

# CITY OF RACINE FIRE DEPARTMENT

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## Press Release

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**DATE: 03/28/2014**

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**After approximately one month of investigating the Mitchell School fire, the City of Racine Fire Department is releasing the following information.**

**The fire was discovered shortly after 01:30, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 when police officers responded to a reported intrusion alarm. Police officers noticed smoke and summoned the fire department.**

**Because of the extreme cold conditions and the amount of ice on the debris pile it took over a week to begin to physically dismantle and examine the debris.**

**It was discovered that the origin of the fire was in the space between the ceiling and the roof. The fire ignited a wooden safety cage that housed the heat exchange unit that provided warmth to the gym. The safety cage was constructed of heavy lumber. The fire from this safety cage created high temperatures that caused the steel trusses that support the roof to fail. The trusses failed initially at the east end of the gym and traveled west until all of the trusses had fallen. There was no evidence found to indicate that this was an intentionally set fire.**

This fire is classified as an accidental fire.

The area of origin was above the ceiling in the gymnasium and below the roof, at the east end.

The cause of the fire is undetermined.

An electrical cause cannot be ruled out.

If any new evidence becomes available it will be evaluated, considered, tested and reviewed.

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