

# First the wind, then the fire

## Debris chopped up into wood chips smolders for two days in old landfill

By Steve Kemme • [skemme@enquirer.com](mailto:skemme@enquirer.com) • January 3, 2009

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Firefighters worked for hours Friday to put out a smoldering fire in a 30-foot-high wood-chip pile in the village's former landfill on North Troy Avenue, west of the Carruthers Pond subdivision.



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**A track hoe helps fight a fire in a pile of debris left from the Sept. 14 windstorm that spontaneously combusted Friday in Glendale.**

A caller notified the Glendale Fire Department on Thursday morning that dense smoke was pouring out of the mammoth pile of wood chips generated by the debris caused by the severe Sept. 14 windstorm.

For more than eight hours Thursday, Glendale and Woodlawn firefighters doused the pile, which was 100 feet long and 50 feet wide. But the fire continued smoldering. The fire was extinguished by about 11 p.m.

On Friday, Glendale rented a large tractor hoe to tear apart the wood pile to expose the sources of the fire. Friday night, the fire was still burning.

"The track hoe pretty much opened up everything and moved it around so we could get to the hot spots," Glendale Assistant Fire Chief Kevin Hardwick said.

The smoky blaze was far enough away from any buildings that it was never a safety threat to residents, he said.

The primary impact on residents would be the odor of the smoke in the area, he said.

Hardwick attributed the fire to spontaneous combustion.

Heat from the decomposition of wood chips built up to the point that it sparked a fire deep inside the debris, he said.

The village had hauled the wood chips from the storm debris to the former landfill for residents to take away and use, Glendale Administrator Walter Cordes said.

Because the former landfill is so far from any fire hydrants, firefighters had to extend a fire hose through woods, over a creek and to a hydrant on Carruthers Pond Drive.

"In my 21 years here," Cordes said, "I've never seen anything like this happen."



The Enquirer/Malinda Hartong  
**A huge pile of windstorm debris has been smoldering for two days in Glendale.**