



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY ROB TOOLEY

Firefighters battle the blaze that burned down Courtney Sullivan's home on Wildwood Lane in Umatilla on Dec. 10.

# Family looking to start over after fire

By **JADE McDOWELL**  
Staff Writer

Courtney Sullivan and her three children are still trying to adjust to the reality of everything they lost after their home burned down in Umatilla earlier this month.

The furniture. The clothes. The television. The Christmas presents. The new washer and dryer.

All of that pales in comparison to the items that no amount of donations will ever replace.

"I think the most I'll miss is my son's baby blanket and all the kids' baby stuff and the pictures," Courtney said.

The single mom and her three children — Josslyne, 6; Braden, 4; and Vincent, 1 — are living with her mother Christina Sullivan for the moment but are hoping to find a place to rent soon and start rebuilding their life.

Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District fire marshal Steve Potts said the cause of the mobile home fire is undetermined. Courtney said she has no idea how it started. All she knows is that at about 9:30 p.m. on Dec. 10 Josslyne and Braden came running down the hallway yelling "Mommy! Mommy! Fire!"

She ran out into the living room, she said, to see flames devouring the wall and the couch, just feet from where Vincent was sleeping in his crib. Getting past the burning couch gave Courtney burns on her arms, legs and side and left burn marks on Vincent's arm, but everyone made it out.

"I grabbed the baby and we got out of there," she said. Meanwhile, someone called the fire department and someone called Christina to let her know that her daughter and grandchild were being transported to the hospital by ambulance.

"I saw the fire trucks go past and thought, 'Oh, that's sad, someone's house must be on fire,'" Christina said. "A few minutes later I got the call."

When she arrived the fire was still burning so hot that the large plastic sanitary disposal garbage can on the street had melted.

Courtney and Christina said the community has been supportive in the aftermath. Several people have donated clothing and others have offered household goods once the family finds a rental and has room for them. A family friend set up an account under Courtney's name at Banner Bank for people who want to pitch in toward the rental deposit and other moving expenses.

They said teachers and administrators at McNary Elementary School have also been understanding of the children's situation and did what they could to help. Christina said Josslyne, in particular, has been withdrawn since the fire.

"She's been really distant and hiding," she said.

Courtney said even though the kids saw the house burn down, they're still having a hard time comprehending the fact that they can't go sleep in their



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA SULLIVAN

Courtney Sullivan, left, with her children Vincent, Braden and Josslyne were left without a home after it burned down on Dec. 10 in Umatilla.

own beds again.

"The kids keep asking, 'Can we go home? Can we go home?' They're talking about weird stuff like monsters and ghosts too," she said.

She said she is looking

forward to finding a new place to call home and getting the children settled into a new routine.

"We're pretty much starting from ground zero," she said.

If anyone has donations of clothing or other items they would like to give to the family, Christina said they can contact her via Facebook or at 541-371-0523.

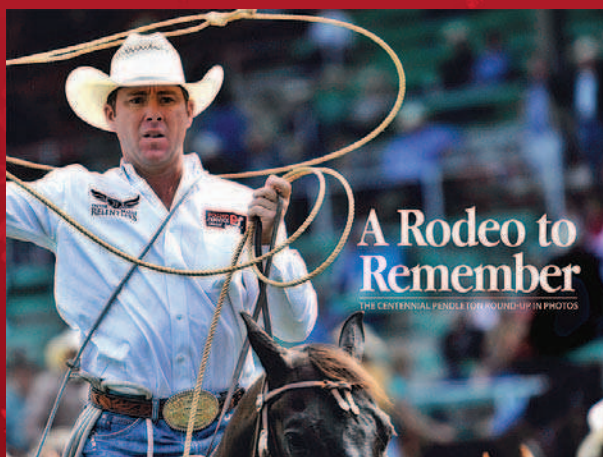
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# State police catch trio of local fugitives

Three local fugitives that tried to get away from police Friday ended up in jail.

Oregon State Police reported a state trooper tried to stop a blue 330 BMW for a lighting violation at 6:33 p.m. on Highway 37 northbound about three miles north of Pendleton. The car took off, then turned west onto Despain Gulch Road and drove for about two miles before slamming to a stop.

Adam Fredrick Abell, 28, of Umatilla, bailed from the BMW. Police caught him in short order and arrested him on a Umatilla County parole violation warrant.

The car kept going, and a Umatilla County sheriff's deputy found it on Terney Road a few miles away.

Additional state police troopers from Pendleton and Hermiston arrived, and members of the sheriff's office and Stanfield police helped search a field next to the BMW. Residents reported officers told them to stay indoors during the search.

State police reported officers found Adam Ben Cooley, 35, and Rebecca Ann Mayes, 24, both of Hermiston, while they were on the ground trying to hide.

Cooley's name was on an outstanding warrant in Umatilla County for a parole violation, according to state police, and he was in possession of a methamphetamine pipe and "a small amount of marijuana extract." Police arrested him on the warrants and for possession of meth and marijuana extracts not purchased from a state dealer.

Mayes admitted she was the driver, according to state police. She was wanted on four Umatilla County warrants for probation violations, and officers also found her in possession of a meth pipe. State police arrested her on the warrants, possession of meth and for attempting to flee in a vehicle and reckless driving.

Oregon State Police booked all three into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.

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