



# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

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FIRE CHIEF

4410 Cathedral Oaks Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93110

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### - New Arson Dog Arrives -

SANTA BARBARA, Ca. November 18, 2013 – The newest member of the Santa Barbara County Fire Department is an Accelerant Detection Canine named Riley, a black Labrador Retriever.



Riley and his handler Fire Captain/ Investigator Howard Orr recently completed a five week canine-accelerant detection school sponsored by State Farm Insurance and certified by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. Since their arrival on September 6<sup>th</sup>, they have responded to 11 fire scenes throughout Santa Barbara County. They are also available to respond to fire scenes throughout the Tri-Counties and beyond upon request.

The training program was funded by State Farm Insurance Companies and is available to fire departments and law enforcement agencies across the United States. Since its beginning in 1993, the program has placed more than 300 dogs in 44 states, three Canadian provinces and the District of Columbia. There are currently about 80 active teams in the United States. Three of those dogs are currently working in California and are located in Fresno, Chula Vista, and now Santa Barbara. For more information about the Arson Dog Program visit the Web site at [www.arsondog.org](http://www.arsondog.org).

The ongoing costs of this program are being supported by local community donations:

- Initial training was covered by a scholarship from State Farm Insurance and is estimate to be \$28,000
- Dave Dawson with San Roque Pet Hospital has offered to provide veterinary service at no cost
- Wendy Guyer, owner of the Pet House in Goleta, is providing Riley's dog food at no cost
- A vehicle designed for Riley that includes an early warning heat detection system is currently being sought through a private donor.

Private citizens have begun providing donations to cover the costs of the training equipment and supplies necessary for Riley to maintain his skills. "This truly is a public/private partnership supporting this program. We are grateful for the community support," says Captain Orr.

Additional donations are welcome and can be made to the "Santa Barbara County Fire Department, Arson Dog Program" and sent to 4410 Cathedral Oaks Rd, Santa Barbara, CA, 93110.

In 2009, over 41,500 intentionally set fires were set in the United States causing over \$792 million dollars in property damage and killing 170 civilians according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

"We want to help support the efforts of the Santa Barbara County Fire Department to douse arson fires in the Tri-County area and put criminals behind bars," said State Farm Agent Paul Cashman. "The scope of arson goes beyond impacting insurance companies – it affects the personal and financial well-being of us all. Training dogs to detect accelerants at fire scenes saves time and money in arson investigations."

A few years ago, investigators could spend days or weeks sifting through rubble at a scene. Today, with a trained dog, the work can be done in less than an hour.

"The dog extends the capabilities of the investigator," said Fire Captain/ Investigator Howard Orr. "The scent-discriminating abilities of a canine are better than any equipment we can take to a fire scene when arson is suspected. The canine will lead the investigator to the location of the accelerant, so the investigator can take a sample to the Department of Justice crime lab in order to prove arson."

Interviews and demonstrations with Captain Orr and Riley can be requested through the Santa Barbara County Fire Department Public Information Officer, Captain David Sadecki at (805) 681-5531.

**Contact Information:**

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