



# NEWS RELEASE

**RALPH HUDGENS**  
COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE  
SAFETY FIRE COMMISSIONER  
INDUSTRIAL LOAN COMMISSIONER

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## Decatur County Man Pleads Guilty to Arson and Insurance Fraud

**Atlanta-** Insurance Commissioner Ralph Hudgens announced today that Kyle Dukes pled guilty to felony counts stemming from an investigation brought by Hudgens' office.

Dukes, 42, was scheduled to appear in court this week in connection with a staged wreck and vehicle fire but pled guilty to four felony counts including First Degree Arson, Insurance Fraud, and Reporting a False Crime before the case could go to trial.

Dukes alleged that the wreck occurred when his truck collided with a wild hog. The purported collision caused the truck's steering system to lock and force the vehicle partially off a bridge before erupting in flames. The alleged incident, which occurred on May 28, 2014, involved the Decatur County Sheriff's Office, the Thomasville Animal Hospital, and Hudgens' office.

An investigator from Hudgens' office requested that the Thomasville Animal Hospital examine the animal in question for injuries consistent with a vehicle collision. Personnel at the hospital concluded that the animal incurred bullet and stab wounds prior to the impact with Dukes' truck.

Dukes pled guilty to the felony counts after the Thomasville Animal Hospital concluded its examination.

"Insurance Fraud and Arson are serious crimes that will not be tolerated in Georgia," Hudgens said.

Insurance fraud is a felony that carries a penalty of two to ten years in prison or a fine up to \$10,000.