



**EL DORADO COUNTY
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

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MEDIA RELEASE

Residential structure fire started by fireplace ashes

For Immediate Release: January 18, 2012

Date/Time of Occurrence: January 17, 2012 20:38 hours

Nature of Occurrence: Residential structure fire

Location: 2964 School St., Pollock Pines, CA

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Pollock Pines, CA – The El Dorado County Fire District responded to a report of a residential structure fire at 2964 School St. Wednesday evening.

The resident, Jonathon Lakey, had been visiting a friend in the Pollock area and when he returned to his home he found his living room on fire. Mr. Lakey ran to his neighbor's house and called 911. His neighbors grabbed a fire extinguisher and a garden hose and tried to extinguish the fire through the windows to no avail.

E17 and M17 arrived at the fire within four minutes and found heavy smoke coming from the front door and fire coming from the windows. The firefighters went into the burning building and quickly knocked the fire down, preventing it from extending into the attic. Three additional engines from the El Dorado County Fire District and one engine from Cal Fire also responded to the fire to assist with extinguishing the remaining fire.

The fire was started by fireplace ashes put in a plastic bucket and left on the hearth. The week old ashes, thought to be cold by Mr. Lakey, melted through the plastic bucket and caught nearby combustibles on fire. Battalion Chief Mike Pott, from the El Dorado County Fire District, said fireplace ashes can remain hot for a deceptively long time. He went on to say, "Fireplace ashes need to be put in a metal bucket and removed from the house to an area clear of combustibles until they are completely cold or they can be mixed with water and emptied from the bucket". "Despite our efforts to inform the public about the dangers of discarding fireplace ashes improperly we still have fireplace ash fires every year". "This winter with the dry weather we have had three vegetation fires started by fireplace ashes that were dumped in the yard". "Fortunately, these fires did not spread to the nearby homes."

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