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Southwest Michigan

## Local News

### Fire destroys home on Hawthorne

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*Three  
dogs  
die in*



John Madill / H-P staff A fire burns at 1864 Hawthorne in St. Joseph Township Thursday afternoon.

***afternoon fire; cause is not yet determined***

**By DAVID WARFIELD - H-P Staff Writer**

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ST. JOSEPH - Three small dogs died when fire destroyed a home Thursday on Hawthorne Avenue in St. Joseph Township.

The owners, Don and Charlotte Mezie, were out of town, a neighbor said.

Township firefighters arrived shortly after 2 p.m. at 1864 Hawthorne Ave., and found smoke pouring out of the house. Within minutes both floors were consumed by flames.

Firefighters shot a constant blast of water into the second-story windows from a fire engine about 100 feet away - a defensive tactic firefighters call "surround and drown."

It took more than an hour of blasting the blaze before firefighters could enter the home.

"I have to make a determination if the house is liveable," Township Building Inspector Jerry Jones said as firefighters blasted gallons and gallons of water through the top floor window and into a large hole in the roof.

"Sometimes people think they can still stay in a house after its cleaned up, but there's no question about this one," he said. "This one is done."

An officer at the St. Joseph Township Police Department said Thursday evening that firefighters had not yet determined the cause of the fire. A damage estimate was not immediately available.

St. Joseph Firefighters assisted at the scene, along with Berrien County Sheriff's deputies and police from St. Joseph and St. Joseph Township.

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