

Look back at Praegitzer fire

30 years later, employees are invited to sort-of reunion

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — It was Aug. 13, 1987, when Praegitzer Industries went up in flames.

The circuit-board manufacturer employed 220 people. Being one of the largest industrial employers in Dallas, the fire was devastating to the town.

Now, then-facilities manager Eric Rogers is planning a reunion for those affected.

He remembers that fateful night 30 years ago.

"The fire started at about 8 in the evening on the 13th," Rogers said. "I was at home and lived up on Reed Lane. I hopped in my car and could see a pillar of smoke. It looked like a smokestack on a battleship."

Dallas City Councilor Bill Hahn, then-firefighter, recalled that the department was on drill that Thursday night.

"There had been numerous alarm calls prior to the incident," he said. "So while we were on drill, the alarm came in. The assistant chief and myself drove out that direction thinking it was going to be another alarm sounding. When we turned onto the Monmouth Highway, we noticed a big, black col-

Remembering the Praegitzer Industries fire of 1987

A "fire reunion" will be held on Saturday and Sunday for all the employees and businesses affected by the massive industrial fire that destroyed Praegitzer Industries in 1987.

The reunion will include a bring-your-own picnic from noon until 4 p.m. at the new side of Dallas City Park on Saturday. A golf outing is scheduled for Saturday at 10 a.m. at Cross Creek Golf Course. A brunch will be on Sunday at 11 a.m. at Eola Hills Wine Cellars, Rickreall. RSVP for brunch: 503-623-2405.

For more information: eric.rogers1947@gmail.com.

umn of smoke coming from the center of the building."

Rogers said he spent the night directing firefighters and volunteer firefighters who were not familiar with the layout of the plant.

"That evening was pretty much a blur," he said. "It was just panic time. They were trying to save the administration building, because it was the furthest point from the start of the fire. The firefighters did a pretty good job about minimizing — or at least trying — to keep it from being a total loss."

It took a number of days for Hahn and the fire chief, the state fire marshal and the city of Dallas to determine the cause of the fire: a faulty immersion heater in a chemical tank.

The building was a total

loss, with an estimated \$30 million in damage, Rogers said.

Rogers said the reunion isn't really a celebration, but more of a remembrance of the fire and the effect it had on the town and the 220 employees at the time.

"For most of us, it was a traumatic event," he said. The building was re-opened a year later, and roughly 180 employees returned to work, Rogers said.

"Bob (Praegitzer) told reporters we'll be back in business," Rogers recalled. "We won all kinds of awards on the rebuild. It was an adventuresome time. A lot of new people came on. A lot of people went on to other ventures. ... We need to celebrate that and reminisce and move on."

Falls City Neighborhood Watch

Looking out for each other

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — See something amiss in your neighborhood you call police, right?

In Falls City, sometimes people call members of the Neighborhood Watch.

The city's group — which has eyes on the entire town, not just certain neighborhoods — has been active for almost a year, and has 15 members who patrol regularly.

Tracy Young, one of those members, is on the receiving end of a lot of calls from fellow residents. She encourages people to call police, and sometimes they do. If not, she is willing to take the concern or tip and place the call herself.

"We try and help out," Young said. "I know we are making an impact."

Falls City hasn't supported attempts to increase law enforcement presence in town at the ballot box, and residents' relationship Polk County Sheriff's Office is tenuous, but improving, Sheriff Mark Garton said.

The only incorporated town in the Polk County without its own police department, Falls City voted down levies to pay for contracts for patrol in the city four times between 2001 and 2007. In Polk County's two attempts to pass a public safety levy in November 2013 (failed) and May 2015 (passed), the Falls City precinct voted against the measures 90-212 (2013) and 136-198 (2015).

Attitudes may be changing through a combination of Neighborhood Watch and the sheriff's office renewed effort to make inroads in Falls City. Garton or one of his deputies attends every Falls City City Council meeting, participates in law enforcement-related town hall meetings, and has helped the Neighborhood Watch program get started.

For their part, the Neighborhood Watch group is active in the community and more than willing to report concerns they see — or

are told about — using Facebook to post tips and or directly contacting deputies.

Garton said the idea of forming a Neighborhood Watch group in the town took off fast. He said there were only a few people at the first informational meeting. The next meeting, interest had increased significantly.

"There was like 20 people there wanting to be captain of their area, not just interested people. They really wanted to take a role in making it work," he said. "It's great. It's really great to have that support. Anybody will tell you it hasn't always been that way out there, and there are a lot of good people there."

Young said when the sheriff's office was losing deputies and patrol hours to budget cuts, the perception was that the amount of crime increased and the trust in the office deteriorated. That is getting better with patrol hours restored and a full complement of deputies who interact with residents on a regular basis.

Young added that responses are getting faster, which may encourage people to call police.

"The community is getting over its fear," she said.

The sheriff's office supports the group, which meets monthly, often with Garton or a deputy on hand to answer questions or offer training on how to safely and legally patrol and report potential crime. He's encouraged by the enthusiasm the group has for its mission.

"We continually educate them on what information we need to be able to act versus what the public thinks we need," he said. "I honestly think most people are supportive of it because they want to make their city better."

Young said the group is happy to help the sheriff's office — and its community — in any way it can.

"They can't be out here all the time," Young said.

DEADLINES

NEWS DEADLINES

For inclusion in the Wednesday edition of the *Itemizer-Observer*:

Social news (weddings, engagements, anniversaries, births, milestones) — 5 p.m. on Thursday.

Community events — Noon on Friday for both the Community Notebook and Community Calendar.

Letters to the editor — 10 a.m. on Monday.

Obituaries — 4 p.m. on Monday.

ADVERTISING DEADLINES

Retail display ads — 3 p.m. Friday.

Classified display ads — 11 a.m. on Monday.

Classified line ads — Noon on Monday. Classified ads are updated daily on www.polkio.com.

Public notices — Noon on Friday.

CORRECTIONS

The *Polk County Itemizer-Observer* is committed to publishing accurate news, feature and sports reports. If you see anything that requires a correction or clarification, call the newsroom at 503-623-2373 or send an email to ementzer@polkio.com.

WEBSITE

The *Polk County Itemizer-Observer* website, www.polkio.com, is updated each week by Wednesday afternoon. There, you will find nearly every story that appears in the print version of the newspaper, as well as some items, including additional photos, that do not appear in print due to space limitations.

The *Itemizer-Observer* is also on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Watch for breaking news, links to stories, sports scores updates and more.

WEATHER

RECORDED	HIGH	LOW	RAIN
Aug. 1	101	60	.00
Aug. 2	107	67	.00
Aug. 3	103	64	.00
Aug. 4	97	62	.00
Aug. 5	90	53	.00
Aug. 6	91	55	.00
Aug. 7	93	64	.00

Rainfall during Aug. — 0.00 in.
Rain through Aug. 7 — 33.30 in.

Sudoku solution

6	9	4	3	2	8	7	5	1
8	1	5	7	6	4	9	2	3
7	2	3	5	1	9	6	4	8
5	3	9	6	7	1	2	8	4
2	7	6	4	8	5	1	3	9
1	4	8	2	9	3	5	7	6
9	8	7	1	4	2	3	6	5
3	6	1	8	5	7	4	9	2
4	5	2	9	3	6	8	1	7

Three arrested at butane hash oil lab

Itemizer-Observer staff report
INDEPENDENCE — Three men were arrested on Aug. 1 after a search warrant revealed an active butane hash oil lab at 8400 Buena Vista Road in Independence.

The lab was being used to make homemade marijuana extract, according to a press release from the Polk County Sheriff's Office.

Dennis Lee Underwood, 35, was charged with unlawful manufacture of marijuana extract (Class B felony), unlawful possession of less than a quarter ounce of marijuana extract (Class C felony), possession of cocaine (Class C felony), possession of methamphetamine (Class C felony), and possession of a schedule 1 controlled substance — psilocybin mushrooms (Class B felony).

Joseph Matthew Soulier, 38, was charged with unlawful manufacture of marijuana extract, unlawful possession of less than a quarter ounce of marijuana extract, and possession of cocaine.

Brandon Michael Axmaker, 18, was charged with unlawful manufacture of marijuana extract and unlawful possession of less than a quarter ounce of marijuana extract.

Members of the Polk Interagency Narcotics Team, assisted by the Oregon State Police and Polk County Sheriff's Office, served the warrant at the residence.

Due to the hazards, members of Polk County Fire District No. 1 assisted during the dis-

mantling of the lab in case of any emergency.

Detectives collected more than 216 pounds of marijuana which was being used a make extract in the lab.

The process was a closed loop system, and there was just more than 30 ounces of finished hash oil product found at the location.

Detectives estimate the street value of the hash oil to be about \$25,000, the release from the sheriff's office stated.

In addition to the active lab operation, detectives also located user amounts of methamphetamine, cocaine and psilocybin mushrooms at the location.

More charges are pending.

INDEPENDENCE CINEMA 8

450 S. 2nd St., Independence
Showtimes 503-606-3000
www.independencecinema8.com



Friday - Thursday • Aug 11 - Aug 17

SPIDER-MAN: HOMECOMING (Digital) (PG13) (12:40) 6:45

WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES (Digital) (PG13) (3:40) 9:45

NUT JOB 2: NUTTY BY NATURE (Digital) (PG) (12:20 2:35 4:50) 7:05 9:20

ANNABELLE: CREATION (Digital) (R) (11:40 2:10 4:40) 7:10 9:40

DARK TOWER (Digital) (PG13) (12:00 2:20 4:40) 7:00 9:20

DUNKIRK (Digital) (PG13) (11:45 2:15 4:45) 7:15 9:45

KIDNAP (Digital) (R) (12:40 2:55 5:10) 7:25 9:40

EMOJI MOVIE (Digital) (PG) (11:45 2:00 4:15) 6:30

DETROIT (Digital) (R) 8:45

ATOMIC BLONDE (Digital) (R) (1:50 4:30) 7:10 9:50

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 www.facebook.com/independencecinema8
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Matinees are all shows before 6pm. New pricing for matinees are: Adult \$8.00 Children \$7.00 • Senior \$7.25 Pricing does not reflect 3D showings.

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AUG 18 Concert: Aerosmith Pump - 7:30 PM
AUG 19 Concert: "Indy Goes Dark" Pyromania Def Leppard Tribute - 7:30 PM
AUG 17 Movie: Star Trek Into the Darkness - 9:45 PM





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Day Drink In The Dark

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Raffle will be held at 9 pm on August 21st.
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