

North Dakota Office of the State Fire Marshal (ND)

INCIDENT REPORT

Official Law Enforcement Report - Unauthorized Dissemination is Prohibited

Incident Type: Fire / Accidental

Agency Incident ID: NDSFM25-070

BATS ID: 1577303

Investigation Title: STRASBURG VANBEEK FIRE



Incident Date/Time/Location

Status

Investigation Closed

Jurisdiction

Primary

Start Date/Time

7/4/2025 22:30 Friday

Address

505 Main St

City/State/Zip

Strasburg, ND 58573

County

Emmons County

Investigator Information

Name

Jordan A VanBerkum

Phone

701-220-5063

Email

jvanberkum@nd.gov

Title

Deputy Fire Marshal

Property Use or Target Information

Type

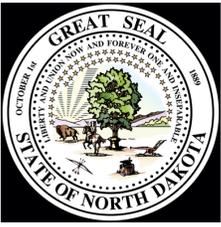
Residential

Subtype

1 (Single Family) or 2 Family Dwelling

Status

Occupied And Operating



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Scene Details

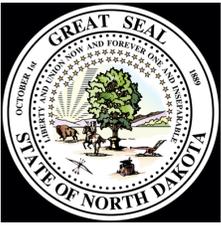
Miscellaneous Information

Latitude

46.134004

Longitude

-100.162342



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Person/Organization Information

Name

VANBEEK, GREG

DOB

1962

Race

Ethnicity

Sex

M

Age at time of Incident

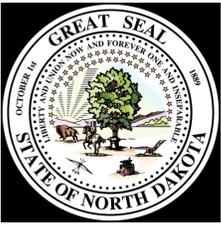
62

Juvenile

No

Relationship(s)

Owner, Resident, Victim



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Name

VANBEEK, BARB

DOB

■■■■ 1962

Sex

F

Juvenile

No

Relationship(s)

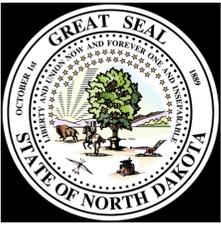
Occupant, Owner, Resident, Victim

Race

Ethnicity

Age at time of Incident

62



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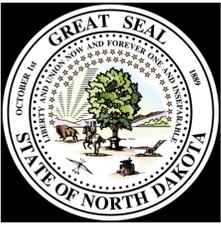
Investigation Title: STRASBURG VANBEEK FIRE



Attachments

Filename	Description	Date
NDSFM25-070.1 STRASBURG VAN BEEK FIRE.pdf		12/9/2025

No image specified



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Narrative(s)

Title

Contacts

Author

Jordan VanBerkum

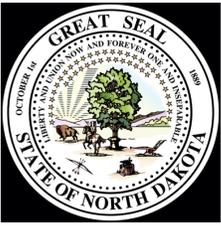
7012205063

jvanberkum@nd.gov

Description

Emmons County Sheriff - Gary Sanders. [REDACTED]

Strasburg Fire Chief - Kevin Gabriel. [REDACTED]



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Deputy Fire Marshal - VanBerkum, Jordan

Date

Approving Official

Date



North Dakota State Fire Marshals Office (ND)
 INCIDENT ORIGIN & CAUSE NARRATIVE
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Agency Incident ID: NDSFM25-070 **BATS ID:** i-1577303
Investigation Title: Strasburg VanBeek Fire

Identify the Need

Call for service (dispatch, request, date, time):

I was contacted at approximately 10:00 am on July 5, 2025, by Deputy State Fire Marshal Doug Pierre that an investigation was being requested by Fire Chief Kevin Gabriel with the Strasburg Fire Department. I contacted Chief Gabriel to talk about the request. During the conversation, we agreed that the investigation would start at 1:00 pm on July 7th, 2025.

North Dakota Century Code 18-01-07 states, “An investigation of each fire must be made by the officers required to report the occurrence of fires under section 18-01-06.”

Define the Problem

Nature of Incident/incident overview:

A fire occurred inside a single-stall detached garage at 505 Main St., Strasburg, ND, 58573, on July 4th, 2025, at approximately 11:05 pm. The homeowner, Greg VanBeek, discovered the fire and called 911. No injuries or fatalities were reported. (See Figure 1.)



Figure 1. Photo of the detached garage.

Authority to Enter/Search:
 I arrived on scene at 1:00 pm on July 7th, 2025, and met with Fire Chief Kevin Gabriel of the Strasburg Fire Protection District.
 The homeowner, Greg Van Beek, was on the scene and signed a consent form to search.
 The scene was released back to Greg Van Beek upon completion of the investigation. I informed Mr. Van Beek that while retrieving items from the home, personal protective equipment (boots, eye protection, and hard-soled footwear) would need to be worn when working in the home.

Assisting Persons/Agencies:		
Name	Agency	Case Reference if Available
Fire Chief Kevin Gabriel	Strasburg Fire Protection District	SO2507040277

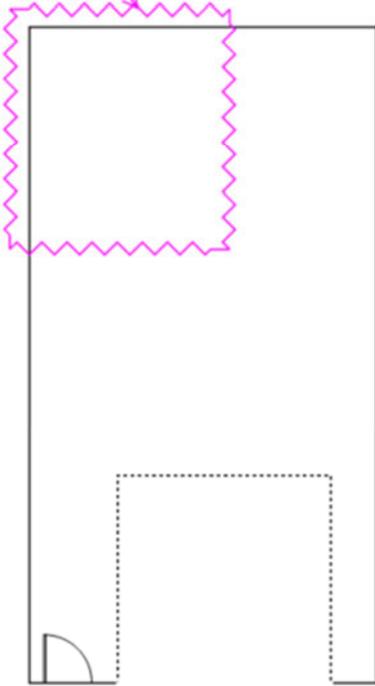
Fatalities/Injuries:		
Name	Fatality/Injury:	Notes/Other Information:
		No injuries or fatalities were reported to the State Fire Marshal's Office as part of the investigation.

Data Collection

Photographs:
 The fire scene was documented with a series of 28 photographs in the condition in which it was when I arrived on scene. The photographs and the photograph log will be maintained with the file.

Drawings/Sketches:

Area of Origin



Case #: NDSFM25-070

Location: 505 Main St. Strasburg, ND 58573

Occupant: Greg and Barb Van Beek

Date of Fire: 7/4/2025

Drawn By: DSFM Jordan VanBerkum

****Not to Scale****





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Exterior Scene Examination:

My exterior scene examination started on the south side of the garage facing north. I observed the roof of the garage that had fallen onto a truck that was in the driveway. Also pictured is the observation of melting of the home's vinyl siding caused by radiant heat from the fire in the garage. (See Figure 2.)



Figure 2. Showing the damage to the garage and the radiant heat damage to the home.

The west side of the garage's wall sustained mass loss. The garage's sheet metal roof can be observed to have fallen down into the garage. Exterior burning can be seen on the east side of the home, along with melting of the home's vinyl siding. Exterior radiant heat damage can be seen on the west side of the neighbor's garage as well.

On the north side of the wall, I observed that a portion of the northeast exterior wall was still standing, but the northwest side was primarily consumed with portions that had collapsed to the ground. The north side of the home sustained thermal heat damage to the home's vinyl siding as well as some charring. I also observed the thermal damage sustained to the exterior of the neighbor's garage. (See Figure 3.)



Figure 3. The north side of the garage shows the damage to the northwest side.

The east side of the garage still had most of its exterior wall standing, and the visible burn patterns show burning from the top of the wall down. The north end of the east wall remained more intact than the south end. (See Figure 4.)



Figure 4. Showing the fire damage sustained to the east side of the garage.

The exterior of the home that was west of the garage sustained thermal damage as well as charring. The windows on the home facing east were gone, and the framing had melted away. The vinyl siding on the north side of the home had been burned away, with more of the vinyl siding still intact on the south side of the home. (See Figure 5.)



Figure 5. Showing the radiant damage sustained to the home next to the garage.

Multiple fireworks were found to the northwest of the garage. (See Figures 6 and 7.)



Figure 6 And 7. The fireworks that were found in the area of the garage.

The home was supplied by natural gas that entered on the north side of the house, and the electricity entered from overhead on the north side as well. No electricity or gas was supplied to the detached garage. (See Figure 8.)



Figure 9. the north side of the home where the electricity comes in.

Interior Scene Examination:

No interior examination was completed for the entire structure due to safety concerns with regard to the stability of the building materials. Exposure to the flames produced heat-induced oxidation on the tin roof, which then collapsed into the interior.(See Figure 10.)



Figure 10. Showing the mass loss to the interior of the garage.

The garage sustained full room involvement. The room and contents within the structure had reached flashover during the fire. Uniformity in fire patterns was observed throughout. The majority of the combustible materials were consumed, and the non-combustible materials sustained oxidation and heat-induced color change. The remaining wood structural members sustained charring from the roof to ground level. Mass consumption occurred in the roof trusses. The area of greater mass consumption and collapse to the structure was in the northwest portion of the garage. (See figure 11.)



Figure 11 The north side of the garage..

A Pickup was parked inside the garage at the time of the fire and sustained a heat-induced color change. The fire department pulled the truck out of the garage during the firefighting process. (See Figure 12.)



Figure 12. Shows the heat-induced color change and oxidation on the pick-up.

Interview #1:	
Name:	Greg Van Beek
Interview Date:	7/7/2025
<p>Notes: The following is a summary of a non-recorded, non-custodial interview with Greg Van Beek, which was conducted at the scene in front of my truck. Greg Van Beek was aware he could stop the interview at any time and did not have to answer any questions.</p> <p>I began my interview with Mr. Van Beek by asking a series of questions about the home's history, followed by the hours leading up to the fire.</p> <p>I asked Mr. Van Beek who lives in the home and he replied that he lives at the residence with his wife Barb Van Beek and they purchased the house in 2015 and that all the bills for the home are up to date, and they have insurance through Northstar Insurance and the only claim that he had made was from a fire that happened the summer of 2024 that involved a combine as he is a farmer in the area. I then asked Mr. Van Beek if he had noticed any electrical issues in the house or garage. He stated that he had not had any in the home and that the garage did not have electricity. I asked Mr. Van Beek if he had any enemies or could think of anyone who would want to set a fire to his property. Mr. Van Beek stated that he does not have any enemies or know of anyone who would have intentionally caused the fire. Mr. Van Beek stated that he used the garage to store an older pickup that he had and also had a mattress bed frame and a few other items stored in the garage.</p> <p>I asked Mr. Van Beek to recount what he and his wife did on the day before the fire.</p> <p>Mr. Van Beek stated that in the morning, between 8:00 am and 11:00 am, he and his wife were helping with the town's July 4th parade and BBQ preparation, with the parade being held from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm and the BBQ to follow from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm.</p> <p>Mr. and Mrs. VanBeek stated that a family member was having a wedding at their shop later that day, so they were preparing for it from approximately 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm, when the wedding was to start. Mr. and Mrs. Van Beek were at the wedding until approximately 10:00 pm, when they returned home to watch and set off some fireworks. Mr. Van Beek stated that while he and some neighbors were lighting off fireworks in the street, he saw a mortar firework enter his garage from the south through the walkthrough door, and a few moments later, smoke was seen coming from it. He went to see what was going on, saw flames inside the garage, and called 911.</p> <p>This concluded my interview with Greg Van Beek.</p>	

Interview #2:	
Name:	Fire Chief Kevin Gabriel
Interview Date:	7/7/2025
<p>Notes: The following is a summary of a non-recorded, non-custodial interview with Fire Chief Kevin Gabriel, which was conducted at the scene in front of my truck. Chief Kevin Gabriel was aware he could stop the interview at any time and did not have to answer any questions.</p> <p>Chief Gabriel stated that he was on main street near the fire area when the 911 call came he stated that he saw some commotion go on with fireworks down the street in the area of the home that had the fire but did not see the firework go into garage itself. Chief Gabriel stated that as they were responding to the fire they were able to see flames extending above the roofline of the home to the east next to the garage.</p> <p>Fire Chief Gabriel stated that upon first arrival, they had a brush truck that was able to immediately start getting water on the fire with a 1 ¾ inch hose line and knock down the flames to prevent the fire from spreading to nearby structures. While firefighters were fighting the fire with the 1 ¾ inch line other fire fighters were setting up the departments pumper truck to also fight the fire. Chief Gabriel stated that after the pumper truck was on scene and set up they were able to get the fire under control and put out.</p> <p>This concludes my interview with Fire Chief Kevin Gabriel.</p>	

Video:

No video was reviewed or collected by the State Fire Marshal's Office.

Weather Reviewed:

The weather information was obtained from www.wunderground.com. The data was reviewed for July 30th, 2024. The closest reporting station was the Minot Intl Airport Station, approximately 15 miles away. The following information was learned.

Time	Temperature	Wind	Wind Speed	Wind Gust	Condition
9:15 pm	73°	Calm	0 mph	0 mph	Light Rain
9:35 pm	73°	SW	3 mph	0 mph	Light Rain
9:55 pm	72°	Calm	0 mph	0 mph	Light Drizzle
10:15 pm	72°	S	5 mph	0 mph	Cloudy
10:55 pm	72°	N	6 mph	0 mph	Mostly Cloudy
11:15 pm	72°	N	5 mph	0 mph	Mist

After reviewing the weather conditions, it was determined that they did not contribute to the fire's ignition or spread.



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Times:		
Hard Time Description	Time	Soft Time Description
	8:00 Am	Began preparing for the July 4 th parade and the BBQ to follow.
	11:00 AM	Watch the July 4 th parade and attend the BBQ until 3:00 pm
	3:00 PM	Went to the shop to set up for the wedding and attend the wedding
	10:00 PM	Returned home from the wedding to watch/light fireworks
	11:05 PM 7/4/25	Fire Discovered
Time of 911 call	11:13 pm 7/4/25	
FD/EMS Dispatch	11:14 PM 7/4/25	
FD arrival	11:20 PM 7/4/25	
FD Cleared the Scene	12:09 AM	
	10:00 AM 7/5/25	Fire investigator contacted
	1:00 PM 7/7/25	Fire Investigator on Scene
	3:11 PM 7/7/25	Fire Investigator cleared the scene

Evidence identified/collected/preserved:
 No evidence was collected or identified by the State Fire Marshal's Office.

Data Analysis, hypothesis development, hypothesis testing, select final hypothesis

Other Forms/Documents/Reports Reviewed:
 State Radio 911 Call Log

- Time of 911 call.
- Dispatch time of the fire department.
- Arrival time of the fire department.
- The time the fire department cleared the scene.

Area of Origin:
 Based on witness statements, fire dynamics, and fire patterns, the area of origin was determined to be on the northwest side of the garage interior.

- Fire Effects

- The west wall of the garage has more damage than the east wall.
- The roof support system sustained mass loss, causing the tin roof to collapse into the garage.
- A heat-induced color change was observed evenly on the whole pickup that was in the garage at the time of the fire.
- The home to the west sustained more thermal damage than the neighbors garage structure that was to the east.
- Charring was observed on the exterior of the home to the west of the garage.
- Fire Dynamics
 - The flame heat caused oxidation on the tin roof of the garage.
 - The garage sustained damage throughout the entire structure.
 - Melting and charring occurred to the home that was located to the west of the garage.
 - A portion of the wall on the east side remained, while the entire wall on the west side was consumed.
- Witness Statements
 - Homeowner Greg Van Beek stated that he saw a firework go into the garage.
 - Fire Chief Kevin Gabriel stated that they observed flames above the roof line of the home to the east while responding.

Cause Hypothesis Development and Testing:

Based on the data collected at the time of the investigation, the area of origin, the following hypotheses were developed and tested:

1. A person or persons unknown entered the structure, utilized an open flame source to ignite ordinary combustible materials such as paper, wood, and cloth materials.
 - Greg and Barb Van Beek were right out front of the garage at the time of the fire.
 - The occupants of the residence reported no enemies.
 - The area of origin had limited access.
 - This hypothesis can be eliminated as the potential cause of the fire.
2. A firework or firework material went off and went into the garage, igniting a mattress stored on the northwest wall.
 - Witnesses stated they saw a firework go into the garage.
 - The garage did not have any electricity going to it.
 - Witnesses stated that shortly after the firework went into the garage, they saw smoke.
 - Multiple used fireworks were found in the area of the garage.
 - No other sources of ignition were found in the area of origin.
 - This hypothesis could not be eliminated as the potential cause of the fire.

Final Hypothesis/Conclusion:

Based on data collected during the investigation, the area of origin was located on the northwest side of the garage interior. Based on the examination of the fire scene, fire patterns, and witness statements, the cause of the fire was determined to be a firework that went into the garage, igniting common combustibles.

This fire was classified as accidental.

The opinions expressed in this conclusion are based on data and evidence collected to this point. The opinions are subject to change based upon relevant, significant, and credible information discovered or provided in the future.

References:

Technical Committee on Fire Investigations. 2023. NFPA 921: Guide For Fire & Explosion Investigations. *2024 Edition*. NFPA. Quincy, MA