



# The Fire Trailer News



Winter 2010

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## GFIA 2010 Officers

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Forensic and Scientific Testing, Inc.  
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**Ken LeCroy**

Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services  
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*The Fire Trailer News is the official publication of the Georgia Fire Investigator's Association and is published four times a year: Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring. Views and opinions expressed in articles herein are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the officers or membership of the Georgia Fire Investigator's Association. Articles, manuscripts and photos are solicited for this publication. No payment is made for contributions. Submissions should be sent to the editor. Appearance of advertisements in the Fire Trailer News does not constitute endorsement by the Georgia Fire Investigator's Association. Advertisers shall not use the Georgia Fire Investigator's Association name or image in its commercial activities in any manner.*

## President's Message

I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, may all of your dreams and aspirations come true. We have planned some exciting training for the upcoming year.

The Training and Education Committee is coordinating with the Gwinnett Fire and Emergency Services Arson Squad to host a possible "Auto Investigation" class at the Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services Training Center sometime after the first of the year. With the "Cash for Clunkers" program, there seems to be an increase in auto fires. With this challenge facing fire investigation, this training can increase knowledge and awareness on indicators to assist in your investigation. For updates visit the website at [www.gfia-iaai.org](http://www.gfia-iaai.org).

The Spring Seminar will be held in McDonough, GA from March 23rd through March 26th, 2010. The Training and Education Committee had their first meeting and came up with several good ideas for training covering all aspects of the field. Exact classes to be offered will be announced at a later date. Anyone with ideas regarding topics and/or speakers can email Kevin Cunningham at [kevin@cunninghamfire.com](mailto:kevin@cunninghamfire.com).

If anyone would like to place an advertisement in the newsletter, the cost is \$100 for a business card size advertisement. Please contact Ken LeCroy if you are interested. Also, if you have an article that you feel would be beneficial to the members of the Georgia Fire Investigator's Association, please send it to Ken for publication in the newsletter. For updates and Georgia Fire Investigator's Association news, please visit the website at [www.gfia-iaai.org](http://www.gfia-iaai.org).

There will be a Georgia Fire Investigator group on Facebook for those interested. Ed Canipelli started this project to see if there was any interest in sharing information with members. This is a closed group, so if you are not a member of the group, you will not be able to share or review the discussions. It should be noted that this is NOT associated with the Georgia Fire Investigators Association, but something that Ed started to see if there was any interest in this type of discussion group here in Georgia. If you would like to be a member please go to the group and request membership. I also encourage the members to visit the International Association of Arson Investigators CFITrainer.net for other training and educational opportunities.

Take care and I look forward to seeing you at the Spring Seminar.

Respectfully yours,

Doug Byron

President GFIA





**National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**  
 Our Mission: Save lives, prevent injuries, reduce vehicle-related crashes

## Ford Adds 4.5 Million Vehicles to Recall of Defective Cruise Control Switch

Vehicle Make/Model	Model Years
FORD / ECONOLINE	1992-2003
FORD / EXCURSION	2000-2003
FORD / EXPOLRER	1995-2002
FORD / F SUPER DUTY	1993-1997 1999-2003
FORD / F53	1994
FORD / RANGER	1995-1997 2001-2003
FORD / WINDSTAR	1995-2003
MERCURY / MOUNTAINEER	1995-2002

Manufacturer: FORD MOTOR COMPANY  
 NHTSA Campaign ID Number: 09V399000

Manufacturer's Report Date: Oct 09, 2009  
 NHTSA Action Number: EA08021

Component: VEHICLE SPEED CONTROL

Potential Number of Units Affected: 4,500,000

### Summary:

FORD IS RECALLING MODEL YEARS 1995-2003 WINDSTAR, 200-2003 EXCURSION, 1993-1997 AND 1999-2003 F-SUPER DUTY, 1992-2003 ECONOLINE, 1995-2002 EXPLORER AND MERCURY MOUNTAINEER, 1995-1997 AND 2001-2003 RANGER, AND 1994 F53 VEHICLES EQUIPPED WITH THE TEXAS INSTRUMENTS SPEED CONTROL DEACTIVATION SWITCH (SCDS). THE SCDS MAY LEAK INTERNALLY AND THEN OVERHEAT, SMOKE, OR BURN.

### Consequence:

A VEHICLE FIRE COULD OCCUR.

### Remedy:

FORD WILL NOTIFY OWNERS AND DEALERS WILL INSTALL A FUSED WIRING HARNESS FOR SCDS. DEALERS WILL ALSO INSPECT THE ABS CONTROL CONNECTOR AND REPAIR AS NECESSARY. REPAIRS WILL BE COMPLETED FREE OF CHARGE. THE SAFETY RECALL IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN ON OR ABOUT OCTOBER 26, 2009. OWNERS MAY CONTACT FORD AT 1-888-222-2751.

## Chinese Drywall and Insurance Fraud Concerns

By Michael Reynolds, IAAI-CFI, FCLS

Territorial Manager – Unified Investigations & Sciences

President – Florida NSPII Chapter

In recent years many Chinese-manufactured products imported into the United States have been recalled due to a variety of serious health and life-safety concerns. The short list of those products include lead painted toys, poisonous dog food and a never-ending list of electrical appliances that have the potential to cause fires or serious injury to consumers. Now we find that another Chinese-made product is causing American homeowners to become sick and is causing hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage to homes, mostly in South Florida and along the Gulf Coast of Louisiana. What's worse, as a result, many of these innocent homeowners seem stuck with homes they can't live in and can't sell. This seems certain to cause some of these homeowners to resort to arson as a way out.

Beginning in 2004, drywall manufactured in China was imported into the United States due to a shortage of a US-made product, caused in large part due to four hurricanes that slammed into the Florida coastline and a building boom that was on-going at that time. This problem was exacerbated further the following year when Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf coast in Mississippi and Louisiana. US shipping records show that over 500 million pounds of drywall were imported from China between 2004 and 2008. It is estimated that over 100,000 homes in South Florida alone may contain Chinese drywall. Investigators now say the tainted drywall may be found not only in Florida and along the Gulf coast but also in Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North and South Carolina, Texas and Virginia. The true numbers aren't known, and it may be some time before they are, since many homes are now in foreclosure and sit empty.

The problem is still being investigated, but what is known is that the Chinese made drywall contains trace levels of strontium sulfide and elemental sulfur. In humid regions, like that found in Florida and along the Gulf coast, the strontium sulfide off-gases a rotten-egg odor that is not only unpleasant to smell, but also causes eye and respiratory irritations. In addition, it reacts with air to corrode certain metals, the primary of which is copper. This corrosiveness is causing homeowners to replace HVAC coils in their homes, sometimes twice a year, as well as refrigerators, washing machines and electronic devices such as computers. What is more, a heavy copper oxide is forming on copper wiring as shown on the included photograph. This oxide may be yet another problem as high-resistance connections develop when oxides form on electrical wiring. This could be problematic on the contact surfaces of switches that are usually open and become closed after the oxides form on the contact surfaces. *(Continued Next Page)*



The bare copper ground conductor shows a heavy oxide coating



The area protected by the terminal screw shows the oxide contrasted with the natural color of copper

## Chinese Drywall and Insurance Fraud Concerns *Continued*

Many of the homeowners involved will have their homes repaired by their builders or contractors but others will not be so lucky. With the US economy being what it is, many builders and contractors have entered bankruptcy and are not able to remedy problems resulting from their use of Chinese drywall. For affected homeowners, there is no immediate solution to their dilemma. Continuing to live in a home that is causing health problems and continually having to replace expensive appliances is not an appealing option. Some, however, will have no other choice.

Symptoms of a house built with Chinese drywall:

Strong rotten egg (sulfur) odor.

Homes built or repaired from 2004-2008.

Homes built by the following builders: Taylor Morrison, WCI Communities, Meritage Homes, Ryland Homes, Standard Pacific Homes and Aubuchon Homes.

HVAC system has needed an untimely replacement.

Appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, microwaves and computers have mysteriously failed.

Copper wiring, especially ground conductors and copper tubing, has dark oxide on its surface.

Metal picture frames, wall switch covers and light fixtures may show tarnishing on exposed surfaces.

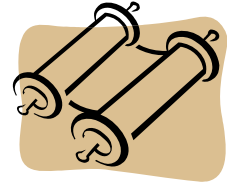
Occupants report eye irritations, headaches, chronic coughing and nosebleeds.

A manufacturer's stamp may or may not be found on the back. Company names to look for include but are not limited to: Knauf Gips (KG), Knauf Plasterboard Tianjin, Taishan Gypsum, L&W Supply and USG.

Those working in insurance claims, SIU and fire investigation need to be aware of the Chinese drywall situation and recognize that it has created yet a new financial motive for arson or other destruction of a home. A recent newspaper quote from a Louisiana woman who is faced with owning an affected home sums it up best. "We will welcome the next hurricane with open arms, open doors and open windows. This drywall has got to go."

For additional information, contact Michael Reynolds @ [mreynolds@uis-usa.com](mailto:mreynolds@uis-usa.com) or 888-751-9696

# Chaplain's Corner



## Being Thankful

*...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:18*

The Thanksgiving holidays are quickly approaching when families come together to give thanks for... fill in the blank. Thanksgiving Day was originally celebrated to give thanks for the annual harvest. Today, most of us don't give thanks for our harvest but instead we give thanks for God's blessings in our lives. God's word tells us to be thankful in **all** circumstances. This is how God wants us to react in good times and bad. God's word tells us that the rain will fall on the just and unjust. We are all going to experience difficult circumstances as long as we live in a fallen world. How we respond to these challenges will reveal our true faith and trust in Christ Jesus. Be thankful brothers and sisters in all things that you may glorify our Lord and Savior!

Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas!

Chaplain Rod Sanders

## Georgia Fire Investigator's Association Constitution and By-Laws

### Article III/Election, Terms & Officers

Section 5. Nominating Committee. The nominating committee shall be appointed by the incoming president and their names published in the first quarterly issue of the "Fire Trailer News," or announced by special letter, electronic mail, or web page posting at least thirty (30) days prior to publication of the second quarterly issue of the "Fire Trailer News."

The committee shall consist of five (5) members who are representatives of the insurance industry, civil authorities, the legal community and the private investigator profession.

The Members of the 2009 GFIA Nominating Committee are:

**Dennis Ellerbee - Chairperson**

email: FM113@bellsouth.net

Phone/Fax: 770-233-0121

**Joe Jones**

email: jhjones@agresources.com

Phone: 404-584-3780 Fax: 404-584-3599

**Greg Cloer**

email: greg.cloer@cobbcounty.org

Phone: 770-499-3886

**Pat McCarragher**

email: mccarragher@fairburn.com

Phone: 770-964-2244 ext. 503

**Tony Nix**

Phone: 770-593-6520 Fax: 770-593-6496

## Check for \$6,500 Given for Arson Info



Dignitaries gathered Thursday afternoon at Newton County Fire Station No. 1 for check presentation ceremonies in connection with the reward for information that led to solving a 2006 **arson** case. An anonymous recipient will receive \$6,500 for helping to solve the case. At left, Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John Oxendine and consultant Bud Ausborn with the Georgia **Arson** Control Board make the presentation to, from left, Newton County Fire Services Chief Mike Satterfield, Deputy Chief Tim Smith and Newton County Sheriff Ezell Brown.

This photo and description are re-published with permission from the Editor of the Newton Citizen paper. The article can be read in it's entirety at [www.newtoncitizen.com](http://www.newtoncitizen.com). The article was originally published on September 4, 2009.



### *How successful is the Georgia Arson Control Program in Fighting Arson?*

*Since its inception in 1979, GAC has approved 520 rewards totaling \$1,485,350. The average reward paid is \$2,856 (as of 10/15/09). Total property damage from arson fires that resulted in rewards since 2004 is approximately \$8,096,948.*

### Arson Control Consultants

#### North Georgia Area

**Kenneth "Bud" Ausborn**

**706-301-9486**

**770-893-7535 (Cell)**

#### South Georgia Area

**William "Randy" Bishop**

**478-731-0532 (Cell)**

**478-474-8595 (Fax)**

**THE GEORGIA FIRE  
INVESTIGATOR'S ASSOCIATION  
PO BOX 382  
SNELLVILLE, GA. 30078**



## **The 2010 Georgia Fire Investigator's Association Spring Seminar**

**hosted by  
Georgia Fire Investigator's Association and Henry County Fire Department  
to be held in McDonough, GA.  
March 23-26, 2010**

**Call 770-978-1251 for details.**