

# Christmas lights sparked deadly Fountain fire

A Fountain man trying to escape a fire in his home Monday morning was just three feet from the door when the ceiling collapsed and trapped him inside.

Joe Nauta, 45, died in the fire at 512 Windsor Lane. The Fountain Fire Department said the fire at Crest Mobile Estates that killed Nauta and burned four mobile homes was started by an outlet overloaded with Christmas lights.

According to Fountain firefighters, Nauta's wife, Janey Nauta smelled smoke about 2 a.m. and woke her family and they all ran outside to a fenced area behind their home. Nauta ran back in when he realized the key to the fence gate was inside.

Janey Nauta lifted her 5-year-old son and 10-year-old daughter over the fence and then jumped the fence herself. When she realized her husband was still inside, she broke a window to help him escape but he never made it out.

The blaze was so intense that firefighters couldn't get inside the home to search for Nauta. When the flames were under control, they found his body inside. No one else was injured, according to firefighters.

The blaze gutted the Nauta home, burned three other homes and destroyed two vehicles.

The Nauta family, which has a temporary home to stay in, lost everything in the fire and does not have insurance, according to the fire department.

A second family, with two adults and two children, was also displaced by the fire. That family was assisted by the Red Cross Monday night.

The fire department is accepting donations of anything to help the families including food, money, clothing and appliances. Donations can be dropped off at any Fountain fire station.

Gazette reporter Ryan Maye Handy contributed to this story.

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