

# Sheriff Keith Stone

Nash County Sheriff's Office  
222. W Washington St.  
Nashville, N.C. 27856



**HONOR COMPASSION DILIGENCE**

## HISTORY

- Nine rail cars once owned by Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.
- All nine rail cars were situated on a state-owned track approximately 4,000 feet from the town limits of Spring Hope.
- Closest access point is near South Old Franklin Road near the Hunt Forest Resources-Spring Hope Yard.
- Bass Farms is the next closest business and the former Masonite Plant, a 213-acre manufacturing site, was the next closest.



## Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Rail Cars

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*(CJ photo by Don Carrington)*



# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Rail Cars

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*(CJ photo by Don Carrington)*



# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Rail Cars

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*(CJ photo by Don Carrington)*



# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Rail Cars

## LOCATION





### 2019 CALLS FOR SERVICE

- **02/19/2019, 2:58 PM.** Trespassing Call. Two deputies responded but unable to locate anyone on or near the train cars after a 30-minute canvas.
- **04/25/2019, 10:03 AM,** Damage to Property and Breaking and Entering to a Vehicle. Damage to all 7 rail cars and 1 tool car where windows were broken and all locks were damaged by a sledgehammer. Assorted tools such as chain saws, cordless power tools, a 3 foot high tool box and a suite case welder. SBI was lead in this investigation. Fingerprints did not identify anyone via AFIS.



## 2020 CALLS FOR SERVICE

- **03/08/2020, 9:12 PM.** Trespassing Call. Multiple deputies and Spring Hope PD responded and located six individuals near the rail cars. Vehicle and individuals were located, no new damage or missing items were identified. Subjects were verbally warned.
- **03/11/2020, 12:20 PM.** Found Property. DOT employee, Andy Miller, located tools at the front of the rail cars, but did not wish to file a report. Informed no timeframe to remove rail cars due to inspection of the railway and the brakes on the rail cars.
- **12/29/2020, 9:21 PM.** Trespassing Call. DOT employee, Andy Miller requested assistance to check the rail cars for possible vagrants. After an hour of checking each of the rail cars, no one was located.



## 2022 CALLS FOR SERVICE

- **03/10/2022, 6:55 AM.** Train fire. Mark Moody notified Nash Communications rail cars were on fire. Multiple fire units responded. Initial units on scene indicated no access via Bass Farms. Units responded to edge of Masonite Plant at train tracks, but rail cars were still too far. Locomotive was called and rail cars were slowly moved to the Old South Franklin Road train intersection. Fire Department units extinguished fire on each rail car as it passed the train intersection. All units cleared after rail cars were extinguished as best as they could and rail cars moved closer to the Town of Spring Hope.
- **03/11/2022, 8:56 AM.** Fire units responded to call of one of the rail cars still smoldering. Fire units continued to monitor rail cars periodically to ensure no reflash occurred.
- **03/14/2022, 8:10 AM.** Fire units were made aware of passerby seeing the rail cars still smoldering. Fire units continued to monitor.



# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Rail Cars

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*(Photo by Chief Deputy B. Medina)*



## Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Rail Cars

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*(Photo by Chief Deputy B. Medina)*



## Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Rail Cars

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*(Photo by Chief Deputy B. Medina)*



# Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Rail Cars

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*(Photo by Chief Deputy B. Medina)*



## INVESTIGATION

- NCSO responded to the scene and obtained photos, canvassed the area, collected evidence.
- NCSO contacted NCSBI for mutual aid support based on our limited capabilities and their expertise in fire investigations.
- NCSO will maintain evidentiary custody to assist NCSBI.
- NCSBI Special Agent D.J. Ward is the lead investigator and is in the process of determining the origin of the fire and an obvious fire cause.
- No witnesses, no video cameras in immediate area, no latent prints recovered.
- Two gas cans located near the original location of the rail cars, but of no evidentiary value to assist with identifying person(s) responsible.



## MITIGATING MEASURES

- Rail cars could have been secured on the private rail line located within the Old Masonite Plant, which is fenced off.
- Rail cars could have been stationed in a well lit area along with fencing to possibly deter trespassers.
- Flammable items in the tool car could have been removed to lessen the probability of fire acceleration.
- Rail cars could have been stationed at or near the CSX Rocky Mount rail yard where video surveillance and employees monitor the yard constantly.



# QUESTIONS?



## **Until April 8, 2022**

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## **Starting April 11, 2022**

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