



LAKELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Sunday, December 13, 2015

Contact: Janel Vasallo, Public Information / Education Officer

Telephone: (863) 834-8219

Cell: (863) 860-9011

Fax: (863) 834-8222

Email: janel.vasallo@lakelandgov.net

Firefighters Respond to Condominium Fire. Rescue One from Burning Unit. Find Deceased Person in Neighboring Unit.

Lakeland, FL - Lakeland Firefighters responded to an early morning fire at 217 Windsor Street on Sunday, December 13, 2015. Units arrived at the two-story condominium unit at approximately 1:17 AM to find heavy fire and smoke emitting from Unit 5B.

Responding firefighters immediately engaged an interior fire attack and the fire was contained to the unit of origin, 5B. However, during the early stages of fire attack, a victim, Ms. Francis Hurd, age 75, was found inside the affected unit, incapacitated by smoke. Engine 21's crew found Hurd inside and rescued her, carrying her to safety where she was later treated on scene and released without injury.

As customary, after the fire was contained LFD firefighters searched for fire and smoke extension into other neighboring units. While searching in the adjacent unit 6B, firefighters found a deceased female, Ms. Alecia Dotson, age 45. She was found in the bathroom of unit 6B. The fire was determined to have started in the bedroom area of Unit 5B however the cause of the fire is still under investigation by LFD Fire Investigators.

After being notified of the deceased person found, Lakeland Police Department detectives responded and will be handling the death investigation shared LPD spokesperson Sgt. Gary Gross. The preliminary investigation by LPD revealed that Dotson had a single gunshot wound. At this time LPD investigators are treating it as a suicide and not a fire fatality. The decedent was transported to the Medical Examiner's office pending an autopsy and the death investigation is ongoing.

The American Red Cross was called to assist two additional families that were displaced due to damage caused by the fire.

Responding units included Battalion 1, Engine 21, Rescue 22, Engine 12, Engine 51, Tower 15, and Polk County EMS. All LFD units cleared the scene by 4:17 AM.

- END -

Gary Ballard, Fire Chief

701 E. Main Street Lakeland, FL 33801 | Phone (863)834-8200 | Fax (863)834-8295

WWW.LAKELANDGOV.NET/LFD



/LakelandFD



@LakelandFD