



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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Prepared by: Brittany Kershaw
Phone and Email: (386) 586-2637; bkershaw@flaglersheriff.com
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Arsonist Sets Two Fires Near Area Businesses **'See Something, Say Something' and Quick Deputy Response Leads to Arrest**

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) responded to the closed Citgo gas station at 4920 Belle Terre Parkway around 12:21 on Wednesday morning after an employee at the nearby Publix reported a fire at this location. The subject who lit the fire was described as wearing a grey shirt and black pants. Deputies arrived to locate only burning embers that were put out with a fire extinguisher.

The fire had been started on a fence which was attached to the business and a dumpster. Deputies searched the area and could not locate the subject who started the fire.



Left: Fire bomb from 4920 Belle Terre Parkway. Right: Dumpster at 1475 Palm Coast Parkway after the fire was dismantled.

Fifteen minutes later, Deputy Conway conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle at Pine Cone Drive and Palm Coast Parkway due to a piece of cardboard taped over the license plate shielding the tag. The driver, identified as 26-year-old Daniel DaCosta (DOB 11/8/1993), appeared nervous and was shaking.

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1769 East Moody Blvd., Bunnell, FL 32110

386-437-4116 – Fax 386-586-4888

Mailing: P.O. Box 879, Bunnell, FL 32110

www.flaglersheriff.com

While on scene at the traffic stop, FCSO units were alerted to a dumpster fire behind Pizza Hut and Kawa Sushi at 1475 Palm Coast Parkway. DaCosta was released from the traffic stop so that deputies could investigate the fire. The large dumpster was fully engulfed with flames reaching as high as fifteen feet. Deputies attempted to utilize fire extinguishers but could not stop the fire.

Since both fires were in close proximity to each other, it was likely that one person could have started both fires. FCSO Units again attempted to search for the suspect. Deputy Conway made contact with the Publix employee who reported the first fire and was able to view surveillance footage from the store's security cameras. Through the footage, Deputy Conway was able to identify DaCosta, the subject from the traffic stop, as the person in the video walking over to the area of the first fire holding an object in his hands.

Contact was made with DaCosta where he initially denied all involvement but then admitted to being responsible for both fires. The lighters used to light the fires were still in his pockets.

DaCosta told deputies that he made a "fire bomb" and then threw it at the first business. At the second business he constructed a teepee out of cardboard and newspaper on top of the dumpster and then lit it on fire. He then drove by to ensure the fires were burning well.

"This is a textbook arsonist," Sheriff Rick Staly said. "Start fires and then remain in the area to watch. He could have easily caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage due to his criminal actions. If not for community members calling when they saw something, a traffic stop for a hidden tag, technology and the quick actions and investigation by our deputies, this could have had a catastrophic outcome and he may not have been caught."

The fires were in closed proximity to businesses and had a great likelihood of catching the businesses on fire if they continued to burn. DaCosta was placed under arrest and charged with two counts of Second Degree Arson and one count of Possession of a Firebomb. He was booked into the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility where he is being held with no bond allowed. The State Fire Marshall has been notified of the incidents.

Video of the traffic stop, dumpster fire, and arrest can be viewed on [YouTube](#).

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