

Davenport Citizens To Hold Mass Meeting Wednesday Night To Discuss Fire, Water Problems

Problems faced by the Davenport area as a result of the disastrous fire Saturday morning which destroyed a two-story building housing Davenport's largest general store and postoffice will be discussed at a mass meeting of area residents Wednesday night in the dining room of the Ocean View hotel starting at 8 o'clock.

Fire Chief Francis Gregory said the session will be sponsored jointly by the Davenport fire department and the Davenport Improvement club. State, county and city water and fire officials will be invited to attend and to offer suggestions on how to meet the problems involved, Chief Gregory said. He also is mailing a letter concerning the meeting to residents of

the area covered by the fire department.

Adequate water will be one of the most important matters to be discussed. The fire chief said the 20,000-gallon reservoir was pumped dry by the Davenport fire truck in three hours. Fire trucks from neighboring communities had to go to the Portland Cement company plant to obtain water with which to combat the flames, he said.

In this connection, Chief Gregory expressed appreciation to Robert Kinzie, superintendent of the cement company, for the men, equipment and water supplied during the blaze.

Yesterday, two "spot" fires within the destroyed structure flared up and were quelled by firemen. The first was at 7 a.m. and was put out by Chief Gregory. The second was noted at about 3 p.m. Firemen kept a watch over the smoldering blaze all day Saturday and Saturday night.

The Davenport fire truck, which is kept in a garage adjoining the burned building, was placed in a shed of the Davenport Producers Saturday night for safety's sake, the chief said.

A permanent new location for the fire truck also will be discussed Wednesday night.

The building was owned by the Coast Dairies and Land company. T. A. Morelli is operator of the Davenport Cash store which suffered heavy damage. Mrs. Myrtle Garaventa is postmaster at Davenport. Temporary postoffice quarters are in the Ocean View hotel, adjoining the destroyed structure. The hotel, owned by Charles Bella, was slightly scorched about the eaves but firemen credited a favorable wind prevented serious damage to the hotel.

Money orders, stamps and record books of the postoffice were rescued and there was no mail in the building when the flames broke out.

Chief Gregory said he had been informed that rebuilding plans by the Coast Dairies and Land company will not be announced until after fire insurance adjustors have made their survey.

Total loss was estimated at between \$60,000 and \$80,000 although the exact figure will not be known until a survey can be made.

Chief Gregory pointed out that if the Davenport volunteer fire department had not been formed early last year, mutual aid from several neighboring communities would not have been available.

The Davenport firemen were assisted by the Santa Cruz fire department, Felton and Soquel forestry station crews, Live Oak volunteer department, Soquel volunteer department and Portland Cement company men.

Hundreds of motorists parked close to the fire and it was necessary for the highway patrol to direct and control traffic. Several near accidents were reported.

Chief Gregory thanked H. B. Mark, foreman of the P. G. and E. plant at the cement company, for contacting Coast Counties Gas and Electric company crews and for temporarily connecting the fire siren. The line to the department's fire siren was used because it ran from Morelli's