

# A TEXAS ADVISORY COUNCIL ON **ARSON**

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## **ATAC Honors Fire Investigators**

A Texas Advisory Council on Arson (ATAC) has honored two fire investigators for their work in education and law enforcement. The awards were presented March 22 at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Texas Fire & Arson Investigators Seminar in Austin.



State Fire Marshal investigator Chris Janssen of Rockport was awarded the 2007 ATAC Law Enforcement Award for his arrests and referrals for arson. In 2006, Janssen referred 16 individuals for prosecution and 12 have already been indicted or convicted on arson related charges. Janssen has served in the State Fire Marshal's Office for six years.

State Fire Marshal Paul Maldonado, who presented the award, said Janssen is tireless when it comes to going after arsonists. "Chris is recognized in a 25 county area for his knowledge of the law and willingness to assist whenever called upon," Maldonado said. "He is continually one of the leaders among our arson investigators."

Tarrant County Deputy Fire Marshal Michael Rehfeld was awarded the 2007 ATAC Fire Service Special Award. Rehfeld was recognized for his leadership and support for implementing a Juvenile Firesetters Program countywide.

Tarrant County Fire Marshal Randy Renois said Rehfeld's efforts to enhance the juvenile program has made an impact. "There is no doubt in my mind that our countywide effort to abate juvenile arsons as well as prevent further juveniles from continuing to set fires is a direct result of Mike's desire and hard work to help our investigators as well as our juveniles," Renois said.

More than 200 fire investigators from Texas attended the five day fire and arson seminar.

ATAC members include fire, police, industrial and insurance representatives who are concerned about arson in Texas. ATAC funds the Arson Hotline, which is answered seven days a week, 24-hours a day and every caller remains anonymous. Calls that lead to legitimate arrests may result in a reward. The Arson Hotline number is 1-877-4-FIRE-45 (1-877-434-7345).

The Insurance Council of Texas (ICT) provides the administrative support in keeping ATAC operational on a daily basis. ICT staff members also publish and distribute the ATAC newsletter and work closely with the State Fire Marshal's Office in responding to calls from the Arson Hotline.

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