

Company says weather conditions spurred blaze

■ **Misjudgment of the wind may have contributed to fire at Embassy Suites.**

BY JAKE BLEED
Senior staff writer

Workers on the roof of the Embassy Suites Hotel may have misjudged how powerful winds would affect a heated asphalt kettle, causing Thursday's fire, Boone Brother's Roofing President Allan Boone said Tuesday.

"We probably misjudged the wind a little bit," Boone said.

The Omaha-based roofing company was contracted to work on the roof of the hotel, 10th and P streets, by Killian Construction, a company in charge of building the hotel.

Ron Barrett, construction manager for Killian Construction, refused to comment on any aspect of the fire.

Boone said the asphalt in the kettle became starved for oxygen while melting in the heated steel container. Workers then poured the melted asphalt into buckets from the kettle to spread across the building's roof but, Boone said, when one bucket was being filled, oxygen-rich wind blowing across the roof caused the asphalt to ignite.

Boone said the asphalt "flashed" when struck by the wind and that such an effect was a regular hazard.

"It's not uncommon," Boone said. "It's just this time it got away from us."

Boone said workers were unable to cover the burning bucket and extinguish the fire before it spread to the still-hot asphalt covering the hotel's roof.

Winds then pushed the flames across much of the roof, Lincoln Fire Inspector Bill Moody said.

Monitoring the asphalt's temperature to avoid flashes was difficult

because flash points varied in different conditions, Boone said.

"The circumstances were too many things happening at once," Boone said.

The Boone Brothers will continue to work on the construction of the hotel and did not fire any employee as a result of the fire, Boone said.

The Lincoln Fire Department was able to extinguish the fire before it caused extensive structural damage to the hotel, Moody said.

"There basically was nothing combustible underneath," Moody said, adding that some water damage has been found in the hotel's lower levels.

The Embassy Suites is owned by John Q. Hammons, of Springfield, Mo. Representatives from the company could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Neither Moody nor Boone could estimate the damage caused by the fire.

Joint effort brought Green

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"Personally I've watched his show a couple times," Linder said. "In no way did I think he would sexually harass anyone."

But Adam Vehe, a UNL sophomore, disagreed.

"I think it was made pretty clear it was made for mature audiences," Vehe said. "Based on his TV show, you knew what to expect."

During the performance, Green looked like he was touching the Scarlet dancers' butts and coerced Rick Schwiager, HuskerVision production specialist, to lay down while Green - inside the Lil' Red suit - laid on top of him and made sexual noises and motions. Green also led the crowd in chanting, "Rick's an ass."

"I didn't think for college students it was inappropriate," said Alissa Axford, a UNL freshman. "But for the younger kids and older adults - they wouldn't understand the humor of it."

David Woll, vice president of sales and marketing for Pepsi bottling company of Lincoln, said Pepsi was contacted by the Athletic Department concerning Green's appearance at the pep rally.

"We made a contact on the Athletic Department's behalf to see if Green makes appearances," Woll said. "It wasn't our decision or our advice to have Tom Green appear."

No one contacted could comment as to where the money came from to pay for Green's appearance or if a contract was involved in the event.

"Nothing under our contract with the university was involved in his performance."

STEVE FORD

general manager of Pepsi bottling company of Lincoln

Swanson said the Athletic Department didn't pay for Green and said he was not at liberty to discuss a contract.

Woll said Green was not paid by Pepsi and added that Green does not represent the company.

"Nothing under our contract with the university was involved in his performance," said Steve Ford, general manager of Pepsi bottling company of Lincoln.

Woll did recognize the Athletic Department's efforts.

"I think that the Athletic Department was trying to do something nice for the student body. It's unfortunate that Tom went the direction he did," Woll said.

Both ASUN and the Athletic Department have responded to complaints made by faculty, staff and students.

NU Athletic Director Bill Byrne and Linder sent a campuswide e-mail Friday concerning Thursday's events.

The e-mail said the planners of the event advertised it as a show directed toward a mature collegiate audience. "We did not anticipate a performance of this nature."

Academic Senate President Gail Latta sent out a second campuswide e-mail regarding Green's appearance Tuesday morning.

Latta said she was offended by Green's antics concerning the Scarlet dancers and said he violated the university policy on sexual harassment.

"In the interest of restoring the dignity, equality and respect of those exploited by this event, I encourage others to work with me to provide appropriate follow-up, consultation and education," Latta said in the e-mail.

An edited version of Latta's statements appeared in the Daily Nebraskan Letters on Monday. The full text of the message also appeared Monday on the Daily Nebraskan Web site at www.dailyneb.com.

Byrne and Athletic Marketing Director Heidi Cuca were unavailable for comment Tuesday. Green's press secretary was also unavailable for comment.

Linder said although the show offended some, it didn't offend all.

"If there are some students that don't think (the show was) a problem, then great," Linder said. "(But) an apology doesn't hurt anyone."

Event examines population concerns

POPULATION from page 1

Aryls Reitan, the founder of the Wachiska Audubon Society, each human's actions affect everyone.

"No matter where one lives, the activities of all humans will ultimately determine the well being of everyone, each of us, as well as all other

living things," said Reitan.

Every 20 minutes the world adds another 3,500 humans but loses one or more entire species of animal or plant life, Reitan said.

Reitan is concerned that even though Nebraska's growth rate is less than 1 percent a year, there are still issues to solve.

An example she used was that unplanned growth in Lincoln and Omaha is causing the degradation of parks, wetlands and wooded areas.

Reitan suggested that the United States find a way to balance the needs of its growing population with the necessity of conserving the Earth's resources.

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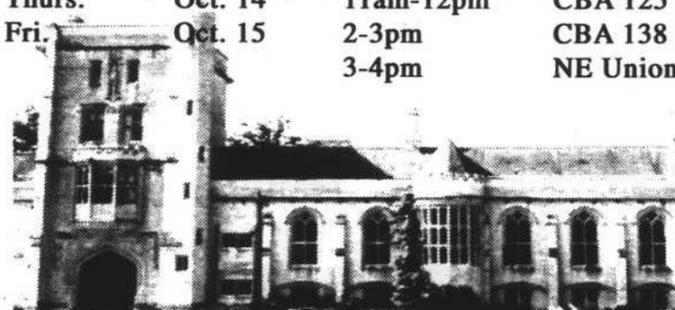
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