



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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State Fire Marshal's Office Releases 2018 Statistics Report

BATON ROUGE, LA- State Fire Marshal Chief H. "Butch" Browning has released the agency's 2018 productivity statistics which show fire investigation calls are down, even though incendiary fire determinations are up, while the agency has conducted almost a thousand more inspections than the previous year and reviewed new construction projects totaling more than \$11 billion.

"The mission of the State Fire Marshal's Office is to protect life and property from the hazards of fire and explosion, to abate arson and to ensure the safety of our citizens in the constructed environment," said Browning, "In 2018, our personnel met those expectations and then some."

In 2018, SFM deputies were requested to investigate 750 fires compared to 783 the year before. Of those fires, just over 300 were classified as incendiary, where in 2017, 230 cases were classified as incendiary. The agency's arrest rate remains in the 40% range for a second year, significantly above the national average.

Unfortunately, two more lives were lost this year to fire than the previous year with a total fatality count of 77. Of 2018's fatal fires, some of the most common, identified causes were unsafe smoking practices and suspected electrical malfunctions. Fewer than ten of those cases involved structures with working smoke alarms.

Deputies also conducted a growing number of building inspections in 2018 totaling more than 47,000 inspections which included almost 11,000 final inspections on new construction projects. The agency has seen a decrease in re-inspections due to efficiencies in our Information Management System. IMS allows for real-time, digital communication to address potential plan and/or building errors prior to the final inspection for approving occupancy.

The agency's Plan Review division saw a steady number of project submittals this past year, more than 18,000, amounting to \$11.2 billion in estimated value.

Finally, the SFM licensed almost 10,000 individuals and firms in 2018, bringing in hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue to the agency. Those licenses apply to a host of industries, as directed by state law, including Life Safety & Property Protection businesses, manufactured housing, fireworks retailers, amusement ride operators, and boiler systems.

“I couldn’t be prouder of our personnel for going above and beyond, for yet another year, to make the safety of Louisiana’s citizens a top priority in all of the functions of this office while improving efficiencies in all of our operations,” said Browning.

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