



MISSISSIPPI STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MIKE CHANEY
State Fire Marshal

PRESS RELEASE

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State Fire Marshal Commends Success of Department Arson Dog

May 3-9, 2015 Arson Awareness Week

2015 Theme-Accelerant Detection Canines – Sniffing Out Arson

Jackson, MS – Mississippi State Fire Marshal Accelerant Detection Canine, or Arson Dog, Sita, has proven herself a valuable member of the State Fire Marshal's Office. Today, State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney commended Sita and her handler, Deputy Fire Marshal Kevin Martin for their contributions to fighting arson in Mississippi.

The recognition comes as part of Arson Awareness Week, May 3-9 and this year's theme – Accelerant Detection Canines-Sniffing Out Arson.

Sita, a three-year-old Belgian Malinois, was commissioned into service for the State Fire Marshal's Office in 2013. She has been deployed on approximately 67 fires assisting local, state and federal agencies resulting in 10 arrests, including four separate investigations where arson was committed to cover up the crime of murder.

"Sita and Deputy Martin's efforts are to be commended in the fight against arson in Mississippi," Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said.

“Arson dogs can cover an entire fire scene in 30 minutes which could take an investigator an entire day. They can also locate more accurate evidence samples, reducing the amount of costly analysis by a laboratory, saving the department and community both time and money.”

Sita is trained to indicate on the odor of three classes of accelerants known as low, medium and high petroleum distillates. These classes consist of accelerants such as gasoline, paint thinner, lighter fluid, rubbing alcohol, diesel fuel and kerosene.

In January 2015, Sita was utilized in a fire at a high school. Sita located multiple areas where the odor of accelerants were present, sample were taken and tested positive for accelerants. Investigators were able to strengthen their case and arrest three suspects in this case.

Sita has participated in nine fire safety details with local churches and schools where she demonstrated her ability by sniffing out the odor of accelerants as well as allowing several hundred children to pet and socialize with her.

In addition to Sita, the State Fire Marshal’s office has commissioned two other canines, a bomb dog and a cadaver dog, to assist in investigations. All three State Fire Marshal dogs recently qualified to participate in the National Detector Dog Trials for the United States Police Canine Association which will be held in Hinds County, beginning May 31.

BIOGRAPHY OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE FIRE MARSHAL ADC CANINE – “Sita”

Accelerant Detection Canine “Sita” is a three year old Belgian Malinois imported from Europe. Sita was trained at USK9 Unlimited in Kaplan, LA where she completed an approximate twelve week training program before being acquired by the Mississippi State Fire Marshal’s Office. Canines trained as accelerant detection canines are often referred to as arson dogs.

Sita is trained a minimum of 10 hours a month per Agency Standards as well as after every deployment. Sita is trained to indicate on the odor of three classes of accelerants known as low, medium and high petroleum distillates. These classes consist of accelerants such as gasoline, paint thinner, lighter fluid, rubbing alcohol, diesel fuel and kerosene.

Sita was commissioned into service in August of 2013 by the Mississippi State Fire Marshal’s Office and assigned to Deputy State Fire Marshal Kevin Martin. To date Sita has been deployed on approximately 67 fires assisting local, state and federal agencies resulting in 10 arrests. Sita has located areas in buildings where samples were taken and tested at the Mississippi State Crime Lab where accelerants were confirmed in those samples. Sita has been to assist in four separate investigations where arson was committed to cover up the crime of murder. Sita located accelerants strengthening the cases which gave investigators sufficient evidence that an individual(s) could be arrested for charges of murder and arson.

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