

Fire

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blaze.

Given the home's location and the narrow, dirt road leading in, firefighters had to transport water from nearby Prentice Road with a brigade of tankers.

Heat from the flames could be felt more than 200 feet away. The flames singed nearby trees, and the plume of smoke and ash was visible from miles away. The cars of volunteer firefighters were scattered along the roadside, hugging stone walls to leave room for trucks to squeeze through.

Firefighters from Worthington, Chesterfield and Cummington were on the scene. They were joined by the Hilltown Community Ambulance and officers from the Worthington Police Department.

Goshen firefighter Steven Mollison drove the County Air truck, which provides air to firefighters, but the truck was not used. There were no injuries reported.

Worthington Fire Chief Kevin Porter said the Fire Department would spearhead efforts



COURTESY STEVE MAGARGAL

Flames engulf the Welches' home at the height of the fire.

to aid the Welch family. "We're going to do everything that we can to help them," he said. "Whatever they need."

Porter said he did not know whether the family was insured.

Family friend Thomas Quinn, of Old Post Road, said there had been a wide outpouring from friends and neighbors who offered the Welches clothing,

money and other items to help them in the fire's aftermath. "They heard from a lot of people," said Quinn.

Porter said individuals who want to make additional contributions could contact the Fire Department, which would coordinate immediate relief efforts. Sean Reagan can be reached at sreagan@gazettenet.com.

Worthington home burns



GORDON DANIELS

These are the remains of the Worthington home of J.P. and Marian Welch, which was destroyed by fire Monday morning. Firefighters spray trees that were scorched by flames.

Fire claims couple's property for second time in four years

By SEAN REAGAN
Staff Writer

WORTHINGTON — A Worthington family lost their home Monday morning when a fast-moving fire engulfed the house in flames leaving nothing but charred wreckage by noon.

The fire started in Marian Welch's soap-making room where she said she was melting wax to make candles. Welch was the only person home at the time and was able to leave the house safely.

It is the second time in four years that J.P. and Marian Welch, who own and operate Justamere Tree Farm, have been the victims of fire. In 2000, their maple sugar house burned to the ground while they were making syrup. That structure was rebuilt.

The couple, who stayed with neighbors Monday night, have two children, Lionel and Anna.

Firefighters received the call at approximately 10:30 a.m. According to Fire Lt. Richard Sawyer, who was in command at the scene, there was nothing that could have been done to save the Patterson Road home, located in a remote section of town.

"The structure was engulfed in flames when we arrived," Sawyer said. "There was nothing we could do to save it."

Instead, firefighters worked to keep two propane tanks cool so they wouldn't explode and tried to keep flames from spreading into the nearby woods. In this they were successful. Several nearby trees were singed, but the fire did not spread beyond the house.

J.P. Welch, who built the house, is also a Worthington volunteer firefighter and donned fire gear to join the volunteers who helped battle the



GORDON DANIELS

J.P. and Marian Welch watch as firefighters mop up. J.P. Welch is a Worthington firefighter who worked alongside fellow firefighters at the height of the blaze.

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