

The Marshall City Bee
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Special Evening Edition

ARSON!

**Treasure Homes Site Levelled
In Early Morning Fire**

A multi-million dollar fire ushered in the New Year at a controversial North Side construction site. The Treasure Homes development, opposed by several neighborhood and environmental groups, virtually blew up as a small fire exploded into a conflagration after natural gas pipes burst from the heat. The fire apparently started around 3 a.m.

“Fire equipment might have kept the damages minimal,” a spokesman for the fire department said. “But we could not do much once the natural gas caused the fire to erupt and spread rapidly.

An local environmental activist group, known as Project LEAF!, has been out front in opposing the city’s acquisition of the lakefront land, and through condemnation procedures, turning the land over to private developers.

Marshall City Fire Chief Neeman Howe stated, “Our initial investigation indicates that gasoline was poured on framing wood stacked next to exposed natural gas lines. This resulted in a small natural gas explosion and a quick spread of the fire...

The explosion also destroyed “The Children’s Tree,” planted by Dr. King during the 1967 ceremony naming the neighboring elementary school in his

honor. Ironically, the tree and the surrounding children's playground were the main reason that members of LEAF! fought the Treasure Homes development. The tree was more recently made famous for being the site of a 2004 public truce between two rival north side gangs.

Levi Marovich, spokesperson for the developer, E.L.I.T.E. Homes, stated: "Treasure Homes needs to be rebuilt from the ground up. The fire has caused at least \$3 million in damage."

"If the investigation concludes that the people responsible for this are the same as those who destroyed property earlier this year [2005], we will sue them all under the RICO laws."

The RICO anti-racketeering statute makes it possible for private victims of certain crimes to sue criminals for triple damages and attorneys fees. Regarded as an anti-gang law, it is used successfully to sue banks, businesses, and other entities, as well as to publicly prosecute "criminal enterprises."