



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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New Arson Dog Adds to State Fire Marshal's Crime Fighting Capability

Baton Rouge, LA -- The newest member of the state Fire Marshal's office has a nose up on arsonists and is planning on using those skills to sniff out the causes of fires. The new investigator is accelerant detection K-9 "Billy". "Billy", a two-year old black lab, and his handler, Deputy Roman Ray, recently completed requirements in a five week canine-accelerant detection school sponsored by State Farm® and certified by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

Deputy Ray and "Billy" will be introduced at a news conference at the State Fire Marshal's office, June 26, at 10:30a.m., at which time "Billy" will demonstrate his detection skills and technique.

The program is funded by State Farm® and is available to fire departments and law enforcement agencies across the United States. Since its beginning in 1993, the program has placed more than 325 dogs in 45 states, three Canadian provinces and the District of Columbia.

In 2012, over 38,000 fires in the United States were classified as intentionally set, causing over \$660 million dollars in property damage according to the Insurance Information Institute. The scope of arson goes beyond impacting insurance companies – it directly affects the personal and financial well-being of tens of thousands of individuals every year.

"We are pleased to support the efforts of the state Fire Marshal's office, and appreciate the interest of Chief Browning, in adding this capability to his office. Chief Browning, has first-hand experience in this regard, being one of the state's first K-9 handlers in 1991," said State Farm spokesman Gary Stephenson of North Little Rock, adding, "He knows the value a trained dog can bring to an arson investigation."

Fire Marshal Butch Browning stated, "We are very pleased to have "Billy" join our Department, and believe that he and Deputy Ray will be great assets in our efforts to fight arson throughout central Louisiana."

A few years ago, investigators could spend days sifting through rubble at a fire scene. Today, with a trained dog, the work can often be done in a couple of hours, in terms of locating accelerant residue, speeding the time of getting samples to the state crime lab and the investigative process.

"Billy" and Deputy Ray will be assigned to work in SFM-Area III, which encompasses central and southwest Louisiana.

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