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CITY OF SOUTH BEND JAMES MUELLER, MAYOR
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UPDATE TO DEVASTATING RESIDENTIAL FIRE

On the evening of January 21, 2024, the South Bend Fire Department responded to a residential fire at 222 North LaPorte Ave. Two firefighters were injured, one adult (father) with minor injuries, and five children passed away that evening. The oldest child remains in critical condition at a hospital in Indianapolis.

The fire cause and origin are still under investigation at this time. South Bend Fire Investigators are working closely with South Bend Police and Investigators from the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS). More details may be released at a later date.

During offensive operations while searching on the second floor of the home, one firefighter fell through a hole in the floor and landed on the first floor. The firefighter self-rescued and bailed out a window on the first floor. The firefighter was transported, released, and is resting comfortably at home while undergoing further evaluations. The second firefighter received minor burns and was treated and released to return to work.

As the investigation continues and with the blessing of the Smith family, the following children passed away the evening of the 21st. Females Davida Smith, age 9, Faith Smith, age 17 months, males Demetis Smith, age 10, Deontay Smith, age 5, and D'Angelo Smith, age 4. Angel Smith, age 11, is currently being treated in Indianapolis.

In closing, Fire Chief Carl Buchanon urges the community to keep the Smith family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult journey and to verify sources that may be soliciting funds and help on behalf of the Smith family.

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