

## **KELO Land Report**

May 25, 2014, 9:55 PM by [Leland Steva](#)



HOVEN, SD -

A small-town in North Central South Dakota is in shock after a fire destroyed the high school in Hoven.

Crews are hard at work hours after a fire turned the Hoven High School into rubble, and the community is trying to pick up the pieces.

"Lots of tears this morning," Superintendent Peggy Petersen said.

Sam Ruckman responded to the call around 1:00 a.m. and battled the blaze for over eight hours. In his five years of

volunteering in Hoven, he's never dealt with a fire of this magnitude.

"We opened the door to the gymnasium, me and another firefighter and we were down as low as we could get and crawled trying to make an entrance in there and it was just too hot to stay in there. It was unbearable, even with our fire gear and SCBAs on and everything. We tried," Sam Ruckman said.

The flames took the high school that has stood in Hoven since the early 1940's. The blaze didn't just destroy the building, but a pillar in the community.

"It's just been devastating loss for our community. Lots of memories in that old building," Petersen said.

"It means everything. I mean everything kind of centers around this for the school year, and sports and everything so it's just, it's going to be tough," Ruckman said.

Although the morning fire has left residents of the small town heartbroken, the community believes it will rally around this tragic event.

"I've never lived in a community like this before in my life. They'll pull together and stay strong. It'll work out," Ruckman said.

"They're wonderful. You can sure tell by all of the farmers that brought their water trucks into town just to help. We had a lady that brought sandwiches. She went home; she got sandwiches and fed the firefighters. Everybody's pitching in," Petersen said.

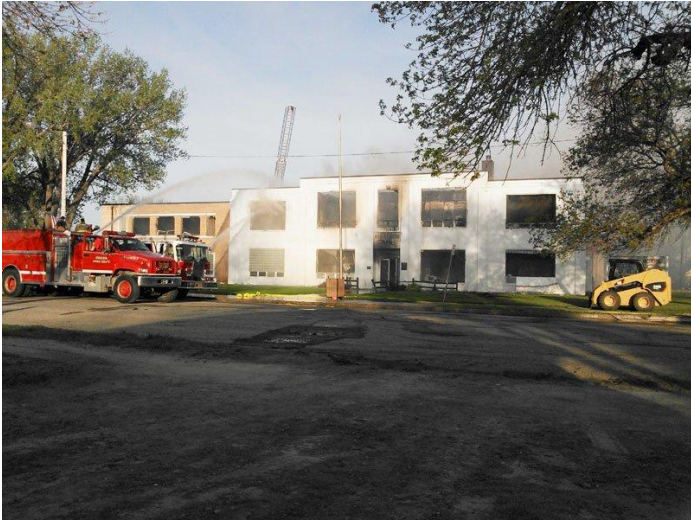
There is no set plan in place for a new home for the students. There are discussions the old hospital building that currently sits empty, could hold classes until a permanent solution is found.

Until then, Hoven residents will only be able to remember the school that has played a big role in a small town.

No one was hurt in the fire. Students were out of

## **KELO Land Report**

May 25, 2014, 5:24 PM by [Leland Steva](#)



HOVEN, SD -

People in a small town in north-central South Dakota have lost a centerpiece of their community.

Early this morning, fire broke out at the high school in Hoven.

Flames shot high above the building as crews from several departments fought the fire throughout the early morning hours.

There was so much damage; the building was too dangerous for the fire marshal to enter.

Crews were working hard to extinguish the blaze into the afternoon, with a lot of the residents of the small town looking on.

The majority of the damaged appeared to have taken place on the second floor. One volunteer firefighter from Hoven said he worked on the putting out the fire for over eight hours, and he has never seen a fire this intense in his five years of volunteering in the small community.

The residents of the small-town say it will be difficult to replace the building, and the memories, of the school that has stood in Hoven for decades.

“It's devastating to lose the high school. Most people went to the high school. They lost their class composites. It's just devastating to the community,” Superintendent Peggy Petersen.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

Nobody was hurt in the fire. School had let out for the summer last Wednesday.

We will have more reaction from the community on this tragic event coming up tonight on KELOLAND Weekend News at 10.

## **KELO Land Report**

May 25, 2014, 8:10 AM by [Stephanie Gregory](#)



HOVEN, SD -

Fire crews fought a large overnight fire at Hoven High School, Sunday. According to authorities, the fire started around 1:00 a.m. and was still burning into the early morning hours.

The superintendent of the Hoven School District, Peggy Petersen, tells KELOLAND News the high school is combined with the junior high. There are about 55 students who attend the school. She says a fire in a small community will leave a lasting impact.

“I can't believe it. It's kind of devastating to the whole community. Everything in these little communities are centered on the

school, I don't even know what to say,” Petersen said.

Petersen says several fire crews have been working throughout the night to put out the blaze.

“We have every fire truck from miles around, it looks like. I think we have firemen from Mobridge, Selby, Java, and Hoven, there are other places that have come. I know that Ipswich got the call,” Petersen said.

As of 11 a.m. the fire is still smoldering. The fire marshal is trying to get into the building to begin the investigation, but conditions are still too unsafe for any work to be done.

Crews are still on the scene Sunday morning. The fire is still under investigation. A KELOLAND News crew is on the way to Hoven and will bring updates later today on KELOLAND News and KELOLAND.com.

See Kelo Land for rest of story

<http://www.keloland.com/newsdetail.cfm/hoven-loses-high-school-to-fire-/?id=164965>