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TOP STORY

Downtown landmark arose on site of previous fire

ROBIN McCLELLAND Globe Gazette

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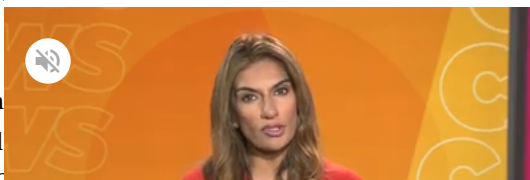
The Kirk Apartment building at 206 N. Federal Ave. smolders in the early morning light Tuesday. Residents evacuated safely, but are left without a home. The building is a total loss, according to Mayor Bill Schickel. ROBIN McCLELLAND, Globe Gazette

ROBIN McCLELLAND Globe Gazette

The Kirk Apartments building has stood at 206 N. Federal Ave. since 1902. Its copper-clad windows and sturdy brick were a backdrop to countless North Iowa Band Festivals, senior portraits and evening walks. Today, the building is a shell as it sputter from the charred remains.

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The Kirk is actually the second apartment block to stand at the corner of Northeast and North Federal Avenue. In 1892, the three-story Kirkland Flats was destroyed by fire in 1902. According to a Globe Gazette article, in 1902, the Kirk was reconstructed as the Kirkland Flats.



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Early Tuesday morning, tenants stood in the early morning sun grieving the loss of their possessions, pets and homes.

The Salvation Army of Mason City has stepped forward with shelter, bus passes, gas vouchers and other items displaced residents will need. The Red Cross also is stationed at the Salvation Army at 747 Village Green Drive.

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Monetary donations are the best way to help those affected by the disaster. Donations of personal hygiene items also are needed. Officials advise those donating to do so in person to ensure donations get to fire victims.

On Tuesday, GoFundMe accounts were created for several of the Kirk's displaced residents, according to Nathalie Granda, GoFundMe communications associate.

Kylie & Jake Fire Relief was set up by Alexia Schulte for her friend, Kylie Fink, after she and her boyfriend lost everything in the blaze. "They were just about to move and had their entire lives packed into cardboard boxes and it's all gone," the fundraiser reads.

The Cheryl Massey Fire Help Fund was created to help Cheryl Massey, who lost her belongings and her beloved cat, Gary, in the fire. Massey didn't have renters insurance. "Getting some money to help her have options when she needs them and be ready to find a new place and get it right away will mean a lot to feel like she can begin to get her life back again," the fundraiser organizer shared.

Kira's fire recovery fund was set up by Nathan Meyer, whose daughter, Kira, was one of the tenants who lost everything. While her cats escaped, Kira needs help replacing her belongings and finding a new place to live.

On Tuesday morning, the Mason City High School Student Senate was at work organizing a student fundraising drive for a paraprofessional who was displaced by the fire and is staying with relatives. The individual could not be independently identified by the Globe Gazette.

City officials are concerned for the safety of community members whose interest in seeing the ruined building may outweigh common sense. Officials ask onlookers to move back and give staff room to operate downtown. RELATED NEWS: - New Helmet Uses 5G for the Deaf and Hard ... X

Mayor Bill Schickel said he feels the loss of the historic building into

"The building is a total loss, but thank God all were evacuated safely
A huge thank you for the heroic work of our firefighters and police c
Tuesday. "They have been working overnight and are still working t

Thank you also for the assistance from neighboring fire departments. A concern now is the possibility of walls collapsing and causing surrounding damage. That's why adjacent streets will remain closed until the area is secure. The focus right now is on making sure everyone has a place to stay, cleanup and safety."

There still is debris, water and equipment on site.

Andrew Balduf, head chef at the Suzie Q, a local diner next door to the Kirk, said there was little water damage to that historic building, and he anticipates the cleanup will be minimal. He is waiting for the area to be declared safe.

"I just went in there and it looks pretty good," Balduf said of the Suzie Q. "Firefighters are worried about Kirk's west wall collapsing, so I don't know when that will be resolved."



PHOTOS: Kirk Apartments in Mason City destroyed by huge fire

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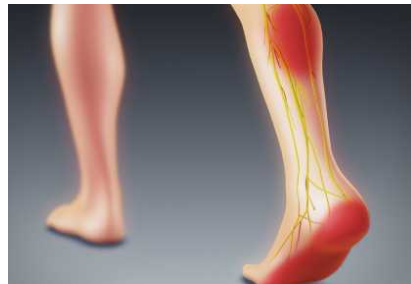


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