



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections
Public Safety Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health-Related Issues Force the Retirement of Police K9 “Buddy”

Handler Reports That “Buddy’s” Condition Has Worsened With Age

Baton Rouge, LA – Hip dysplasia, among other age-related plagues that adversely affect a number of canine breeds, is just one of several health issues that is forcing State Fire Marshal detector dog “Buddy” into retirement. This comes in the wake of the retirement of another detector canine just weeks ago.

A 110-pound black Labrador Retriever, “Buddy” is the longest serving detector dog in the history of the State Fire Marshal’s Office and very possibly the longest serving K9 in Louisiana, having begun his tour of duty on November 13, 2002.

However, prior to his service in Louisiana, “Buddy” and his handler, Captain Richard Abbott, underwent four (4) months of intensive training in New York after he was given to Louisiana by the City of New York in appreciation for two (2) water pumping fire trucks which Louisiana built and donated to New York in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

After completing their training, Captain Abbott and “Buddy” conducted approximately 250 searches in New York and currently remain listed as a fire investigation team in that state. In addition, “Buddy” has the distinction of being the only New York-trained K9 that serves in a different state.

“Buddy,” who is well-known for his service to virtually every fire department in northern Louisiana, has faithfully prowled through literally hundreds of fire scenes resulting in findings which were instrumental in the arrests of dozens of persons suspected of committing arson-related homicides, as well as those attempting to defraud insurance companies by filing false claims. Each year such arrests, in turn, save Louisiana citizens on their insurance premiums by diminishing fraudulent claims, the costs of which are unfortunately borne by other policy holders.

MORE – MORE – MORE

Accelerant detection K9s are used on fire scenes to assist investigators in determining whether an accelerant was used to facilitate the fire. Because of their very sensitive noses, these dogs are capable of detecting trace amounts of ignitable substances, thus allowing investigators to pinpoint samples which are then submitted for laboratory analysis. It is an accepted fact that the use of detector dogs significantly reduces the amount of time and effort required to locate these substances on fire scenes, resulting in additional savings to Louisiana taxpayers.

When not on fire scenes, "Buddy" was utilized in conducting demonstrations before numerous schools, civic groups, and associations throughout the state, and before heads of state.

Annual training and certifications were obtained through the Dallas Fire Department Training Center, sponsored by the Texas State Fire Marshal's Office and certified by the North American Police Work Dog Association and the U.S. Department of Justice (Border Patrol).

"Of course, we're saddened to see 'Buddy' leave us," said State Fire Marshal H. "Butch" Browning, "But considering the number of years and the manner in which he has served the people of Louisiana, I believe he needs now to just enjoy the retirement he has earned and so richly deserves."

During his retirement, "Buddy" will remain in the care of Captain Abbott for the remainder of his life.

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LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

News Release – Addendum (Retirement of “Buddy,” 12/18/14)



“Buddy” in his younger days.

(Photo courtesy of Louisiana State Fire Marshal)



Working a fire scene.

(Photo courtesy of Louisiana State Fire Marshal)



“Buddy” conducting a demonstration before students with handler, Richard Abbot.

(Photo courtesy of Louisiana State Fire Marshal)



Receiving special attention.

(Photo courtesy of Louisiana State Fire Marshal)



"Buddy" and handler Richard Abbott standing beside the "Spirit of Louisiana," one of two trucks donated by Louisiana to New York City in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

(Photo courtesy of Louisiana State Fire Marshal)



"Buddy" in his golden years.

(Photo courtesy of Louisiana State Fire Marshal)