



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections • Public Safety Services

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### Two Die, Two Injured in Heflin House Fire

**WEBSTER PARISH-** State Fire Marshal (SFM) deputies have concluded their investigation into a house fire that led to the deaths of an elderly man and woman and sent their adult daughter and a responding firefighter to the hospital.

Just after 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 19, the Heflin Volunteer Fire Department, with assistance from Bienville Fire Districts 4 and 5, responded to a report of a residential fire located in the 100 block of South Church Street. Firefighters arrived to find two women outside of the home badly burned reporting that an additional occupant was still inside. The body of a 74-year-old man was later found in the remains of the home.

The two women and a responding firefighter injured during his efforts were transported to a Shreveport hospital for treatment. Unfortunately, one of the women, a 74-year-old, later died. The other victim continues to be hospitalized while the firefighter is expected to make a full recovery.

Through the investigation, deputies learned the three residents in the home at the time of the fire included an elderly husband and wife as well as their 54-year-old daughter. The daughter reporting smelling something burning and finding fire in her parents' room as they laid in bed. The daughter pulled her mother from the fire first, at the insistence of her father, then made attempts to also rescue her father, who was a double amputee. Unfortunately, the smoke and flames prevented the daughter from continuing her efforts.

Official identifications are pending with the Webster Parish Coroner's Office.

Following an assessment of the scene and collecting witness statements, deputies have confirmed the fire began in the couple's bedroom. Deputies are unable to rule out unsafe smoking practices as the cause of this fire.

"So many things about this case are heartbreaking," said State Fire Marshal H. "Butch" Browning, "But I hope Louisianans use this family's tragedy as an opportunity to make their homes and behaviors safer so these lives are not lost in vain."

The SFM always recommends smoking outdoors and ensuring all smoking materials are properly extinguished in the appropriate manner. Also, refrain from smoking when tired or under the influence of alcohol or medications that make you drowsy. In addition, all spark-producing objects, like lighters, should be kept out of the reach of children.

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