



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Monroe Man Dies in Apartment Fire

OUACHITA PARISH- State Fire Marshal (SFM) deputies have determined an apartment fire in West Monroe, that claimed the life of a male resident, was accidental.

Around 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 15, the Ouachita Parish Fire Department responded to a fire call at an apartment complex located in the 100 block of Alexander Road in West Monroe. Firefighters arrived to find one unit affected by the remnants of a fire that appeared to have extinguished itself. After a search of the unit, a male victim was found in a bedroom.

While official identification and cause of death are pending with the Ouachita Parish Coroner's Office, the victim is believed to be the 59-year-old sole resident of the apartment.

Following an assessment of the scene, deputies determined the fire began in the kitchen and was caused by unattended cooking on the stove.

Deputies learned neighboring residents smelled smoke in three separate instances before the discovery of the scene. The residents reported the issue to property managers the second time they experienced the smell, but no source could be found. In the afternoon, the smoke smell was reported again, which led property managers to enter the unit in question and discover the extinguished fire and victim.

Deputies were able to locate a smoke alarm in the home, but it was not in working order due to the battery being removed.

"This is truly a tragic situation in that had that smoke alarm been working, not only would it have quickly alerted the resident to the fire danger in his kitchen, but it also would have alerted his neighbors, who possibly could have helped save the victim if he couldn't save himself," said State Fire Marshal H. "Butch" Browning.

Working smoke alarms are a proven tool to alert residents to a fire danger in order to escape safely. The SFM's Operation Save-A-Life partners with local fire departments to install smoke alarms for free for families that need them most. To learn more about Operation Save-A-Life, or to register for a smoke alarm installation, visit lasfm.org.

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