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Storm

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Over 125 emergency personnel fought the fire as it burned from noon Feb. 25 to evening the next day for a total of 29 hours.

(Images 177x260 to 764x533)

News

Icy water floods a kitchen and dining area after pipes froze and burst. This was a common result of Winter Storm Uri's record-breaking, below freezing temperatures. (Image 27x891 to 765x1472)

Fire (continued from page 1)

greater Fort Worth area, all of which played a part.

“Our guys were on I-20 finding a car accident and turned around to see this huge column of smoke,” Shelly said. “They imme-

diately responded.”

Within minutes, the scene burst with activity. The growl of fire engines, the whine of hoses — a testament to the size of

the inferno.

“First responders to subdue the fire. That night we lit a fire in our
department,” said Fort Worth resident Dmtrio Valsadua.

“ERCOT knew the storm was coming even before the weather turned,” Valsadua said. “They were the same as family
and I have been in a state of shock ever since,” Napoleon said.

WFAA. The average temperature
from Feb. 14–16 was 30.8 degrees, 0.9 degrees colder than the previous year.

“State leadership was more concerned about large corporations saving money and avoiding Federal regulations than they were about the well-being of their fellow citi-
zens,” Montez said.

The blame is on the Electric
Reliability Council of Texas — an
energy supplier to over 25 million
T a x a n s, according to its website
and having his power go out left a
permanent impact.

He had a collection of exotic
fish estimated to be worth around
two thousand dollars, he said. The filters and heaters in the tank lost electricity which resulted in him trying to transport the fish to a safe location in the cold, but he wasn’t able to save them.

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Benbrook firefighter Valerie
Willis — another TCC graduate —
arrived with her company early the
following morning as the building was still smoldering. Heavy rain had fallen through the previous night, but because of how the roof fell, hardly any of it had reached the
burning foam.

“I ended up going to the tip of
the ladder to get a better view of it
so we could find the right spots,”
she said.

Willis and her company sprayed hot spots for over five hours. It wasn’t until 5:30 that evening — 29 hours into the fire —
that responders cleared the scene.

For the next two days, driv-
ers on the nearby highway report-
ed small flames in the wreckage
as hot foam reignited beneath the
collapsed roof. Shelly’s department dispatched to the site several times to obfuscate the flare-ups.

Until the building owners settle with their insurance company and demolish the wreckage, this may con-

continue to happen, Shelly said.

Shelly graduated from TCC Fire
Training Academy in 1995 and
worked as a firefighter in Azle, Col-
leyville and Southlake before join-
ing the Richland Hills Fire Depart-
ment in 2014.

To know that the biggest fire of
his long career was fought with-
out a single death or major injury
makes him proud.

“To get through an incident that long with so many people in-
volved and not have any injuries
is a testament to everybody’s pro-

fessionalism and the care that
they handle every call,” he said.