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Monday, November 26, 2007

Arson is suspected in fire at former pub

Two-alarm blaze Saturday fought at vacant restaurant

By Scott J. Croteau TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF
scroteau@telegram.com

HOLDEN— Authorities are treating a Saturday night fire at a vacant restaurant on Main Street as arson, saying a flammable liquid was found at the site.

Fire Chief John Chandler III said firefighters went to 700 Main St. about 10 p.m. to find flames along the foundation at the back of the building. The building has been unoccupied for some time. It was most recently Shamrock's Pub & Eatery, and for many years it was home of Vinny's Restaurant.

The state fire marshal's office was called to the scene, and a trained dog detected accelerant in the area, according to the chief. It appeared the liquid was spread on the outside of the back of the building, and some could have leaked inside through holes, Chief Chandler said. "We do think it is a suspicious fire."

Most of the fire was in the basement, which was used for storage. Heat and smoke caused extensive damage to the restaurant level of the building, which has been closed since March, Chief Chandler said. The utilities were still on in the building and, according to the chief, the owners are trying to lease the building.

It took about 20 minutes to extinguish the two-alarm fire. "It was knocked down pretty quick," the chief said.

Nearly three dozen Holden firefighters were assisted by



Arson is suspected in a fire Saturday night at the former Shamrock's Pub & Eatery, 700 Main St. (T&G Staff/CHRISTINE PETERSON)

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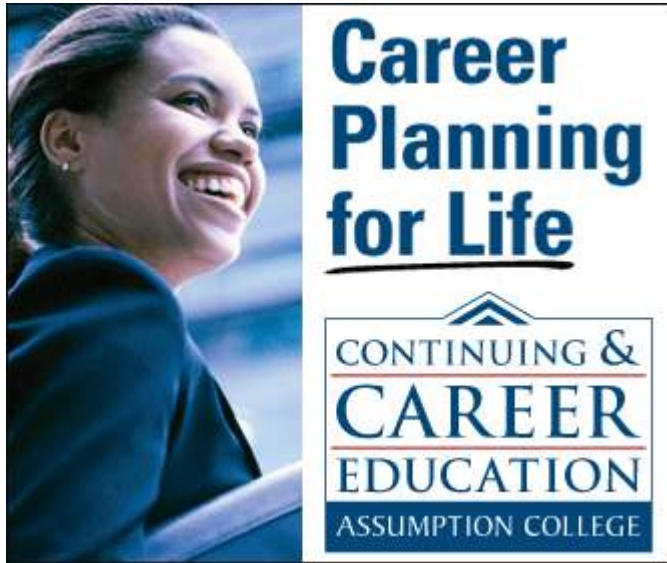
firefighters from West Boylston, Paxton and Rutland.

One Holden firefighter was taken to St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester for an ankle injury. He was treated and released.

In September, the restaurant site was briefly discussed by the Public Safety Building Committee as a possible location for a town public safety complex.

The discussion did not go very far, said Chief Chandler, because the site is not suitable for that purpose.

The state fire marshal's office is offering a reward of up to \$5,000 for information leading to a conviction in Saturday's fire. Anyone with information is asked to call the Arson Hotline at (800) 682-9229 or the Holden Fire Department at (508) 829-0266.



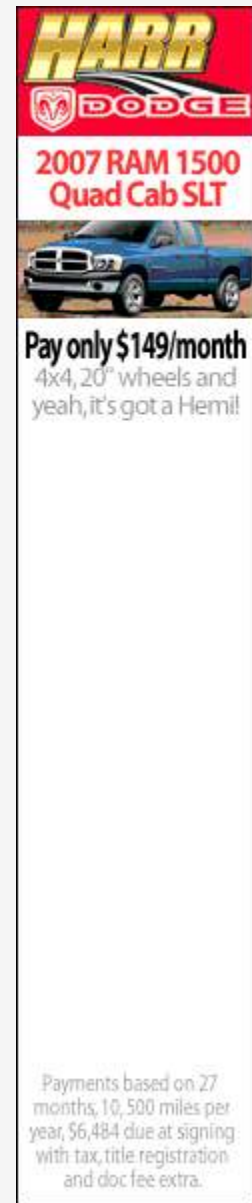
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