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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EVERGREEN PARK MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR AGGRAVATED ARSON

Michael C. Carr, Jackson County State's Attorney, announced today that an Evergreen Park, Illinois man was sentenced to prison on July 13, 2016, for Aggravated Arson.

Justin D. Brearley, 21, of Evergreen Park, IL, who was charged in Jackson County Circuit Court with Aggravated Arson, a Class X Felony, was sentenced to serve twelve (12) years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. The defendant will serve a period of Mandatory Supervised Release of three (3) years upon his release from the Department of Corrections. The defendant will have to serve a minimum of 85% of this sentence.

On March 29, 2015, the Carbondale Fire Department was dispatched to a structure fire in the 700 block of West Walnut Street, Carbondale, Illinois. Upon arrival, firefighters found the residence, which was split into two apartments, was fully engulfed in flames. Carbondale Police Department officers also arrived on scene. Ultimately, firefighters were able to extinguish the fire, which completely consumed one of the apartments in the building. It was quickly determined that the fire was the result of an arson.

During the investigation, officers learned that the defendant had been inside the apartment, along with three of his friends. It was also learned that another person was located inside her apartment, which was the other apartment inside the building. Officers determined that all individuals were able to make it out of the building without injury, except for the defendant. The defendant suffered burns to his foot. Officers learned from those inside the building that the defendant was responsible for setting the house on fire. Officers were told that the defendant started fighting with one of his friends. According to witnesses, the defendant grabbed a gas can, which was located inside the residence, and began pouring gas on the floor. The defendant then lit the gasoline, which immediately erupted in flames.

The defendant was interviewed and ultimately admitted to setting the fire. The defendant indicated that he started the fire to get the attention of his friends. The defendant further indicated that it was his intention to quickly extinguish the fire, but, the fire spread too quickly, catching the rest of the house on fire along with his leg.

During the arson investigation, it was learned that the fire was started in the living room by the use of gasoline. Arson investigators also identified a secondary ignition point in the rear bedroom. It was the opinion of Arson experts that there were two locations where fires were set.

On January 19, 2016, the defendant entered into an "open plea" to Aggravated Arson and a sentencing hearing was scheduled. The sentencing hearing occurred on July 13, 2016. Evidence and arguments were presented regarding aggravating and mitigating circumstances, including testimony from

the Arson Expert who assisted in the investigation. On that date, the Court sentenced the defendant to the above term in prison.

This investigation was conducted by the Carbondale Fire Department and the Carbondale Police Department. Assistant State's Attorney Casey Bloodworth prosecuted this case.