



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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Public Safety Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fire Sinks Vessel, One Body Recovered

Sulphur, LA – State Fire Marshal investigators and Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's deputies remain on scene today in Sulphur investigating a fire that destroyed a water vessel Saturday night and claimed the life of a man aboard.

Investigators responded after officials were notified of a fire involving a vessel located in the area of 1318 Dunn Ferry Road shortly after 9:30 p.m., Saturday. Dunn Ferry Road crosses the Calcasieu West Fork, a tributary to the Calcasieu River and an area known to have numerous campsites and boat moorings.

Firefighters informed investigators that the vessel, described as a 32-foot long cabin cruiser holding an estimated 300-350 gallons of fuel, was found to be engulfed in flames upon their arrival. Fire officials stated that the vessel immediately sank after the fire was extinguished, preventing firefighters and investigators from accessing the craft.

Neighbors told investigators that the boat's owner, who had recently acquired the craft, had been working on the vessel when they heard the sound of a small explosion. Neighbors then observed the boat on fire and called 911.

With the use of advanced sonar technology, investigators were able to determine that the vessel sank to the bottom in approximately 30 feet of water. In addition, dive teams from the Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office were able to retrieve human remains, believed to be those of the owner, from the sunken craft.

The remains were later released to the Calcasieu Parish Coroner for autopsy after they were examined by investigators on the scene.

In the coming days, investigators will work with recovery experts to devise a plan as to the practicality of raising the vessel. If successful, the scene investigation into the origin and cause of the fire can continue. "While the sinking of the vessel poses a unique challenge for our investigators, I am confident that we will be able piece together the circumstances that led to this tragic event," said State Fire Marshal H. "Butch" Browning.

This investigation remains active.

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