

## Ruined dreams



Staff Photo By Blair Callicott

Frank Richardson, 66, of Franklinville, stands near what used to be the kitchen of his home. Fire destroyed the 70-year-old house Friday morning.

## Family loses almost everything in fire

### Richardsons will get to move into house built 20 years ago

By MICHAEL JOHNSON  
Courier-Tribune Staff Writer

FRANKLINVILLE — For Frank Richardson and his family, losing their home in a Friday morning fire meant losing almost everything they owned.

It also meant the family will finally be able to move into a house they built more than 20 years ago.

Richardson — who lives with his wife, daughter and two grandchildren — had built a new home some 20 years ago, but was never able to move into it because the septic system failed to meet county health standards. The house ravaged by Friday's fire was more than 70 years old, Richardson said.

"They (health officials) said I'd have to dig the line out because the rain washed dirt into it," Richardson, 66, said, explaining why the family never moved into the newer home.

Because the septic system was not up to standard, the electric company would not hook up power to the residence, and he and his family were forced to live in the house which burned.

"That house is 20 years old, and we've never been able to move in," he said.

But Saturday afternoon, workers were expected to arrive to fix the septic system, and the power company has agreed to hook up electricity.

Because they could not use the newer house, the Richardson family had all their belongings in the house which burned.

"We lost everything," said Richardson. "If it hadn't have been for our little grandyoung'un needing a Pamper ... there wouldn't be no reason to fix the septic tank." He said when his daughter awoke to tend to the toddler, she noticed the fire.

The cause of the fire is believed to be an electrical short in the kitchen, a problem Richardson said has happened before.

"We had a fire in the kitchen a while back because of the wires," he said. "So we got a new switch box."

As the fire ravaged their home, all the Richardsons could do was watch and hope it didn't spread to their other house about 50 feet away.

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## Fire

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"If you look at the windows (of the newer house) you can see where the fire heated them and broke them," said Richardson. Aside from two broken windows and some scorched paint, the home was not damaged in the blaze.

"I guess we just start over, doing it a

little at a time," said Richardson, who retired from a swamill four years ago because of heart problems. "All my money goes to doctor bills, and we don't have no insurance (fire or health)."

"We'll just have to get a little every month," he said, looking over the pile of smoldering rubble where his old homestead once stood.

Richardson said although the family members do have a roof over their heads, they still have no furniture, clothes or food. "All my canned goods were in that

house ... If I hadn't had these old boots out in the yard, I wouldn't even have no shoes."

With a sigh, Richardson spoke about the upcoming holiday season, and said his youngest grandson was going to be 3 years old Wednesday, but probably didn't face a very happy birthday.

"I guess I'll get over it ... we all will, someday," said Richardson. Until then, the Richardsons will concentrate on rebuilding their lives and making their "new" home as livable as possible.