

Deerfield Lodge fire cause may never be known

What caused the fire that resulted in millions of dollars of damage to the Deerfield Lodge in South Lake Tahoe last month may always be a mystery.

"I'm not sure if we will ever know what it was," Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We know it started by the stairwell in the back of the building."

He said the cause of about 25 percent of fires is never determined.

The fast moving fire forced three dozen guests to be evacuated. Some lost everything they were traveling with. The community came to their rescue by providing lodging, food vouchers, clothing and things to do to take their mind off the tragedy.

The owners of the Ski Run Boulevard property, who live out of state, plan to rebuild. Right now they are working through insurance issues.

While fire investigators found the sprinklers to be turned off, there had been an inspection earlier this year that found them to be in working order.

Who turned them off and when remain unknown. While it is easy to turn them off, it could not be done so accidentally.

Meston said it is hard to know if the sprinklers had been working, if it would have made much of a difference because the fire started outside.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*