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For Immediate Release

March 18, 2011



Gang Members Busted for Arson in Bastrop County

An anonymous phone call to the state's Arson Hotline has led to the arrest of three juvenile gang members in Bastrop County. The three teenagers reportedly terrorized a neighborhood for more than a year before burning an abandoned mobile home they used as a hang-out.

The juveniles face charges of second degree arson in the destruction of the mobile home located just east of Elgin. The three youths claimed to be associated with the Surenos 13, a Mexican mafia group.

The fire occurred on the afternoon of November 30, a day all three youths had been suspended from school. Upon setting the home on fire, the suspects were spotted running from the blaze and later returning to the scene to view the damage. The Elgin Fire Department responded to the fire.

State Fire Marshal Office investigator Janine Mather and Elgin fire investigators placed Arson Hotline posters at the scene of the fire and a call was made to the Arson Hotline on Dec. 14. The call led to the arrests of the three suspects in late January.

The Bastrop County District Attorney plans to try all three as adults. Their maximum sentence would be 20 years. All three suspects are currently out on bond, wearing ankle monitors and faced with restraining orders.

Persons who place phone calls to the Arson Hotline can be rewarded up to \$1,000 if the information leads to an arrest or conviction. **ATAC** is an advisory body for the State Fire Marshal's Office and was instrumental in the creation and funding of the state's Arson Hotline and reward program. Callers can anonymously contact the Arson Hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week to report suspected arsonists. The arson hotline phone number is 1-877- 4 FIRE 45.

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