

# ST. TAMMANY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT # 1

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**Fire Chief - Larry Hess**

**For Immediate Release**

**February 23, 2013**

## **Early Morning Fire Destroys Old Town Home Undergoing Major Renovation**

Saturday morning just before 8am firefighters from St. Tammany Fire Protection District No.1 responded to the report of a working structure fire on Bilten Avenue in Old Town. Callers were unable to provide the exact address; however, Ladder 11 arrived on scene within 2 minutes and 12 seconds of receiving the call. Captain A.J. Wrublewski and his crew reported a fully involved structure fire at 430 Bilten Avenue and initiated a defensive attack of the fire.

Billowing smoke, impressive flames and the wail of sirens from responding fire engines, police cars and ambulances attracted many bystanders who watched as firefighters aggressively worked to extinguish the fire. Firefighters equipped with large hoses sprayed water and stood their ground to prevent the spread of the fire to adjacent properties. Despite firefighter's best efforts, the heat from the fire had already caused damage to the neighbor's fence, shed, greenhouse, truck and boat but their actions kept the flames at bay and firefighters were able to stop the progress of the fire before it could spread to the neighbor's home.

After 30 minutes of flooding the involved structure with water from the 77' ladder truck known as the "Old Town Express" and four large hose lines directed by firefighters, the fire was brought under control.

Fire Investigator Van Joffrion was on the scene working to determine the cause of the fire. According to Fire Prevention Officer Mike Thiel, "The home was undergoing major renovations and was unoccupied at the time of the fire. The construction stage contributed to the rapid spread of the fire as there were no windows installed which allowed air to feed the flames. Because the structure was unoccupied, the fire burned for an unknown amount of time until it grew to the point that neighbors noticed the smoke and flames, and called 911."

The cause of the fire is still under investigation at this time.

For more information about St. Tammany Fire Protection District #1 visit us at [www.slidellfire.org](http://www.slidellfire.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#) - *St. Tammany Fire District #1* and [Twitter](#) - @SlidellFire\_PIO

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