



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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Jonesboro Man Arrested in Connection with Arson

Baton Rouge, La. (October 16, 2015) – A joint investigation by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) and the Louisiana State Fire Marshal's Office has resulted in the arrest of a Jonesboro man on six counts of simple arson.

Investigators said 22-year-old Justin L. Murphy of 1150 Firewood Road in Jonesboro was arrested Friday afternoon and charged with setting six woods fires in Jackson Parish near Jonesboro while he was a volunteer firefighter at the Jonesboro Fire Department during 2010 and 2011.

The arrest was made following an interview Thursday in which Murphy was questioned as a “person of interest” about the Liberty Hill fire in Bienville Parish Tuesday that burned approximately 800 acres. The fire destroyed one home and threatened several others including a train that contained numerous tanks filled with hazardous chemicals.

During the interview, investigators said Murphy admitted making small grass bundles and using a cigarette to light the blaze. As a volunteer member of the Jonesboro Fire Department, Murphy was paid \$10 for every call out on a grass fire and \$25 for each call out to a woods fire.

“Our agents are currently investigating numerous wildfires that have been allegedly set by individuals in the Bienville and Jackson Parish areas. Wildfires can get out of control very easily and this week, a family is homeless as a result. We have formed a task force with the State Fire Marshal’s Office to investigate and find those responsible for the damage and loss of property, said LDAF Commissioner Mike Strain, D.V.M.

Bond was set at \$90,000.

Strain and State Fire Marshal Butch Browning are asking individuals to report any information they may have regarding these fires. The Louisiana Forestry Association is offering up to a \$2,000 reward for information that leads to an arrest and conviction. If you have information about who may be responsible for these fires, please call [\(225\) 925-4500](tel:(225)925-4500).

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