

# A TEXAS ADVISORY COUNCIL ON **ARSON**

Contact

For Immediate Release

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## **Nationwide and Germania Donate to Arson Hotline**

Nationwide, one of the largest insurance and financial services organizations in the world, and Germania, one of the oldest property and casualty companies in Texas, have made \$1,000 donations to the Texas Arson Hotline. The Arson Hotline has been responsible for more than two dozen arrests on charges of arson since its inception on November 10, 2001.

“The Arson Hotline has been able to demonstrate that intentionally setting fires to property is a serious crime and can result in jail time,” said Nationwide Regional Vice President John Raybuck.

David Sommer, president of Germania said, “Hopefully, our donation will encourage other insurance companies and those who are interested in fighting arson fires to invest in what we think is a valuable law enforcement tool.”

The Texas Arson Hotline was started by the State Fire Marshal to encourage people who had any knowledge of acts of arson to anonymously call in and report the crime. A Texas Advisory Council on Arson (ATAC) has been responsible for providing the funds that reward the anonymous callers.

ATAC president David Mitchell says the Arson Hotline phone number will soon be appearing on hundreds of fire emergency vehicles around the state and its distribution will encourage even more people to call in and report suspicious fires.

“We want to thank Nationwide and Germania for their acknowledging that the Arson Hotline is playing a significant role in identifying arson suspects and preventing more fires,” said Mitchell. “The Arson Hotline benefits both insurance companies and policyholders.”

The Arson Hotline number is 1-877-4-FIRE-45. The Arson Hotline 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.

In 2005, Texas recorded approximately 8,100 intentionally set fires that resulted in more than \$26 million in property losses. About ten percent of all fires in Texas are reported to be suspicious in nature.

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 works closely with the State Fire Marshal's Office in responding to calls from the Arson Hotline. Donations to the Arson Hotline can be made by contacting ICT's Mark Hanna at [mhanna@insurancecouncil.org](mailto:mhanna@insurancecouncil.org) or 512-444-9611.

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