



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ville Platte Woman Dies in Duplex Fire

EVANGELINE PARISH- State Fire Marshal (SFM) deputies continue investigating the circumstances surrounding a duplex fire in Ville Platte that claimed the life of a female resident.

Around 1 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 11, the Ville Platte Fire Department responded to a call at a 2-unit residential structure, or duplex, located in the 5600 block of Vine Street. While first responders were able to safely evacuate the occupant of one of the units, firefighters unfortunately located the body of a woman in the living room of the second unit.

While official identification and cause of death are pending with the Evangeline Parish Coroner's Office, the victim is believed to be a 62-year-old resident of the unit where the fire began.

Following an assessment of the scene, deputies determined the fire began on the couch where the victim was located. Deputies learned the woman, who was disabled, was also a heavy smoker. Based on witness statements, and evidence found at the scene, deputies cannot rule out improperly discarded smoking materials as a likely cause of the fire.

The SFM always recommends smoking outdoors and ensuring all smoking materials are properly extinguished in the appropriate manner. Also, refrain from smoking when tired or under the influence of alcohol or medications that make you drowsy. In addition, all spark-producing objects, like lighters, should be kept out of the reach of children.

Deputies were able to locate smoke alarms in the home, but they were not in working order due to the batteries being removed.

Working smoke alarms are a proven tool to alert residents to a fire danger in order to escape safely. The SFM's Operation Save-A-Life partners with local fire departments to install smoke alarms for free for families that need them most. To learn more about Operation Save-A-Life, or to register for a smoke alarm installation, visit lasfm.org.

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