



*Wayne Waggoner*  
*Regional Manager*

P.O. Box 9  
Andersonville, TN 37705

Phone: (865) 755-2956  
Fax: (865) 381-0597  
Email: w.waggoner@comcast.net

**November 2009**

## **Fire demonstration shows importance of home sprinkler systems in North Carolina**

Firefighters in Mooresville hosted a dramatic demonstration Wednesday afternoon to show the dangers of house fires and the effectiveness of sprinkler systems.

The demonstration was held at the Mooresville/Shepherds Fire Station. Firefighters and fire sprinkler pipe fitters constructed two identical rooms complete with common household items. One room was equipped with a home sprinkler system and the other was not. Both rooms were set on fire. The room without the sprinkler was totally consumed in flames and thick, black smoke within six minutes. A couch, chair, table and television were all destroyed. In the other room, the sprinkler activated within two minutes of the start of the fire. A burned sofa was the only fire damage in the room.

Officials used the demonstration to show how effective sprinklers can be.

Many fire and safety agencies across the country are lobbying for codes that would make sprinkler systems part of new home construction. The following facts about home sprinkler systems were provided by the Mooresville Fire Department:

Fire sprinklers are supplied by household water - usually off the water main. Just like ordinary plumbing, sprinkler system piping is hidden behind walls and ceilings.

The sprinklers are positioned along the piping and can be seen in ceilings or up high along certain walls. Sprinklers are activated only by the high temperature of a fire - typically between 135 degrees and 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

Burned toast or other smoke cannot set off a sprinkler; neither can a smoke alarm that activates.

Sprinklers are designed to flow between 10-25 gallons of water per minute. That's about 10-15 times less water flow than fire department hoses, and under far less pressure.

By operating while a fire is still small, a sprinkler controls or extinguishes a fire, slowing the spread of poisonous smoke and deadly heat.

That fast and effective action gives family members more time to get out safely, saving lives.

And, the sprinkler confines the fire damage so that surrounding rooms are protected, saving valuables.

### **Key Study Reveals No Loss of Life in Home Fires During 15-Year Period in Jurisdiction with Mandatory Fire Sprinkler Laws**

#### **This is a must read document**

*Recent findings from a key study show the overwhelming effectiveness of mandatory home fire sprinklers in saving lives in municipalities with mandatory fire sprinkler codes for homes. Prince George's County, Md., the first county in the nation to require residential fire sprinklers in its building code, has reported that since 1992, when the code was first adopted, there were no deaths and only six injuries resulting from house fires where fire sprinklers were present. The 15-year study, titled, Prince George's County 15-Year History with its Single-Family Residential Dwelling Fire Sprinkler Ordinance, was led by the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, in cooperation with the University of Maryland.*

Recent findings from a key study show the overwhelming effectiveness of mandatory home fire sprinklers in saving lives in municipalities with mandatory fire sprinkler codes for homes.

Prince George's County, Md., the first county in the nation to require residential fire sprinklers in its building code, has reported that since 1992, when the code was first adopted, there were no deaths and only six injuries resulting from house fires where fire sprinklers were present.

The 15-year study, titled, Prince George's County 15-Year History with its Single-Family Residential Dwelling Fire Sprinkler Ordinance, was led by the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, in cooperation with the University of Maryland.

During the 15-year study, Prince George's County recorded a total of 13,494 single-family home and townhouse fires, with 245 of those affected structures being protected by fire sprinkler systems. In the fires where fire sprinkler systems were present, no deaths occurred and only six injuries were reported. In the fires that occurred in dwellings without sprinklers, 101 residents were killed - which represented 89 percent of all fire deaths in the county during the study - and 328 people were injured.

The study also noted that during the 15-year study, the average property financial loss after a fire with fatalities in an unsprinklered residence was more than 10 times the cost of a fire in a fire sprinkler-protected residence.

These findings are particularly timely as the International Code Council (ICC) - the governing body for the International Residential Code (IRC), which is the national building code - will meet late this month to vote on proposals re-confirming the ICC's building code requirement that all new one- and two-family homes in the U.S. that are built starting in 2011 be equipped with fire sprinkler systems.

The ICC residential fire sprinkler vote is expected to take place either October 28 or 29 - depending on the pace all action items before the ICC are debated - during the ICC's annual hearings in Baltimore.

"The powerful data from this study must be held up as evidence that this technology should be embraced nationwide when building homes. We must go to the heart of the country's fire problem if we are to solve it, and that is in the home, where most of the fires happen. There has NEVER been a multiple loss of life due to fire in houses where a properly installed and maintained fire sprinkler system is present," said John Viniello, president of the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA).

# REGIONAL REPORT

Tennessee/Southeast Edition



## Home Prices Maintain Value with Sprinklers

Additionally, a previous study conducted in Maryland by the National Fire Protection Association, has revealed that the cost of residential home fire sprinkler systems - a national average of \$1.61 per-square-foot of a home's size - has had a beneficial effect on the housing market prices in that area.

The U.S. Fire Administration strongly agrees and recently endorsed the requirement of fire sprinklers in new homes and struck a partnership with NFSA, the longest-tenured fire sprinkler advocacy group in the nation, to promote fire safety. Other groups that are supporting nationwide adoption of mandatory residential fire sprinklers are the National Fire Protection Association, the Home Safety Council, and fire service organizations across the U.S.

"Fire departments and other fire service professionals in surrounding states often look at Prince George's County as a model of true teamwork. That county provides a valuable life-saving benefit to the residents in Maryland," said NFSA Mid-Atlantic Regional Manager Ray Lonabaugh.

To view the full report, visit [www.homefiresprinkler.org/images/Prince-Georges-County-Report.pdf](http://www.homefiresprinkler.org/images/Prince-Georges-County-Report.pdf).

## David Brooks Named City of Chattanooga, Tennessee Fire Marshal

David Brooks, who has been serving for the last 80 days as interim Chattanooga fire marshal, has been appointed to the post. Mayor Ron Littlefield said he had a number of recommendations to make the promotion, including from a former chief. He said since being named when Craig Haney was reassigned as captain, "he has done an excellent job." Mayor Littlefield said Fire Marshal Brooks had achieved the chief rank in a relatively short time. David has been with the department for 13 years, including 10 years as assistant fire marshal.

## Business closed, fined for code violation in Gulf Port Mississippi – Public Safety must not matter

Kevin Lock is struggling to stay in business after a city judge levied against him what is believed to be the largest fine in the city's history, \$125,000 for failing to comply with the city's fire code.

The fire sprinkler system in Lock's business, General Lumber & Millworks, was inoperable.

Prosecuting attorney James Halliday said the fire department tried to work with Lock, giving him months to correct the problem. When he had made no progress, Halliday said, Lock was prosecuted in Municipal Court by Assistant Prosecutor Robert Harenski. (Harenski's part-time job has since been eliminated due to budget constraints.) Kevin Lock works with a customer in his store, General Lumber & Millworks on 15th Street, before a city judge ordered him to close because the building's fire suppression system is not working

Judge Alvin Chase fined Lock \$1,000 a day for each day the business operated without a sprinkler system from April through the September court date. Chase shut down the business and ordered Lock to begin paying a minimum of \$100 a month on the fine in October, Halliday said. If Lock fixes the sprinkler system the money he spent will come off the fine. A fire at the business could cause "catastrophic" damage, Halliday said. A medical company next door deals in oxygen tanks that could explode. Lock is a father of five children aged 2 to 11. He employed three people at his business, which he had been building since he was a teenager working with a handful of tools out of his mother's front yard. He builds custom storm shutters, cabinets, molding and fireplace mantels, and repairs furniture. "I'm just talking with people and, hopefully, I will find someone who will work with me in bringing that sprinkler system up to code so I can open that store," said Lock, whose custom handiwork is

visible through the plate-glass windows in his 15th Street storefront. "I don't have \$30,000 and I don't have access to \$30,000. They were very unsympathetic to me. "It just doesn't seem right to come in here and close my business."

Lock said he has been in the building for almost six years. About a year ago, he said, fire inspectors visited, citing him for numerous code violations. Lock, 45, said he fixed all the problems except the sprinkler system. "I'm hustling," he said. "I'm out in the field. I'm working on the job sites. It's tough. It's hard right now. We have accounts open we're trying to service."

Fire Chief Pat Sullivan said two other businesses avoided court appearances this year by fixing fire-code violations.

"We are pro-business, of course," Sullivan said. "But it's a public-safety and a fire-safety issue. The thing that we think about all the time is that if you have a fire and no one's there, that fire is going to be far worse in intensity and more dangerous to the firefighters who have to fight it if there is not a working sprinkler system in that building."

### ***Update on the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act of 2009***

- Re-filed in House February 25, 2009 by Mr. Langevin (D-RI) and Mr. Cantor (R-VA).
- Assigned as HR 1194 to House Ways and Means Committee
- Currently has 96 cosponsors
- Has support of Committee Chair Charles Rangel (D-NY)
- Has support of Select Revenue Measures Sub-Committee Chair Richard Neal (D-MA)
- Mr. Pascrell (D-NJ) has agreed to be W&M Committee "Bull Dog" on behalf of Mr. Langevin. Dinner with Pascrell scheduled for Wednesday July 22. NFSA NJ principles to attend
- Rescored at 2.6B with retro to April of 03
- 5 Year Sunset 1.7B with retro to April 03
- Rescored at 1.79B with retro eliminated and effective 2009
- 5 Year Sunset with retro eliminated 888M
- General expectation is to eliminate the retro and consider 5 year sunset
- Still negotiating Senate companion bill
- Senator Carper (D-DE) a member of Senate Finance Committee has agreed to sponsor
- Working through issues involving a primary Republican cosponsor
- Presently focusing on Senator Cornyn (R-TX)
- Still expecting tax legislation in second session of 111<sup>th</sup> Congress
- Will need to intensify recruitment of support and input of allied support groups beginning this Fall
- A big "thanks" to David Vandeyar and Jeanne Kozlowski for their efforts regarding funding of NFSA PAC

***To view the up to date information on the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act please go to [www.nfsa.org](http://www.nfsa.org) or click on the***

### **NFSA 2010 Annual Seminar in Chicago April 14-18**

The Fairmont Chicago in Chicago, Illinois will host NFSA's 2010 Annual Seminar. Due to economic conditions, the NFSA Board of Directors unanimously endorsed a recommendation of the Seminar and Exhibition Committee to move the venue from the Hawaiian Islands to the mainland. Look for details on extended business sessions and timely topics on how to maintain a competitive edge in a very difficult

# REGIONAL REPORT

Tennessee/Southeast Edition



business environment. The business sessions will be conducted on Thursday April 15 and Friday April 16. Details will follow in special mailings and on our website.

## **American Homes Are One Step Closer to Being Safer from the Devastation of Fire**

*International Building Code Hearings Result in a Vote Reaffirming Mandatory Residential Fire Sprinklers in New Construction*

**PATTERSON, N.Y. (October 28, 2009)** – American homes are one step closer to being more fire-safe, following the 8:45 PM October 28 vote during the International Residential Code (IRC) hearings conducted by the International Code Council (ICC) in Baltimore, MD. The vote confirmed, by the IRC Committee, by a 7-4 margin and overwhelmingly supported by the 1,650 credentialed ICC member voters reaffirmed that previously accepted national building codes will make it mandatory for all new one- and two- family dwellings to have residential fire sprinklers starting in 2011 by state or local adoption.

Currently, 44 states are in various stages of legislation to adopt the ICC's International Residential Code (IRC), the national building code which includes the fire sprinkler requirement. This requirement was in danger of being removed from the 2012 code and was subject to this vote.

With this win, residential fire sprinkler requirements have progressed to becoming a standard fire safety addition to homes. This initiative has the potential to vastly reduce the 3,000 yearly fire deaths in the U.S., as well as significantly reduce serious injury and property damage.

Working together, fire sprinkler supporters united to show that mandatory fire "Over a 30-year mortgage, that's less than the price of a cup of latte' per week! That's a small price to pay to save the lives of your loved ones in the event of a fire. This is a big win for the fire service and American's where they live. In order to reduce this country's fire problem, it must be attacked where fires happen the most, which is in the home," said John Viniello, president of the National Fire Sprinkler Association.

The IRC is the model code that is adopted in 46 states as the basic building code for new homes. Following code hearings, the IRC must be adopted at the state level. Residential fire sprinkler ordinances already exist in municipalities throughout 34 states.

The inclusion of residential fire sprinklers for one- and-two-family dwellings is a response to the growing fire problem in the U.S. About 85 percent of all fires occur in the home, fueled by new lightweight construction and more flammable home contents. In fact, the new sprinkler regulations have been endorsed by fire service professionals across the country, including the NFPA, U.S. Fire Administration, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, and the International Association of Firefighters. Groups such as these agree smoke detectors are no longer enough in residential fire protection, as the time to escape a house fire has dwindled from 17 minutes 20 years ago to three minutes today, and this poses a severe risk to those who cannot self-evacuate or have mobility concerns.

NFSA joined forces with the International Residential Code Fire Sprinkler Coalition – a large alliance of fire service professional organizations, including fire chiefs and fire marshals, fire code associations, and citizen advocacy groups – through educating and canvassing ICC members to vote for the code change.

“This is not a one-person or one-organization victory,” added Viniello. “We are grateful to the ICC for implementing a process that allows for the call for change to be heard and provides a forum for change to take place. In addition, we thank the International Residential Code Fire Sprinkler Coalition for joining so many organizations together to bring us to victory.”

Thanks to all who have ventured into this arena to make America a more "fire-safe" community! This was an amazing display of fire safety support from a variety of organizations; the NFPA, US Fire Administration, International Fire Chiefs Association, Habitat for Humanity-Austin, Texas and the International Association of Fire Fighters . The committee strongly backed what the future home owner can expect in maximum fire safety.