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SUNBURY

Four displaced, home destroyed in Sunday blaze



Francis Scarcella/The Daily Item

Firefighters battle a blaze along Miller Street in Sunbury on Sunday afternoon.

Fire chief: Occupants taken to local hospitals for treatment

By Francis Scarcella
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SUNBURY — At least four people were displaced after a Sunday afternoon blaze destroyed a home on Miller Street, a two-alarm fire that called more than 70 firefighters to the city dwelling.

Sunbury Fire Chief Ronald Rupp said the fire started in the early afternoon Sunday. Firefighters began to arrive after 911 began to receiving multiple calls after flames became visible at 1121-1123 Miller Street.

Rupp said when crews arrived they battled the blaze which began to spread to 1117-1119 Miller Street and a member of the fire department rescued a woman inside a home at 1117 Miller Street.

Within two hours, the blaze was knocked down but the structure at 1121-1123, which is owned by Adam Rosinski, was unstable and hot spots continued to pop up, Rupp said.

Sunbury Councilman John Barnhart, who is in charge of the city's codes department, made the decision, along with Solicitor Joel Wiest, to immediately tear the home down.

Barnhart said they called a Shamokin contractor who arrived just before 5 p.m. The demolition began while firefighters remained at the scene.



Francis Scarcella/The Daily Item

A demolition crew begins work to tear down what remains of a house that was destroyed by fire Sunday afternoon on Miller Street in Sunbury.

Rupp said the fire is under investigation and initial reports were it started near a sofa in the 1123 side of the duplex.

"Everyone did a great job," Rupp said. "Everyone did what they were supposed to do and acted quickly and safely."

Rupp said he is unsure of any serious injuries but some of the residents inside both structures were being treated at local hospitals.

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Bodies of 7 found after West Reading factory blast

The Associated Press

WEST READING — All seven bodies have been recovered from the site of a powerful explosion at a chocolate factory in a Berks County community.

West Reading Mayor Samantha Kaag said in a statement Sunday night that none of the victims will be named until officials are certain that all families have been contacted.

"Please understand that this is a devastating loss, but we are truly grateful to bring closure to the families involved in the upcoming days," Kaag said.

Police Chief Wayne Holben said at a press briefing just after 9 p.m. that rescue workers had found the bodies earlier in the evening and that they are believed to be the remaining two individuals who were listed as missing earlier in the day.

Their identities will be confirmed by the Berks County Coroner's Office, he said.

One of the victims was found around 6:50 p.m., and the other around 8:20 p.m., Holben said.

The deaths bring the total number killed in the blast to seven.

Earlier Kaag confirmed to the Associated Press that the fifth body was found Sunday morning by first responders and confirmed dead by the Berks County Coroner's Office. The coroner was unable to confirm the identity of that person, Kaag said.

West Reading Borough Chief of Police Wayne Holben confirmed the body of a fourth victim was found under debris early Sunday at the R.M. Palmer Co. plant in the borough of West Reading, about 75 miles southeast of Sunbury.

Holben asked for continued prayers from the community and vowed that rescuers and officials "will not rest until every single person affected by this tragedy has been accounted for" from the blast that occurred just before 5 p.m. Friday.

Rescue crews had been using heat imaging equipment and dogs to search for possible survivors after the blast destroyed one building and damaged a neighboring building.

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Walking tours tell guests about Mifflinburg's past

By Cindy O. Herman
For The Daily Item

MIFFLINBURG — Think that everybody back in the day was honest, hardworking and respectful? Not entirely — people are people, no matter what decade they live in.

Mifflinburg Buggy Museum will premier its newest walking tour, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," at 1 p.m. on Sunday, May 7; Sunday, May 21; and Saturday, June 3. Tours begin and end at the museum's Visitors' Center at 598 Green St. and will last about 90 minutes.

"The Good, The Bad and The Ugly" picks up where the Buggy Museum's 2020 and 2021 "Scandals and Scoundrels" tour left off, said Mary Sullivan, volunteer and

tour guide for the museum's annual Ghost Tours, which will take place again in October.

Sullivan got the idea for the more recent tours by reading years' worth of news articles from both the "Mifflinburg Telegraph" and "The Lewisburg Journal." From the 1880s to the 1940s, she found sometimes amusing, sometimes appalling stories about the people who lived in and built her hometown.

"These tours are history tours, but they're really fun," Sullivan said. "I guarantee people will laugh out loud."

There's the businessman who was so devoted to his dog that when the dog died, the man buried him in a coffin.

See **TOURS**, Page A2

Susquehanna Valley Chorale performs selection of Bob Dylan classics

By Anna Wiest
For The Daily Item

MIFFLINBURG — The Susquehanna Valley Chorale performed "The Times They Are A-Changin': A Dylan Oratorio at the Rusty Rail Brewing Company in Mifflinburg on Sunday. The chorale originally planned to perform the selection three years ago.

Conductor and Music Director for more than 20 years, William Payn opened the concert by telling the audience the songs they would hear had been in the

works for a long time. "We were supposed to perform the selection three years ago," he said. "Before a contagious disease took over everything."

Payn and Executive Director Kelly Beard agreed that it was exciting to finally have an audience to hear the product of all their hard work. "It's almost like a breath that you are finally able to take," Beard said.

The Susquehanna Valley Chorale featured more than 60 local singers and was accompanied by a string quartet, acoustic guitar and piano.

The concert began with a series of four choral pieces that were not Bob Dylan hits, but Payn said would set the tone of love, hope, and peace. One of these songs, titled "when all is full," is one of Payn's more than 50 original compositions.

A Dylan Oratorio, arranged by non-traditional composer Steve Hackman, included chart-toppers like "The Times They Are A-Changin'," "Like a Rolling Stone," and "Knockin' on Heaven's Door."

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Members of the Susquehanna Valley Chorale, under the direction of William Payn, perform a selection of Bob Dylan classics during a performance Sunday afternoon in Mifflinburg.

Anna Wiest
For The Daily Item

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