



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **STATE ARSON DOG DEAD AT AGE 11; HAD SUCCESSFUL CRIME-FIGHTING CAREER**

**Atlanta** – Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner Ralph Hudgens announced today that Smokey, the state's fifth arson dog, passed away this morning after a brief illness.

"We'll always remember Smokey as a valuable employee in the fight against arson, Hudgens said. "His death leaves a great sadness within the entire Department."

Smokey, an arson detection Labrador retriever, began his training in September 2003 at the Maine State Training Center in Alfred, Maine. He came to work in Georgia in October 2003 as the fifth arson canine in the state to serve the law enforcement and fire service communities.

Between October 2003 and April 2013, Smokey and his handler, Investigator Ken Palmer were involved in over 700 fire investigations around the state. Smokey's specialized training allowed him to determine if accelerants were used to start a fire. This ability led to the arrest of numerous arson suspects, which included arrests for murders that involved arson.

Born July 2001, Smokey worked his last assignment on March 30, 2013, which was a house fire in Catoosa County. That fire which was determined to be arson.