

The Galena Gazette, March 5, 2015

Jo Daviess County authorities are in the process of evacuating a 1-mile radius around a crude oil train car fire just south of Galena.

The Jo Daviess County Sheriff's Department received a call from Burlington Northern Railroad at about 1:50 p.m. after one of its Bakken crude oil trains jumped the track next to the Galena River.

City of Galena Administrator Mark Moran said eight of the 105 cars derailed. Two of the cars remained upright, while six are turned over on their sides. As of 8 p.m. two of the overturned cars were on fire. The train had 103 oil cars and two buffer cars filled with sand.

Officials were able to access the train via the Galena River Trail, but once getting word of a smoking train car, Galena Fire Chief Randy Beadle evacuated all forces. Shortly after, there were two explosions that could be seen from the U.S. 20 Bridge incident command center, Moran said.

At 4:30 p.m. Beadle released all outside departments, but Galena firefighters and the hazmat team remain on standby.

The flames are located 2.5 miles north of River Road, close to the end of the bike trail. Galena Mayor Terry Renner said officials will not send anyone to the fire until its safe, possibly allowing the fire to burn itself out.

Renner said as far as he knows, nothing to this magnitude has ever happened in this area. While there have been incidents he said, the trains had not been carrying any hazardous material and there have been no spills.

Renner and Moran said Galena officials are focused on the safety of residents in the area and the environment, as the crash is located next to the Galena River, which feeds into the Mississippi River.

This derailment comes two weeks after a similar incident happened north of Dubuque.

