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## **Northbrook Mayor and Board Recognized for Passing Residential Fire Sprinkler Ordinance**

Orland Park, March 14, 2007— Northbrook Village President Eugene Marks and the board of trustees were recognized by the Northern Illinois Fire Inspectors Association and the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board Tuesday evening as Northbrook became the 42<sup>nd</sup> municipality in Illinois to pass a residential fire sprinkler ordinance requiring fire sprinkler systems in all new single-family homes

At the February 27<sup>th</sup> board meeting, Marks provided the seventh and deciding vote to break a 3-3 deadlock between committee members. His vote in favor of the ordinance completed a two-and-a-half year process to implement the ordinance and made Northbrook the first municipality to pass the ordinance in 2007.

“This was not an overnight process,” Jeff Lewis, Northbrook Director of Fire Prevention, said. “It began in December of 2005 when I was asked to monitor the progress of the International Rescue Committee and report my findings to the board. In August of 2006 the Architectural Control Committee did not support the installation of fire systems of single family homes, but did in townhouses and other multi-family structures.”

Lewis, with assistance from trustee A.C. Buehler, in turn presented sufficient data and research to six of seven members of the Public Safety Committee, who asked him to write the sprinkler ordinance as it relates to single-family homes.

“They were surprised by the efficiency of the sprinklers and how quickly and rapidly the ceiling temperatures rose. I wrote the ordinance based on questions and concerns that the board members had,” Lewis said.

“This is a proven, contemporary system. We know that the sprinklers work and know that they save lives.”

Lewis said that his work progressed through the direction of President Marks, who used to serve as a Northbrook firefighter.

“As a first responder I saw the loss of life and damage of property first hand. With sprinkler systems, these fires probably would have been out,” Marks said. “People don’t relate the cost to life safety; they are not educated on the matter. People talk about smoke alarms, which are significant, but they do not fully secure a home. People may forget to change the batteries, take out the batteries, or listen to the alarm beep until it is melted to the ceiling.”

Northbrook became the first municipality to pass NFPA 13D in 2007, following Prospect Heights, who passed it in their last board meeting of 2006.

“Adopting a residential fire sprinkler ordinance for single-family homes has been on my list for four years,” Prospect Heights Fire Chief Donald Gould said. “It was a great way to end the year and start a new year.”

“Every time I would see another town pass the ordinance, I knew we had the same issues,” he said. “We have many teardowns in our district where new large homes are built, often in areas that do not have hydrants. It’s expensive to put water in the areas and I didn’t see shuttling water as an option.”

Earlier this week, the Village of Lake Bluff also passed an ordinance requiring fire sprinklers in all new single-family homes making it the 43<sup>rd</sup> municipality/fire district in the state to adopt such an ordinance. Only California has more municipalities with single-family ordinances.

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NIFSAB is a non-profit organization composed of fire officials, contractors, building officials, suppliers, architects, engineers, and manufacturers. NIFSAB is dedicated to educating and informing the public and elected and appointed officials of the vital role that fire sprinklers play in fire protection.

**For more information visit [www.firesprinklerassoc.org](http://www.firesprinklerassoc.org).**