



**Paulding County Fire & Rescue Contact:**

Steve Mapes  
Public Information Officer  
678-383-3416  
[steve.mapes@paulding.gov](mailto:steve.mapes@paulding.gov)

**Cause Determined for Wildfire Near Paulding County Airport**

**Hiram, Georgia – November 11, 2016** – Tips from concerned residents have led Paulding County Investigators to the cause of Tuesday's 120 acre wildfire which started near the Paulding County Airport on Tuesday morning.

Four juveniles, ranging in age from 7 to 13 years old, had been playing with a lighter in a wooded area. The individuals lit dried leaves on fire. Despite their efforts to extinguish the blaze, it quickly spread as a result of the extremely dry conditions. Schools were closed that day due to the election.

Based on their ages, names of the suspects are not being released. However, Paulding County Fire & Rescue will be enrolling the four individuals and their families in the Youth Firesetter & Intervention Program (YFIP).

The program, which is court sanctioned and can be court mandated, is sponsored by the Georgia Public Safety Training Center and the Georgia Firefighter's Burn Foundation.

Juvenile firesetting is a serious, dangerous, and costly behavior. Children are responsible for 46 percent of all fires deliberately set in the United States and one in four fire deaths is attributed to children playing with fire. Nearly 80,000 structure fires, 300 deaths and more than 1.2 billion dollars in property damage were caused by children last year. And, more than 50 percent of arson arrests nationally are juveniles. This is a very serious indicator of the pervasiveness of this problem. But this statistic does not include the far greater number of juvenile firesetting incidents that never attain the status of criminal arson.

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