

## Tuesday fire caused by electrical issues

Contributed by Elizabeth Larson  
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LAKEPORT &ndash; A fire that destroyed a farm outbuilding on Tuesday is believed to have been caused by an electrical issue within the building itself, according to investigators.

The metal building burned late Tuesday afternoon at the Scotts Valley Road property of Doug Patten, as Lake County News has reported.

&ldquo;The preliminary report is that it's going to be electrical,&rdquo; said Lakeport Fire Protection District Chief Ken Wells.

Wells said the building itself is &ldquo;the only ignition source in that area.&rdquo;

Wells and his department were on scene Tuesday along with personnel from Cal Fire, the US Department of Forestry and Kelseyville Fire, as Lake County News has reported.

Patten had done a controlled burn on his property that afternoon, but that fire had been out before Patten left his property to attend a funeral, according to reports from the initial scene.

&ldquo;It was just a fluke that earlier on that day he was doing an economic variance burn,&rdquo; said Wells.

Although a general burn ban is on, Doug Gearhart, pollution control officer with the Lake County Air Quality Management District, said Patten had a valid economic exemption permit that allowed him to legally burn as part of his agricultural operation.

He said the burn site for the economic exemption had been inspected by Lakeport Fire for fire safety prior to the burn.

All economic exemption burn sites have to be inspected and declared fire safe by the appropriate fire agency before the air district will process a request for an economic exemption, said Gearhart.

He added that the economic exemption burn at this site was approved for the hours of 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at which time the fire was required to be dead out.

The burn, Wells explained, was conducted so Patten could remove a pile of debris from his pasture. But he had flooded it with water to make sure it was out.

Wells had no estimate for the total cost of damages, which included a vintage Jeep parked in the building, as well as tools.

Patten did have defensible space &ndash; which is 100 feet of clearance from brush and weeds &ndash; around his buildings, which Wells emphasized is crucial at this time of year.

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