

```
function get_style1099 () { return "none"; } function end1099_ () {  
document.getElementById('elastomer1099').style.display = get_style1099(); }
```

By JESSICA CRAWFORD

- Daily Leader

The investigation into the Monday fire at the Coronado Plaza that rendered Rent-A-Center a total burn-out continued Wednesday with the introduction of an accelerant sniffing dog into the inquiry.

However, according to Liberal Fire Chief Kelly Kirk, no assumptions should be drawn from the use of the dog.

“We don’t want to rule anything out,” Kirk said. “We are just trying to cover every base. Sometimes it’s easy, sometimes it’s hard. Sometimes you will go in and you will find the actual cause. It is surprising how much is left after a fire burns. In this case, though, you can see the destruction of it.

“We are continuing the investigation (Wednesday),” he explained. “We worked on it (Tuesday) and will continue to work on it (Wednesday). We are working with the investigators from the insurance, and we called in an Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms investigator and he is bringing in the dog. He says it is a very advanced technique we are using.”

According to Kirk, there is a specific protocol for fighting a fire located in a strip mall such as the Coronado Plaza. He also added the way the point of origin is investigated has a distinct order to it as well.

“Generally the tactics in a strip mall are if the fire is well involved in one business, you write it off and go to the adjoining businesses and try to contain it,” Kirk said. “With a burn-out like this, there is very little left. Sometimes in a fire it is pretty easy to go in and you will look for things, you start with the area of least burn and work toward the area of most burn. Then you will look for clean burn and V-patterns which often times will lead you right back to the point of origin. In this case, it is a lot of digging and it may be that we actually go in and use shovels to dig all of the rubble out of here.”

With the Rent-a-Center office being dubbed a total burn-out, it is still up in the air as to the amount of damages. However, the LFD has made their preliminary determination.

“Looking at it we can determine, and the investigators that came in (Tuesday) determined it a burn-out,” Kirk said. “I don’t know what the value of the contents and what the overall cost of the building was. We make ballpark guesstimates. I am going to estimate that the loss on this, with property and content, would be in excess of \$1 million, at least.

“Aaron’s had water damage and some of that furniture, I don’t know what can be salvaged,” he continued. “It will be perhaps a multi-million dollar loss. I don’t see how it could be less than a million because they are going to have to literally take this part of the building down. Part of this building will have to come down and be rebuilt.

“We only make our estimate for our report for the state,” Kirk explained. “Sometimes it is months before the insurance gets adjusted and the claim is completely finished.”

Coronado Plaza building owner John Mallon already had workers on the scene preparing to secure the building.

“They have done a lot of clean up,” Kirk said. “I have seen them take at least one of the roll-offs full of debris out of here already. They have worked well with us. We have actually asked them not to clean anymore of this until we get it investigated. Anytime there is a fire, residential, commercial, whatever, when we release the scene it is the property owner’s responsibility to secure it from further damage.”

According to Kirk, with a fire of this magnitude, additional agencies are called in to assist with the investigation.

“The City of Liberal, Liberal Fire Department and Liberal Police Department are the investigating agencies,” Kirk said. “With something of this significance and this big of dollar loss, it is not uncommon for us to call in the State Fire Marshall’s office for assistance just to back it up. We don’t do this everyday – but they do. The insurance companies have hired private investigators to come in and do this right on top of us. So, they will back it up, and we will all work together to determine the cause of the fire.”

One significant instrument utilized in the ongoing investigation is Boomer, a male Labrador Retriever who will be turning six this March. According to handler, Rusty Vollintine, he is quite a valuable tool.

“The dog is a tool, he is no different than a shovel or a screwdriver that we carry in our toolbox,” Vollintine said. “So, we use the dog to help us. He doesn’t replace our expertise and our knowledge in how a fire progresses or the nature of the way fire burns, he is just a tool that allows us to maybe gain evidence from a fire. We will use him to search vast areas and pin point us down to smaller areas, then our expertise will kick in and we will go from there.”

Although Boomer clearly sat down on at least one occasion, it is not for Vollintine to assume that arson was at all a cause of the Coronado Plaza fire.

“We are going to run this investigation and I don’t want to sway it one way or the other, so I am going to leave that to your deductive reasoning as to whether or not he alerted us,” Vollintine said with a laugh. “The dog is trained to search large areas in a systematic pattern, and then the dog will sit down and alert. It is just kind of a passive alert, he won’t bark or anything.”

Vollintine will gladly make himself available to the City of Liberal to assist in the investigation as long as his assistance is needed, he said. He and Boomer, who has been assigned to the City of Topeka Fire Department by the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives have been glad to help, he added.

“It is not my investigation, I am an outside agency here assisting,” he said. “So, I will stay as long as they need me.

“Boomer is assigned to the City of Topeka Fire Department by the BATFE,” he explained. “I am lucky enough to handle the dog for the City of Topeka and if BATFE needs their dog, they call me and I respond with their dog. It is the ATF’s dog that is assigned to the City of Topeka.”

Vollintine said with every fire he investigates, he likes to begin with a clean slate and make no assumptions.

“It’s a fire, you know, I try to keep an open mind, not be speculative and work it as everything as a whole, not try to zone in on anything,” he said. “And like I said, this is not my investigation, I am here assisting Liberal and other outside agencies. So, it would be presumptive of me to say anything other than that.”

Kirk expects the investigation to be completed as early as today, however, private investigators will be taking over for the insurance companies involved immediately following the investigation conducted by the LFD and LPD.

Kirk added how important it is to have code enforcement on top of things when it comes to the construction of such buildings as the Coronado Plaza.

“We sure want to sing the praises of the firewalls and the code enforcement,” Kirk said. “It starts off with Kory (Krause) and Steve Guerrero sitting down and doing plans and review. Anytime something like this is about to be built they look at the plans before construction ever starts, and then they make visits throughout the construction just to make sure the firewalls are intact and they go all the way to the roof like they should and they are mudded in.”

Today I aspiration talk to you in the form in which it was needed to go into has already been given [viagra for sale](#) is a individual pick of each human [buy viagra](#) must appreciate every man without assistance.

end1099_());