

# International Association of Arson Investigators

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## Hawaii Chapter Newsletter



The economy is slowing down. People are losing jobs and living paycheck to paycheck.

As you already know, the price of everything has gone up. I can't get over the cost of a 20 lb bag of rice. I can't find it lower than \$12 on Maui. Fuel costs are tied to everything, especially in Hawaii. It is

thought that 90% of our supplies and food travel more than 2,000 miles to reach us.

The added costs cut in to our other spending habits. Eating out regularly now needs to be evaluated or halted. What about that daily coffee stop at your nearby café?

Some industries and services are cutting jobs, cutting hours or just plain shutting down. Do you make sure you have a complete list for your groceries before you head to the supermarket so you don't need to go back?

I have already resorted to hollering at the kids to turn off lights. In reality, I'm worse than them. My last electric bill was outrageous and I thought we actually were doing a lot better conserving power. The "fuel surcharge" keeps going up on my utility statement.

I rode my bike to the hardware store the other day. I needed something small, so I figured what the heck. The economy is changing our lifestyles in many ways.

Aloha,  
*Val Martin*  
President

## ARSON & THE ECONOMY

For many years, statistics have shown that the economy and crime statistics go hand in hand. People take desperate measures in desperate times. The car payment becomes harder and harder to make. Many times, people can owe more than their car is worth when they lose their job. Nobody wants to buy

SUV's with the price of gas today. SUV's have come down substantially in price because the demand is not there. Other jurisdictions in the country are already feeling the effects of arson due to the downward turn of the economy. Bibb County in Georgia has already seen a

climb in vehicle fires since the beginning of summer.

There is no argument that we have seen Americas largest economic climb in its history. The economy has been great the last ten years. However, the only thing that's consistent is change.

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The FBI has been keeping crime statistics since 1934. Only 16 individual years of the last 74 years has the crime statistics fallen. 8 of those 16 downward years have occurred in the last robust economy that we no longer have. When times are good, crime statistics appear to be kept in check.

Arson fires took a dramatic and consistent drop from 2000. Again, you may find these statistics on the FBI website or the US Fire Administration website at <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/statistics/arson/>. These statistics also show that around 32,000 structures were intentionally set as compared to 20,000 vehicles in the year 2007. The statistics went up for the first time in 2007 going back to 2000.

As people lose their jobs and payments become late or just plain stop, we can expect to see the crime rate increase again. This also includes arson. It would be prudent, on our part, to not deny the fact that it is a matter of time. If you have not already seen arson

increase in your area, stick around. Be aware of the different methods that are out there. Most people who use fire to cover up a crime usually do not do a great job of eliminating the clues. My experience tells me that if you dedicate the time and effort to conduct a thorough investigation, it is likely you will find evidence.

The Insurance industry is well aware of this phenomenon. That's why it is important to communicate with each other and attend meetings, conferences or seminars. We need to communicate to stay abreast of what is happening in our communities. Continuing education is very important and a requirement to keep any type of fire investigator certification. We all must keep up with the latest techniques and equipment to stay on top of our game.

## Chapter Membership Information

On the front page you will see the officers contact information. Please feel free to contact any of us with any questions or concerns you may have during the year. I would like to keep this newsletter active so I will need your support. My goal

is to keep all members up to date with what is happening in our chapter. Please send us your current information, i.e. phone numbers, email address, and mailing address so we may keep an up to date list of our members. Please send let me know if

you have any articles that you would like to include on a future newsletter.



**Wear proper protective clothing & safety equipment when investigating fire**