

# The Herald-Press

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## Harvey landmark in ashes

By Neil O. Nelson

One of the first businesses to open on the Highway 52 bypass road in Harvey was reduced to ashes and charred metal framing when a late-night fire swept through Mack's Farm and RV Center Thursday, Feb. 13, 2020.

Harvey's volunteer fire department was called at 6 p.m. Thursday. Fire departments from Fessenden and Anamoose assisted Harvey's 30 firefighters in controlling the blaze.

The main structure at the farm and RV center, including the office and front showroom, was a total loss, said owner Blaine Mack. A preliminary investigation determined the fire started in the northeast corner of the shop, said Harvey fire chief Gordy Schmidt.

Located on city's south side for 50 years, Mack's is one of the more recognized Harvey businesses.

"We lost everything," said Mack, who on Saturday morning was leaving for Minot to replace some of the office equipment lost in the fire.

Mack and his wife, Sandy, were "doing better on Saturday." But Friday was long and difficult, he added.

The owners of the popular Harvey business met with the state fire marshal and their insurance agent Friday.

"Everything is okay there," said Mack. "That all sailed through fine."

Fortunately, the Macks upgraded their insurance plan last spring. "Best thing I ever done," said Mack Saturday morning.

"I'm just glad I did."

But, at 4:30 a.m. Friday, Blaine Mack was watching his world go up in smoke.

"That was tough. I didn't know what to think."

Mack's Farm and RV Center has been in operation on the Highway 52 bypass since 1970, joining Harvey's outdoor theater as the only businesses on Harvey's south side.

"Sandy takes great pride in the fact "that we started the development on the strip."

The Macks have been Harvey's only authorized U-HAUL dealer for more than 20 years.

Blaine, in the last half a century, has tinkered with, purchased and sold everything remotely associated with the agriculture industry.

The Macks estimated last summer that they had \$750,000 in inventory.

Much of that inventory was burned beyond recognition, left in ashes or charred coal black by Thursday night's fire.

The couple's home, out buildings and equipment set off from the service center escaped damage.

Blaine and Sandy Mack discovered the fire. The call came in at 6 sharp, said Schmidt.

"We had a busy evening." The fire, he said, just moved through the building, from the north end to the office and showroom.

"From outside the building," that wasn't evident, added Schmidt.

More than 100,000 gallons of water were used to fight the blaze.

The exact cause of the fire has yet to be determined, said the Harvey fire chief.

The firefighters stayed on the scene until 3 a.m. Friday.