

## Groningen casino completely destroyed in massive fire

Written by Administrator

Monday, 28 August 2017 02:37 -

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The Holland Casino in Groningen was completely destroyed in a massive fire that was discovered around 7:00 a.m. on Sunday, and which firefighters finally managed to get under control around 3:30 p.m. No one was seriously injured, but millions of euros of damage was done, Dagblad van het Noorden reports.

Groningen firefighters responded to an automatic fire alarm at 7:02 a.m. on Sunday. When they were still struggling to get the fire under control around 10:00 a.m., colleagues from the Drenthe fire department responded to help. Eventually 150 firefighters, 16 fire trucks and 5 platforms worked to fight the fire, fire department commander Roelf Knoop said to the newspaper.

Residents of surrounding street and guests of the Hampshire hotel across the street from the casino and other nearby hotels were evacuated. They were accommodated on Kreupelstraat. Around 3:15 p.m. the residents of a few streets and nine houseboats were able to return home. Guests of the City Hotel were given an opportunity to collect some of their belongings, but had to spend the night elsewhere, according to ANP.

No one was seriously injured in the fire. One person was treated for smoke inhalation by paramedics, but did not have to go to the hospital.

"We are also relieved that the fire did not spread to other properties in Groningen city center", mayor Peter den Oudsten said, according to DVHN. The casino is surrounded by centuries-old inner city houses and buildings. According to Den Oudsten, those buildings were saved by the professional deployment of the emergency services.

Many shops and restaurants in the city center were unable to open on Sunday.

The property can be considered lost. A "few dozen" cars were still in the casino's parking garage, according to the mayor. They too were lost "Most are blackened. Some obviously burned", the mayor said, according to the newspaper.

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How much money and chips were in the casino's slot machines and safe, Erwin van Lambaart, chairman of the Holland Casino board, could not say to DVHN. Saturday nights are the casino's busiest time, so this could involve a considerable amount.

Van Lambaart is "terribly shocked" and regrets the fate of the some 200 employees of the Holland Casino in Groningen. "This is a black page in Holland Cansino's history", he said to the newspaper. He could not yet say whether the Groningen branch will reopen. The board is looking into it and hope to quickly find another, temporary or permanent, location in the city, he said, according to ANP.

The cause of the fire is still unclear.

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