



ROD HOOPS, SHERIFF-CORONER

PRESS RELEASE

DATE/TIME: Friday, June 03, 2011

INCIDENT: Arson, Commercial Burglary, Felony Vandalism

LOCATION: Yermo Community Center, Silver Valley Baptist Church, Thrift and More & Yermo Bible Church

SUSPECT: 14 year old male and 17 year old male, residents of Yermo

SUMMARY:

On Thursday, May 12, 2011, Barstow deputies responded to a commercial burglary at the Yermo Community Center. Deputies determined that suspects forced entry to the building, stole items and vandalized the interior. During the investigation, deputies identified three juvenile suspects. The three male suspects, ages 9, 13 and 17, were arrested and cite released.

On Sunday, May 29, 2011, Barstow deputies responded to a commercial burglary at the Silver Valley Baptist Church on Yermo Rd. Deputies found that suspect(s) had forced entry to the church and took electronic equipment and fire extinguishers. The interior of the church was vandalized.

Also on May 29th, Deputies responded to an alarm call at the Thrift and More business on Yermo Rd., just east of the Silver Valley Baptist Church. Deputies found a broken window, however the suspect(s) did not gain entry. Physical evidence was collected at the scene but no suspects were identified.

On Tuesday, May 31, 2011 at 3:00 a.m. the alarm was activated at the Thrift and More business and a neighbor was alerted. The citizen looked out the window and observed fire coming from the Silver Valley Baptist Church and immediately called 911. Yermo Fire Department responded and was assisted by the Marine Corp Logistics Base Fire Department and San Bernardino County Fire Department to extinguish the fire. Deputies believed the fire was suspicious and notified the Sheriff's Bomb/Arson Detail. Arson Detectives responded and began an investigation.

Arson Detectives notified the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) due to the suspicious fire in the church. ATF Agents responded and assisted Sheriff's Detectives with the investigation. Sheriff's Detective Steve Szydoski utilized his Accelerant Detection Canine on scene. Detectives and ATF Agents spent hours collecting evidence and conducting interviews which resulted in two juvenile suspects identified and arrested. They were booked at the High Desert Juvenile Hall for Arson, Commercial Burglary and Felony Vandalism.

The juvenile District Attorneys Office will determine if charges will be filed.

Investigators do not believe that any of the crimes involving the church are hate crimes.

ATF is offering a \$1,500 reward for the arrest and conviction of any other persons involved.

The investigation is ongoing and anyone with information is urged to contact the Barstow Station Detective Division or remain anonymous and contact WeTip at 1-800-78-CRIME or www.wetip.com

Refer: Barstow Sheriff's Station

Phone No: (760)256-4645

Case No: 081100729, 081100848, 081100849, 081100857, 081100860

ROD HOOPS, Sheriff-Coroner
San Bernardino County Sheriff-Coroner Department