PRESS RELEASE - UPDATE
For Immediate Release
July 25, 2024

UPDATE

As an update to the previous Press Release – the suspect’s name is:

Ronnie Dean Stout II, 42, of Chico
He has two previous “strike” felony convictions which will be charged along with whatever Arson charge is determined by the evidence to be appropriate.

- 2001 – Butte County Superior Court – Lewd and Lascivious Acts with a Child under 14
- 2002 – Kern County Superior Court – Robbery with Great Bodily Injury
  - After the 2002 Kern conviction, Stout was sentenced to the State Prison for 20 years

CHICO MAN ARRESTED FOR PARK FIRE ARSON

A 42-year-old Chico man was arrested early this morning by Cal Fire arson investigators, assisted by District Attorney investigators on suspicion of starting the Park Fire.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said the man was arrested after an unknown male was seen pushing a car that was on fire into a gully near the Alligator Hole in upper Bidwell Park shortly before 3:00 p.m. yesterday. The car went down an embankment approximately 60 feet and burned completely, spreading flames that caused the Park Fire.

The male was then seen calmly leaving the area by blending in with the other citizens who were in the area and fleeing the rapidly evolving fire. Cal Fire arson investigators responded immediately, secured the scene, and began to search for clues to the identity of the unknown man.

The man was eventually identified and with the help of the DA’s Office, a warrant was issued by a local judge for him early this morning. He was booked into the Butte County Jail where, pursuant to the warrant, he is being held without bail until his arraignment on Monday of next week.

The man’s name will be released later this afternoon.
Ramsey said the investigation is ongoing and anyone who has information or was in the Alligator Hole area between the hours of noon and 3:00 p.m. is encouraged to call Cal Fire investigations at (530) 538-7888.