

TAHLEQUAH

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INVESTIGATIONS

TPD officer loses home to fire

Tahlequah Fire Department officials have not yet ruled on the cause of an early Sunday morning fire that destroyed the home of Tahlequah Police Officer Reed Felts.

When firefighters arrived at the home on Fowler Road around 3:30 a.m., flames were widespread inside the structure. Crews were on scene throughout the

morning Sunday. Fellow officers from various agencies also responded.

The fire and its cause remain under investigation, firefighters said Monday.

Tahlequah Police Chief Nate King said the Red Cross was contacted, and that both the police department and local Fraternal Order of Police were ready to offer assistance to Felts.

SEARCHING FOR SALAMANDERS

Six-year old Layne Spencer gazed into a microscope Saturday, looking at some dyed salamanders.

While his younger sister looked at the salamanders, his mother asked him what he saw.

"Lots of tiny ribs," Layne said.

Layne and his family were some of the 30 people who attended the Spring Creek Coalition's salamander outing on Saturday, April 28.

The group hosted Associate Professor Ron Bonett from the University of Tulsa's biology department before heading out to the river to look for their own salamander.

By **SIDNEY VAN WYK**
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"Our mission is to unite to protect the Spring Creek Water Shed," said President Beth Ross.

Last year, the coalition celebrated its 20-year anniversary.

"Over those 20 years we've planted at least 2,000 trees," said Ross.

Aside from being educational, the gathering was also a way of honoring a SCC board member who had recently passed away. Chris Robb had recently been elected to his second term as an SCC board member, and had scheduled the salamander outing before passing away in February.

The coalition hosts a different educational meeting every year, and this year, the

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Spring Creek Coalition board member Casey Ferguson shoveled loose gravel from Spring Creek, hoping to find salamanders during an outing last weekend.

Photo by Sidney Van Wyk/Daily Press

INFRASTRUCTURE

LREC members pick board reps at gathering

Lake Region Electric Cooperative members overwhelmingly returned two trustees to their board Saturday at the co-op's annual meeting in Hulbert.

Jack Teague and Scott Manes will remain on the board for three more years. Members could choose between Teague, Manes and a third candidate, Louis Bohanon. When members registered to vote, they were instructed to vote for two of the three candidates.

The annual meeting was the 65th for the member-owned cooperative.

Tina Glory-Jordan, the cooperative's attorney, said Teague received 865 votes and Manes totaled 789. Bohanon finished with 281 votes. Earlier in the meeting, Jordan said 1,087 members had registered during the day and that number constituted a quorum of the membership.

Trailers were set up on the Hulbert Public Schools grounds to allow LREC to showcase some

of its member services. The annual health fair was also available to members and their families, as was the food booth. Area fire departments showed off their cooking skills and members could dine on combinations ranging from barbecue, chicken fried steak and cotton candy.

Members were also allowed to update their account information with the cooperative.

Members also heard from Bethany Shultz, a Hulbert High School senior who is the cooperative's youth tour member and also represented Oklahoma on the Youth Leadership Council. LREC CEO Hamid Vahdatipour said Shultz's honor was a first in the history of Lake Region.

"We are so proud of Bethany and all she has done for youth and the

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COMMUNITY EVENTS



Lane Hall's hound, Salt, became a hit at Saturday's annual Red Fern Festival field trials when he launched himself into a tree repeatedly, trying to reach a caged raccoon.

Photo by Josh Newton/Daily Press

Red Fern brings in 20K-plus visitors

From TDP staff reports

Tahlequah's 2015 Red Fern Festival drew capacity crowds to the community last weekend.

Tahlequah Area Convention and Visitors Bureau Director

Melissa Harris said she and others who planned the event were told by multiple people that was the largest Red Fern Festival Tahlequah has ever held.

The goal was to have at least 20,000 people at the festival, and Harris believes that goal was reached.

"Hopefully the traffic counters [on area highways] will be able to verify that," said Harris.

She said many of the vendors also had a successful festival.

"Quite a few vendors, when I went to collect their sales tax

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