



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UPDATE- SUSPECTS IDENTIFIED, ARRESTED IN COVINGTON BUSINESS FIRE INVESTIGATION

ST. TAMMANY PARISH- Hours after seeking assistance from the public to identify and locate two suspects in connection with a fire inside a heavily occupied, Covington big-box store, the two suspects have been arrested.

The 17-year-old and 15-year-old boys, both from Covington, were booked into the Florida Parishes Juvenile Detention Center on one count each of Aggravated Arson, Conspiracy to Commit Aggravated Arson and Manufacture and Possession of a Delayed Action Incendiary Device.

Around 8:15 p.m. on Sunday, June 4, St. Tammany Fire District #12 responded to a call for a fire inside the Walmart store located in the 800 block of North Highway 190 in Covington. The fire consumed an aisle of products in the automotive section. The store, which had at least 200 customers inside at the time, had to be evacuated. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Following an assessment of the scene, including obtaining video evidence, deputies determined the fire was intentionally set and began asking the public for assistance identifying and locating the two suspects.

Thanks to the overwhelming and quick response from the community, State Fire Marshal deputies in partnership with St. Tammany Sheriff's Office deputies learned the teens' names and whereabouts and were able to take them into custody this evening.

"We are grateful that the Northshore community stood up for itself today and made a stance against arson," said State Fire Marshal Chief Dan Wallis. "While it is very unfortunate two young people have been arrested in this case, I am hopeful that this situation encourages all adults to remind children and teens that fire is not a toy. Fire is very dangerous and can change lives in an instant, just like in this case."

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