

Conroe Fire Department



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K9 Pearl the Newest Member of the Conroe Fire Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Conroe, TX: The Conroe Fire Department is pleased to announce that K9 Pearl is the newest member of the department. Pearl is a certified Arson Dog who has been trained to sniff out accelerants used to start fires. Pearl and her handler, Lieutenant/Deputy Fire Marshal Branden Ferrell, have just returned from an intensive 200 hour/4 week training program in Maine.

Pearl was obtained through a grant administered by State Farm. State Farm has been a sponsor of the Arson Dog Program since 1993. Pearl and Lt. Ferrell are one of the more than 380 arson dog teams in the United States and Canada sponsored by State Farm and trained by Maine Specialty Dogs. These arson investigation teams assist local and state law enforcement officers in the investigation of fires.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), an estimated 280,000 intentional fires are reported to U.S. fire departments each year, with associated annual losses of 420 civilian deaths, 1,360 civilian injuries, and \$1.3 billion in direct property damage. The actual number of arson fires and amount of property damage is likely much higher as arson is an underreported crime. Arson dogs play a key role in determining the cause of many of these fires.

As of April, 2017, there are 96 active accelerant detection canines, also known as arson dogs, trained through the State Farm Arson Dog Program. The K9s are all Labrador Retrievers or Goldadors due to their superior ability to discriminate scents at a fire scene, their good disposition and outgoing personality, and their "love to work" type attitude.

Pearl will serve to enhance the fire investigative capabilities of the Conroe Fire Department Fire Marshal's Office in the detection and prosecution of the crime of arson.

More information on this program can be obtained by visiting www.arsondog.org or by contacting Chris Pilcic with State Farm at (214) 681-2125.

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