

A TEXAS ADVISORY COUNCIL ON ARSON

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Arson Hotline Call Results in Arrests and Reward

An anonymous phone call to the state's Arson Hotline resulted in the arrests of two men in Brady, Texas. The suspects were charged with burglary with intent to commit arson and for burglarizing and setting fire to an abandoned house.

The fire occurred on June 5, 2006. Days later, the pair bragged about setting the house on fire and this led a phone call to the Arson Hotline. The information was sufficient to establish probable cause and led to the arrests of the individuals who face fines up to \$10,000 and a maximum jail sentence of 99 years.

The anonymous caller has since been awarded a check for \$595. The amount was determined by A Texas Advisory Council on Arson (ATAC), a group of fire, law enforcement and insurance investigators who advise the State Fire Marshal's Office on matters pertaining to arson investigations. Higher rewards are offered to callers who assist arson investigators on fires involving injuries or fatalities.

The State Fire Marshal's Office created the Arson Hotline on May 1, 2000, to assist arson investigators around the state to stop intentionally set fires. The Arson Hotline number is 1-877-4 FIRE 45 or 1-877-434-7345. The phone number is manned 24 hours a day and its calls are sent to state arson investigators for review.

When a call to the Arson Hotline results in an arrest or conviction, the informant becomes eligible for a reward. Each anonymous caller who provides worthwhile information is given a tracking number. With this number the caller can stay in touch with the Arson Hotline to see if the information leads to an arrest.

Arson Hotline posters are placed at the scene of suspicious fires around the state in hopes that someone will call to report any suspicious activity or possible suspects. The posters ask people with information about a suspicious fire to call the toll-free state Arson Hotline. The posters are printed in both English and Spanish. The posters can be obtained by contacting the State Fire Marshal's Office at 1-512-305-7900.

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