



For Immediate Release

February 9, 2010

State Fire Marshal Investigation Results in Vicksburg Arson Arrest

Jackson –A joint investigation between the Mississippi State Fire Marshal’s Office (SFMO), the Vicksburg Fire Department and the Vicksburg Police Department has resulted in the arson arrest of Leroy Evans, a Vicksburg resident. Evans has been charged with 10 structure and two vehicle fires, the most recent being at Jackson and Second North Street in Vicksburg which burned five buildings.

“This arrest is just the latest example of how the Mississippi State Fire Marshal’s Office and county and local authorities work together to crack down on arson in the state,” Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said.

“Our investigators have one of the highest arrest and conviction rates in the country.”

Between July 1, 2008 and February 9, 2009 the SFMO investigated 223 incendiary fires resulting in 98 arrests. From July 1, 2009 through February 9, 2010, the SFMO has investigated 146 incendiary fires resulting in 59 arrests, not including today’s arrest.

“Arson is a crime that affects everyone’s insurance rates. Our office will continue to pursue and help in the arrest of arsonists with every tool at our disposal,” Chaney said.

Anyone with information on a deliberately set fire is urged to participate in the State Fire Marshal’s “CASH FOR HOT TIPS ARSON REWARD” program. Information that results in the arrest and arson conviction of any person responsible for the willful destruction by fire or explosion of any real or personal property within the State of Mississippi is eligible for an up to \$1000 cash reward. To report a suspected arson contact the State Fire Marshal’s Office at (601) 359-1061 or 1-888-648-0877 or contact your local sheriff’s office.

The State Fire Marshal’s Office Fire wants to also remind all Mississippians that fire safety should be a top priority in every home. Among the most important fire safety reminders for all Mississippians are: every home should have a working smoke alarm, and every family should practice an escape plan in the event of a fire. Instructions on how to create a family escape plan can be found on the special Holiday and Heating Fire Safety page of the Mississippi Insurance Department website at www.mid.state.ms.us

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