



WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Conserving the Peace Through Values Driven Service
Sheriff Pat Garrett

PRESS RELEASE

Detective Receives the 2016 Fire Investigator of the Year Award

September 15, 2016 — Yesterday, Washington County Sheriff's Office Detective James "Mitch" Coley was honored with the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) 2016 Fire Investigator of the Year award at the IAAI Annual Awards Banquet in Bend, Oregon.

The IAAI Fire Investigator of the Year award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated outstanding achievement and professionalism in the field of fire/arson investigation and is selected from nominations submitted by their peers in the field of Arson Investigation for the honor.



Detective Mitch Coley was nominated for this prestigious award for his diligent and tireless efforts investigating a [series of arson fires set on Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation \(THPRD\) properties](#) where the responsible party was ultimately prosecuted for these crimes.

Detective Mitch Coley has been a Detective for 10 of his nearly 20 years with the Washington County Sheriff's Office and specializes in Arson/Explosives investigations. Detective Coley is recognized by his peers, supervisors, partner agencies, and the Washington County District Attorney's Office as a dedicated expert in the field of arson investigation.

He is a mentor to his fellow investigators and peers and supervisors often attribute successful prosecution of cases to Detective Coley's thorough and detailed investigation. He has also served on the Clandestine Lab Enforcement, Remotely Operated Vehicle (Robot) Teams, Major Crimes Team, Westside Interagency Narcotics team and is a Survival Skills Instructor at the Sheriff's Office.

Detective Coley served in the United States Air Force and retired in December of 2013 as a Chief Master Sergeant after 23 years of service. While working at the Sheriff's Office, Detective Coley deployed four times to Iraq, Afghanistan and other foreign countries. He earned the [Bronze Star](#) for working with the 82nd Airborne Division in Iraq for Explosive Ordnance Disposal and led 867 combat missions during that deployment.