



Duncan Brown/The Courier

Jim Jerasa stands in front of his Lockridge home that burned down Tuesday morning. Jerasa's grandson Dalton Price, 6, was credited with getting his brother Zac, 5, and his grandmother Dixie Jerasa out of the house and running over to a neighbor's to call 911.

First-grader saves family as fire engulfs Lockridge home

By DUNCAN H. BROWN
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LOCKRIDGE — An early-morning fire destroyed a Lockridge home Tuesday, but thanks to the quick thinking of 6-year-old Dalton Price, no one was injured.

Dalton Price, a first-grader at Washington Elementary School, is credited with getting his grandmother, Dixie Jerasa, and his brother, Zac Price, 5, safely out of the house and then running over to a neighbor's to call 911.

"Dalton's our little hero," said his grandfather, Jim Jerasa. Jerasa was at his night-shift job at Mackay Envelope in Mount Pleasant when the fire occurred. A neighbor called Jerasa at the office at 8 a.m. and told him his house had burned down.

Dalton's first-grade teacher Shawna Dickey said, "He's just such a good boy. I'm so glad he got everybody out. Every year

we do a unit on fire safety. We constantly talk about it. I quote my husband's (Packwood volunteer firefighter Adrian Dickey) fire safety tips. I send a book home on fire safety, and talk about drawing up a fire escape plan for your house."

The family is moving temporarily to the Super 8 motel in Fairfield. The Red Cross has provided them with vouchers for clothing and other necessities.

Jerasa credits his grandson's quick thinking to his schooling.

"They had a session on fire safety in school, and I guess it paid off," he said.

The Lockridge and Fairfield fire departments got the 911 emergency call at 5:56 a.m. and were on the scene by 6:02. Lockridge sent a pumper and a tanker and six to seven firemen to fight the blaze, and Fairfield sent two trucks and six firemen.

"By the time we arrived at 6:06, half the trailer was fully engulfed and the fire was com-

ing through the roof," Jeff Koontz of the Fairfield Fire Department said.

Fairfield firemen had already been out all night fighting brush fires. There is currently a ban on open fires in Jefferson County due to the dry conditions.

Fairfield firefighters left the scene at 7:40, while Lockridge firefighters finished at 8:30.

Lockridge Fire Chief John Stutzman was reportedly looking at a ventilation fan in the bathroom as a possible cause of the blaze and also considering whether to ask for help from the State Fire Marshal.

The trailer is a total loss. Insurance Adjuster Coleen Rolfs from Shelter Insurance in Burlington was on-site to evaluate the house before noon.

"It will probably cost every bit of \$30,000 to replace it," she said.

Jerasa purchased the trailer new in 2000 for \$32,000, and had just added a new deck in front last summer.