



# NEWS RELEASE

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

Seventh Floor, West Tower  
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
[www.oci.ga.gov](http://www.oci.ga.gov)

**For Immediate Release**  
**November 2, 2013**

**Contact: Glenn Allen**  
**404-463-0729**  
**[gallen@oci.ga.gov](mailto:gallen@oci.ga.gov)**  
**Twitter: @GA\_DOI**

## **(UPDATE) HUDGENS: HABERSHAM COUNTY MAN ARRESTED FOR GAS STATION FIRE**

**Atlanta** – Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner Ralph Hudgens said a Habersham County man has been arrested for causing a fire at a gas station, which severely injured his wife.

Austin Dawkins, 37, of 6827 Highway 197 North Clarksville, Ga., was arrested late Friday night, and has been charged with one count of reckless conduct, Hudgens said.

On October 16, 2013, Dawkins was fueling his vehicle at the Gulf Food Mart, located at 183 Grant Street, in Clarksville, when surveillance video captured him igniting a cigarette lighter near his gas tank causing a fuel vapor explosion.

Dawkins' wife, Jessica Dawkins, 30, was standing next to her husband when the vapor explosion occurred, causing her to sustain second and third degree burns to her legs, arms, back and head. Austin Dawkins suffered minor injuries to his hands.

Hudgens' Office worked the investigation with the Clarksville Fire Department and the Habersham Sheriff's Office. The case has been turned over to the Habersham District Attorney's Office for prosecution.

Dawkins is currently being held in the Habersham County Jail.

Reckless conduct is a misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of a year in prison and a fine of up to \$1,000.