

BROOME COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION

BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK

Hillcrest Quickly Handles Basement Fire

Photos & Story by N. Griswold



A light smoke rolls out the front door as crews make their way to the basement.

Early on the morning of Friday, March 4, 2011, Broome County Communications received a single call from a home at 6 Billata Drive reporting a fire in the basement of the residence. At 05:51 Hillcrest (55) and Port Dickinson (35) were dispatched for the report of a house fire. While enroute Broome County notified Chief 55 that a Broome County Sheriff Deputy was on scene and reporting heavy smoke on the first floor of the residence. At this time Chief 55 requested that Chenango Bridge (39) and Five Mile Point (59) be placed on standby.

Chief 55 arrived on scene with a report of smoke showing with a working fire in the basement and requested that one engine out of Chenango Bridge be sent to the scene and Chenango (66) be placed on standby. Squad 55 and Pumper-Tanker 35 went responding and assignments were given for Squad 55 to come into the scene and Pumper-Tanker 35 to grab a hydrant a few houses down and lay in.

The crew from Squad 55 laid a preconnected 1- 3/4 inch line into the structure and placed a 2 1/2 inch line at the front door as a back up. The attack team made their way through the smoke on the first floor to the basement door which was warm to the touch. By cracking the door the crew encountered heavy smoke and could see a glow to one side of the basement stairs. After descending the stairs the crew was able to knock down the fire quickly.

Pumper-Tanker 35 laid 300 feet of 4 inch supply line from the hydrant and connected to Squad 55

with a 100 foot length of 3 inch supply hose. Though never needed, the 3 inch hose was charged between the two trucks. The hydrant was never opened. The crew from Pumper-Tanker 35, Engine 39, and Engine 55 which had arrived a short time later were then used to assist with ventilation and overhaul. Also assisting on scene was the Broome County Fire Investigation Team.

The fire was determined to have originated on the floor in the area of the hot water heater. It was later discovered that after doing laundry the night before a large pile of clothes were placed on the floor of the basement next to the hot water heater. When occupants arose in the morning and used hot water the hot water heater turned on igniting the clothing. The fire then traveled down the pile of clothing igniting a portion of the base of the staircase and other various nearby items.

Smoke detectors alerted occupants quickly aiding in the quick knockdown of this fire. Several more minutes and a much more substantial fire would have taken hold in the basement and would have caused significantly more damage. A great job by all three departments to quickly manage and control this fire before it got out of control.



The crew from Engine 39 precedes into the structure to assist Squad 55.



Squad 55 and Engine 39 work on scene



Pumper-Tanker 35 provides supply.