



# CITY OF KENNER

## PRESS RELEASE

**MICHAEL S. YENNI**  
Mayor

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### ***KENNER FIRE DEPARTMENT HANDLES HILTON HOTEL FIRE, HOUSE FIRE THURSDAY NIGHT***

An apparent electrical fire temporarily knocked out the power to the Airport Hilton for about 90 minutes Thursday night, according to Kenner Fire Chief John Hellmers.

Guests were temporarily relocated to the lobby of the hotel, which never lost air-conditioning during the incident, Hellmers said. Firefighters were on the scene within seven minutes – two trucks, a district chief, assistant chief and seven firefighters - and the quick response minimized the inconvenience for guests of the hotel.

Kenner Mayor Michael Yenni, who was at the scene of the Hilton electrical fire, said he was impressed with the fast response and hard work of the men and women of the Kenner Fire Department.

“That’s one of our largest hotels, so I definitely had some concern about the guests and whether this might become a more significant issue,” Yenni said. “I was very proud of the way the members of the Fire Department handled the situation.”

Airport Hilton General Manager Tom Mamalis agreed, saying the response by the Fire Department was exceptional.

Mamalis also praised his employees for utilizing their training to handle the emergency expertly. The fire was located in a utility room on the first floor where much of the hotel’s electrical services are located. Smoke quickly spread throughout the first floor and hotel officials quickly evacuated guests from their rooms, Hellmers said.

Guests were offered lodging elsewhere, but none left, Mamalis said. The kitchen staff prepared sandwiches and dessert for customers to enjoy during the temporary blackout.

Firefighters put out the fire and de-energized the affected panels, Hellmers said. The hotel quickly got an electrician to the scene to isolate the affected circuit. As a precaution, a fire

watch was put in place – meaning a detailed firefighter paid for by the hotel remained at the scene to ensure no flare-ups occurred.

At nearly the same time, the department also received a call of a house fire at 504 Taylor Street in south Kenner. The first truck was on scene in five minutes and reported flames shooting out of the front of the home and into the street, Hellmers said. The fire was under control at 8:02 p.m., a little more than a half-hour after firefighters were dispatched. Three trucks with nine firefighters, two district chiefs, and an assistant chief responded to that call.

The cause of the Taylor Street fire apparently was connected to a problem with the electrical panel. A resident told firefighters the panel had been arcing and was doused with water, Hellmers said. A woman and her two grown sons evacuated safely, but the home was heavily damaged, he said.

Two working fires at the same time is fairly unusual for Kenner, but Hellmers said firefighters were up to the task.

“We were stretched pretty thin but we were able to handle both,” he said.

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