

Deputy alerts neighbors to fire Tuesday

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Yuma County Sheriff's Deputy Todd Sutton was the first responder on the scene at a house fire in the 300 block of South 19th Avenue - and it was his quick thinking that helped neighbors get to safety.

Yuma Fire Department and Yuma County Sheriff's Office released the details of the fire in news releases Wednesday, praising his actions.

Sutton was on his way to another call just before 7 p.m. Tuesday when he saw something abnormal.

"I saw large plumes of smoke coming from the north side of town," said Sutton, who has been with YCSO for nine months.

It was black smoke, Sutton said, which means it's possibly a vehicle or residence. This time of year, there are often plumes of smoke of other colors due to controlled burns.

Sutton said when he arrived on 19th Street, he saw a lot of people outside of their houses and the one residence on fire, as well as a car in the carport.

"At that point, the north side of the house was fully engulfed," Sutton said.

The resident of the house ran up to Sutton and told him that she and her two children were out safely and there was no one else left in the home. Sutton said the children were safe at a neighbor's house, while the woman waited for emergency responders.

That's when Sutton went to work checking on the neighbors.

There was no response at the first house he went to, Sutton said.

At the next house, Sutton said, there was an elderly couple. "They had no idea there was even a fire," he said.

Sutton said he went back to the other residence, and there was still no one there. By this time, Sutton said, the Yuma Fire Department was on scene.

The wife of the elderly couple was outside the home, but her husband was not, Sutton said. The wife told Sutton that her husband was having a difficult time getting out of the home.

Sutton went into the home and helped the man with getting dressed and exiting the home to a safe location.

Even though there was extensive damage to the home and the car, none of the neighboring homes were damaged, and the important thing is everyone got out safe, Sutton said.

Sutton said it's not often that people get to see law enforcement officers doing what they see as a good thing.

"It's great to be able to do that," Sutton said.