



SANTA CRUZ POLICE DEPARTMENT

155 Center Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE/TIME: June 20, 2013

LOCATION: 150 Jewell Street

TOPIC: Arson Arrests

CASE NUMBER: 13S-05105

ARRESTED:

Kelly Nichole Hawkins – 30 YRS, Transient

Mitchell Edward Swienton – 49 YRS, Transient

INFORMATION:

On June 20, 2013, at approximately 3:00 PM, Santa Cruz Police Officers responded with the Fire Department to assist in evacuations, traffic control and the investigation of the fire behind the Elks Lodge, 150 Jewell Street. This area borders wildland wooded areas and the transition road from Highway 17 to Highway 1. Investigators determined the fire was intentionally ignited at several points along a trail in the wildland area behind the Elks Lodge.

Officers quickly set a perimeter and obtained information from witnesses. Officers located suspect Mitchell Swienton running from the scene still carrying a butane lighter. The officers were able to catch Swienton and take him into custody.

Officers obtained a description of a female seen running from the area as well. After hearing the radio broadcast, a First Alarm Security Officer spotted suspect Kelly Hawkins running into the Homeless Services Center at 115 Coral Street. The First Alarm Officer radioed responding police officers who located Hawkins near River Street and Highway 1. The First Alarm Officer was on patrol as part of the police department's deployment of First Alarm private security in the Harvey West neighborhood.

Officers determined that earlier in the day, Hawkins was involved in a dispute with the Elks Lodge over her vehicle being towed from their parking lot after she abandoned it there. Hawkins has a significant history of arrest for drug related offenses. She is currently out of custody on probation 4x over and has been arrested 10 times in the last year alone. The most recent probation was granted on May 23, 2013.

Both suspects had evidence of having been involved with the fire and both made certain admissions to their participation.

Both suspects were booked into Santa Cruz County Jail. Mitchell Swienton was booked for a charge of Arson, while Hawkins was booked for Arson, Being Under the Influence of Narcotics, and a Probation Violation.

The Santa Cruz Fire Department should be acknowledged for their swift response and deft firefighting strategies that clearly prevented a tragedy of much larger scale. The swift response of the Cal Fire helicopter was also a significant factor in keeping further damage and loss of property from occurring.

For additional information, contact: Deputy Chief Steve Clark

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To Leave ANONYMOUS information regarding this incident, please call our TIP LINE (831) 420-5995 or use our mobile iPhone and Android App



