

UPDATE: \$1,000 reward still in place for potential arrest(s) regarding suspicious fires in Alton

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - Another suspicious fire blazed in Alton in the early morning hours of Wednesday, and authorities are calling the cause suspicious.

Alton Fire Chief Bernie Sebold said firefighters were called to the most recent blaze at 1025 Willard Street at 3:03 a.m. Wednesday morning. Sebold said he was not sure who called authorities, but said flames were shooting from the roof and windows when firefighters arrived on the scene, describing the vacant home as "fully involved." No one was currently living in the home, and no utilities were connected to the property. Because of these facts, Sebold said the Alton Fire Department has deemed the fire as "suspicious."

"There is no reason for that fire to have started without human intervention or action," Sebold said. "There were no severe storms or lightning strikes in the area at that time. When I say suspicious, what I mean is we believe there was potential human involvement until ruled otherwise by the Fire Marshall or police department."



Because the Alton Fire Department does not have arresting powers, Sebold said the determination between willful arson and criminal destruction of property would have to be made by either the Illinois State Fire Marshall or the Alton Police Department.

Wednesday's fire was the newest in a line of suspicious fires in the Alton area, which was especially prevalent over the winter when at least four vacant homes were destroyed in such a fashion.

Since the potential for arson does exist, Sebold said a \$1,000 reward has been offered by the fire department for any information leading to the arrest(s) of any potential suspect (s). Sebold said if hypothetically it was an arson case done by more than one suspect, a \$1,000 reward would be offered in regards to each separate arrest.

No other buildings were badly damaged in the wake of the Wednesday morning fire. Sebold said firefighters were able to limit damage done to another vacant structure directly north of the engulfed residence. He said heat from the conflagration did crack the electrical meter, however.



[Chris Rhodes also contributed to this story.](#)