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Crews raze Majestic Hotel

Fire cleanup could take days

DON THOMASON
The Sentinel-Record

Crews began razing the original Majestic Hotel building late Friday, even though the fires had not been completely extinguished.

Deputy City Manager Bill Burrough said the plan late Friday was to start tearing the building down from the rear, since that would put the equipment operators on a higher level so they could bring the walls down with less danger of any of it falling on the equipment.

Completely extinguishing the Majestic Hotel fire, demolishing the building and cleaning up the debris will not be a one-day event, city officials said early Friday.

The oldest portion of the hotel, built in 1882, caught fire around 5:30 p.m. Thursday and was still burning Friday afternoon. The fire, which apparently began in the middle of the fifth floor, is of a "suspicious origin," and will be investigated, City Manager David Watkins said Friday.

Also known as the yellow brick building, the structure was the northernmost section of the three-building Majestic Hotel complex, which closed in 2006 and has been for sale for about a year.

The Arc Arkansas had attempted for several years to renovate the buildings, formerly owned by Southwest

MAJESTIC, PAGE 10A

The Sentinel-Record/Mara Kuhn

VALIANT EFFORT: Hot Springs firefighters made a valiant effort Thursday night to extinguish a fire in the original Majestic Hotel building.

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/Ben Krain

FIRE DAMAGE: Plans were made Friday to raze the original section of the Majestic Hotel, which started to burn Thursday night.

Volunteer departments assist with hotel blaze

JEFF SMITH
The Sentinel-Record

Personnel from the Lake Hamilton, 70 West and Morning Star volunteer fire departments answered the call Thursday night and Friday morning to help the Hot Springs Fire Department battle the blaze at the historic Majestic Hotel.

Doug Davey, deputy chief of the Lake Hamilton Fire and Rescue Department, said they received a call for assistance at 6:30 p.m., about an hour after the fire started in the original portion of the hotel.

"We sent seven people, including myself, along with one fire engine and one ladder truck. We reported to Chief (Ed) Davis, and one of our crews was sent to assist a Hot Springs crew at the back part of the building. The second crew set up our ladder truck on the front side of the building to assist the two Hot Springs ladder trucks," Davey said.

Along with Davey, others responding to the blaze included Wayne Roberts, Roger Lishbrook, Jonathan Lishbrook, Nathan Hen-

DEPARTMENTS, PAGE 10A

The Sentinel-Record/Richard Rasmussen

STILL BURNING: A Hot Springs firefighter tends to a hose on the Cedar Street side of the Majestic Hotel as fires continued to burn in the historic building.

Opening Central Avenue helps businesses

CALEB TAYLOR
The Sentinel-Record

Central Avenue in downtown Hot Springs reopened to traffic Friday morning, 17 hours after the Majestic Hotel began burning on Park Avenue, prompting city officials to block off roads leading to the area for public safety.

The Hot Springs Police Department began allowing northbound vehicular traffic on Central Avenue to travel throughout most of the

BUSINESSES, PAGE 5A

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/Ben Krain

AERIAL VIEW: Firefighters continued Friday to battle the blaze at the historic Majestic Hotel that began Thursday evening.

Firefighters try to attack fire's center

CHELSEA BOOZER
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

After nearly 20 hours of fighting flames that spread through the oldest portion of the historic Majestic Hotel in downtown Hot Springs, crews began tearing down that section of the property Friday in an effort to attack the center of the fire that was thought to have retreated into the structure's belly.

By 1 p.m. Friday, firefighters had halted their continuous spray of the building because the flames were no longer visible from the roof or windows. Before that, Hot Springs Fire Chief Edward Davis said workers were pouring 500,000

FIRE, PAGE 9A

8 32116 00050 2

Weather

PARTLY SUNNY. HIGHS IN THE LOW 60S. LOWS IN THE HIGH 40S.

SUNRISE: 6:42 A.M.
SUNSET: 6:07 P.M.

MORE ON PAGE 2A

SUNDAY: HIGH 51° LOW 24°

MONDAY: HIGH 36° LOW 24°

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