

Fire at Frito Lay delays corn delivery

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 28 January 2010 00:37 - Last Updated Thursday, 28 January 2010 13:30

Dryer blaze damages about 2,500 bushels.

Fire ruined about 2,500 bushels of white corn at Frito-Lay the morning of Jan. 20, according to Gothenburg fire chief Mark Ballmer.

Ballmer didn't have an estimate on equipment and corn damage.

No one was injured.

Gothenburg volunteer fire fighters worked at putting out the fire and cleaning up for about 4 1/2 hours, Ballmer said.

The fire chief said the fire started in a grain dryer in the middle dryer at the facility on south Cottonwood Drive.

Ballmer said overheated corn, caused by a problem with grain-drying equipment, started the fire.

Fire fighters were challenged by the height of the elevators in getting to the fire, Ballmer said, just like they were when fighting an elevator fire at All Points Cooperative in November of 2008.

They were also tested by fog and by freezing rain from the night before, he said.

"All the ladders and platforms were extremely dangerous to walk on and climb," Ballmer said.

Fire at Frito Lay delays corn delivery

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 28 January 2010 00:37 - Last Updated Thursday, 28 January 2010 13:30

The plant was temporarily closed for part of the day.

Facility manager Scott Bartels could not comment on the fire but Aurora Gonzalez, public relations director for Frito-Lay North America, issued a statement.

Gonzalez said employees discovered the fire in one of the corn driers.

The building was evacuated and the fire department called. Police records show the call at 7:10 a.m.

“A limited amount of corn was impacted as a result of the fire,” Gonzalez said.

Between existing inventories and corn provided by another facility, she said production of the company’s corn-based snacks continues without interruption.

“We are working with the corn drier manufacturer to understand the cause of the fire and anticipate being able to start receiving corn at the Gothenburg facility in the next two weeks,” Gonzalez said.

ebarrett@gothenburgtimes.com 308-537-3636