

Grassland Oregon

Blog

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Overcoming Tragedy

The Fire at Grassland Oregon

By Jerry Hall

As many of you may know, this past weekend, our office caught on fire.

On Sunday my wife, daughter and myself decided to take my nephew Jason, who is headed off to college, out to dinner. Shortly after placing my order I received a text from Colin Scott, our field representative, that our neighbors had called him and said our office was on fire.

Leaving the family behind, I took off for the office.

Our office sits a quarter mile off the road, so I parked in the ditch and started running up the drive. About 2/3 of the way I ran out of gas and paused to take this photo, didn't look so bad. A five-inch fire hose ran up the length of the driveway.



As I approached, I was stopped by a fireman and directed to the Captain. At this point I thought things still looked pretty good.

The Captain stated that the fire was contained and they were knocking down the remaining hot spots. At this time, I saw a blast of water coming up thru the office roof. That's not good I thought. I asked the Captain, "so how is it inside?"

"Not good," he replied. "When we approached the structure, it was too hot, so we had to cool it down before we entered. We fought it from the front door. We estimate that the temperature inside was greater than 600 degrees Fahrenheit."

The temperature was so hot that it blew the skylights off the building.



It was at this time I knew we had a problem. After a couple of hours, they had it cooled down enough so that I could approach the building and peek in through the windows. Definitely not good.



The next morning, I was allowed to enter with the Marion County Fire Investigator. It got worse.



I remember a long time ago that I read a book where Andy Grove, the founder of computer giant Intel, stated, “Only the paranoid survive.”

From that day forward that concept was ingrained in my business philosophy.

We had contracted with a local computer IT support company, Compex, Inc., to provide us support. They would back up our server nightly and the critical files more frequently than that. At times I have complained about the cost but let me tell you, in hindsight it was money well spent.

Monday morning I broke the news to them, “Guys I hate to do this to you but I want to be back up and running in 24 hours”. This being our busiest time of year we cannot afford down time.

By Tuesday they had delivered a computer to Phill Lindgren, our logistics manager, at his home nearly 30 miles away from our office, and had him connected with a back-up server and fully operational. So in just 24 hours our shipping was back up to speed. Pretty damn good. The folks at Compex, Inc. have my undying gratitude.

We have spent a lot of time the last couple of days looking at office space and have identified a property that we can call home for the next year as we rebuild.

There is a lot of work ahead of us and our goal is to make it so that our customers experience no disruption. Your business is our number one priority.

We appreciate all of the support and kind words that we have received. There is no doubt in my mind that we will emerge as a stronger and better company. I am already thinking about the opportunities.

If you don't have off-site backup, get on it. It is critical to your business. If you are in the Willamette Valley I highly recommend Compex, Inc., they have been fantastic and came up huge in getting us back on our feet.