



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety and Corrections
Public Safety Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Abbeville Fire Death under Investigation by State Fire Marshal

Abbeville, LA – State Fire Marshal investigators were called upon to investigate an overnight fire in Abbeville where a 48 year old man lost his life. The circumstances and cause of the fire remain under investigation at this time.

Just before 2:00 a.m. Friday, Abbeville firefighters responded to a residential structure fire at 205 5th Street in Abbeville. After bringing the fire under control, firefighters discovered the resident, 48 year old Stephen Harbst unresponsive on the floor of the two bedroom, wood frame structure.

Harbst was transported by ambulance to Abbeville General Hospital where he was pronounced dead. The Vermillion Parish Coroner is conducting a death investigation in order to conclusively determine the cause of death. Results of that investigation could take two weeks.

Investigators have determined that the fire originated in the living room of the residence where investigators found the remains of a candle and a small Coleman camp-stove. Investigators also noted the presence of candles in other rooms of the home. There was very little in the way of furnishings and no electrical service to the structure at the time of the fire.

The exact cause of the fire is undetermined at this time and the investigation remains active.

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