

## Fire Investigators Locate Important Witness

Missoula, MT – The new, central phone line for local, state and federal law enforcement and land management agencies to receive information related to on-going fire investigations on the Gold Creek arson fire, the I-90 fires, and other fires is making a difference.

“We have made contact with the person we were looking for associated with a Subaru Outback due to caller’s tips and information in the news,” said Paula Nelson, spokesperson for the interagency investigation team. “We’re still hoping more people will call with more pieces of the puzzle on the I-90 investigation as well as on the Gold Creek arson fire.”

The new tip line received a call from a motorist who had traveled on I-90 on August 4. He said he had stopped to assist a motorist with a broken-down Subaru and remembered the man’s name. Shortly after that, the Subaru driver called the tip line; indicating his brother had seen information in the news. Investigators are working with both drivers to gain as much information as possible about activities in the area during the time the fires started. “Others, possibly commuters, may have seen a malfunctioning vehicle, suspicious activity, or one of the fires when they were very small, said Nelson. “We ask that they call in and help us solve this case.”

Investigators believe the fire is the result of some type of vehicle malfunction and want to talk with this possible witness or anyone else who may have information on the fire start. All information leads are appreciated and encouraged.

Officers are also actively hoping to find the person responsible for starting a fire near the Gold Creek exit off of I-90 on Tuesday Aug. 9 around 9am. The suspect was driving a blue or black GMC pickup, possibly with a silver stripe. The truck had Idaho license plates.

Gold Creek exit is between Drummond and Garrison Junction.

<p><b>Fire Investigation Phone Line</b> <b>(406) 396-4168</b> <b>6am - Midnight daily</b></p>
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**CONTACT:** Paula Nelson, US Forest Service; (406) 329-3472 or [pjnelson@fs.fed.us](mailto:pjnelson@fs.fed.us)

**LINKS and OTHER RELATED MATERIAL:** The Northern Region incident information website is: <http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/information/information.htm>.