

# Fire marshal bird-dogs suspect into arms of law

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□ State-of-the-art radio system helps Painter in pursuit of man who snatched a purse.

By J. Russell White

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

WINTER PARK — Picture, if you will, 6-foot-6-inch, 270-pound, Winter Park Fire Marshal Steve Painter in red-hot pursuit of a suspect moments after a purse snatching in the city.

Naomi Coyle of Eustis, shopping at the Bargain Box store on Virginia Avenue, had been knocked to the floor by a man who grabbed her purse and ran.

Waiting for repairs on a fire department vehicle at the city garage, Painter noticed the frenzied activity at the thrift shop.

Told by witnesses what had occurred and given a description of the suspect, Painter was off and running.

The 40-year-old fire marshal didn't catch the suspect single-handedly — swiftness of foot isn't his strong suit. What saved the day was Painter's use of

Winter Park's state-of-the-art radio system.

The \$1.3 million system allows city agencies to communicate with each other and with other emergency departments in Orange County.



Painter

er said. The suspect, 32-year-old Anthony Graham of Winter Park, was eventually apprehended by police officers in a vacant house 2½ blocks away.

Upon receiving a letter of commendation from Doug Ball, acting Winter Park police chief, Painter says co-workers are urging him to run for Orange County Sheriff.

"I imagine [Sheriff] Kevin Beary must be pretty worried," he said jokingly.

"Within seconds, I was able to inform every cop in the city with information about the scene of the crime and a description of the suspect," Painter