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Fire Sprinklers Prevented More Than a Dozen Major Fires This Year in Chicago Area

Orland Park, Illinois, April 8, 2008 — The Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NIFSAB) reports that a fire sprinkler that prevented a fire from spreading in a multi-unit building last week in Lake Zurich was the 15th successful activation in the Chicago area.

According to the Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue Department, at approximately midnight, March 29th, a fire started in a cardboard box where oily rags, thinner and paintbrushes had been discarded after woodwork was stained the previous day. The fire sprinkler closest to the fire activated and prevented it from spreading until the fire department arrived.

“The automatic fire sprinkler system prevented a serious fire from developing,” said Chief Terry Mastandrea, Lake Zurich Fire/Rescue. “If the system wasn’t there, the fire would have spread out of control and we would not have received notice of the emergency until the fire broke out of the building,” he said. “Because the building was protected with a fire sprinkler system, there was no damage to the unit, its contents or any of the other units.”

According to NIFSAB, other activations include a Michigan Avenue high-rise building in Chicago, two hotels in Matteson and Lincolnshire, a department store in West Dundee, a chemical plant in Bourbonnais, an apartment building in Rockford and a high school in Chicago.

A fire sprinkler also prevented a fire from spreading in a single-family home in Streamwood caused by an electrical appliance. In 2002, Streamwood passed an ordinance requiring fire sprinkler systems in all new homes. That fire was the first successful activation in a Streamwood single-family home since the ordinance was passed.

According to NIFSAB, 73 communities in Illinois require fire sprinkler systems in all new commercial construction. Fifty-four communities require fire sprinkler systems in new homes.

For a list of those communities and a list of successful activations in the Chicago area, visit NIFSAB’s Web site www.firesprinklerassoc.org.

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