



Contact:
Denise Walsh
T: 610-635-3531
M: 484-614-3548
dwalsh@lowerprovidence.org

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Homeowner Charged in Manufactured Home Fire

LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP (*August 13, 2012*) – Charges have been filed against a homeowner in connection with an August 3, 2012 house fire in the Valley Forge Crossing manufactured home park in Lower Providence Township.

Joanne Ryan Frye has been charged with four counts of arson; causing or risking a catastrophe; recklessly endangering another person; falsely filing an insurance claim; and falsifying a statement to authorities.

On August 3, 2012 at 11:24 p.m., Lower Providence Township Police received a report of an active fire with heavy smoke in a manufactured home in Valley Forge Crossing. Crews from Lower Providence, Jeffersonville and Valley Forge Fire Companies responded and suppressed the fire. While contained to the master bedroom, the fire resulted in substantial smoke and water damage to the home. Two adults and two dogs were in the home at the time of fire. Four neighboring homes were within 22 feet of the Frye's home.

During an investigation by the Lower Providence Township Fire Marshal, the homeowner, Joseph Frye, said he and his wife had come home and he fell asleep in the living room. He said he was awakened by his wife alerting him that she smelled smoke. Mr. Frye discovered a fire in a closet in the bedroom. In his attempts to extinguish the fire, he received burns to his eyes from the smoke and blistering burns on his hands. Mr. Frye declined treatment for his injuries.

A subsequent joint investigation was conducted by Lower Providence Township Police, the Montgomery County Detective Bureau and Pennsylvania State Police. It was determined that an incendiary fire started in the bedroom. A second interview of the homeowners led to Mrs. Frye recanting her original statement and admitting that she intentionally set the fire to collect \$50,000 in insurance money in order to relocate to Florida. Over the weekend, Mrs. Frye had notified her insurance company of the fire and had received a pre-payment.

Joanne Ryan Frye was arraigned on August 9, 2012 before District Justice Cathleen Rebar of Collegeville. The arson charges include danger of death or bodily injury; recklessly placing persons in danger; intent to collect insurance money and personal property in excess of \$5,000. She was remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Institute in lieu of \$200,000 cash bail. A preliminary hearing before Judge Rebar is scheduled for August 15.

In 2009, there was a fire of suspicious origin in a manufactured home owned by the then Joanne Ryan. That fire remains under investigation.

###