



For Immediate Release

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**State Fire Marshal Cites Collaboration As
Key in Fighting Automobile Arson
Arson Awareness Week May 4-10**

Jackson – Working with local fire and emergency service departments, law enforcement, insurance companies and the justice system, Mississippi State Fire Marshals made arrests in over half of the automobile arsons committed in Mississippi in 2013.

“The cooperation and collaboration between officials were key in solving these cases; we are united in solving and hopefully preventing future arson crimes,” Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said.

Throughout Mississippi and the nation, officials are focusing on such collaborative efforts, particularly involving automobile arson during National Arson Awareness Week, May 4-10, 2014. The theme of this year’s week is “Vehicle Arson — A Combustible Crime.”

In Mississippi, there were 31 vehicle arson fires in 2013; arrests were made in 17 of the cases. The estimated value of losses from these fires is \$386,050.

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, from 2008-2010, 14 percent of all fires were vehicle fires. Of these fires, 7 percent were intentionally set.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program indicates that over the last 10 years (2003-2012) there has been an average of 14,737 vehicle arsons reported, accounting for 26.5 percent of total arsons annually.

The Mississippi State Fire Marshal's Office offers the following tips in helping to prevent automobile arson.

- Park your car in a well-lit area.
- Use a secure parking lot for extended periods.
- Close all windows.
- Remove the key from the ignition.
- Always lock doors, trunk and tailgate.
- Use antitheft devices.
- Report abandoned cars to the police.
- Don't leave valuables in plain sight.
- Use a recovery system, such as GPS or Lojack.

The State Fire Marshal's Office offers an up to \$5000 Reward through its Cash for Tips Arson Reward Program. Anyone providing information that leads to 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 is eligible for the reward. If you have information regarding an arson, contact the State Fire Marshal's Office at 601-359-1061; 1-800-648-0877 or contact your local authorities.