

HOVEN – Members of the Hoven community gathered outside of the burned wreckage of their school at 335 S.



Main St. this morning and into the early afternoon.

Even as the embers were still smoking, Gloria Duenwald, 15433 316th Ave., held strong with those around her.

"The scene is very sad, watching all those memories going up in smoke," said Duenwald, who reported that her husband and eight children graduated from Hoven High School. "Hoven has a reputation for not giving up

easily. Any thought of not continuing Hoven High School? Not a chance."

It is a question being asked by those still in high school. One group of students was camping nearby when news of the fire reached the campsite.

"It's just kind of unbelievable," Hoven freshman Callie Kaiser said.

"All the little things in there that aren't replaceable, like composite pictures and all those pictures from the past," senior Abby Simon said.

The girls expressed worry about how the school would be replaced in the fall, whether they would be split between nearby Bowdle and Gettysburg or if another location in Hoven would be utilized.

Up in smoke

Smoke was still billowing out of Linda Coyne's classroom late this morning after the overnight blaze that was reported at about 1 a.m.

"It is not giving up," Coyne said of the embers that smoldered within the burned-out frame of Hoven's combined high school and junior high school at 335 S. Main St.

"You never, ever dream of something like this. And to think that you had just been in there a day or two earlier," said Coyne, who has taught at the school for 37 years and was a 1968 graduate of Hoven High School.

Seniors celebrated graduation a week ago on May 18. School was out on Wednesday for students. Meanwhile, teachers had packed their things by Friday, but many leave items in their classrooms over the summer.

"Your posters and your textbooks and all of that is pretty much gone," said Coyne, who met her husband, Michael, at Hoven High School. He began as a music teacher in 1966, when she was still in school. They began dating when she returned to teach in 1976.

Norm Stethem, a retired teacher, waited until about 8:30 this morning to check out the firefighting activities.

"There was still plenty of activity," said Stethem, who taught at the school for more than 30 years. "They were watering down the roof. It looks pretty sad. All the windows are out. It is pretty much history."

Bob Keller, another Hoven school teacher, says he slept through the first five hours of efforts to battle a fire at the school on Main Street, although he lives five blocks away at 645 Day St. He even slept with his window open.

However, Keller joined many community members this morning to watch firefighters work.

"It is a mess. It looks ugly. There is still a lot of smoke out there. Everything of wood construction is gone," said Keller, pointing out that the loss of the school will be devastating to the small community.

Keller said he saw Hoven School District Superintendent Peggy Petersen sitting in the street with a group of teachers watching the firefighters. He reported multiple fire trucks had responded to the call, including Hoven, Gettysburg and Roscoe.

"It was a whole effort by the entire community," said Keller, of the many fire departments that battled the early morning blaze.

No other structure was endangered by the incident, Keller said.

Among those who had a history with the school building was Irene Arbach, of Rapid City, who visited her husband's grave today with her daughters, Kathy Klaemann and Susie Arbach Peters. Arbach graduated in 1942 – the second class to do so from the now-destroyed building.

"They had the pictures of everyone that graduated there," Arbach said.

One thing saved from the blaze: an old scoreboard from the school's gymnasium.

Arbach's daughter, Klaemann, graduated in 1970, and Peters graduated in 1976 from the school. The family had walked by the school at about 10 p.m. Saturday.

"It's kinda devastating," Klaemann said. "They had just consolidated sports-wise with Gettysburg."

"The first class was '41, and you turn it around and it's '14," Arbach said.

The fire is under investigation. Aberdeen news reporter Katherine Grandstrand is in Hoven and will bring updates throughout the day at AberdeenNews.com.

[See story at Aberdeennews.com](http://Aberdeennews.com)

FIREFIGHTERS KEEP EYE OUT FOR HOTSPOTS

Posted May 27, 2014 by Scott Waltman

Firefighters remained on the scene Monday afternoon at the combined junior and senior high school in Hoven after a fire that started early Sunday morning badly damaged the building.

Two firefighters are at the school at all times, said Hoven firefighter Rick Schaefer. He said crews are putting out hot spots that pop up, including one Monday in the location of the old school stage.

There's no reason to suspect foul play, Schaefer said, but the cause of the fire is still not known. Officials from the state fire marshal's office are expected to arrive today, he said.

It's not known where the fire started, but flames were coming out of the electrical room when firefighters arrived about 12:45 a.m. Sunday, Schaefer said. The heat emitted by the fire was intense, he said.

One Hoven firefighter was taken by ambulance Sunday to the hospital in Bowdle, then flown to an Aberdeen hospital, Schaefer said. He didn't know exactly what the problem was, but said the firefighter did not remember responding to the call, even though he was at the scene all night.

Schaefer estimated that more than 100 people helped fight the fire in some way. That includes firefighters from 12 departments, law enforcement officers, emergency responders and farmers and ranchers who hauled water to the school, he said.

Sometime after the fire started, Schaefer said, the main water line into the school ruptured, resulting in decreased water pressure. Between 5 and 6 Sunday morning, the pressure was restored. Before it was, other fire departments, farmers and ranchers were hauling trucks full of water to the scene. The water was then dumped into tanks with a capacity of 4,500 gallons, then pumped onto the flames, he said.

During the fire, flaming tar paper floated through the air and landed on trees and buildings to the north of the school, Schaefer said. One tree started to burn, but crews quickly sprayed it and other areas to keep them safe and to prevent the fire from spreading, he said.

By noon Monday, folks in Hoven were selling purple Hoven Greyhounds T-shirts with proceeds going to help the badly damaged school. The shirts cost \$15 each. For more information about the shirts, call Tara Heuer at 605-281-0924 or Kim Hoerner at 605-769-0292