

**HB**

**56**

<TARGET><BILL>HB 56</BILL><SUBJECT>HB  
56</SUBJECT><COMM>SJUD27</COMM></TARGET>

# Alaska State Legislature

## House of Representatives



**Representative Max F. Gruenberg, Jr.**

**House District 20**

**Anchorage (Mountain View, Russian Jack, East Anchorage)**

**House Minority Floor Leader**

*Member*

*Standing Committees:*

Judiciary  
State Affairs  
Transportation  
Rules

*Finance Subcommittees:*

Corrections  
Courts  
Law

*Interim:*

716 W 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Rm 350  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2133

*Phone:* (907) 269-0123

*Fax:* (907) 269-0124

*Session:*

Alaska State Capitol, Rm 110  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

*Phone:* (907) 465-4940


*Toll Free:* (866) 465-4940

*Fax:* (907) 465-3766

*Email:*

[Rep.Max.Gruenberg@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Rep.Max.Gruenberg@legis.state.ak.us)

TO: Senator Hollis French, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Representative Max Gruenberg 

DATE: March 12, 2012

RE: HB 56 – Include Arson in Crimes of Conspiracy

\*\*\*\*\*

Please consider this memo as a request for House Bill 56 to be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Accompanying this memo are the following documents:

- HB 56 (27-LS0312\M)
- New Sponsor Statement
- DPS Support Material
- Relevant Statutes
- Fiscal Notes
  - o Department of Law (0.0)
  - o Department of Public Safety (0.0)
  - o Department of Corrections (\*\*)
- Letters of Support
  - o Alaska Fire Chief's Association
  - o Alaska Peace Officers Association
  - o Capital City Fire/Rescue
  - o Alaska Association of Fire & Arson Investigators
  - o Anchorage Fire Department
- Legislative Research Memo

Thank you for considering my request for a hearing on HB 56. Please contact my legislative aide, Miles Brookes, at 465-4940 with any questions.

# Alaska State Legislature

## House of Representatives



**Representative Carl Gatto**  
**Representative Max Gruenberg**  
**Representative Bob Lynn**

HB 56

INCLUDE ARSON IN CRIMES OF CONSPIRACY

### Sponsor Statement

House Bill 56 adds first and second degree arson to Alaska's conspiracy statute, which will provide strong deterrents to committing arson and close a loophole in current law. HB 56 was drafted after it became apparent during a committee hearing last session that arson is not currently included in Alaska's conspiracy statute. Because of this, arsonists may only be charged with a crime if the arson is attempted or completed, and they cannot be charged with the separate crime of conspiracy if two or more people are involved in the arson. This bill only adds first and second degree arson

- Conspiracy: an agreement by two or more people to commit a crime with at least one overt act committed towards the completion of the crime.
- Arson in the first degree: damaging property by fire or explosion and recklessly placing another person (including emergency personnel) in danger or serious physical injury. (Class A Felony)
- Arson in the second degree: knowingly damages a building by fire or explosion. (Class B Felony)
- Conspiracy to commit a Class A Felony (Arson One) is a Class B Felony.
- Conspiracy to commit a Class B Felony (Arson Two) is a Class C Felony.

HB 56 will fix those problems. Including arson in the conspiracy statute will provide stronger punishments, whether or not conspirators actually complete the arson. Under HB 56, if arson is committed, the conspiring arsonists can be charged with *both* arson and conspiracy, rather than just arson under the current law. If the arson is not completed, however, this bill will allow conspirators to be prosecuted for conspiracy to commit arson, which is not punishable under current law.

If you have any questions, please contact Representative Gruenberg's legislative aide, Miles Brookes, at 465-4940.

# Alaska State Legislature

## House of Representatives



**Representative Carl Gatto**  
**Representative Max Gruenberg**  
**Representative Bob Lynn**

HB 56

### INCLUDE ARSON IN CRIMES OF CONSPIRACY

#### Relevant Statutes

#### AS 11.31.120 Conspiracy

- (a) An offender commits the crime of conspiracy if, with the intent to promote or facilitate a serious felony offense, the offender agrees with one or more persons to engage in or cause the performance of that activity and the offender or one of the persons does an overt act in furtherance of the conspiracy.
- (b) If an offender commits the crime of conspiracy and knows that a person with whom the offender conspires to commit a serious felony offense has conspired or will conspire with another person or persons to commit the same serious felony offense, the offender is guilty of conspiring with that other person or persons to commit that crime whether or not the offender knows their identities.
- (c) In a prosecution under this section, it is a defense that the defendant was merely present at the time that two or more other persons agreed to engage in or cause the performance of a serious felony offense.
- (d) In a prosecution under this section, it is not a defense that a person with whom the defendant conspires could not be guilty of the crime that is the object of the conspiracy because of
- (1) lack of criminal responsibility or other legal incapacity or exemption;
  - (2) belonging to a class of persons who by definition are legally incapable in an individual capacity of committing the crime that is the object of the conspiracy;
  - (3) unawareness of the criminal nature of the conduct in question or of the criminal purpose of the defendant; or
  - (4) any other factor precluding the culpable mental state required for the commission of the crime.
- (e) If the offense that the conspiracy is intended to promote or facilitate is actually committed, a defendant may not be convicted of conspiring to commit that offense with another person for whose conduct the defendant is not legally accountable under AS 11.16.120(b).
- (f) In a prosecution under this section, it is an affirmative defense that the defendant, under circumstances manifesting a voluntary and complete renunciation of the defendant's criminal intent, either (1) gave timely warning to law enforcement authorities; or (2) otherwise made proper effort that prevented the commission of the crime that was the object of the conspiracy. Renunciation by one conspirator does not affect the liability of another conspirator who does not join in the renunciation.
- (g) Notwithstanding AS 22.10.030, venue in actions in which the crime of conspiracy is alleged to have been committed may not be based solely on the location of overt acts done in furtherance of the conspiracy.
- (h) In this section,
- (1) "overt act in furtherance of the conspiracy" means an act of such character that it manifests a purpose on the part of the actor that

the object of the conspiracy be completed;

(2) "serious felony offense" means an offense

(A) against the person under AS 11.41, punishable as an unclassified or class A felony;

(B) involving controlled substances under AS 11.71, punishable as an unclassified, class A, or class B felony;

(C) that is criminal mischief in the first degree under AS 11.46.475; or

(D) that is terroristic threatening in the first degree under AS 11.56.807.

(i) Conspiracy is

(1) an unclassified felony if the object of the conspiracy is murder in the first degree;

(2) a class A felony if the object of the conspiracy is a crime punishable as an unclassified felony other than murder in the first degree;

(3) a class B felony if the object of the conspiracy is a crime punishable as a class A felony;

(4) a class C felony if the object of the conspiracy is a crime punishable as a class B felony.

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### AS 11.46.400 Arson in the First Degree

(a) A person commits the crime of arson in the first degree if the person intentionally damages any property by starting a fire or causing an explosion and by that act recklessly places another person in danger of serious physical injury. For purposes of this section, "another person" includes but is not limited to fire and police service personnel or other public employees who respond to emergencies, regardless of rank, functions, or duties being performed.

(b) Arson in the first degree is a class A felony.

*Conspiracy "B"*

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### AS 11.46.410 Arson in the Second Degree

(a) A person commits the crime of arson in the second degree if the person knowingly damages a building by starting a fire or causing an explosion.

(b) In a prosecution under this section, it is an affirmative defense

(1) that no person other than the defendant had a possessory, proprietary, or security interest in the building or that all persons having such an interest consented to the defendant's conduct; and

(2) that the sole intent of the defendant was to damage or destroy the building for a lawful purpose.

(c) Arson in the second degree is a class B felony.

*Conspiracy "C"*



# LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICES

Alaska State Legislature  
Division of Legal and Research Services  
State Capitol, Juneau, AK 99801

(907) 465-3991 phone  
(907) 465-3908 fax  
research@legis.state.ak.us

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## Memorandum

TO: Representative Max Gruenberg  
FROM: Chuck Burnham, Legislative Analyst  
DATE: February 21, 2012  
RE: Legislative History: Arson as a Crime of Conspiracy  
*LRS Report 12.207*

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***You asked whether the Alaska Legislature has considered adding the crimes of arson in the first or second degree to the offenses that can be prosecuted as crimes of conspiracy.***

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As you know, Alaska's current law on crimes of conspiracy is codified at AS § 11.31.120, which was enacted in 1994.<sup>1</sup> We located one measure—SB 343 (1991)—through which the Legislature contemplated including arson in the first and second degrees (AS § 11.46.100-110) among the crimes that could be prosecuted as conspiracy.<sup>2</sup>

The Senate approved CSSB 343 (JUD) AM on reconsideration by a vote of 18-2 on May 6, 1992, after which it received referrals to the House Judiciary and Finance Committees on May 8. The bill was forwarded to Finance on May 10 after receiving 4 "do pass" and one "no recommendation" votes in Judiciary. The bill received no further hearings before adjournment of the second session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislature on May 15, 1992. We located no subsequent measure seeking to include arson under the conspiracy statute.

Our review of committee minutes for SB 343 found no specific mention of the arson provisions of the bill. Where opposition was expressed, it was typically related to the broader topics of the impact, effectiveness, and necessity of conspiracy laws. Although supported by the Department of Law and Attorney General, SB 343 brought opposition from other individuals and groups—notably the American Civil Liberties Union—who believed existing laws were sufficient deterrents to the crimes considered in the bill. The Public Defender's Office and Office of Public Advocacy held the position that the crime of conspiracy was a "high cost experiment" and unlikely to induce guilty pleas, enhance penalties, or increase public safety.<sup>3</sup>

We hope this is helpful. If you have questions or need additional information, please let us know.

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. 3 SLA 1994.

<sup>2</sup> We include a copy of the text of SB 343 (1991) as an attachment. We searched bills back to 1987 for crimes of conspiracy and arson. Although we believe our research to be thorough, there may be additional bills relevant to your request that we overlooked due to variations in construction and wording.

<sup>3</sup> Testimony before the House Judiciary Committee of Brant McGee, director of the Office of Public Advocacy, May 5, 1992.

David Tyler  
*Director/State Fire Marshal*  
5700 E. Tudor Rd.  
Anchorage, AK 99507

**FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE**

Megan A. Peters  
*Information Officer*  
907 269.5413  
cell: 907.351.3137

*megan.peters@alaska.gov*

**Press Release**

May 1, 2009



**2009  
Arson Awareness Week  
May 3 - 9**



(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) — Across the nation this week, fire officials are speaking out against Arson. The Alaska Department of Public Safety is joining in the educational push. According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2005, an estimated 323,900 intentionally set fires were reported to U.S. fire departments. These fires resulted in 490 civilian fire deaths, three firefighter deaths, 1,500 civilian fire injuries and 7,600 firefighter injuries. These fires caused \$1.102 billion in direct property damage.

In Alaska during 2005, six deaths were attributed to intentionally set fires. Last year, there were two people in Alaska killed by intentionally set fires.

The theme for the 2009 Arson Awareness Week is Arson for Profit. Nationwide, community officials are reporting a sharp increase of vehicle owners who are suspected of reporting their vehicle stolen and then destroying their vehicle by setting it on fire. There has also been an increase of vehicle arson arrests.



Arsons are often times done for financial reasons, to include collecting insurance money, liquidating property, dissolving businesses and concealing losses.

Arson for profit affects everyone through the loss of life, increased insurance premiums and related expenses for the fire and law enforcement professionals. It can be curtailed by a collaborative effort and cooperation of fire investigators, law enforcement, insurance professionals and the legal system.

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA cost # codes  
 2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version HB 56  
 Fiscal Note Number 4  
 Publish Date 2/24/12 (H)

Identifier (file name) HB056-LAW-CRIM-12-07-11 Dept. Affected Law  
 Title An Act making arson in the first degree and arson in the Appropriation Criminal  
second degree serious felonies. Allocation Criminal Justice Litigation  
 Sponsor Representative(s) Gatto, Gruenberg, and Lynn  
 Requester (H) Finance OMB Component Number 2202

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>FY13</b>	<b>FY13</b>	<b>FY14</b>	<b>FY15</b>	<b>FY16</b>	<b>FY17</b>	<b>FY18</b>
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants, Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>FUND SOURCE</b>		(Thousands of Dollars)					
1002	Federal Receipts						
1003	GF Match						
1004	GF						
1005	GF/Prgm (DGF)						
1037	GF/MH (UGF)						
1178	temp code (UGF)						
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>POSITIONS</b>							
Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES</b>							

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs \_\_\_\_\_ (separate supplemental appropriation required)  
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY13) costs \_\_\_\_\_ (separate capital appropriation required)  
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

Updated for new fiscal year form.

Prepared by Eileen Donahue, Division Operations Manager  
 Division Administrative Services  
 Approved by John J. Burns, Attorney General  
Department of Law

Phone 465-5427  
 Date/Time 12/07/11 11:00AM  
 Date 12/7/2011

**Analysis**

HB 056 adds arson in the first and second degrees to those crimes defined as a "serious felony offense" in the statute defining conspiracy. With this amendment, the crime of conspiracy would prohibit persons from conspiring to commit arson in the first or second degree.

Passage of this legislation would have no foreseeable fiscal impact on the Department of Law.

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Bill Version HB 56  
 Fiscal Note Number 5  
 (H) Publish Date 2/24/12

Identifier (file name) HB056-DPS-FLS-12-22-11 Dept. Affected Public Safety  
 Title "An Act making arson in the first degree and arson in the second degree serious felonies..." Appropriation Fire and Life Safety  
 Allocation Fire and Life Safety Operations  
 Sponsor Representatives Gatto, Gruenberg, Lynn  
 Requester (H) FIN OMB Component Number 2883

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates					
			FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Services								
Commodities								
Capital Outlay								
Grants, Benefits								
Miscellaneous								
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>FUND SOURCE</b>		(Thousands of Dollars)						
1002	Federal Receipts							
1003	GF Match							
1004	GF							
1005	GF/Prgm (DGF)							
1037	GF/MH (UGF)							
1178	temp code (UGF)							
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>POSITIONS</b>								
Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES</b>								

Estimated **SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs** \_\_\_\_\_ (separate supplemental appropriation required)  
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated **CAPITAL (FY13) costs** \_\_\_\_\_ (separate capital appropriation required)  
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

**Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)**

Updated on new fiscal note form.

Prepared by Kelly Howell Phone (907) 269-5591  
 Division Office of the Commissioner Date/Time 12/22/11 2:40 PM  
 Approved by Joe Masters, Commissioner Date 12/15/2011  
Department of Public Safety

FISCAL NOTE #5

STATE OF ALASKA  
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 56

**Analysis**

Passage of this legislation will have no fiscal impact on the Division of Fire and Life Safety.

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA cost # codes  
 2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version HB 56  
 Fiscal Note Number 6  
 Publish Date 2/24/12 (H)

Identifier (file name) HB056-DOC-OC-12-22-11 Dept. Affected DOC  
 Title "An Act making arson in the first degree and arson in the second degree serious felonies for purposes of..." Appropriation Admin & Support  
 Allocation Commissioner's Office  
 Sponsor Representative Gatto, Gruenberg and Lynn  
 Requester House Finance Committee OMB Component Number 694

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates					
			FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Services								
Commodities								
Capital Outlay								
Grants, Benefits								
Miscellaneous								
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**

FUND SOURCE		(Thousands of Dollars)						
		FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	
1002	Federal Receipts							
1003	GF Match							
1004	GF							
1005	GF/Prgm (DGF)							
1037	GF/MH (UGF)							
1178	temp code (UGF)							
<b>TOTAL</b>		**	**	**	**	**	**	

POSITIONS							
		FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

CHANGE IN REVENUES	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs 0.0 (separate supplemental appropriation required)  
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY13) costs 0.0 (separate capital appropriation required)  
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

**Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)**

Update to reflect current fiscal year.

Prepared by Leslie Houston, Director  
 Division Department of Corrections - Administrative Services  
 Approved by Joseph D. Schmidt, Commissioner  
Department of Corrections

Phone 907-465-3339  
 Date/Time 12/22/11 3:45 PM  
 Date 12/22/2011

**Analysis**

This legislation is creating a new serious felony crime of conspiring to commit arson in the first degree and arson in the second degree. Therefore, the Department of Corrections has no information to determine the number of offenders that will be placed under the custody of the department.

The department will closely monitor potential future impacts of this legislation.

# THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF FIRE & ARSON INVESTIGATORS



February 15, 2011

Representative Carl Gatto  
Representative Max Gruenberg  
Representative Bob Lynn

Reference: House Bill 56 - Arson

Dear Representatives:

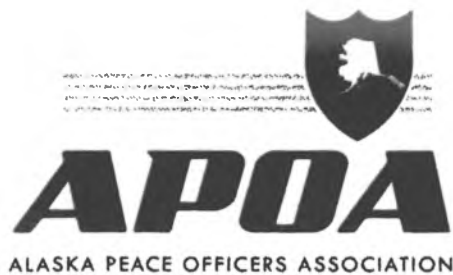
The Alaska Association of Fire & Arson Investigators is in total support of House Bill 56 and would like to offer our assistance in any way, which would aid in the enactment of this bill.

It is our belief the enactment of this bill will provide a greater deterrent to the crime of arson and allow for the prosecution of arson/conspiracy cases, where the actual arson was not completed, but a crime nonetheless committed. This will put a closure to a loophole presently in the current law.

Please feel free to contact my office at 907-262-4792 or [ghale@borough.kenai.ak.us](mailto:ghale@borough.kenai.ak.us).

Sincerely,

Gary E. Hale, President  
Alaska Association of Fire & Arson Investigators



February 14, 2011

Representative Carl Gatto  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol  
Juneau AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Gatto:

On behalf of our respective organizations, we would like to thank you for introducing HB 56, an Act making arson in the first degree and arson in the second degree serious felonies for purposes of application of the crime of conspiracy.

We met recently to review proposed legislation and decided to unanimously support this bill.

Again, thank you for addressing this issue. Please contact the APOA office in Anchorage at 277-0515 if there is anything our organizations can do to assist in the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

John Lucking Jr., President  
Alaska Peace Officers  
Association  
PO Box 240106  
Anchorage AK 99524

Tom Clemons, President  
Alaska Association of  
Chiefs of Police  
183 Nelson Ave  
Wasilla AK 99654

Michele Logan, President  
Women Police  
of Alaska  
PO Box 233306  
Anchorage AK 99523

cc: Max Gruenberg  
Bob Lynn

# MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE



*Mayor Dan Sullivan*

February 15, 2011

Representative Carl Gatto  
Representative Max Gruenberg  
Representative Bob Lynn

Reference: House Bill No. 56 - Arson

Dear Representatives:

The Anchorage Fire Department is fully in support of House Bill No. 56 and would like to offer our assistance in any way you feel would be beneficial to aid in the enactment of this bill.

It is our belief that the enactment of this bill will provide a greater deterrent to the crime of arson and allow for the prosecution of arson/conspiracy cases where the actual arson was not completed, but a crime nonetheless was committed.

I can be reached at (907) 267-4936 or by e-mail at [hallms@muni.org](mailto:hallms@muni.org) should you wish to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark S. Hall".

Mark S. Hall  
Fire Chief

cc: Brian Balega – Arson Investigator – Anchorage Fire Department



**Fire Chief Richard Etheridge**

February 17, 2011

**Representative Carl Gatto  
Representative Max Gruenberg  
Representative Bob Lynn**

**Reference: House Bill No. 56 – Include Arson in Crimes of Conspiracy**

**Dear Representatives:**

**Capital City Fire/Rescue fully supports House Bill No. 56 and would like to offer our assistance in any way that would be beneficial to the enactment of this bill.**

**If this bill were enacted, we believe that there would be a greater deterrent to the crime of arson and allow the prosecution of arson/conspiracy cases when the actual arson was not completed, but a crime was committed.**

**I can be reached at (907) 586-5322 or by e-mail at [dan\\_jager@ci.juneau.ak.us](mailto:dan_jager@ci.juneau.ak.us) if you wish to contact me.**

**Sincerely,**

**Daniel M. Jager  
Fire Marshal**

**Mailing Address: 820 Glacier Avenue Juneau, Alaska 99801**



## To catch an arsonist

Juneau Crime Line announces new arson reward program

Posted: March 15, 2012 - 12:10am

By EMILY RUSSO MILLER

JUNEAU EMPIRE

After a reported 31 arsons in 13 months, the Juneau Crime Line is upping the ante in hopes of catch arsonists who have evaded police.

The nonprofit crime solving organization, which is Juneau's equivalent to Crime Stoppers, announced a new \$1,500 arson reward program Wednesday to incentivize those with information about unlawful blazes to come forward.

"We're trying to get some information to help the police department to get these arsons to stop," longtime Crime Line board member Robin Paul said in a phone interview. "That's our main goal."

Crime Line tipsters, who are guaranteed anonymity, are usually awarded up to \$1,000 when they provide information that is instrumental to cracking unsolved cases. But Paul hopes the extra \$500 will prompt more leads.

"These arsons are something that have really been problematic for the community," she said.

Capital City Fire Marshal Daniel Jager said there were 31 arson incidents reported from January 2011 through February 2012, and that all of those cases are still open and active. Those include 11 vehicle fires, fire damage to the turf field at Adair-Kennedy Memorial Park and Thunder Mountain High School sports fields and the destruction of a Porta-Potty and to the Twin Lakes playground, according to a statement from Paul.

"All of these are still open, and we're still actively pursuing leads on them," Jager said. "We haven't just forgot about them."

Perhaps the most troubling suspected arson was the vehicle and carport fire at the Crow Hill Condominiums last July that "could have resulted in tragedy if the fire had spread to the complex and trapped unaware sleeping residents," Paul said.

The perpetrator or perpetrators of that crime still remain at large.

CCFR and the Juneau Police Department work together to solve arson cases, with the fire marshal focused on the fire scene (the point of origin of the fire, whether an accelerant was used, etc.) while the police conduct the criminal investigation. But when leads wind down or "things go cold," as Paul put it, Crime Line can reignite a case by enticing informants to come forward with a monetary award.

"(Arson) is a very big concern for us, and I'm pleased to see the Crime Line is offering rewards to help us solve these issues," JPD spokesman Lt. David Campbell said in an interview.

He said arson not only poses danger to property and people, but to firefighters and others who respond to the scene.

Arson cases can be difficult to investigate and prosecute if there's not a confession or witness, Jager said, because potential physical evidence is not only destroyed in the flames, but also by firefighters while doing their job suppressing the fire. He said there's about a 2 percent arson conviction rate nationwide.

Jager said he hopes this new reward program will jog people's memory and cause them to think back to see if they remember anything out of the ordinary; and for those who know something, to come forward. The anonymity Crime Line affords is the key, he said.

"Sometimes people are a little more willing to do the right thing if they have a reward, but the key is not so much the money award, it's the fact that it can be done anonymously," he said. "They don't want people to know that they're involved and that's understandable. I think the Crime Line is a great avenue for people who aren't comfortable doing that in person."

Jager added, "The money helps, but for the most part, people, they're just concerned about potential ramifications."

The 31 arsons have come at a high price. Jager estimates the total damage from all the above instances is much more than \$100,000, and the damage from the Crow Hill fire alone caused as much.

Local businesses — like Shattuck & Grummett Insurance and Malia Hayward State Farm Insurance — and other community members have stepped forward to pledge money to the special arson reward program. Crime Line is funded only by donations from the community.

This isn't the first time Crime Line has created a special reward program. According to the Crime Line website, more than \$10,000 was pledged for the unsolved murder of Johnny L. Jack Sr. in October 1988 and the murder of Cindy Elrod nearly 30 years ago.

The group also offers up to \$1,500 for reporting the purchase or distribution of oxycontin in the Juneau area.

Other popular programs are the \$100 reward for reporting drunken driving, and the special graffiti program, sponsored by the city, also pays \$100, according to the website.

The last suspected arson incident in Juneau area, Jager said, was a vehicle fire by Glacier Gardens, a botanical garden on Glacier Highway, about two weeks ago.

To report a tip, visit [juneaucrimeline.com](http://juneaucrimeline.com).

• Contact reporter Emily Russo Miller at 523-2263 or at [emily.miller@juneauempire.com](mailto:emily.miller@juneauempire.com).



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