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Fire marshal mum on alleged explosives



A female state law enforcement officer carries a pizza box. Other officers who investigate arson are seen here, including one in a white shirt, who may be among the leaders. None of them wanted to speak with the press, even to say their names or titles.

Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © April 25, 2023 at 4:45 p.m.

CHIEFLAND – With nothing more than a social media post from the Chiefland Police Department, people passing through part of that little city on Tuesday afternoon (April 25) learned to avoid one area.

The area was blocked off for hours.

An explosive device was allegedly believed to be in a house at 405 N.E. Second St., a couple of blocks away from the Luther Callaway Public Library.

Near to the scene state fire marshal's office personnel made sure that no one crossed one of the many barricades erected around the suspected bomb house.

The state law enforcement officers shooed away reporters. The Chiefland Police Department was courteous, but they noted it was not their investigation.

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State fire officials chat about the scenario, after having been there for hours.

Under the leadership of Chief Mitch Harrell, members of the Levy County Department of Public Safety had an ambulance crew, and a battalion commander on the scene. None of them would speak with the press, nor would they direct the press to where to find answers.



When directed to the state fire marshal's staff on the scene, that just showed more of the silent treatment. It was as if there was some reason to keep the alleged investigation of explosives top secret.

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Standing behind a Chiefland Fire Rescue truck with a stretcher ready to place a patient upon for transport, a guy in sunglasses demands the press come no closer than a barricade about a city block away from the tent where they ate doughnuts and chatted.



A bomb squad trailer is on the scene Tuesday afternoon for hours after the drive from Gainesville, near the Church of Christ on Northeast Second Street in Chiefland.

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A couple of cars from Gainesville-based TV stations sit some distance from the alleged explosives area. The blue car is not a news car. The two white cars from TV reporters based in Gainesville.

The Alachua County Sheriff's Office sent a bomb squad vehicle and personnel.

A Levy County Sheriff's Office lieutenant was on the scene as a liaison for the LCSO, but he could say nothing, just as the CPD could not talk.

Chiefland Fire Rescue had some vehicles on the scene too.

The most recent news from **Florida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronus** is from today (April 25) where he announced the arrest of Daniel Holmes (Marion County) on four counts of arson and one count of battery on a firefighter/EMT for his alleged involvement in reportedly intentionally setting three fires inside the West Marion Hospital in Ocala some time ago.

Petronis is the state fire marshal.