



# NEWS RELEASE

## OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### State Fire Marshal's Office Outlines 2022 Performance

**BATON ROUGE, LA-** State Fire Marshal Dan Wallis is announcing the agency's 2022 performance outcomes which show continuity in services to and protection for the people of Louisiana following a seamless transition of leadership mid-year.

"I know that the formula for success established and executed under Chief Browning during his 14-year tenure is why the agency adjusted to me stepping into his shoes without a hitch," said Wallis, "I'm proud of the hard-working employees of this agency continuing to serve this state's residents and business owners with care, urgency, and superior standards."

The state's growing economy was evident in the number of plan review submittals for new commercial construction and/or significant renovation projects. In 2022, there were more than 19,000 submittals compared to 17,500 in 2021. The estimated total value of projects submitted in 2022 reached more than \$9.4 billion. The agency's plan review team addressed 56% of submittals within five days of their entry into our Information Management System (IMS.)

Enforcement deputies conducted around 26,500 final inspections of new commercial buildings opening across the state as well as compliance inspections of existing commercial buildings. In addition, deputies inspected hundreds of fireworks stands and displays, confirmed safety standards in in-home daycares, and responded to thousands of impairment reports on life safety and property protection systems in commercial businesses.

SFM deputies were requested to investigate more than 700 fire incidents. Of those fires, fewer than 250 were classified as incendiary which is consistent with 2021's figure that was lower than the prior three years' figures. The agency's arrest rate is around 45% which exceeds the national average (21% in 2020).

Unfortunately, despite a notable dip in fatal fire figures in 2021, we returned to losing almost 80 lives in residential fires in 2022. Only 3 of those cases involved structures with working smoke alarms at the time of the fires. The most common causes deputies were able to determine in these fires were electrical, heating-related, and/or smoking.

In addition, the SFM continued to license thousands of individuals and firms as well as issue more than 1,000 permits, and log more than 2,000 registrations in 2022, bringing in more than \$1 million in revenue. Those licenses, permits, and registrations apply to a host of industries including life safety & property protection businesses, amusement ride operators, conveyance devices, fireworks professionals and retailers along with boiler systems.

The agency's Emergency Services division continued its work to help in the wake of disasters both at home and in our partner states. An Incident Management Team coordinated by the SFM made up of about a dozen specialists deployed to Fort Myers Beach, Florida, following Hurricane Ian to assist the local fire district and town leadership with recovery functions and operations.

Lastly, the State Fire Marshal's Office continued to grow the efforts of its fire prevention and safety program by partnering with lawmakers to develop and pass legislation requiring sealed-battery, carbon monoxide detectors in all one and two-family homes sold or leased after January 1, 2023. The agency continues its partnership with local fire departments to offer the Operation Save-A-Life program which installs smoke alarms for free for families most in need.

"One of my goals for the agency in 2023 is to show the people of Louisiana another year of quality customer service," said Wallis, "But another is that I want to challenge the people of Louisiana to join us in the effort to prevent fires in all structures, especially in their own homes. We stand by the motto that 'fire is everyone's fight' and we want 2023 to be the year Louisianans fights for fire safety where they should be the most safe."

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