February Burn at West Fertilizer Plant Led to School Evac

In this Instagram photo provided by Andy Bartee, a plume of smoke rises from a fertilizer plant fire in West, Texas on Wednesday, April 17, 2013. An explosion at a fertilizer plant near Waco Wednesday night injured dozens of people and sent flames shooting high into the night sky, leaving the factory a smoldering ruin and causing major damage to surrounding buildings. **(AP Photo/Andy Bartee)**

WEST, Texas (AP) — A school near the Texas fertilizer plant that was leveled by an explosion says it wasn't warned about a controlled fire at the plant in February and evacuated its students to another school as a precaution.

Superintendent Marty Crawford notified West Intermediate School parents and staff in a Feb. 12 letter that the evacuation earlier that day was orderly. The letter is posted on the district's website.

He says the West Fertilizer plant didn't inform school officials that it planned to burn unwanted pallets and brush, and that officials were alarmed by the fire.

Crawford says the principal called 911 and that the dispatcher didn't acknowledge any coordinated burn. He says the district asked to be notified by local emergency personnel and the plant before any future planned burns.

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