



Office of Commissioner of  
Insurance and Safety Fire  
Protect | Enforce | Educate | Inform

**JOHN F. KING**  
*Commissioner of Insurance  
and Safety Fire*

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## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

**November 16, 2020**

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### ELDERLY MAN DIES IN HEARD COUNTY CAMPFIRE

**ATLANTA** – The Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John F. King announced today that Robert Ratliff Jr., 71, was killed in an accidental fire on Saturday, November 14. The fire occurred on the 12000 block of Highway 100 in Franklin.

This fire was reported by a property owner after he returned to his hunting camp around 7:00 p.m. The property owner reports that Mr. Ratliff had been staying at his property for approximately two weeks when he arrived to find Mr. Ratliff's body near a tree and the woods on fire.

“Our investigators believe Mr. Ratliff was getting out of his camping chair when he stumbled into the fire,” said Commissioner King. “This freak accident gives us heavy hearts as we pray for the loved ones impacted and we continue to investigate this case.”

When a Heard County police deputy arrived, he used a fire extinguisher on the fire and found Mr. Ratliff's phone and wallet in the fire. Mr. Ratliff's death marks the 75<sup>th</sup> fire fatality in Georgia this year.

Commissioner King's State Fire Investigations Unit is collaborating with the Heard County Sheriff's Office, Heard County Fire Department, Heard County Coroner's Office, and Forestry Unit.



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*The mission of the Office of the Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner is to protect Georgia families by providing access to vital insurance products and safe buildings through fair regulation that creates economic opportunities for all Georgians.*