



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections
Public Safety Services

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.lasfm.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: December 19, 2014

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Despite Firefighters' Efforts, Man Dies In New Roads Fire

Tragedy Compounded by Lack of Smoke Alarms

New Roads, LA – Investigators from the Office of State Fire Marshal are currently investigating an early morning fire that claimed one life and destroyed a second-story, wood framed apartment while severely damaging the business upon which it was located.

Authorities were alerted to the fire at 148 E. Main Street shortly before 1:00 a.m. this morning. Upon their arrival, a large amount of smoke was observed billowing from the north side of the apartment.

After forcibly entering the apartment through a door accessible by an exterior staircase, firefighters of Pointe Coupee Fire District 5 were met with heavy smoke. Within a few short feet, however, one firefighter located a lone male occupant who was believed to be alive at that time.

As the firefighter worked feverishly to move the man towards the exit, he became unable to ascend the steps to the door, prompting a second firefighter to render assistance. Suddenly, however, both firefighters were confronted by intense, rapidly-moving flames which forced them to abandon their valiant efforts, leaving the man behind.

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The body of the victim, 62-year-old Leonard V. Dimichele, V, was later recovered by State Fire Marshal investigators from within the apartment unit and was subsequently released to the Pointe Coupee Parish Coroner's Office for autopsy. Preliminary findings suggest that the victim died as a result of smoke inhalation, coupled with thermal injury.

Initial findings by investigators point to an area of the apartment where an island-type counter was located, as the origin of the deadly fire. At this time, the official cause of the fire is undetermined, with the inability to rule out any malfunctions and/or failures of the electrical wiring servicing that island. Investigators also discovered that there were no working smoke alarms in the apartment at the time of the fire.

The State Fire Marshal urges all Louisiana citizens to ensure that their homes are equipped with smoke alarms and that those alarms are frequently tested to ensure proper function. Those citizens needing assistance in the purchase or installation of smoke alarms are encouraged to visit the State Fire Marshal's website at www.lasfm.org, where one can find valuable information on how to obtain these life saving devices free of charge.

While no suspicious circumstances were noted by investigators, the cause of this deadly fire remains under investigation.

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LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

News Release – Addendum (New Roads Fire; 12/19/14)



Photograph provided by the Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office



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