



ALEX SINK
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
STATE OF FLORIDA

September 7, 2009

Lieutenant Campina
State Fire Marshal's Office
Bureau of Fire & Arson Investigations
3659 Maguire Blvd, STE 151,
Orlando, FL 32803
(407) 893-3654

Florida Advisory Committee on Arson Prevention
P.O. Box 48826
Tampa, FL 33647-9111

FACAP Board Members:

My nomination for Fire Investigator of the Year is Detective George Holcomb. On December 2, 2008 Detective Holcomb was dispatched to a structure fire scene in northwest Orange County. The fire was located just down the street from another active fire scene also being investigated by State Fire Marshal personnel. The fires had been set within minutes of one another. Holcomb's fire was one in a series of fires our agency had investigated since May that had been tied to local suspects. There had not been enough probable cause to arrest them for the 3 other arson fires in the area. The suspects had terrorized the neighbors into believing that if they provided evidence then they would be the next victims. Through his diligence Detective Holcomb was able to locate a possible accomplice and interview him. The accomplice provided information that led to more evidence against the suspects. Detective Holcomb was able to convince the neighbors to provide information about his fire investigation and using the Williams Rule, 5 other fires were able to be linked to the suspects. With the assistance of the Orange County Sheriff's Office the suspects were located and arrested. They are currently awaiting trial on 5 counts of arson. Due to the arrest, the suspects are no longer able to threaten and intimidate the neighbors, leading several more witnesses to come forward with information regarding the series of fires.

Due to Detective Holcomb's diligence there have been no fires in that neighborhood since the suspects' arrest in January.

CINDY CAMPINA • LAW ENFORCEMENT LIEUTENANT
STATE FIRE MARSHAL • BUREAU OF FIRE AND ARSON INVESTIGATIONS
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AFFIRMATIVE ACTION • EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

**SLECA Investigator of the year
Holcomb, George**

BIOGRAPHY:

George Holcomb is a criminal investigator with the Division of State Fire Marshal / Bureau of Fire and Arson Investigations. George has been with the Bureau for approximately 4 years and 6 months. Prior to working with the Bureau, George was employed by the City of Eustis Police Department located in Lake County. In addition to his employment with the Bureau, George volunteers at the Kenneth Bragg Public Safety Training Center/Chris Daniels Leadership Institute, located in Lake County, as a member of the Mock Interview Board. Detective Holcomb also teaches at this Training Center, as well as St. Leo College, the University of Central Florida and Lake-Sumter Community College.

SYNOPSIS OF ACTIVITY OR EVENTS:

A series of six (6) residential arson fires had taken place in a northern Orange County community in central Florida between June and early December of 2008. This investigative effort required tedious, meticulous fire scene examination and documentation, together with thorough follow-up investigation. This investigation initially met with dead ends because of the refusal of neighborhood residents to provide information, due to threats and the fear of retaliation. Other investigators may have shut down their investigation once it reached this stage but Detective Holcomb did not. Detective Holcomb not only identified and obtained useful information from an accomplice, but he also continued to press the residents to come forward and provide information about these fires and those responsible. Eventually, Detective Holcomb convinced neighbors to talk to him and enough evidence was obtained that three (3) people were arrested. One of the defendants was charged with one (1) count of residential first degree arson and two (2) of the defendants were charged with three (3) counts of residential first degree arson. These six (6) fires resulted in property damage estimated to be approximately one quarter of one million dollars. The defendants are currently in the Orange County jail awaiting trial. In addition, due to Detective Holcomb's diligence, once the arrests were made other neighbors came forward and became witnesses – providing even more information against the defendants. This new information assisted with the pending cases but there was not enough evidence obtained to charge the two (2) major defendants with the three (3) other residential arsons. Even though they could not be charged with the three (3) other fires, it is believed that they were responsible for those fires as well. It should also be noted that there have been no fires in this neighborhood since the arrests took place.

Detective Holcomb initially was assigned only one (1) of the six (6) residential fires that took place in this neighborhood. Detective Holcomb took the initiative to expand his investigative effort to include the other five (5) fires. It is believed that by Detective Holcomb being able to charge each major defendant with three (3) counts of arson, as opposed to one (1) count, he greatly increased the potential sentences that these defendants may receive.



Alex Sink
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
State Fire Marshal

James Preston, President
Fraternal Order of Police
P.O. Box 1349
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1349

Re: Nomination-Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

March 1, 2010

Dear Mr. Preston,

Please find below relevant information concerning our Agency's "Officer of the Year" nominee, George Holcomb. Please let me know if you need any additional information

Respectfully,

Captain Tammy R. White

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