

Classifieds | Jobs | Cars | Homes | Place an Ad

53° / 29° F
Clear

Advertise | Special Section | Contact Us | Search

From the Journal



Subscribe Now
Customer Service
Store Coupons
Newspaper Ads



Search **Go!**

Online partner of the **WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL** February 23, 2007

- Home
- News
- Ask SAM
- Business
- Entertainment
- Health
- Hurricane Center
- Living
- Local News

Local News

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

Oracle workers had just minutes to escape fire

Subsequent explosion blew a 40-foot wide hole in roof of plant

By Patrick Wilson
JOURNAL REPORTER

>> advertisement <<

Workers' quick actions during a fire and explosion at a packaging plant on Monday saved their lives, the fire marshal said yesterday.

"It was a true miracle that nobody was injured," said Robert Owens, Winston-Salem's fire marshal. "The folks there took the original fire seriously and they evacuated, and that was what helped not have any fatalities, really. This was a massive explosion."

The workers had just minutes to get out of the section of the Oracle Metals Operations plant that caught fire at 9:11 a.m.

The first Winston-Salem firefighters arrived at 9:14. Before they got there, the fire had spread to another room and caused an explosion that caused the

Ads by Yahoo!

[Focus On Foreclosure in Raleigh Area](#)

www.myeducationnetwork.com

>> web tools <<

[Print Story](#) | [Email Story](#) | [News Tip?](#)

TODAY'S TOP STORIES

Today's Top Stories, by section, on [JournalNow.com](#)

Blogs
 Calendars
 Celebrations
 Houses of Worship
 Obituaries
 Milestones/Volunteer
 Journal in Education
 Personals
Marketplace
 CarSeeker
 HomeSeeker
 CareerSeeker
 ApartmentSeeker
 Coupons
 Special Sections
 Search Classifieds
 Newspaper Ads
JournalNow & You
 Place a Classified Ad
 Place Other Ads
 Buy a Photo
 Contact Us
 Corrections
 E-Mail Update
 Games
 Join Our Panel
 Search Our Site
 Search Our Archives
 Site Map
 Web Feeds
 Subscribe to Paper
 Town Hall

roof to collapse.

The explosion left a hole in the roof about 40 feet in diameter.

Sixty employees were working in the plant when the fire started, the company said.

The fire marshal's office has not determined the cause of the explosion but has determined it to be accidental.

The plant is at 1300 Cunningham Ave., off Vargrave Street. About 25 percent of the building was damaged, Owens said.

The fire started at a milling machine, where workers were making aluminum foil that the company sells to pharmaceutical, health-care and food companies.

The material is fed through the machine to be pressed. Workers use oil to keep the material cool. The oil ignited, starting the fire, Owens said.

A fire-suppression system on the machine put it out, but not before it had spread into an overhead duct system, he said.

The fire then spread into a room where the aluminum foil is bailed for recycling, where the explosion occurred.

Fire investigators say that they have an idea of what caused the explosion.

"It was all accidental," Owens said. "However, we are trying to rule out a couple more things before we actually make the call on what triggered that explosion."

The fire department is still working with the company to put a dollar figure on the amount of damage, Owens said.

Oracle Packaging also has a plant on Polo Road in Winston-Salem and has plants in Wilmington and other states.

The roughly 150 employees at the Cunningham Avenue plant are getting paid time off while the company figures out repairs said Chris Payne, the director of sales and marketing for Oracle Packaging.

Front Page ([more local news](#))

• [Officer in critical condition after shooting outside bar](#)

Local News ([more local news](#))

• [County signs on for ballpark](#)

Sports ([more sports](#))

• [McMichael's Bullins goes for fourth crown](#)

Living ([more living](#))

• [Getting Framed: Knowledge and a dose of self-confidence will prepare you to see, and to be seen](#)

Business ([more business](#))

• [New Job Skill: Triad's first bilingual job fair reflects increase in Hispanics](#)

Recent News Updates from JournalNow.com

• **SLIDESHOW:** [Inside the Manning Mill with Marshall Manning](#)

• **MULTIMEDIA:** [Federal education law needs more work, officials told](#)

• **News With Local Reactions**

• **More Local News Updates**

Like this article?

- [See who is linking to it](#)
- [See who is bookmarking it](#)
- [Post this to del.icio.us](#)
- [Add to Yahoo!](#)

SIGN UP FOR YOUR
FREE COPD GUIDE.
CLICK HERE ►

Get your
FREE
Experts'
Guide to
Better
Breathing.



SIGN UP FOR YOUR
FREE COPD GUIDE.
CLICK HERE ►

Assessments of the building and interviews with employees will continue through this week, he said.

The company issued a statement Monday thanking the fire department and its own fire brigade for containing the fire.

"It's been a very difficult situation," Payne said yesterday.

"We're extremely pleased that nobody was injured, and we're proud of our fire brigade - our internal fire brigade - and all of our employees in adhering to safety policies and doing the right thing."

- Patrick Wilson can be reached at 727-7286 or at pwilson@wsjournal.com.

[Subscribe to the Newspaper](#)

SIGN UP FOR YOUR FREE COPD GUIDE. [CLICK HERE ►](#)

Get your FREE Experts' Guide to Better Breathing.



SIGN UP FOR YOUR FREE COPD GUIDE. [CLICK HERE ►](#)

[BACK TO TOP](#)

News: [Ask SAM](#) | [Business](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Living](#) | [Local](#) | [Multimedia](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Special Reports](#) | [Sports](#) | [Weather](#) | [AP](#)
Classifieds: [Search All Ads](#) | [CarSeeker](#) | [CareerSeeker](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Place an Ad](#)
Community: [Calendars](#) | [Celebrations](#) | [Personals](#) | [Obituaries](#)
JournalNow: [Contact Us](#) | [Corrections](#) | [E-mail](#) | [Panel](#) | [Search](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Town Hall](#)

NOTICE: Use of this Web site is subject to certain Terms and Conditions.
We may collect personal information on this site, as described in our Privacy Policy.
© 2007 Winston-Salem Journal. The Winston-Salem Journal is a Media General newspaper.