

# Blaze destroys 23 homes

Firefighters race to contain southern El Paso County fire; no deaths, serious injuries



CHRISTIAN MURDOCK, THE GAZETTE

On Wednesday, Jake Bywater walks through the remains of his pole barn that burned in the 117 fire. Bywater spent the night and day fighting the fire and saved his home, but he lost the barn, a school bus, four boats and the 100-year-old homestead that he and his wife, Kim, had restored.

BY ELLIE MULDER AND KAITLIN DURBIN  
The Gazette

The number of homes destroyed by fire continued to rise Wednesday as hundreds of firefighters raced to corral a 41,000-acre grass fire in southern El Paso County ahead of another predicted gusty day.

Of the 23 homes burned — up from 10 structures known to have

## Multimedia

To view updated maps and more photos from the fire in southern El Paso County, go to [gazette.com](http://gazette.com).

been damaged Tuesday evening — seven were vacant, El Paso County Sheriff Bill Elder said Wednesday evening at a briefing on the 117 fire, named for the mile marker

along Interstate 25 where it is believed to have started.

No deaths or serious injuries have been reported, although 16 families are now displaced, Elder said. Hundreds of residents remain under evacuation orders but Elder termed them “soft evacuations” because many have begun

## More fire coverage

Firefighters are caught in a maelstrom of flames, smoke and dust. **A8**

Some are thankful for what has been spared, but others lost everything. **A8**

Hanover School District 28's Junior-Senior High School unscathed. **A9**

## Springs airport reopens

Flights resume in Colorado Springs as crews deal with fire damage. **A3**

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