For Immediate Release – Sept. 19, 2019

Contact: Matthew Tobia, Deputy Fire Chief
           540-432-7703

Two-Alarm Fire Damages Home in Harrisonburg

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Two adults are safe after an alert ride-hailing car driver spotted a home on fire in the 700 block of Woodland Drive overnight.

At approximately 1:32 a.m., the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communications Center received several calls for a report of a residential structure fire with flames visible. A first-alarm assignment consisting of three engines, one ladder truck and a Battalion Chief were immediately dispatched. Crews arrived on location in under four minutes to find a duplex-style set of residences with heavy fire showing from the roof. A second alarm was struck at 1:43 a.m., bringing a total of 30 firefighters to the scene, with assistance provided by Rockingham County Fire and Rescue and the Harrisonburg Rescue Squad.

Given the severe volume of fire, firefighters initially fought the fire from the exterior and then quickly transitioned to the interior to complete extinguishment. Each home was occupied by one adult, and both were able to escape unharmed having been alerted to the fire by a passing motorist.

"We sincerely applaud the actions of the driver who stopped and warned the residents," Fire Chief Ian Bennett said. "A further delay in awakening the residents could have been disastrous for both."

Investigators will return to the scene this morning to conduct an investigation and work to determine the cause of the fire. Preliminary damage has been set at $200,000 with one home sustaining extensive fire, smoke and water damage. The second attached home suffered minor damage as firefighters fought to keep the fire from extending and may be re-occupied as early as later today. The owner of the home that was damaged was able to stay with neighbors. Both occupants were also able to save their pets, including a total of three dogs. There were no civilian or firefighter injuries.

The Harrisonburg Fire Department reminds all citizens that functioning smoke alarms save lives. Any resident who does not have a functioning smoke alarm can request one through the fire department. Firefighters are available to complete installation and perform safety checks whenever requested. The fire department can be contacted during business hours by calling 540-432-7703, stopping by any fire station, or by social media.

The Harrisonburg Fire Department is an ISO-Class II All-Hazards agency providing essential emergency and non-emergency life safety services to the public who live, work and travel in Harrisonburg. More

information about the Fire Department is available on-line at www.harrisonburgva.gov/fire or on Facebook©, Twitter© and Instagram©.

The City of Harrisonburg *is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.*

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