



# 2009 ANNUAL REPORT





# ALABAMA STATE FIRE MARSHAL





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#### Introduction

The 2009 Annual Report of the Alabama State Fire Marshal's Office is submitted by State Fire Marshal Edward Paulk in compliance with Section 36-19-26, <u>Code of Alabama</u>, 1975.

The State Fire Marshal's Office ended 2009 with a staff of 20 Deputy State Fire Marshals, down one position with the retirement of Deputy Marshal Graham in December 2009. Deputy State Fire Marshal's are law enforcement officers. The State Fire Marshal's Office conducts investigations to determine the origin and cause of fires and explosions, criminal investigations of those cases determined to be arson, inspections of structures for compliance with the building and fire codes adopted by the state and regulatory functions in the licensure of the fire sprinkler industry, the fireworks industry, and the blasting industry. In 2009, the fire standard compliant cigarette legislation was passed which requires the cigarette industry to become licensed in January 2010.

In 2009, we experienced a 9 percent decrease in the number of fire investigations, ending the year with 871 investigations. These investigations resulted in 237 arrests for crimes ranging from arson and capital murder to drug related offenses. The decrease in investigations was met with a 41 percent increase in the criminal charges resulting from the investigations.

The increase in criminal charges resulting from fire investigations in 2009 is due in part to the economy, as we are seeing an increase in the crime of arson because of the economic motive. This trend is troubling and we will continue to examine the data, looking for ways to combat the financially motivated fires.

Fire fatalities in 2009 jumped 16.5 percent over 2008 to a total of 85. This is troubling as the fatalities experienced in 2008 were the lowest in the past ten years. We are planning to increase our efforts in the area of inspections and public education to combat this problem.

Inspections conducted during 2009 totaled one thousand seven hundred twenty-six inspections (1,726), an increase of 6 percent over those conducted in 2008. Inspections found conditions in eight of these cases to be severe, especially liable to fire and endangered lives and property and required the issuance of Fire Marshal Orders to close the facilities until the conditions could be brought into code compliance. These cases included three assembly occupancies, two motels, one college dorm, storage occupancy and a detention facility. Our inspection efforts have focused on education and assembly occupancies in an effort to impact facilities where numbers of people gather.

We are continuing to strengthen and increase the partnerships we began to form in 2006. These partnerships began with other state departments and agencies and now include federal and local agencies and associations. We are attempting to maximize our efforts through these partnerships and thereby increase our presence without the cost of adding many additional employees to our staff.

2010 will be another year to challenge our inspection and education capabilities as we are faced with the prospect of maintaining facilities for use that were scheduled for replacement. This will require that we work hard to maintain these buildings and their required fire systems to provide a safe environment for citizens to work play and live. We will look to life safety education efforts to help change the behavior of people, to eliminate hazards that our bad habits create.

We look to 2010 as we continue to improve our response to the needs of our State.



#### Who We Are . . .

The Alabama State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) is a division of the Alabama Department of Insurance. The department is under the leadership of Insurance Commissioner Jim Ridling. Commissioner Ridling provides the resources for the SFMO to accomplish the goals and perform the duties and responsibilities of the office. A portion of the funding for the SFMO is provided through monies generated by permits issued by the office.

The Alabama State Fire Marshal's Office was established in 1917. In 1919, the first legislative act regarding the authority, duties and responsibilities of the office was adopted and signed into law. In 1953, the State Fire Marshal's Office became a division of the Alabama Department of Insurance. Title 36 Chapter 19 of the <u>Code of Alabama</u>, 1975 provides the authority and prescribes the duties of the office of the State Fire Marshal and his deputies. The Fire Marshal, Assistant and Deputies are state police officers and carry general police powers statewide.

The Alabama State Fire Marshal's office consists of State Fire Edward Paulk, Assistant State Fire Scott Pilgreen, Assistant State Fire Marshal Jeffrey Thompson and 19 deputies with a combined total of 145 years of experience. The deputies are located in field offices throughout the state and are responsible for investigations and inspections in their respective districts. The headquarters in Montgomery is staffed by the State Fire Marshal, two Assistant State Fire Marshals and four administrative support personnel.

The SFMO conducts inspections of buildings and properties to ensure the buildings are safe for occupancy for their intended use, and provides for adequate exits in the event of fire, disaster or other emergencies. The SFMO adopts and enforces various Building, Life Safety and Fire Prevention Codes. The State Fire Marshal is charged with the promulgation and enforcement of regulations pertaining to building construction and fire safety for the citizens of Alabama.

The State Fire Marshal's Office regulates and permits the fireworks industry, fire sprinkler industry, fire alarm industry, and blasting industry.

The SFMO investigates fires, explosions and any related crimes. Assistance is provided to fire departments and other law enforcement agencies in the prevention of arson and explosions, and provides support to the courts for prosecution of cases made by its personnel. The office provides training for the public, courts, fire and law enforcement departments in fire prevention, fire investigation, detection of arson, and education for the interpretation of fire and building codes and life safety regulations.

#### Our Mission . . .

The mission of the Alabama State Fire Marshal's Office is to provide inspection services, to conduct investigations of fires and explosions, to prevent the commission of arson and related crimes, to protect lives and property from fires and explosions and to provide visitors and citizens of the state a safe environment in which to live, work and play.





State Fire Marshal Edward Paulk



Assistant State Fire Marshal Scott Pilgreen



Assistant State Fire Marshal Jeff Thompson



Left to Right: Carolyn Lee, Vicki Parker, Alesha Womble, and Angela Slade

# smoke Alarins Save Lives

#### Alabama Smoke Alarm Initiative

The Alabama Smoke Alarm Initiative (ASAI) is a collaborative project of the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama State Fire Marshal. Operating funds are provided through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This program was initiated in October 2001 and Deputy State Fire Marshal Jebb Harrison is currently assigned to this program.

ASAI has worked with thirty-one (31) fire departments in twenty (20) counties from October 2001 through September 2009.

The fire departments and counties are Livingston and York Fire Departments in Sumter County, Brent VFD in Bibb County, Notasulga and Tuskegee Fire Departments in Macon County, Thompson Cornerstone and Warrior Stand VFDs in Bullock County, Clayton VFDs in Barbour County, Dollarhide VFDs in Greene County, Brundidge and Corinth VFDs in Pike County, Forest Home, Providence and Mt. Pisgah VFDs in Butler County, Newell and Wedowee VFDs in Randolph County, Bullock and Dozier VFDs in Crenshaw County, Kellyton VFD in Coosa County, Leroy and Yarbo VFDs in Washington County, Fayette and Boley VFDs in Fayette County, Moundville VFD in Hale County, Frisco City VFD in Monroe County and Brewton, East Brewton and Wawbeek Fire Departments in Escambia County.

In 2009 ASAI worked in the following counties; Lamar and Marion and with these fire departments Bear Creek VFD, Hamilton VFD, and Winfield VFD in Marion County, Vernon VFD in Lamar County.

Since 2001 the Alabama Smoke Alarm Initiative (ASAI) has reached 8,007 families with fire safety messages, 7,944 smoke alarms have been installed and 75 lives have been saved. An average of 63% of the homes visited had a smoke alarm in the home and 52% of the homes with a smoke alarm had at least one smoke alarm that was working.

The State Fire Marshal's Office is looking forward to participating in the ASAI program until all homes in Alabama have been provided with working smoke alarms.



## Alabama Fire Incident Reporting System (AFIRS)

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 authorizes the National Fire Data Center in the United States Fire Administration (USFA), an entity of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to gather and analyze information on the magnitude of the Nation's fire problem, as well as its detailed characteristics and trends. The Act further authorizes the USFA to develop uniform data reporting methods, and to encourage and assist state agencies in developing and reporting data. In order to carry out the intention of this Act, the National Fire Data Center has established the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

The State of Alabama, recognizing the importance and benefits of reliable statistical data, is encouraging fire departments to submit data to AFIRS. AFIRS is Alabama's segment of the National Fire Incident Reporting System. Currently, four hundred fifty-five (455) fire departments out of the 1,041 departments have activated the electronic reporting account to the system. Four hundred twenty-five (425) departments have actually submitted data to the system in 2009. Alabama is one-third of the way towards having timely, factual data on which many decisions can be made. In support of AFIRS, the State Fire Marshal's Office administers the creation of the reporting accounts for departments, provides software for the electronic reporting and provides support services. Twenty (20) training sessions with county fire associations have been conducted around the state, which provided information and assistance to all interested departments in the area. Assistance is provided to any department who asks for help. Assistance is first attempted over the telephone; however, for more difficult problems, site visits are not uncommon. The software necessary for reporting is supplied to departments on a CD, which is computer generated in the Fire Marshal's Office; one hundred fifty (150) copies of software were provided to departments in 2009. Many departments now have highspeed internet connections and can download the software and updates to the software, reducing the number of copies provided by this office.

# **K-9 Accelerant Detection Handlers**

During the late 1980s and early 1990s the State Fire Marshal's Office began training Deputy State Fire Marshals to be K-9 accelerant detection handlers. Presently, there are two (2) K-9 teams located throughout the state. These teams respond as needed to assist our division and other police departments and fire departments in locating trace amounts of hydrocarbon residue at fire scenes. The teams also provide another service to the citizens of the State of Alabama by conducting demonstrations of controlled searches at schools and civic groups. This is done throughout the year to assist with Fire Prevention Awareness. These teams are a very valuable asset to this division and to the Department of Insurance.



Deputy Jebb Harrison and K-9 Bako



Deputy Ray Cumby and K-9 Andy

# Lone lite Revention Tips



### Fires can be prevented from starting if you take some simple precautions. Here are some important safety measures to remember . . .

#### **To Prevent Chimney Fires:**

\* Have your chimney cleaned annually; preferably prior to its use in the fall and winter months.

#### **To Prevent Kitchen Fires:**

- Stay in the room when cooking on the stove. If you need to leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off all stove burners before leaving the room.
- When cooking in a microwave, use only those utensils and items approved for use in a microwave.
- \* Do not use the oven to provide heat for your home.

#### **To Prevent Laundry Room Fires:**

- If you have a dryer or washing machine that trips an electrical breaker frequently, an underlying wiring problem could be the cause. Have the wiring checked by a properly licensed electrician.
- \* Clean all dryer/lint filters as needed; vacuum around dryers to eliminate accumulation of lint.

#### **To Prevent Living Room Fires:**

- Beware of plugging multiple electrical appliances into one surge protector and NEVER overload electrical outlets.
- Keep space heaters and halogen lamps away from flammable and combustible materials.
- Never leave a lit candle unattended.
- Remember that extension cords are for temporary use only and are not meant to replace permanent wiring, NEVER cover an extension cord with carpet, rugs or other material.

#### **To Prevent Bedroom Fires:**

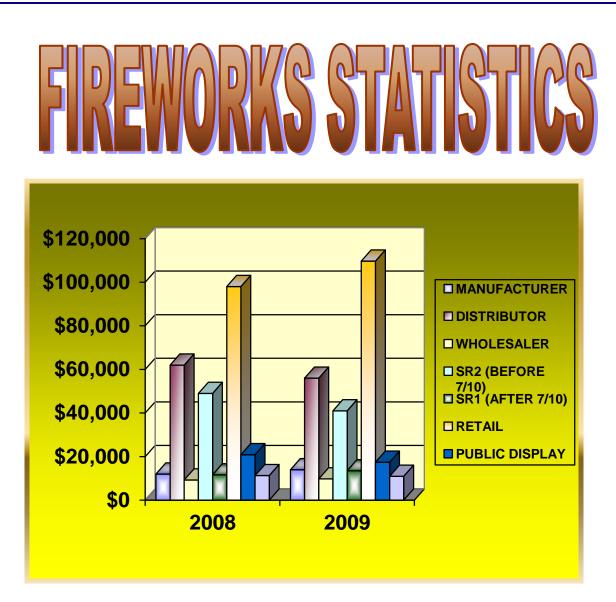
- **DO NOT** smoke in bed.
- ★ Keep all matches and lighters out of the hands of children.
- \* Keep combustible material away from space heaters.

Remember, fire safety begins at home and fire prevention begins with a plan. Practice fire escape drills at home and have a meeting place outside away from the home in the event of an evacuation.

Remember to have properly functioning smoke alarms throughout your home. Check your smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least twice annually.

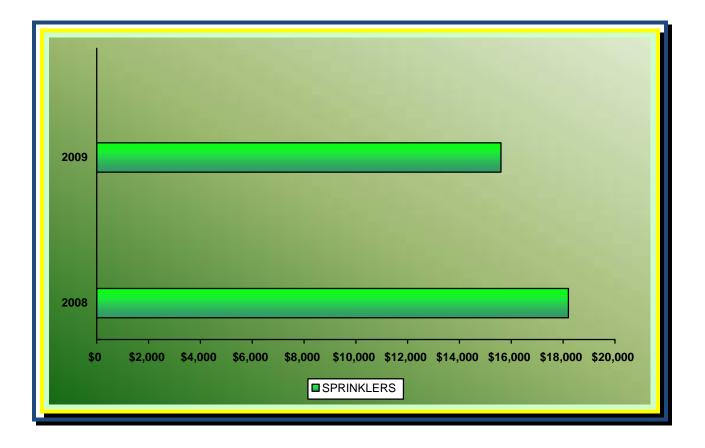


Watch and enjoy fireworks from a safe distance. *Never* shoot fireworks towards people or buildings. *Never* shoot fireworks from your hands or body parts. *Never* shoot fireworks from or toward a motor vehicle. *Never* let children play with fireworks. Always have a responsible adult present when shooting fireworks.



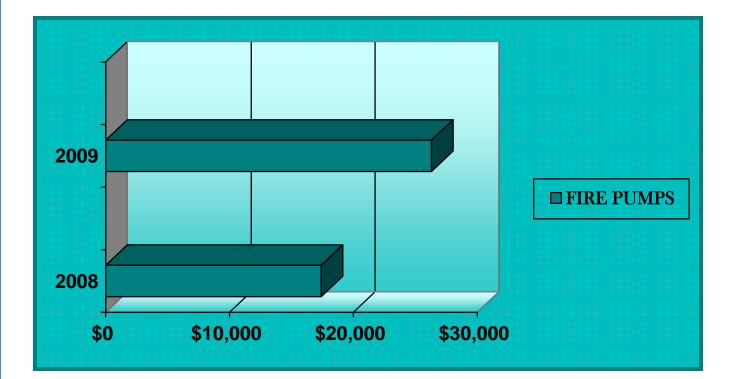
MONIES COLLECTED FOR 2008		MONIES COLLECTED FOR 2009	
DISTRIBUTOR	\$62,000.	DISTRIBUTOR	\$56,000.
MANUFACTURER	\$12,000.	MANUFACTURER	\$14,000.
WHOLESALER	\$ 9,300.	WHOLESALER	\$ 9,800.
SEASONAL RETAILER - SR2 BEFORE 7/10	\$49,000.	SEASONAL RETAILER – SR2 BEFORE 7/10	\$41,000.
SEASONAL RETAILER – SR1		SEASONAL RETAILER – SR1	
<b>AFTER 7/10</b>	\$11,600.	AFTER 7/10	\$13,500.
RETAIL	\$98,000.	RETAIL	\$109,700.
PUBLIC DISPLAY	\$20,850.	PUBLIC DISPLAY	\$17,450.
CLOSE PROXIMITY	\$11,300.	CLOSE PROXIMITY	\$10,950.
TOTALS	\$274,050.	TOTALS	\$272,400.
PERMITS ISSUED	1,379	PERMITS ISSUED	1,342
<b>INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED</b>	1,059	<b>INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED</b>	1,016

# SPRINKLER STATISTICS



MONIES COLLECTED FOR 2008	MONIES COLLECTED FOR 2009	
SPRINKLER CONTRACTORS \$18,200.	SPRINKLER CONTRACTORS \$15,600.	
PERMITS ISSUED 149	PERMITS ISSUED 156	

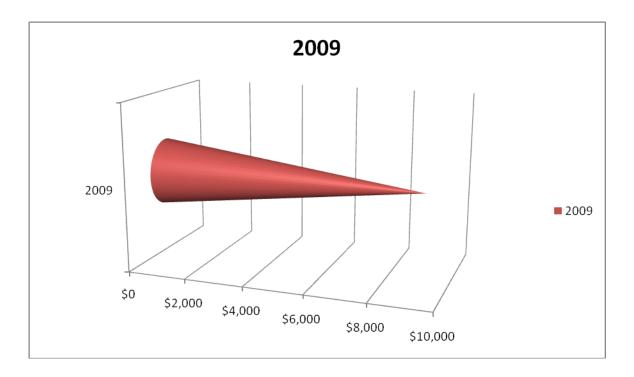
# FIRE PUMP STATISTICS



MONIES COLLECTED FOR 2008		MONIES COLLECTED FOR 2009	
FIRE PUMPS	\$17,400.	FIRE PUMPS	\$26,300.
PERMITS ISSUED	174	PERMITS ISSUED	263

14

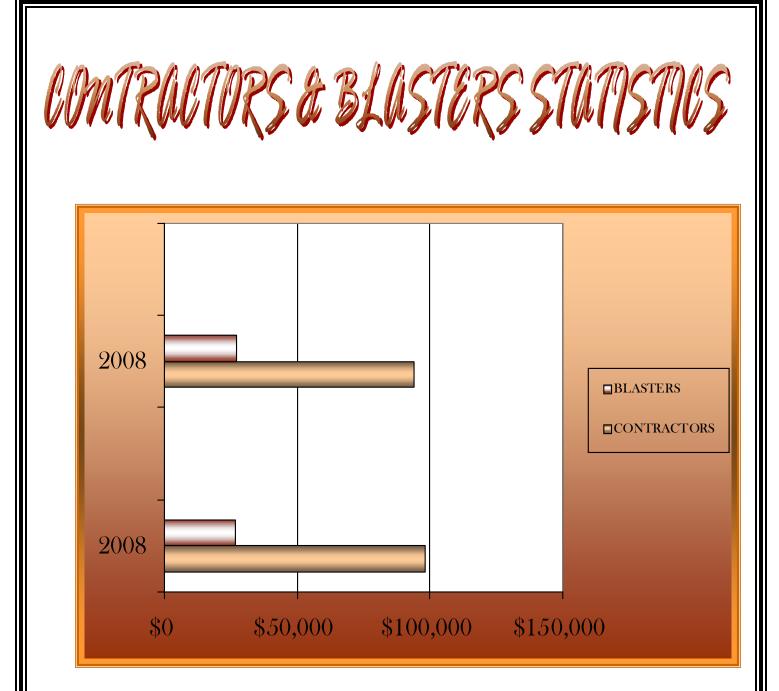
# FIRE ALARM CONTRACTORS



#### **MONIES COLLECTED FOR 2009**

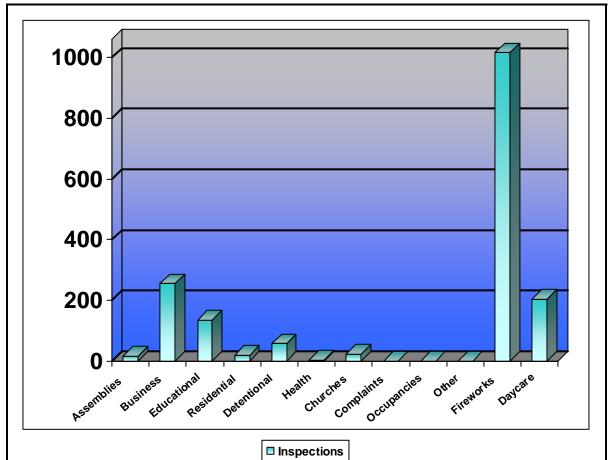
FIRE ALARMS \$9,100.

PERMITS ISSUED 91



MONIES COLLECTED FOR 2008		MONIES COLLECTED FOR 2009	
CONTRACTORS	\$ 98,000	CONTRACTORS	\$94,000
BLASTERS	\$26,600	BLASTERS	\$27,000
TOTALS	\$124,600	TOTALS	\$121,000
	01.7		017
TOTAL PERMITS ISSUED	315	TOTAL PERMITS ISSUED	317

### Inspections



CLASSIFICATION	INSPECTIONS
Assembly	16
Business	254
Educational	135
Residential	19
Detentional	57
Health	3
Church	22
Complaints	0
Occupancy	0
Other	0
Fireworks	1,016
Daycare	204
TOTAL	1,726

## Inspections by County

AUTAUGA	6	JACKSON	12
BALDWIN	50	JEFFERSON	39
BARBOUR	3	LAMAR	5
BIBB	5	LAUDERDALE	13
BLOUNT	12	LAWRENCE	5
BULLOCK	5	LEE	4
BUTLER	5	LIMESTONE	10
CALHOUN	15	LOWNDES	2
CHAMBERS	23	MACON	2
CHEROKEE	2	MADISON	1
CHILTON	9	MARENGO	5
CHOCTAW	3	MARION	13
CLARKE	6	MARSHALL	14
CLAY	4	MOBILE	15
CLEBURNE	3	MONROE	2
COFFEE	51	MONTGOMERY	6
COLBERT	11	MORGAN	12
CONECUH	5	PERRY	-
COOSA	7	PICKENS	3
COVINGTON	13	PIKE	2
CRENSHAW	7	RANDOLPH	8
CULLMAN	26	RUSSELL	1
DALE	19	SHELBY	12
DALLAS	1	ST. CLAIR	7
DEKALB	6	SUMTER	5
ELMORE	22	TALLADEGA	99
ESCAMBIA	16	TALLAPOOSA	3
ETOWAH	4	TUSCALOOSA	9
FAYETTE	5	WALKER	14
FRANKLIN	5	WASHINGTON	1
GENEVA	6	WILCOX	3
GREENE	1	WINSTON	11
HALE	2		
HENRY	4		
HOUSTON	11	TOTAL	711

# Fireworks Inspections by County

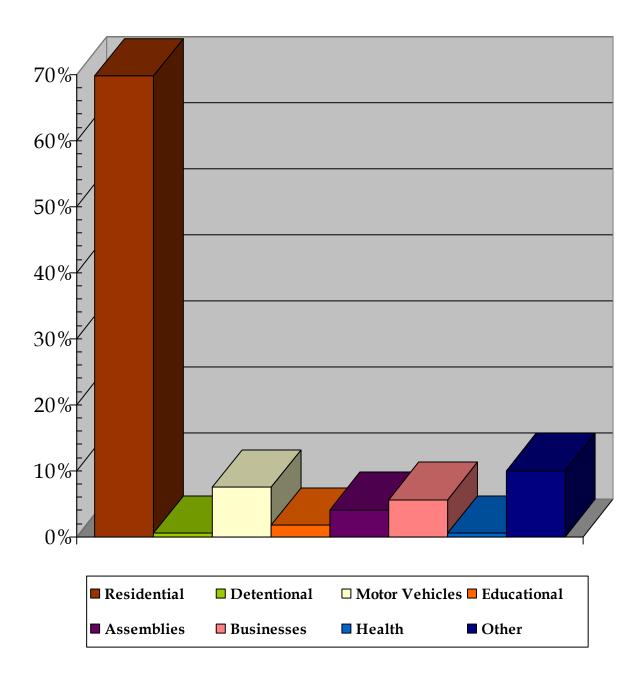
AUTAUGA	7	JACKSON	11
BALDWIN	27	JEFFERSON	85
BARBOUR	3	LAMAR	2
BIBB	7	LAUDERDALE	29
BLOUNT	17	LAWRENCE	13
BULLOCK	3	LEE	10
BUTLER	4	LIMESTONE	18
CALHOUN	18	LOWNDES	3
CHAMBERS	12	MACON	4
CHEROKEE	13	MADISON	73
CHILTON	19	MARENGO	8
CHOCTAW	7	MARION	11
CLARKE	4	MARSHALL	16
CLAY	4	MOBILE	78
CLEBURNE	11	MONROE	7
COFFEE	5	MONTGOMERY	22
COLBERT	15	MORGAN	17
CONECUH	2	PERRY	2
COOSA	0	PICKENS	5
COVINGTON	11	PIKE	4
CRENSHAW	2	RANDOLPH	10
CULLMAN	28	RUSSELL	6
DALE	8	SHELBY	33
DALLAS	7	ST. CLAIR	11
DEKALB	26	SUMTER	2
ELMORE	26	TALLADEGA	17
ESCAMBIA	8	TALLAPOOSA	18
ETOWAH	33	TUSCALOOSA	71
FAYETTE	2	WALKER	24
FRANKLIN	7	WASHINGTON	3
GENEVA	11	WILCOX	1
GREENE	1	WINSTON	14
HALE	5		
HENRY	2		
HOUSTON	33	TOTAL	1,016

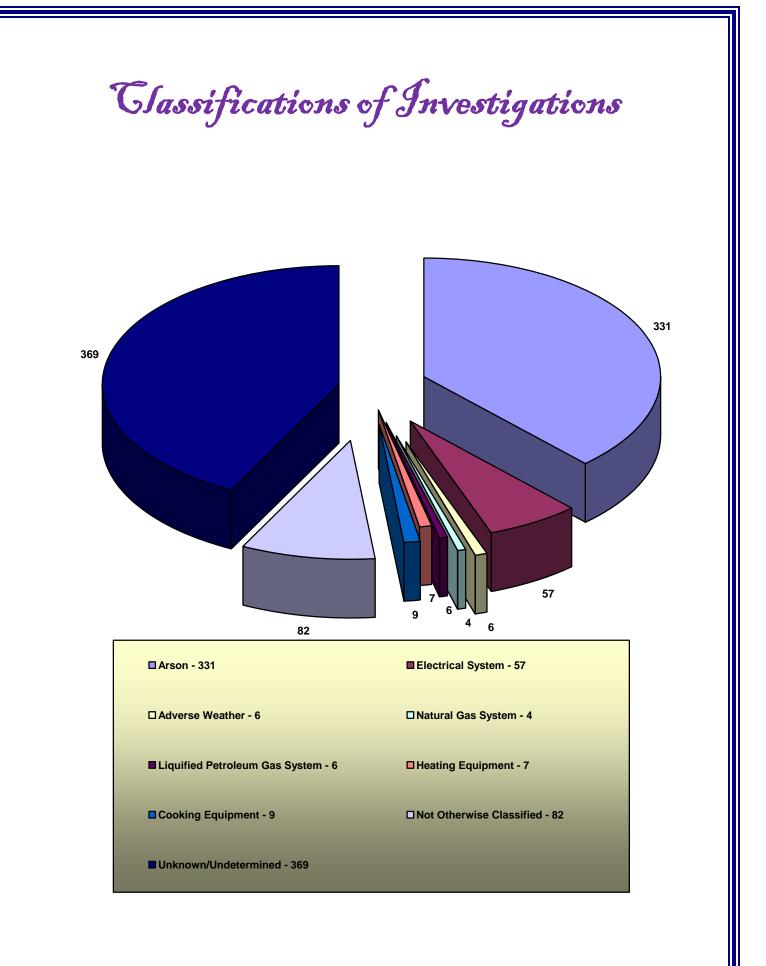
## Classifications of Property Involved A Closer Look..

RESIDENTIAL:	70%
DWELLINGS	425
MOBILE HOMES	152
APARTMENTS, DORMITORIES	23
HUNTING CLUBS/LODGES	5
HOTELS/MOTELS	6
DETENTIONAL:	.5%
JAILS, etc.	4
MOTOR VEHICLES:	7.5%
AUTOMOBILES, TRUCKS, etc.	61
MOTOR HOMES/CAMPER TRAILERS	-
WATERCRAFT	2
FARM EQUIPMENT/ TRACTORS,	
HEAVY EQUIPMENT, etc.	2
EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES:	1.7%
SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES	15
ASSEMBLIES:	4.1%
ASSEMBLIES/CHURCHES	29
RESTAURANTS	7
BUSINESSES:	5.6%
INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL,	49
MERCANTILE	
HEALTHCARE:	.5%
DOCTOR OFFICES, HOSPITALS	5
OTHER:	10%
	86
TOTAL	871

## Investigations

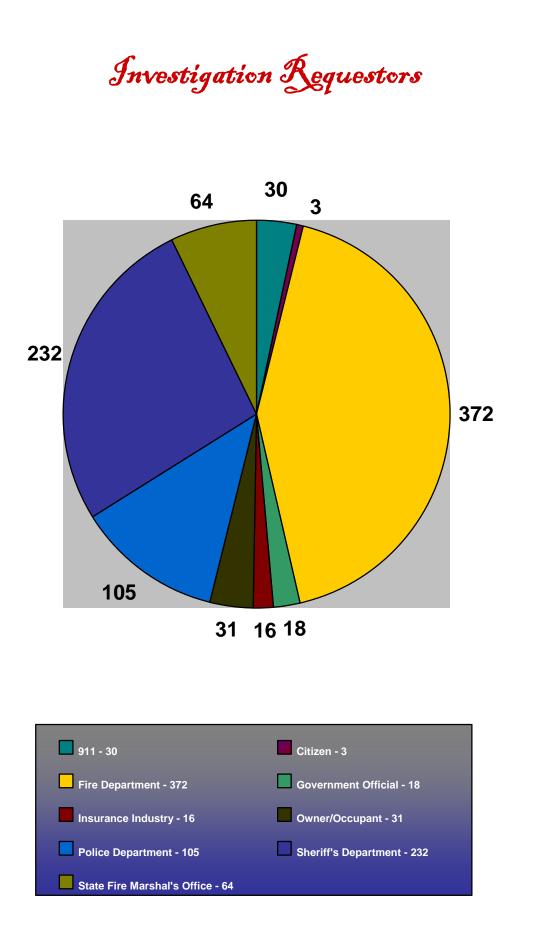
## **Classifications of Property Involved**







AUTAUGA	10	JACKSON	23
BALDWIN	37	JEFFERSON	40
BARBOUR	5	LAMAR	7
BIBB	9	LAUDERDALE	42
BLOUNT	13	LAWRENCE	17
BULLOCK	6	LEE	5
BUTLER	10	LIMESTONE	8
CALHOUN	28	LOWNDES	8
CHAMBERS	10	MACON	-
CHEROKEE	3	MADISON	23
CHILTON	7	MARENGO	7
CHOCTAW	1	MARION	14
CLARKE	4	MARSHALL	8
CLAY	6	MOBILE	21
CLEBURNE	12	MONROE	6
COFFEE	11	MONTGOMERY	6
COLBERT	23	MORGAN	12
CONECUH	5	PERRY	7
COOSA	7	PICKENS	4
COVINGTON	9	PIKE	4
CRENSHAW	5	RANDOLPH	7
CULLMAN	18	RUSSELL	-
DALE	9	SHELBY	6
DALLAS	16	ST. CLAIR	17
DEKALB	9	SUMTER	3
ELMORE	21	TALLADEGA	37
ESCAMBIA	20	TALLAPOOSA	14
ETOWAH	34	TUSCALOOSA	29
FAYETTE	9	WALKER	67
FRANKLIN	15	WASHINGTON	6
GENEVA	8	WILCOX	3
GREENE	6	WINSTON	10
HALE	6		
HENRY	3		
HOUSTON	15	TOTAL	871

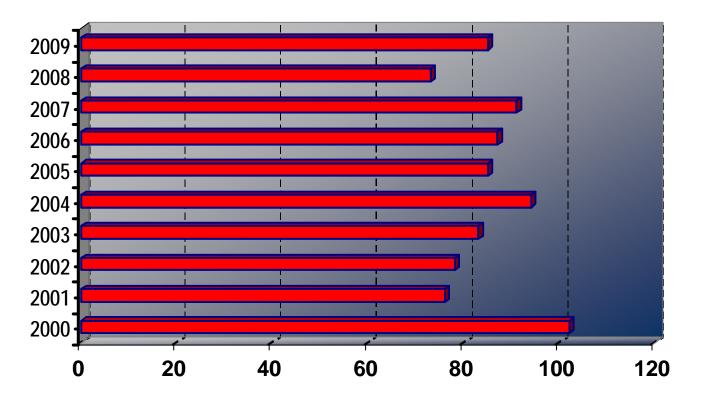




Alcohol – Possession of a Still	1
Arson	99
Assault	2
Attempted Murder	3
Burglary	30
Capital Murder	11
Conspiracy to Commit Arson	1
Conspiracy to Commit Murder	1
Criminal Mischief	16
Criminal Solicitation	2
Criminal Trespass	3
Cruelty to Animals	1
Disorderly Conduct	2
Domestic Violence	1
Driving Revoked	1
Failure to Appear (FTA) Alias Warrant	1
Falsely Reporting an Incident	2
Harassing Communications	2
Hindering Prosecution	3
Igniting fireworks within 600 ft of a school	1
Imp Ins/rep/mnt Sprinkler	5
Murder	2
Obstructing Governmental Operations	1
Rape	1
Receiving Stolen Property	5
Reckless Endangerment	3

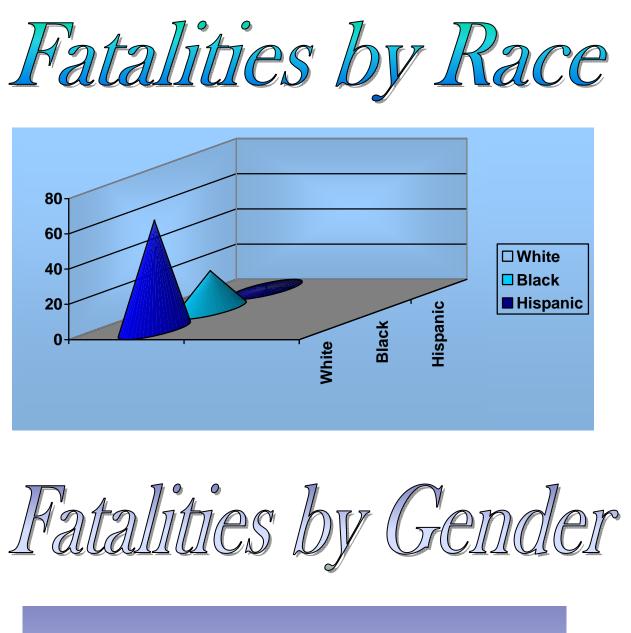
Robbery	1
Smoke Detectors	1
Terrorist Threat	1
Theft of Property	21
Unlawful Breaking & Entering of a Motor Vehicle	1
Unlawful Manufacture of a Controlled Substance	1
Unlawful Possession of Marijuana	2
Use or Possession of Drug Paraphernalia	2
Willfully Setting Grass Fires	1
Woodlands Arson	6
TOTAL	237

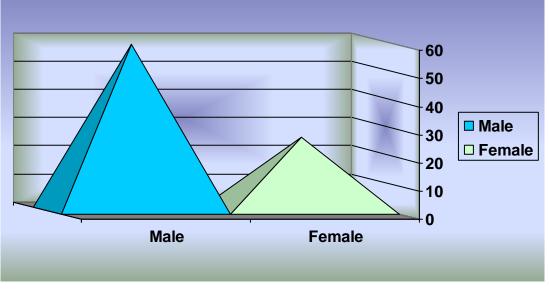
Alabama Fire Fatality Record



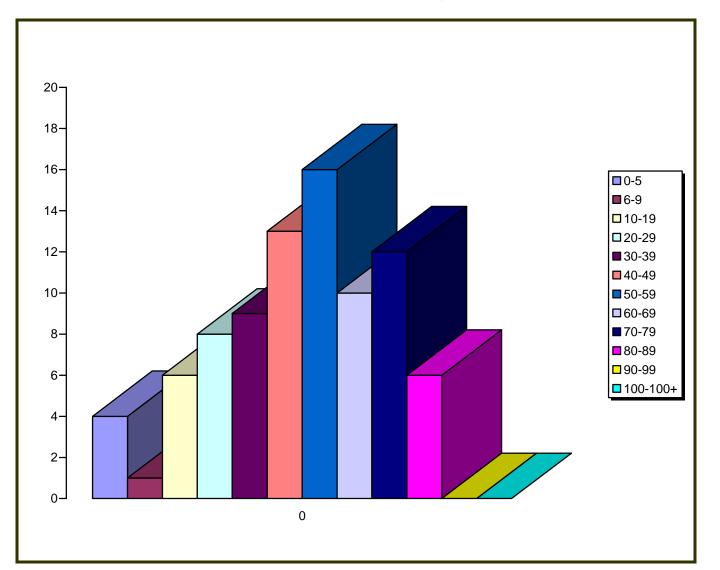
Alabama's fire death record for the past ten years is statistically graphed above. The exact numbers of annual fire-related fatalities are as follows:

2000 – 102
2001 – 76
2002 – 78
2003 – 83
2004 – 94
2005 – 85
2006 – 87
2007 – 91
2008 – 73
2009 - 85





## **Fatalities by Age**



The fire-related fatalities are broken down into age groups in the graph above. The exact fatalities per age group are as follows:

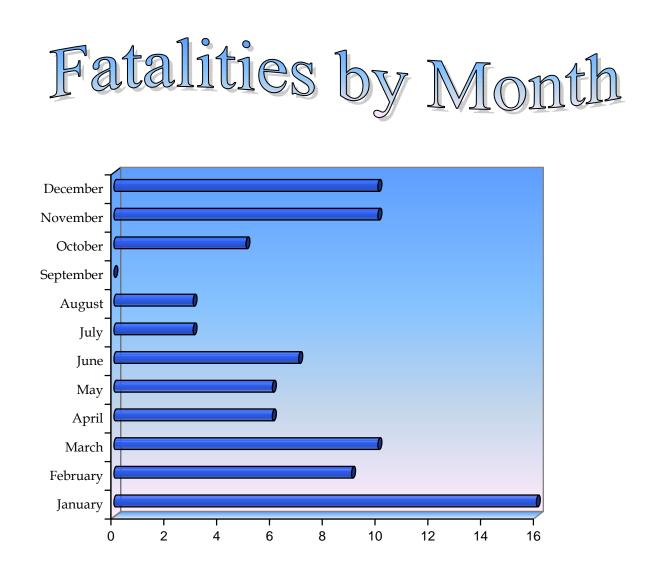
Age	Number	Age	Number
0 – 5	4	60 - 69	10
6 – 9	1	70 – 79	12
10 – 19	6	80 - 89	6
20 - 29	8	<u>90 - 99</u>	-
30 – 39	9	100+	-
40 – 49	13		
50 - 59	16	Total	85

### FIRE FATALITY CAUSES

ARSON BY FIRE	4
MURDER BY FIRE	3
SUICIDE BY FIRE	2
AUTOMOBILE-COLLISION	
IMPROPER USE OF FLAMMABLE LIQUID	3
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM-WIRING-	5
PERMANENT-INTERIOR	3
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM-WIRING-	5
TEMPORARY-INTERIOR	1
ELECTRIC-STOVE/OVEN-	•
	4
EQUIPMENT/APPLIANCE-	
PERMANENT-INTERIOR	1
FIREPLACE	1
L.P. GAS-STOVE/OVEN-	
LEFT UNATTENDED	1
LIQUIFIED PETROLEUM GAS SYSTEM-	I
PIPING/TUBING-PERMANENT-INTERIOR	9
MISUSE OF SMOKING MATERIALS	9
(including improperly discarded)	
	1
UNDETERMINED	28
UNDETERMINED-SUSPICIOUS	3
UNDETERMINED-NOT SUSPICIOUS	11
NOT OTHERWISE CLASSIFIED	3
NON-CRIMINAL NON-FIRE OR EXPLOSIVE	1
OTHER – NON CRIMINAL	1
TOTAL	85

Fatalities by County

AUTAUGA	2	JACKSON	-
BALDWIN	1	JEFFERSON	12
BARBOUR	1	LAMAR	-
BIBB	1	LAUDERDALE	2
BLOUNT	1	LAWRENCE	-
BULLOCK	1	LEE	1
BUTLER	1	LIMESTONE	1
CALHOUN	3	LOWNDES	3
CHAMBERS	-	MACON	-
CHEROKEE	1	MADISON	3
CHILTON	-	MARENGO	-
CHOCTAW	-	MARION	1
CLARKE	1	MARSHALL	1
CLAY	-	MOBILE	5
CLEBURNE	-	MONROE	-
COFFEE	2	MONTGOMERY	1
COLBERT	1	MORGAN	1
CONECUH	-	PERRY	-
COOSA	-	PICKENS	1
COVINGTON	1	PIKE	-
CRENSHAW	-	RANDOLPH	1
CULLMAN	1	RUSSELL	-
DALE	1	SHELBY	-
DALLAS	2	ST. CLAIR	1
DEKALB	1	SUMTER	-
ELMORE	1	TALLADEGA	2
ESCAMBIA	2	TALLAPOOSA	-
ЕТОЖАН	5	TUSCALOOSA	5
FAYETTE	-	WALKER	3
FRANKLIN	3	WASHINGTON	3
GENEVA	1	WILCOX	-
GREENE	-	WINSTON	-
HALE	-		
HENRY	1		
HOUSTON	3	TOTAL	85



The fire-related fatalities are broken down by months in the graph above. The exact fatalities per month are as follows:

January	16	July	3
February	9	August	3
March	10	September	-
April	6	October	5
May	6	November	10
June	7	December	10

#### Total Fatalities - 85