

Furnace Blast At Waterbury Wrecks Plant

Explosion Heard By
Most Of Village
Late Last Night

Building Was Still
Under Construction

WATERBURY — A furnace located in a separate building which joins the new street department garage and fire station, still under construction, is a shambles today following an oil burner explosion which reverberated throughout the village at 10:25 o'clock last night.

Many residents went scurrying in several directions to find the source of the blast. It was Craig Parker, program director for WDEV, who discovered the source.

Victor A. Backels, village president, said today the cause of the explosion is not definitely known. He revealed, however, that the blast occurred within the oil burner. It blew the burner apart and much of the burner cabinet was wrecked.

One of the concrete walls was pushed out about an inch. The chimney was slightly cracked. The casing was blown off the furnace, as were smoke pipes.

The fire alarm system, located in the same building, was not damaged. Backels said low voltage might have been the cause of the explosion.

"We did have a low voltage control, however, which appeared to be operating," he said. "In substance, it seems evident that the fumes from the oil burner did not ignite at the right time. When they did ignite there were too many fumes to be carried off safely.

"We feel very fortunate," he continued, "that nobody was in the building at the time. The force of such an explosion in a cement block building would have caused critical and possibly fatal injury."

He said the loss, which he estimated unofficially at about \$3,000 is completely covered by insurance. The insurance adjustors are expected here today. Ironically enough, the furnace is a Waterbury, Minn., product.

Richard Hough, who has installed this type of furnace for many years, said this morning that a few seconds of low voltage could have caused the explosion. In such case, the pump would turn but the electrodes would not fire and when the voltage returned to normal the electrodes would fire the accumulated fumes, resulting in explosion.

He said further that the burner had been operating perfectly for about four weeks. Construction of the three adjoining buildings is a \$60,000 project for the village of Waterbury.