



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Convicted Arsonist Pleads Guilty in New Arson Cases**

**WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH-** A Baton Rouge man, who is a convicted arsonist, has pleaded guilty as charged in two new arson cases investigated by the State Fire Marshal's Office last year.

On Wednesday, March 4, William Wise, 60, entered a plea of guilty to two counts of Simple Arson in the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court. Wise was sentenced to ten years in prison for each case, to run concurrently.

In the evening hours of September 18, the West Baton Rouge Fire Protection District contacted the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFM) to assist in the investigation of burned piles of heavy timber located in a field in the 3100 block of Highway 1 S in Port Allen.

Witness statements indicated a man was seen and approached in the area of the piles just before the fires. Details about him and his vehicle were provided to deputies and Wise was identified as a suspect in the case. Those same details matched the description of the suspect wanted in an arson investigation from three days prior in the 2700 block of Charles Drive, also in Port Allen. In that case, a pile of tires was set on fire behind a business.

During the course of the investigation, deputies learned Wise had three-times been convicted for arson in the past. The most recent was for a December 2011 fire at Mike Anderson's restaurant in Baton Rouge.

SFM deputies located Wise in Baton Rouge and arrested him on two counts of Simple Arson and one count each of Criminal Trespass and Failure to Register as an Arson Offender.

"This is a serial arsonist that I'm glad we have taken off the streets once again," said State Fire Marshal Chief Butch Browning, who personally assisted in this investigation, "I want to thank the community for their cooperation in this case as well as the fire, law enforcement and judicial agencies that partnered with our office to fully close this case so quickly for the safety of the community."

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