



Office of Commissioner of Insurance and Safety Fire

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JOHN F. KING
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NEWS RELEASE

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SUSPECT ARRESTED IN PIKE COUNTY ARSON INVESTIGATION

ATLANTA – Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John F. King announced today that Jason Goolsby, 36, of Zebulon, has been arrested in connection with a series of fires at a residential home in the city of Molena.

On Sunday, August 11, the Pike County Fire Department responded to a fire on the front porch of a home on Grubbs Street. The initial cause of the fire was undetermined. A second front porch fire at the same address was reported on Thursday, August 22. The City of Molena Police Department and Pike County Fire Department requested Investigators from the State Fire Marshal’s Office to conduct an origin and cause investigation.

After obtaining voluntary consent from the property owner, an origin and cause investigation was conducted utilizing the assistance of an Ignitable Liquid Detection K9. Based on interviews and evidence gathered at the scene, both fires were classified as incendiary. A third fire occurred at the residence on Tuesday, August 26, and was also classified as incendiary.

During the investigation into all three fire events, officers with the Molena Police Department attempted to contact a witness who was in the home when all three fires occurred. The witness was reported as missing for nearly two weeks and officials began a missing persons investigation. Mr. Goolsby was soon identified as a person of interest in the investigation.

While conducting a wellness check at the Goolsby residence, deputies from the Pike County Sheriff’s Office located the missing witness who was being held at the residence against their will. Upon interview, the witness stated that Mr. Goolsby admitted to his involvement in all three fires in an attempt to intimidate the witness into moving out of their current residence and into his own.

On September 16, Mr. Goolsby’s vehicle was positively identified by patrol officers with the Baldwin County Sheriff’s Office, and a traffic stop was attempted. Mr. Goolsby ran from his vehicle, leading deputies on a foot pursuit where he was eventually taken into custody. The suspect currently remains in custody awaiting trial. He is charged with Kidnapping, False Imprisonment, and Arson among various other charges.

“During my time in law enforcement, you never knew when a simple investigation would turn into a life-threatening situation,” said Commissioner King. “Thanks to the incredible efforts of all the officers and fire safety personnel involved, we were able to put this dangerous criminal behind bars, and more importantly, prevent further harm from coming to his victims.”

Our office worked with the Pike County Fire Department, Pike County Sheriff's Office, Molena Police Department, and the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office on this investigation.

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The mission of the Office Commissioner of Insurance and Safety Fire 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.