

FIRE SPRINKLER TIMES

Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board • Winter 2003 Edition



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Support Our Troops and Keep Them in Our Prayers this Holiday Season.

• See the enclosed "Fax Back" forms.

Mother Fights For Safer Campus Housing In Son's Remembrance

Since her son, Michael, died in a dorm fire at Murray State University in Kentucky five years ago, Gail Minger has worked aggressively to make campus housing safer.

Michael Minger had just started his sophomore year studying music and journalism when he perished in that fire on September 18, 1998. According to reports, the blaze started at 2:30 a.m. on the fourth floor of Hester Hall, an eight-story dormitory. The building did not have a fire sprinkler system.

The 300 student residents scrambled for safety when the fire hit, but Michael was overcome by smoke. Another student was critically injured and several students suffered less serious injuries.

The cause of the deadly fire was arson, the number one cause of dormitory fires according to the College Fire Safety Forum Final Report (NFPA/USFA).

Ironically, five days earlier a fire was started in the same area on the fourth floor. Michael told his mother that a smoke alarm woke him up during that fire and he saw smoke when he went into the hallway.

"Michael had a learning disability," Gail said. "He was dyslexic and had severe attention deficit disorder. He was easily confused. Two students saw him in the hallway and told him to follow them out of the building."

The day after the first fire, Gail called university officials to express concern about her son's safety. She was concerned because of his disabilities, lack of fire sprinklers, numerous false alarms at the building and difficulty in exiting the student housing structure.

Gail said the University never mentioned that arson was suspected in the first fire, and never informed students or parents that it was an arson fire.

"The University assured us that everything was okay and that the first fire was an accident even though they knew the fire was intentionally set," she said.

Gail soon learned that prior to the fires, the Fire Marshal's Office warned the University about violations, yet school officials never took action.

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When It Comes To Fire Safety Young Adults Need To Be Educated Too

**Skip Hart
Public Education Officer
Buffalo Grove Fire Department**

When it comes to public fire and life safety education, the process has overlooked a significant portion of the population – the 18-22 year old.

Traditionally, the fire service concentrates most of its educational program deliveries to the elementary school segment. As a whole, we have reduced the fire death and injury rate among very young individuals and recently reached into the senior citizen arena.

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This Northwestern University dorm room was recently retrofitted with a fire sprinkler system. All NU dorms will be protected with fire sprinklers as part of a five-year plan.



NIFSAB Updates

by Tom Lia, NIFSAB Executive Director

Contact Tom at 866-264-3722 or e-mail: sprinktom1@aol.com

It's 2004 ... And Time To Change Your Fire Codes!

Don't ask ... and it will not happen!

That's the one thing for sure that I have discovered about proposed code improvements and code changes.

In the wake of this year's fire at "The Station" in West Warrick Rhode Island as well as the high rise fire and the E2 stampede incident in Chicago, the atmosphere has become very positive for code change acceptability.

Bolstered by 27 communities at "zero" tolerance for fire and another 14 towns with new single-family home fire sprinkler ordinances, the precedent has definitely been set for your board or council to consider more proactive fire codes. (Congratulations to Berkeley Chief Sustr and Fire Marshal

Mulchahy for passing the 14th single-family home ordinance!)

Public records are of informational benefit in proposing proactive fire code improvements with the advantage of equipment/installation pricing as well as fire-protected housing sales and commercial property sales.

The old "if we do this in our town we will lose that business" argument just does not hold water. In addition, all backflow (double detector versus reduced pressure types) and plastic pipe (PVC versus CPVC) issues have been answered.

Recently, there has also been further hope of accomplishing these safety goals now with many mayors, council members and trustees initiating serious fire safety discussion with

their fire chiefs and/or FPB directors.

You may find yourself pleasantly surprised if you plan your actions this December and announce that you are going to request fire code changes for a January or February full board discussion.

Educating your elected officials is an essential part of the process as is the involvement of your council in fire training and public education events. They need to know about flashover, fire department time lines and the effectiveness of built-in fire suppression.

The fire safety trend for the next few decades begins with you making the start now.

Good luck in 2004! ■

NFSA Midwest Notes

By Dan Gengler, NFSA Midwest Regional Manager (IL, WI)

Contact Dan at 262-245-5255 or e-mail: DanNFSA@aol.com • www.nfsawi.org

Father Shares Personal Loss During Chicago Nightclub Hearing

"The last time I kissed and hugged my beautiful daughter, Tammy, she was in a black body bag."

That was the opening statement by Ray Mattera who lost his 29-year-old daughter in the West Warwick Station Nightclub fire last February. Tammy was one of 100 people who died in the tragic fire. The nightclub did not have a fire sprinkler system.

Ray traveled to Chicago to urge members of the Chicago Building Committee to support a new fire safety ordinance requiring fire sprinklers in Chicago's nightclubs. Alderman Edward M. Burke (14th Ward) introduced the ordinance last June to raise the safety bar for nightclubs in Chicago. The ordinance would require the installation of fire sprinkler systems in existing nightclubs with occupancy as low as 50 persons.

I had the opportunity to spend time with Ray during his brief stay in Chicago. What struck me the most was his compassion to share his personal experience to help

improve safety ordinances. Minutes after meeting Ray, he was anxious to show me pictures of his daughter, Tammy, and his two young grandsons. It was with sadness and pride that he talked about Tammy and how much her boys missed their Mom.

"I had to bury my child — no parents should EVER have to go through this hell on earth!" Ray said. "That is why I am here today."

Ray clearly had everyone's attention in the room. It was a sad moment. Shortly after the fire, Ray testified during the Rhode Island hearings because he believes legislators must do away with grandfather clauses that allow substandard and non-existent fire safety measures.

After spending time with Ray and listening to his testimony, I believe his willingness to share his story during these types of hearings is his way of dealing with his loss. He ended

his testimony with the following:

"I hope my presence here today will make a difference to the decisions of this council here in Chicago and hope that none of you sitting here today will ever have to experience the dreadful pain and emptiness that my wife and I live with every day."

Now it's up to the Chicago City Council to pass the nightclub ordinance introduced by Ald. Burke to prevent other parents and family members from experiencing the pain Ray Mattera and his family will feel for the rest of their lives. ■



Ray Mattera (right) with Ald. Edward Burke after the Chicago Building Committee hearing. Mattera's 29-year-old daughter, Tammy, was one of 100 people who died in the Rhode Island nightclub fire.

Fire Sprinklers at Work: SUCCESSFUL ACTIVATIONS

JUNE 2003

Mall

Chicago Ridge, Chicago Ridge Fire Department

During business hours, the Chicago Ridge Fire Department was dispatched to the Chicago Ridge Mall for a fire alarm. Firefighters found a single sprinkler activated and contained a fire in a merchandise rack. According to Deputy Chief Dave Bricker, because of the fire sprinkler protection, the business opened the next morning.

*Randall Grossi, Fire Chief
Chicago Ridge Fire Department*

AUGUST 2003

Manufacturing Plant

Batavia, Batavia Fire Department, Tom Springer, FPB

A fire sprinkler system extinguished a fire in a plastics manufacturing plant. No one was injured when a spark from a circuit breaker ignited insulation. According to Batavia Fire Chief William Darin, three automatic sprinklers activated and extinguished the fire by the time firefighters arrived at the scene. Damage was limited to \$2,000.

*William Darin, Fire Chief
Batavia Fire Department*

SEPTEMBER 2003

Five Story Apartment Building

Wheeling, Daily Herald, September 26, 2003

Wheeling fire officials praise a single fire sprinkler for preventing a kitchen fire from spreading in an apartment building.

Battalion Chief Bob Leipzig said sprinklers put out the fire, which started in a 5th floor apartment, before it could spread through the complex.

According to Leipzig, the fire started when the occupant placed a box full of paper on the kitchen stove. The stove was accidentally left on and ignited the box.

"It really had the potential to be bigger," he said. "Those sprinklers put the fire out before we even arrived."

"This is a perfect example of what sprinklers can do." Estimated damage: \$7,500.

*Milt Lemke, Fireman
Keith Macisaac, Fire Chief
Evanston Fire Department*

OCTOBER 2003

Stroger Hospital

Chicago, Chicago Tribune, October 1, 2003

A fire was reported about 1:45 a.m. at Stroger Hospital of Cook County on the 7th floor of the Medical and Surgical Unit. The blaze began in bedding materials and one report indicated it might have been started by a patient smoking. Fire sprinklers in the room of origin contained the fire. The Chicago Fire Dept. removed the bedding. The unit was evacuated, along with adjoining floors. No injuries were reported.

*John Javorka, Chief Engineer
Chicago Fire Department*

Car Dealership

Naperville, Daily Herald, October 23, 2003

According to Assistant Fire Chief Patrick Mullen, Dodge of Naperville employees called the Naperville Fire Department at 12:27 p.m. Firefighters arrived two minutes later to find heavy smoke and a van on fire in the service garage. Aided by the fire sprinkler system, it took firefighters approximately 15 minutes to extinguish the fire. Mullen said the fire sprinklers kept the smoke confined to the garage. The van, which was on a lift, was undergoing repairs to its fuel system.

*John H. Wu, Chief
Dan Voiland, FPB Chief
Naperville Fire Department*

Apartment Building Storage

Gurnee, Daily Herald, October 21, 2003

A single sprinkler contained a fire in a storage unit at the Woodview apartment complex. According to Capt. Barry Henby, firefighters were notified at 6:31 p.m. of an alarm. Henby said the sprinkler contained the fire on the third floor of a five-story

building. No injuries were reported.

*Fred Friedl, Chief
Rich Berndt, FPB Director
Gurnee Fire Department*

Shopping Center

Glen Ellyn, Glen Ellyn Volunteer Fire Company

A single fire sprinkler prevented fire from spreading at Binny's Beverage Depot at Pickwick Place Shopping Center. According to Glen Ellyn Building Inspector Chris Clark, firefighters found a small fire involving combustible materials next to a water heater. The single sprinkler contained the fire until firefighters arrived. Damage was limited to discolored drywall.

Clark said the 50,000 sq. ft. building was built in 1968 and retrofitted with sprinklers as a result of the Village of Glen Ellyn's sprinkler ordinance.

*Scott Raffensparger, Chief
Glen Ellyn Volunteer Fire Department*

Shopping Center

Hickory Hills/Palos, North Palos Fire Protection District

Shortly after midnight, the North Palos Fire Protection District and automatic-aid companies responded to a structure fire in the Hickory/Palos Shopping Plaza. Upon arrival, they found smoke showing from the end unit. Upon entry, firefighters found a single activated sprinkler extinguishing a fire. According to Russell Carlson, Battalion Chief, the fire was caused by a neon sign that was mounted to an interior wall. Smoke and water damage was minimal.

*Richard McKeon, Chief
Russell "Rocky" Carlson, Battalion Chief
North Palos Fire Protection District*

St. Francis Medical Office

Evanston, Evanston Fire Department

An emergency lighting unit malfunctioned, landing on cardboard boxes in a sixth floor physician office in the St. Francis Hospital Medical Office Tower on October 12th. According to Alan Berkowsky, Evanston Fire

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Arson Top Cause of Dorm Fires

The NFPA/USFA (U.S. Fire Administration) College Fire Safety Forum Final Report states that the number one cause of fires in dormitories is arson or suspected arson. Motives for juvenile arsons include peer pressure, a cry for help, and struggling with the pressures of the environment. All of these conditions can exist in a college environment where young people often encounter more pressure than they have ever experienced.

The second leading cause of college building fires is cooking, followed by smoking. Other hazards include alcohol consumption, burning candles and incense, using halogen lighting, disabling fire alarms and electrical overload.

While life-safety is the primary benefit fire sprinklers offer, they also protect the institution from long-term economic impacts caused by fires, such as:

- Increased dropout rates caused by the trauma of fire:
- Increased tuition reimbursements because students were unable to complete their studies:
- Reduced enrollments due to negative image created by a fatal or serious fire. ■

Source: Final Report, NFPA/USFA College Fire Safety Forum, September 24, 1999.

Campus Housing Fire Facts

- There are 1,700 campus housing fires a year.
- The number one cause of fires in dormitories is arson or suspected arson, which accounts for 1/6 of the fires.
- The second leading cause of college building fires is cooking, while the third cause is smoking.
- Over 90% of the campus building fires reported to fire departments occurred in buildings where there were smoke alarms present. Only 27% of the campus buildings had sprinklers.
- 25% of the college housing fires occurred in high-rise dormitory buildings.

College Fire Safety Forum. Final Report.
NFPA/USFA College Fire Safety Forum.
September 24, 1999.

Fire Safety continued from page 1

Untouched, however, is that 18-22 year old population representing high school seniors and college students.

Overall, these people have very little contact with fire prevention or life safety issues once they have left the sixth grade. Consequently, a growing trend is surfacing in the statistics book regarding fire on college and university campuses, specifically in residential housing.

Between the years 1986 and 2001, there were 76 reported fires involving college or university resident housing. Ironically, these fires also resulted in 76 deaths as well as 219 fire related injuries.¹

We need to revisit the high school senior segment and reinforce fire and life safety theories. These young adults are going to be leaving home for the first time and venturing out on their own. This risk group needs to have the tools to safely reach the next plateau of their life as they step out from under "Mom and Dad's" protection. Reinforcement of time tested fire and life safety disciplines will reduce the number of fires in campus housing.

"Beyond High School ... Out On Your Own" targets college-bound students by addressing issues such as housekeeping, maintenance and storage. Each category is broken down into topics that further discuss fire safety issues.

For example, housekeeping includes normal cleaning, vacuuming, dusting, trash removal and laundry. All of these functions relate to fire load, unobstructed exiting and general life safety.

Maintenance issues are directed toward the non-dorm resident. Fraternity life often includes up-keep of the HVAC systems, interior and exterior structural components, lawn care equipment and, in some instances, vehicle maintenance.

Storage, electrical use or misuse, cooking and fire protection equipment are issues that effect residential life – be that in a dorm, fraternity and sorority or off campus housing. This portion of the program reinforces the cognitive process of behavior to eliminate predisposing attitudes that fire and life

safety principles are not important.

In addition, value added programs have a way of finding each other for a better overall result, as is the partnership of "Fire Safety ... Out On Your Own," a similar program designed and delivered by Keith Patterson, Director of Education for the Deerfield-Bannockburn Fire Department.

This program targets the same risk group and explains the life saving actions that individuals need to take to survive a fire. Exit drills, smoke alarms, fire extinguisher use, first aid, basic rescue and emergency calling are topics that Patterson revisits with students with the goal of creating leadership roles in people to make sound decisions during emergency situations.

The effectiveness of these programs is evaluated through the use of pre-tests and post-test.

Pre-testing is administered during the last semester of the senior year in high school while post-testing is completed during the registration process at a college or university.

Results are gathered and analyzed, and then compared to national figures. These evaluations guide the program's direction for each individual jurisdiction.

Not having an institution of higher learning in your jurisdiction does not preclude you from using these programs. Regardless, your residents are sending their children to college and it's our job to make sure those students understand what to do when they are "Out On Their Own!"

Further information about these programs is available by contacting:

Skip Hart

Public Education Officer
Buffalo Grove Fire Department
Buffalo Grove, Illinois 60089
847-520-1522

Keith Patterson

Director of Education
Deerfield-Bannockburn Fire Department
Deerfield, Illinois 60015
847-945-4066 ■

¹ Structural Fires in Dormitory Properties Statistical Analysis, Kimberly Rohr, Fire Analysis and Research Division, NFPA, April 2002

Campus Housing Fire Hazards

- Alcohol
- Smoking in rooms
- Candles/incense
- Halogen lights
- Disabled fire alarm
- Electrical overload

Visit www.collegefiresafety.org for case studies related to these hazards.

RETRO s e c t i o n

Northwestern University's Five Year Retrofit Plan

While many universities consider fire sprinklers after a major fire, Northwestern University is taking a proactive approach and is retrofitting all dormitories as part of a five-year plan.

"Basically what we're trying to do is get ahead of the curve," said Evanston Division Chief Alan Berkowsky. "We're trying to put the life-safety systems in before a tragedy occurs."

Five dormitories are being retrofit per year, according to Berkowsky. The buildings are prioritized based on age, exits and other risk factors. The buildings range from 100 to 400 units, and three to four stories in height. There are a few high-rise dorm buildings for graduate housing.

The plan, Berkowsky said, has been challenging although most of the work is done when students are not in school. Even during those times when students are on summer and winter breaks, the dorms are often used for other activities like camps. The piping is done in summer, and the final hook up is accomplished in winter.

"It's quite a task, and a lot of work in a short amount of time," Berkowsky said. However, he

quickly added that the University's vision is good and its planning has been excellent.

"It's a unique system," he said. "We are using a fire pump loop with an eight inch water main that circles the campus."

"The advantage is the system provides redundancy in fire pumps to every dorm building," Berkowsky added. "If something goes wrong with a pump, we still have backup to keep the other pumps powered and pressurized."

The other advantages of the system are easier maintenance and better pressure. In the long run, it's an overall cost-savings to the University.

Working closely with the University's safety division and facilities management, an education program is in place or students. Resident advisors, students responsible for sections of the dorms, are also educated on how sprinkler systems work and how to protect them from being damaged.

Berkowsky said the University is taking fire safety very seriously and the project is moving along as planned. ■



A sprinkler fitter from Superior Mechanical adjusts a tamper switch.



Sprinkler fitters test the capacity of the new fire pump in front of Elder Hall. Three hundred students live in dorm.

Mother Fights For Safer Campus continued from page 1



Gail Minger

Michael Minger, who died in the 1998 dorm fire.

"We really believed Murray State was a safe university," Gail said. "It was listed as the eleventh safest school in the nation."

Gail made the assumption that fire sprinklers were installed in the dorms because she saw them in other buildings on campus. She said the fire safety information the university handed out mentioned sprinklers and advised students not to cover those sprinklers with anything.

"Because the dorm Michael lived in did not have fire sprinklers, Michael did not have time to escape," Gail said. "Without sprinklers, there was no time for someone to save him."

People close to the situation told Gail that Michael was heard screaming for help in his room ... then the screaming stopped.

In the tragic aftermath, Gail began to wage a legislative campaign that resulted in passage of the Michael Minger Act. The act requires higher-education institutions in Kentucky to maintain and publish a detailed record of campus crimes. In addition, it provides for the state fire marshal's office to have complete jurisdiction over inspection of campus buildings and requires colleges to report all fires to the agency.

Gail has also lobbied for a state requirement to have sprinklers installed in all college dorms. The Council on Postsecondary Education and state university presidents developed a plan after the Murray State fire to install sprinklers in dorm rooms. Most of that work has now been completed.

"I ache still from missing Michael these five years," Gail said. "He was a son any mother and father would be proud of, even with his difficulties. Those are the children you love the most."

She said the five-year wait for legislation has served only to toughen her resolve. ■

The RETRO-SECTION is a new feature of the Fire Sprinkler Times that will highlight a special retrofit project. Contact Tom Lia to submit a special project.

Where to find more information:

CAMPUS
Firewatch

www.campus-firewatch.com

COLLEGE FIRE SAFETY
www.collegefiresafety.org



Northern Illinois
Fire Sprinkler
Advisory Board

www.firesprinklerassoc.org

Chiefs With NFPA 13D Ordinances Were Recognized at IFIA Luncheon

With the recent announcement that the Village of Berkeley passed a residential ordinance, there are now 14 municipalities in northern Illinois that require residential fire sprinkler systems installed in all new construction homes.

Chiefs from the departments whose districts include the NFPA 13D ordinance were recognized at the Illinois Fire Inspectors Association luncheon for increasing public safety and protecting their citizens and firefighters. ■



Those chiefs include:

Chief John Feit

Barrington Fire Department

Chief Scott Raffensparger

Glen Ellyn Volunteer Fire Company

Chief Ralph Blust

Glenside Fire Protection District

Chief James Spiegel

Countryside Fire Protection District

Chief Robert Turpel

Long Grove Fire Protection District

Chief Ed Dubowski

Park Ridge Fire Department

Chief Paul Maplethorpe

Greater Round Lake Fire Protection District

Chief Keith Mac Isaac

Wheeling Fire Department

Chief James Eaves

Hoffman Estates Fire Department

Chief Brian Leahy

Clarendon Hills Fire Department

Chief Larry McManaman

West Dundee Fire Department

Chief John Nixon

Streamwood Fire Department

Chief Dean Maggos

La Grange Park Fire Department

Chief Mike Figolah

Mount Prospect Fire Department

NIFSAB Scholarship Class A Success

The 4th Annual NIFSAB Scholarship Class was held in September with 40 fire and building officials attending. Those who wanted to qualify for the class had to submit a letter of application explaining why fire sprinklers are important to their businesses, colleges and communities.

"The people who attend this class tend to be more progressive, they're looking to improve their fire ordinances," said Tom Lia, NIFSAB Executive Director.

The class - which included a two-day plan review, one-day hydraulic calculations and



one-day testing and inspection - was taught by NFSA's most qualified instructors: John Corso, National Training Manager and Bob Treiber, North Central Regional Manager. ■

ICC and the Model Codes

Model building and safety and fire prevention codes have been with us for more than 60 years. When the nation's three model code organizations created the International Code Council in 1994, the goal was to develop a single set of comprehensive, coordinated model construction codes that could be used throughout the United States and around the world. The first I-Code published was the 1995 International Plumbing Code. By 2000, a complete family of 11 construction codes was available including the International Building Code and International Fire Code. The ICC Performance Code for Buildings and Facilities joined the I-Code family in 2001. The ICC also introduced I-Code Commentaries and a host of other products and services to strengthen its position as the leader in building and fire codes.

History was made at the 2002 joint annual conference and business meetings of the nation's three leading building safety organizations. Meeting in Fort Worth, members voted to consolidate services, products and operations into one member service organization. The new ICC began operations in February 2003, as one member service organization. The consolidation united the nation's leading building safety experts.

The ICC, a 50,000-member association dedicated to building safety, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. The majority of U.S. cities, counties and states that adopt codes choose building safety and fire prevention codes developed by the ICC. The new ICC is comprised of a 350 professional, technical and support staff. The national headquarters of the ICC is located in Falls Church, VA, with three district offices in Birmingham, Chicago, and Los Angeles and resource centers located across the country.

For additional information on ICC codes, products, membership, code interpretation, training, and certification, please contact Larry Bazaar at 708-799-2300, Ext.215 or at: lbazaar@iccsafe.org

Larry Bazaar, C.B.O., C.F.I.
Regional Director Fire Service Activities
Chicago, Regional Office
lbazaar@iccsafe.org
708-799-2300, Ext 215 ■

Fire Departments Use Side-By-Side Demonstrations To Show Dramatic Comparison of Fires With and Without Sprinklers

Over the last six months, fourteen Chicago area fire departments set up side-by-side demonstrations as part of their public education programs.

By setting up two 8 X 8 foot furnished rooms, one with an automatic fire sprinkler and the other without a sprinkler, members of the community can get a close-up view of two very different fires.

In the unsprinklered room, families can see how quickly a fire spreads, observe flashover, and see how much damage a fire can create. In the sprinklered room, families can watch how quickly a sprinkler activates and extinguishes a fire.

After both fires are extinguished, families are encouraged to walk up to the displays and compare the damage. ■

RIGHT - Christmas trees and decorations were used in the Pleasantview demonstration.

BELOW - Families at the Mount Prospect demonstration get a close up view of how little damage there is in the room that had fire sprinklers.

2003 SIDE-BY-SIDE DEMONSTRATIONS

Lake County Area Fire Departments at Lake County Fair

- Alsip Fire Department
- Mt. Prospect Fire Department
- Elmhurst Fire Department
- St. Charles Fire Department
- Streamwood Fire Department
- Hinsdale Fire Department
- Mokena Fire District
- Lisle-Woodridge Fire District
- Darien-Woodridge Fire District
- Crestwood Fire Department
- Pleasantview Fire District
- LaGrange Park Fire Department
- Oak Forest Fire Department



ABOVE - At the Oak Forest demonstration, flashover occurred in the unsprinklered room at approximately two minutes.

LEFT - The crowd stood back to watch the St. Charles side-by-side demonstration.

November 24, 2003

Dorm fire in Russia kills 37, injures nearly 200 students

MOSCOW — A fire ripped through a 5-story Moscow university student dormitory housing 280 students. Students, who clutched blankets to catch victims leaping from the

windows of the burning dormitory, said Monday that firetrucks took more than a half-hour to arrive and then had inadequate water pressure to fight the fast-moving blaze. ■

SUCCESSFUL ACTIVATIONS

continued from page 3

Department, the light ignited a blaze. Two sprinklers activated, extinguishing the fire. Staff and patients were safely evacuated from the building.

“Without the sprinklers, the fire would have surely done more damage and smoke would have permeated the entire floor,” Berkowsky said. The building was reopened the following day. Estimated damage: \$10,000

*John Wilkinson, Fire Chief
Evanston Fire Department*

NOVEMBER 2003

Warehouse/Distribution Facility, Lemont

Lemont Fire Department, November 4, 2003

At 7:24 p.m., the Lemont Fire Protection District responded to an alarm at Perlman-Rocque Distribution, an 80,000 square foot warehouse. A fire in the electrical equipment room was extinguished by the building’s fire sprinkler system prior to the fire department’s arrival. There was believed to be an explosion and fire in the electrical switchgear about 30 minutes after a lightning strike to an electric power transformer near the building.

“This is yet another perfect example of the life safety and property preservation benefits of fire sprinkler systems,” said Jeffrey G. Lehr, Director of Fire Prevention. “The outcome of this incident would have been entirely different without the fire sprinkler system which includes the untold measure of safety that sprinklers provide to the firefighters that must enter these buildings.”

*Jeff Lehr, Fire Prevention
Andrew O'Donnell, Chief
Lemont Fire Protection District*

Ronald Regan Museum

Eureka, Eureka College

A fire sprinkler system extinguished flames and protected artifacts at the Eureka College’s Ronald Regan Museum in September. Fire officials believe arson caused a fire. Eureka Fire Chief Craig Neal said state investigators ruled Tuesday the fire was set in the storeroom. ■

Send your “Successful Activation” stories to: Tom Lia, NIFSAB, 62 Orland Square Drive, Suite 203, Orland Park, IL 60462; or fax them to: 708-403-4771.



Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board

www.firesprinklerassoc.org

62 Orland Square Drive, Suite 203
Orland Park, IL 60462

Standard
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Permit #77

For more information about fire sprinklers, contact Tom Lia, Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board, 866-264-3722

You can also contact Tom via e-mail: sprinktoml@aol.com



Berkeley Passes Single-Family Fire Sprinkler Ordinance

In an effort to increase fire safety and protect their citizens, the Berkeley Village Board passed an ordinance requiring the installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems in all newly constructed homes.

Under the direction of Trustee William Daugherty, Fire Chief Frank Sustr and Fire Inspector Michael Mulcahy, the ordinance requires all new, single-family homes and townhouses to have home fire sprinklers installed according to NFPA 13D. The ordinance is effective immediately.

According to Inspector Mulcahy, it took months of planning, research and hard work with the board to pass the ordinance. "Our board thoroughly reviewed the issues. They really understood the life-saving benefits and the long-term benefits to our community," he said.

Chief Sustr said Berkeley has an extremely supportive Board when it comes to fire safety. "People from the Fire Department and

Village worked hard," he said. "Because of their work, Berkeley will be a safer community."

Both Chief Sustr and Inspector Mulcahy agree that ordinances that require residential fire sprinklers is the wave of the future because sprinklers help save lives, reduce fire-related property damage and protect firefighters who respond to house fires.

Berkeley is the fourteenth Northern Illinois municipality to require residential fire sprinklers.

Chief Sustr and Inspector Mulcahy coordinated the information and resource search for the trustees. They worked closely with Tom Lia, Executive Director of the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board, who provided national reports, PowerPoint programs, cost comparisons, insurance research and other audio/visual support materials. ■

Alcohol as a factor in fire deaths

A government report states, "Approximately one-half of the adults who die in house fires have high BAC (blood alcohol count) values, a finding that is consistent with the disproportionate number of deaths that occur in house fires on weekends, when people tend to consume more alcohol."

This is important when one considers that almost 2/3 of the nation's students live off-campus in houses and apartments.

There is also a probable connection between smoking and drinking. Minnesota has been conducting autopsies on all fire fatalities. In the period from 1993 to 1996, there were 255 deaths caused by fire. Out of these deaths, 30% were found to have positive blood alcohol concentrations. The leading cause of death among this group was smoking (64%) versus the non-alcohol impaired group which had 37% of deaths caused by smoking. ■

Source: "Living With Fire" is a project to develop campus-oriented fire safety material. It is available through the U.S Fire Administration website at www.usfa.fema.gov.