



## Johnson County Fire Protection District

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### NEWS RELEASE – Tuesday, January 27, 2026

#### Man's Best Friend Credited with Saving Life in Late-Night House Fire

WARRENSBURG, MO – One person was injured following a house fire late Monday night southeast of Warrensburg.

The Johnson County Fire Protection District was dispatched to a reported house fire in the 100 block of SE 685 Road shortly after 9:45 PM on January 26, 2026. Upon arrival, firefighters encountered heavy smoke and fire conditions in a single-family residence. The resident had already exited the home prior to crews arriving.

Initial investigation indicates the fire originated in the basement near a pellet stove and spread into the attic before extending throughout the structure. Firefighting operations were impacted by narrow, ice-covered roadways and extremely cold temperatures, which slowed response and suppression efforts. Fire crews from three JCFPD stations worked for approximately an hour and a half to bring the fire under control and remained on scene for nearly six hours to complete overhaul and ensure the fire was fully extinguished.

The 66-year-old resident was transported by ambulance to an area hospital for treatment of injuries related to smoke inhalation. No firefighters were injured during the incident. The Johnson County Volunteer Fire Auxiliary also assisted at the scene.

The resident reported that he was alerted to the fire by his dog, Red, who woke him as smoke began filling the home. The resident credits Red with saving his life by providing the early warning that allowed him to escape.

Because the resident was transported to the hospital, Fire District Lieutenant Tim Caudill took Red home for the night to ensure he was cared for. A fitting example of "man's best friend," a phrase first coined in Warrensburg, Red was evaluated at Lifetime Animal Clinic, where no apparent effects from smoke inhalation were found. He was then taken to Dog Days Daycare for a bath and care before returning with Lt. Caudill, who will continue looking after Red until the resident is released from the hospital.

"This call could have had a very different outcome," said Fire District Captain Joe Jennings. "The resident's quick evacuation, prompted by his dog, made all the difference. It's a reminder of how important early warning can be in any fire situation."

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For more information contact:

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