Memorandum

Date: May 29, 2009

To: Dr. Elba Garcia, Chair
and Members of the Public Safety Committee

Subject: Arson Update

The Public Safety Committee will be briefed on the Arson Update on Monday, June 1, 2009.

Ryan S. Evans
First Assistant City Manager

Attachment

c: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Dallas City Council
   Mary K. Suhm, City Manager
   Deborah Watkins, City Secretary
   Tom Perkins, City Attorney
   Craig Kinton, City Auditor
   Victor Lander, Administrative Municipal Judge
   Ramon F. Miguez, P.E., Assistant City Manager
   Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager
   A.C. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager
   Forest E. Turner, Interim Assistant City Manager
   Dave K. Cook, Chief Financial Officer
   Helena Stevens-Thompson, Assistant to the City Manager Mayor/City Council Office

"Dallas, the City that works: Diverse, Vibrant and Progressive"
To provide an update on Dallas arson statistics, trends and initiatives

To give an overview of the Fire Cause and Arson Division

Discuss Arson Awareness Week
2007-2008 Fire Stats

- Total Fire Loss ................. $32,658,212
- Incendiary Fire Loss .......... $9,412,316
- Incendiary Fires ............... 884
- Average Loss Per Fire ........ $10,647
Fire Loss in Dallas
FY 2007-2008

- Residential 64%
- Vehicle 14%
- Storage 4%
- Store & Office 13%
- Church, Club, Restaurant 5%
- Other 2%

Total - $32,658,212
Arson - $9,412,316
Accidental - $23,245,896
Structures - $5,534,217
Vehicles - $3,846,765
2004-2008 Arson Stats

**Total Arson Incidents**

- 2004: 1,235
- 2005: 953
- 2006: 1,077
- 2007: 880
- 2008: 884

**Total Arson Arrests**

- 2004: 210
- 2005: 208
- 2006: 242
- 2007: 232
- 2008: 201
What does Arson look like?
State Law

- Arson - an offense if a person starts a fire or causes an explosion with intent to destroy or damage any:
  - Vegetation, fence, or structure on open-space land
  - Building
  - Habitation
  - Vehicle
And, knowing that it is:
- Within city limits
- Insured
- Subject to a mortgage
- On property of another
- On property of another, or
- Reckless and intentionally endangers an individual or property of another

Criminal Mischief - an offense if a person damages or destroys property of another. This includes fire offenses not listed in the arson statute.
Arson Crime
Criminal Punishments

- **Arson:**
  - Second Degree Felony - Texas Department of Corrections (TDC) 2 to 20 years and up to $10,000 fine

- **Arson with bodily injury, death or arson of a habitation or place of assembly or worship:**
  - First Degree Felony - TDC 5 to 99 years or life and up to $10,000 fine

- **Criminal Mischief:**
  - Depends on value of property damaged or destroyed
Reasons Behind Arson

- For Profit
- Revenge and Prejudice
- Vanity
- Juvenile Fire Setters: Curiosity and Delinquency
- Crime Concealment
- Psychological Compulsion
- Mass Civil Disturbance (Riot)
- Terrorism
- Gang Initiations
- Thrill Seekers and Dares
Arson Investigators have a variety of duties for which they have received specialized training from several entities including the International Association of Arson Investigators, Dallas Police Academy, National Fire Academy and others.
Evidence Collectors
Interviewers & Polygraph Examiners
K-9 Handlers
Fire Inspectors

- Perform after hours fire inspections:
  - Overcrowded assemblies (ex. clubs, special events, etc.)
  - Respond to inoperable fire and sprinkler system complaints
Many of our investigators are already Certified Fire and Explosion Investigators (CFEI)

Our other investigators are in the process of obtaining this certification
Organizational Chart
As of April 1, 2009

Assistant Chief
Eugene Campbell, Jr.
Homeland Security

Deputy Chief
Jerry Knorr
Special Operations

Section Chief
Trixie Lohrke
Special Ops

Section Chief
Max Kirk
ARFF

Section Chief
Isaac McClellan

Deputy Chief
Joe Pierce
Arson/Bomb Squad

Section Chief
Chris Martinez
Arson/Bomb

Section Chief
James Adams
Arson/Bomb

Sergeant Dennis Wilson
EOS
(June 2009)
Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program

- Counsels juvenile fire setters referred by Arson Investigators

- Juveniles 10 and older who have been charged with Arson are offered counseling as part of probation rehabilitation

- Offers classroom education and intervention in our high fire incident areas (and others as requested)
The Oak Cliff Arson Fires

A total of 29 vehicles and 2 sets of portable toilets were burned over a 5 week period.
Coordination between Dallas Fire and Dallas Police utilized the Incident Command System

- DPD Fusion Center was used as the command center
- DFD Arson Personnel were leading the investigation
- DPD Deployment Officers, DPD Gang Unit, FBI, ATF and Dallas ISD Police played integral parts in the investigation
- DFD and DPD were working 24 hours/7 days a week in this joint investigation
  - 5 Juveniles were sentenced to the Texas Youth Commission
Arson Awareness Week
May 3 – 9, 2009

ARSON FOR PROFIT
What is Arson For Profit?

- Arson for profit is where the crime of arson is committed to cash in on the property insurance policy.
- Homes, businesses and vehicles are all subject to Arson For Profit motives.
Society Effects

- Fraudulent insurance claims such as those made in many Arson cases, is a crime that affects everyone.

- According to the Texas Department of Insurance, nationally, insurance fraud costs an average of nearly $1,000 per family each year in additional insurance premiums and added costs to consumable goods.
What are we doing about Arson in Dallas?

- Dallas residents will see DFD’s proactive and reactive efforts to fight Arson crime through the following Awareness/Prevention Program initiatives:
  - “Burn An Arsonist for Cold Cash Program”
  - Signs at fire scenes to solicit tips
  - Passing out flyers when canvassing neighborhoods
  - Arresting Arsonists and putting out press releases
  - Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program
  - Public Service Announcements on local cable channels
Public Impact

- Enhance Public Safety to ensure people are safe and secure where they live, work and play
- Reduce the overall crime rate of Dallas as reported through the Uniform Crime Reporting system
- Reduce recidivism through public education and prevention programs
- Increase neighborhood vitality through strategic deployment of resources to address needs
Arson Impact

- In 2007-2008 there was a 17% decrease in Incendiary Fire Loss
- Annually reduce the number of Arson incidents by 1.5%
Questions?