FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, May 7, 2018

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State Fire Marshal: “Be Aware. Arson Ain’t Cool.”

Arson Awareness Week 2018 is May 6-12

SPRINGFIELD – The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is highlighting how Illinois communities can help prevent arson with the release of an online public service announcement (PSA).

The video coincides with the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s 2018 Arson Awareness Week. This year’s theme is, Preventing Arson in Vacant and Abandoned Buildings.

“Arson causes irreparable damage to buildings and is a leading cause for fire fatalities in the country,” said State Fire Marshal Matt Perez. “Our Division of Arson Investigation reviews thousands of cases each year. We need all Illinoisans to be vigilant when it comes to preventing arson in their communities.”

In the PSA, Division of Arson Investigation Manager Terry Ooms provides five tips for Illinoisans to help prevent—especially in vacant buildings:

1. Keep leaves, overgrown brush and other combustibles away from buildings;
2. Store all flammable liquids such as paints and gasoline in an approved storage location;
3. Ensure that vacant buildings have locked doors and windows;
4. Establish an arson watch program within your neighborhood and;
5. If you know or suspect that an arson crime has been committed, contact your local fire or police department.

Arson is the leading cause of property damage due to fire in the United States. In 2017, the OSFM’s Division of Arson determined that nearly 40 percent of the fires they investigated were set intentionally.

In addition to investigating potential arson cases, OSFM’s Division of Arson Investigation oversees the Youth Firesetter Intervention Program. It’s a statewide standardized program that provides education and intervention to children and
families to reduce the frequency and severity of fires set by youths. This prevention education is held in partnership with Illinois’ fire service community. For more information on the Youth Firesetter Intervention Program, go to: https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/About/Divisions/Arson/YFSIP/Pages/default.aspx

The Arson Awareness Week PSA is available here.

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