



## Educating Builders an HFSC Priority

When Angela Fuqua told prospective builders about her desire to install a residential fire sprinkler system in the Dallas area home she and her husband plan to build, she encountered surprising push-back. "The builders all said it would be very expensive, our insurance rates would probably go up and there's a lot of maintenance involved," she said. "It was a shock with the first builder, but after that we expected it." Fuqua was not deterred by the negative reaction, and she and her family remain on course to build their sprinklered home this fall.

Fuqua's experience reveals a serious gap between the safety and construction fields. She was struck by how passionate home builders are about the products they like, and how vocal they are about those they don't like. Fuqua also realized that builders' misconceptions about sprinklers were extensive. "They want to do what's right for the customer and put in the best systems," she said. "Their reputation is why you pick one builder over another." Fuqua believes that an educated builder will become a powerful advocate for sprinklers, but an uneducated builder may remain a vocal opponent. "I believe in sprinklers," she said. "They save lives. If we can just get that into the minds of builders, they can change the minds of buyers. But it has to be a builder initiative or it won't ever be successful."

Helping building contractors understand why residential sprinklers are value-added for their customers is one of the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition's (HFSC) top priorities. "The HFSC is in a unique position to bring sprinkler manufacturers and contractors together with home builders and others in the construction trades, and create harmony where there has traditionally been discord,"

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## Spreading the Good News About Home Fire Sprinklers

*The industry is dedicated to saving lives ... and that's where home fire sprinklers come in.*

Members of the fire service across the country know that home fire sprinklers save lives. They speak of losses – personal, property and, most of all, peace of mind.

Many have seen fire's devastation firsthand and know that smoke alarms alone can't always save a person's life. But there is something that can, and that's the good news. Home fire sprinklers and smoke alarms together – relative to having neither – can reduce the risk of death in a home fire by 82%.

Undaunted by a constant barrage of rumors and myths surrounding residential sprinkler systems, first responders continue to spread the good news. At community service meetings, school career nights, block parties, festivals and even on the construction site of a new development, these people have taken to heart that they are an important part of the lifesaving solutions that come with home fire sprinklers, too.

They want to persuade the public about the inherent pluses of home fire sprinklers and that these devices can contain and even extinguish a fire in less time than it would take the fire department to arrive on the scene. As an active early warning/suppression system, there's nothing better than home fire sprinklers.

Even before the creation of the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition and during the tenure of Operation Life Safety and other early predecessors to HFSC, first responders have taken education upon themselves. And today, thanks to efforts by HFSC and others, they find the task a bit easier with a vast array of brochures, videos, presentations and demonstrations that set the record straight about how these devices work – and why they work so well.

First in Georgetown, SC, then in Akron, OH, and now, in Jackson, MI, Fire Chief Kenneth Gaiser of the Jackson Fire Department continues to use every angle he can to get the truth out about home fire sprinklers. He works with local and national television and newspaper media, talks to community groups, and never loses an opportunity to tell the fire sprinkler side of the story. When

*See "Spreading the Good News" on page 5*



*Lt. Dan Quinn (left) and Cory Pikora (right), public education officer, Northbrook Fire Department (IL), use HFSC education material and a sprinkler display at Northbrook Days. Visitors had the opportunity to see a close-up view of how a sidewall and ceiling-mounted sprinkler activates. Pikora said the display was a huge hit with more than 900 citizens viewing the display.*

# Fire Sprinkler Industry Teams Up at 2004 International Builders' Show

After participating at the International Builders' Show (IBS) over the last four years, along with two fire sprinkler manufacturers, HFSC will have a major presence at the 2004 IBS thanks to the sprinkler industry.

Since 2000, HFSC has participated in IBS with an exhibit during the convention and through sponsorship in *Show Village*, an outdoor exhibit located near the main entrance of the convention where a fire sprinkler system is installed and showcased in a partially built home.

Representatives from HFSC, along with sponsors BlazeMaster Fire Sprinkler Systems (Noveon) and The Viking Corporation, talked to builders. They provided the information in their 300-square-foot exhibit as well as inside the *Show Village* home.

Last January, 1,300 exhibitors displayed their products to more than 90,000 members of the home building industry who attended IBS to see and learn about the latest in building products and technologies.

Through collective support from the fire sprinkler industry, residential fire sprinklers will have a stronger and more credible presence at the 2004 show. Thanks to the sponsors, there will be a 900-square-foot HFSC booth in the main convention center and all five *Show Village* homes will have fire sprinkler systems.

At the center of the island-shaped booth will be a miniature, built-to-scale house with an automatic residential fire sprinkler system. Some rooms will be finished, while others will be framed out exposing the pipe and the system design. Individual manufacturers will have the opportunity to display their products through high-profile individual kiosks spaced around the perimeter of the exhibit.

In addition, the manufacturers will have the chance to showcase their products throughout *Show Village*. Sponsored by *Professional Builder* magazine, highly reputable builders recognized

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# Alberta Coalition Making Strides with Home Builders

Gerry Ennis understands the science behind fire sprinklers, but he doesn't consider himself a technical guy. "I sell the sizzle and someone else has to sell the steak," explains the Canadian Automatic Sprinkler Association (CASA) Regional Manager for Western Canada.

With 32 years in the fire service behind him, Ennis knows first hand both the tragedy of

unwanted fire and the urgency of finding a solution to it. According to the NFPA, 388 civilian fire deaths occurred in Canada in 1999. Even one fire death is too many and Ennis is convinced that residential sprinkler systems are the answer.

With founding support from the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA) in 2000, Ennis helped launch the Alberta HFSC along with Sandy McKenzie of the AFCA and Assistant Fire Marshal Tim Vandenbrink of Edmonton Fire and Rescue. The coalition has grown considerably since then, with a diverse and dedicated membership.

Covering a huge geographic area with a population of about four million, the Alberta HFSC has been actively working throughout the province to raise the awareness of residential fire sprinklers. Reaching out to and working collaboratively with the home builder community has been a coalition priority since day one. Among the organizations represented on the Alberta HFSC is the Alberta Home Builder's Association (AHBA) with shared top-level participation by President Phil Neufeld and Executive Officer Grant Ainsley.

"We're working collectively to be able to offer home sprinklers as an option for home owners and we're on a good even trail," says Neufeld about the Alberta HFSC.

Several of the Alberta HFSC members spend a lot of time on the road, making presentations about the value of fire sprinklers and introducing



Gerry Ennis (left) and Larry Fronczak (right) from the Canadian Automatic Sprinkler Association with HFSC spokesperson Jon Eakes (middle) at the Canadian Association of Home Builders Convention in London, ON.

the option of residential sprinklers to home builders. Vandenbrink is a veteran road warrior, having spoken about fire safety in 37 states, nine provinces and two territories. "I talk to people about change," he says, including residential fire sprinklers in his discussions.

"I think we're making more progress now working with builders and raising awareness," Vandenbrink says, stressing the importance of "going the coalition route and sharing with other community partners." "The more people we have in the advocacy role, the more the message will get out."

Ennis was involved with hundreds of fire investigations during his fire service tenure and is still deeply saddened by two troubling incidents in which five children from one family and six from another perished in separate home fires. The memories of those tragedies have not faded. "These fires are very difficult to deal with," he says. "I tried to get legislative change to make fire sprinklers mandatory, but ran into the same brick walls everyone else did back then. It's a hard battle to win from the mandatory point of view - if you can't get them one way, get them another."

Ennis puts most of his energy these days into the "other way." Although he is happy to help municipalities work toward sprinkler ordinances any time they need help, he says, "We seem to be making much better progress with

See "Alberta Coalition" on page 7

# Governor Jeb Bush Recognized Home Fire Sprinklers with Awareness Day

Noting that automatic fire sprinkler systems are accessible, cost-effective fire protection for homes, Florida Governor Jeb Bush signed an order declaring April 8th *Florida Home Fire Sprinkler Awareness Day*. In his proclamation, the Governor called fire sprinkler systems “the next generation of home fire safety” and said they also protect the safety “of our dedicated members of Florida’s fire and emergency services, who put their lives on the line for the rest of us each day.”

A well attended Tallahassee press conference to kick off *Florida Home Fire Sprinkler Awareness Day* was held in Florida’s Capitol on April 8th, with live fire sprinkler demonstrations helping to bring out local print, electronic and television reporters.

Organized by a coalition led by the Florida Fire Chiefs’ Association, the Florida Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition, and the Florida Division of State Fire Marshal, the press conference featured special guest Florida State Fire Marshal Tom Gallagher, and resulted in a strong turn-out by state fire service officials and representatives of the fire sprinkler industry. A trailer brought to the grounds of the Capitol by Wiginton Fire Sprinkler was used to provide dramatic fire sprinkler demonstrations, making “believers” out of the observers.

“I have been there and seen the destruction and devastation from fire. It can happen to any one of us,” said Chief Wayne Martin of the Oviedo, Florida Fire Department, and Chair of the Florida HFSC. Martin, who has lived in a sprinklered home for more than 13 years, says, “I believe that as a fire chief, I must walk the walk, and therefore set the example. The sprinklers I have lived with have always given me a sense of security. When I have to leave my family behind each day for work, travel or to someone else’s emergency, I feel my family is safe.”

## Setting the record straight

The Florida Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition has been working locally since 1999 to help Florida homeowners learn about the availability of automatic fire sprinklers. A lot of energy is expended by Coalition participants to educate the public

about fire in general. National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA) Director of Regional Operations Buddy Dewar says, “It’s absolutely amazing how much misinformation is out there, and not just about sprinklers. One of the main reasons we use the sprinkler trailer is to help people understand how fast fire really progresses, and how fast and effective sprinklers really are in response.” Dewar, whose background is in the fire service, says that sometimes it takes a tragedy for people to fully appreciate their own risk of fire.

To be successful, much of HFSC’s work necessarily focuses on setting the record straight about fire sprinklers themselves. Dewar brought photographs of his own home’s sprinklers to the press conference to debunk the myth that home fire sprinklers are obtrusive. His strategy worked! Virtually everyone who saw them admitted to him that his recessed lighting was more obvious than the sprinklers.

Gary Keith, Chair of the national HFSC, shares Dewar’s concerns that the myths affect consumer interest in sprinklers. “Together, fire sprinklers and smoke alarms reduce the risk of dying in a home fire more than 80 percent, relative to having neither. When you consider that more than 3000 people die in home fires in the U.S. every year, you quickly realize how many lives could be saved if more homeowners chose to have sprinkler systems installed. But they can’t choose fire protection if they don’t know it’s available to them, and they won’t choose it if they buy into the anti-sprinkler propaganda.”

In Florida, residential sprinkler systems entitle homeowners to discounts on property protection insurance up to 10%. Some Florida insurers offer even more. But Keith says surviving a fire is the most important incentive for installing sprinklers in homes. “When homeowners are building a new home, they often don’t think twice about upgrading kitchen cabinets, carpeting and tile. If more homeowners realized that they could choose an ‘upgrade’ that would save their lives in a fire, I believe they would choose sprinklers every time.”

For a copy of the Florida Proclamation, visit [www.HomeFireSprinkler.org](http://www.HomeFireSprinkler.org). ■

# AFSA Honors HFSC Chair Gary Keith

The American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA) has chosen Gary Keith, NFPA, VP, Building & Life Safety/Regional Operations and Chair of the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition as 2003 Fire Sprinkler Advocate of the Year. AFSA will present Keith with the award September 11, 2003, during the opening general session of AFSA’s 22nd Annual Convention & Exhibition in Boca Raton, Florida.

“As chair of HFSC, Gary has been at the forefront of efforts to educate the public about residential sprinklers,” said Steve Muncy, AFSA President. Muncy has worked closely with Keith as a member of the HFSC Steering Committee since the coalition formed more than eight years ago.

“His dedication to this effort goes well beyond what is expected,” Muncy added. “He is truly a disciple of residential sprinklers and spreads the message about residential sprinklers in many ways. You simply can’t find anyone more dedicated to this task.”



Gary Keith was a 4th generation firefighter in his family. He served as an on-call firefighter with the West Bridgewater (MA) Fire Department for 20 years.

AFSA created its Fire Sprinkler Advocate of the Year Award to honor individuals not directly involved in the fire sprinkler industry whose efforts have significantly advanced the fire protection industry and automatic fire sprinklers. The award, previously known as the Fire Service Person of the Year Award, was renamed in 2001 to better reflect the diversity of backgrounds – including the fire service, as well as legislative, code, and standards-setting groups – in which individuals can have a major impact on the fire sprinkler industry. Nominees are recommended by members of AFSA’s Legislative Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. ■

# Fire Service Responds to Advocate Survey

The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition is developing a database of fire service and fire sprinkler industry representatives who either are sprinkler advocates or will agree to become advocates. Members of the fire service and sprinkler industry who visit the web site continue to respond to the Fire Sprinkler Advocate Survey with 90% agreeing to serve as a resource or spokesperson in their community.

Nearly 40% of those representatives already responding live in single-family homes protected with an automatic fire sprinkler system. And of those who do not have sprinklers, close to 50% say that they plan to live in a home with fire sprinkler protection.

An important component of the survey is the "additional comments" section. Many respondents talked about their own installations and experiences working in both the fire service and fire sprinkler industries. ■

## Fire Sprinkler Advocate Survey

**Total Returned Surveys ..... 476**

Members of fire service ..... 165

Members of fire sprinkler industry ..... 311

**Have fire sprinklers ..... 194**

Single-family homes ..... 176

Multi-family homes ..... 8

Other ..... 10

**Do not have sprinklers ..... 282**

## Comments from Survey Responders

I am currently building a home and will be installing a fire sprinkler system in the next few weeks. As a Deputy Fire Marshal, I am really looking forward to practicing what we preach. My parents, who are in their late 70s, will be living in a 2000-square-foot daylight basement portion of my house. With this in mind, I would like to adapt a theme from a commercial I see on TV. The commercial states "adding residential fire sprinklers to your home about \$1 per square foot ... the peace of mind they provide ... priceless!"

Looking forward to the day when the public will understand their value and will be asking for their installation as a desired option.

*Randy Miller, Camas Fire Department, Camas, WA*

I am a disabled former Army helicopter pilot and West Point graduate. After my injury, I served two terms on the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities.

In my role as spokesman for the State Fire Marshal, I have become keenly aware of the fire safety needs of all citizens, but especially those of children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Being in a wheelchair myself, I have seen a number of Ohioans and others across the country who had various disabilities or mobility impairments that contributed to their deaths due to fire. I live alone, which only exacerbates my risk. Consequently, I knew the vital importance of living in a sprinklered environment, and that is why I sought a sprinklered apartment and would not compromise on having my new home sprinklered as well.

*Thomas J. Ratcliff, Columbus, OH*

I just recently built a new home in a township that requires sprinklers in residences, but I would have installed sprinklers in my new home anyway. We are quite pleased with the township's position on this, and the end result of the installation. My homeowner's insurance dropped from \$850/year to \$450/year, despite having a 25% larger home with all other factors being the same, although I actually now have higher limits to the coverage.

*Greg Jakubowski, P.E., CSP, Merck & Co., Inc., Furlong, PA*

In my opinion, the "timeline" video presentation available on your Web site is the single-most influential piece of medium which conveys the message very clearly. I have it saved to my hard drive and watch it frequently. The residential fire sprinkler agenda is in great need of "helping hands and voices." If I can help in any way, it is my duty to do so. Thanks.

*Eric Wentworth, U.S. Air Force Academy Fire Department*

My home is being retrofitted with fire sprinklers as time permits. Our department is actively installing home fire sprinkler systems in Habitat for Humanity homes in Moore and surrounding counties. We have installed 67 systems as of this date and have worked with other fire departments in the state to aid in the development of fire sprinkler installations with other Habitat builders.

*Floyd Fritz, Pinehurst Fire Department, Aberdeen, NC*

# HFSC Spokesperson Turns Retrofit Into Video

As HFSC spokesperson and Home Improvement Editor for ABC's *Good Morning America*, it was only natural for Ron Hazelton to allow a video crew into his new home while it was being retrofitted with a residential fire sprinkler system.

The video crew spent an entire week videotaping Hazelton and David



Walencewicz, P and J Sprinkler Company, while the system was being installed. In the video, Hazelton and Walencewicz discuss how the sprinkler system was designed and some of the challenges of retrofitting.

Funded by the National Fire Sprinkler Association, the video will be available this fall to sprinkler contractors, members of the fire service and homeowners. ■

# Palm Beach County Unveils New Mobile Safety Home

Palm Beach County Fire Rescue's Community Education Division and the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition unveiled the county's newest life safety tool – a 39-foot fire/safety mobile home demonstrator called "911 Prevention Way."

As one of the first mobile demonstration trailers of this type in the country, Chief Herman Brice believes *911 Prevention Way* will allow the department to better demonstrate good home safety practices to residents all over Palm Beach County.

At the back of the Safety Home is a fire sprinkler demonstration. A fire sprinkler demonstration surrounded by windows to protect the public takes place at the back of the Safety House. Viewers standing outside the trailer watch while a fire educator starts a trash can fire. The fire spreads along a curtain until the heat activates the single sprinkler installed in the ceiling. Within seconds, the fire is extinguished.

In addition to the sprinkler activation room, *911 Prevention Way* has a smoke simulator that can show people what it's like to be in a smoke-filled environment, and a severe weather simulator that demonstrates exactly what it's like to be in a mobile home during a tornado.

According to Sean Pamplona, Public Information Officer, residents can expect to see *911 Prevention Way* at many upcoming events in the county. He said the mobile home demonstrator is also available for schools and community groups to utilize as an education tool. ■



(left to right) Shane Duke, Wayne Automatic, Capt. Sean Pamplona, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, Peg Paul, HFSC, Chief Herman Brice, PBCFR, and Gary Bush, Wayne Automatic, in front of "911 Prevention Way" after the press conference. Wayne Automatic donated the fire sprinkler system.

## Spreading the Good News

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a community group has a scheduled speaker that's a no-show, he'll often hand-deliver the video, "Protect What You Value Most," as a fill-in.

"There's no doubt in my mind after 38 years in fire service that we could eliminate unnecessary death from fire with home sprinklers," Gaiser says. "We need to educate people so they will voluntarily install home fire sprinklers, just by knowing all the facts."

Courtesy of Gaiser, the local access cable television channel regularly airs "Protect What You Value Most," from HFSC featuring spokesperson Ron Hazelton from ABC's *Good Morning America*. Gaiser is also working with the local Habitat for Humanity to persuade the group's locally sponsored project to feature home fire sprinklers.

He says that the information from HFSC also updates him on the latest news and issues. The materials help address some of the perceived barriers to home sprinklers including cost, looks, operation and more.

"Using these materials, I've opened people's minds to the possibility of putting sprinklers in homes," he continues. "The information is user-friendly, accurate, and easy to access," he says.

Debunking the myths surrounding home fire sprinklers is one of the greatest obstacles, and HFSC materials can turn a story around in no time flat. Christie Knudsen, Public Information

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TV stations videotape a "911 Prevention Way" fire sprinkler demonstration through the windows.

## Scottsdale Report: 15-Year Data

In Scottsdale, Arizona, a sprinkler ordinance was implemented on January 1, 1986. The following information is based on the 15-year data collected by Jim Ford, Fire Marshal, Rural/Metro Fire Department.

- There were 49 fires in single-family homes with fire sprinkler systems:
  - + There were no deaths in sprinklered homes.
  - + 13 people died in homes without sprinklers.
  - + Sprinklers prevented over \$20 million potential loss.
  - + \$106,110 actual loss.

### Less Fire Damage

- There was less damage in the homes with sprinklers:\*
  - + Average fire loss per sprinklered incident: \$2,166.
  - + Average fire loss per unsprinklered incident: \$45,019.

\*Based on fires 1998-2001; 15-year data did not separate residential fire damage from all structures with fires.

### Less Water Damage

- 90% of fires are contained by the operation of just one sprinkler.
- There was less water damage in the homes with sprinklers:
  - + Sprinkler systems discharged an average of 341 gallons of water per fire.
  - + 2,935 gallons of water per fire were released by firefighter hoses.

### Cost

- Recent technology breakthroughs make sprinklers more affordable and easier to install in homes. On a national average, they add only 1% to 1.5% of the total building cost.
- In Scottsdale, the average cost is less than \$.80 per square foot.

## Fire Sprinkler Industry

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by their industry typically build the demonstration homes.

In addition, HFSC and its sponsors will run ads in builder trade magazines during and following the show and hold events and demonstrations in *Show Village*.

### 2004 IBS HFSC Fire Sprinkler Sponsors

- BlazeMaster Fire Sprinkler Systems (Noveon)
- Kidde Fire Fighting (USA)
- Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Co.
- TYCO Fire Sprinkler Systems
- Victaulic Fire Safety Company, LLC
- The Viking Group

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explains HFSC Chair Gary Keith. “We know there has been a great deal of misinformation out there that has been clouding builders’ viewpoints about sprinklers. When they know the facts, they typically come around and are supportive of the idea of offering sprinklered homes to their customers.”

Tom Deegan agrees. The VP of New Business Development for The Viking Corporation says he sees home builders as partners. “We have to learn to work together,” he said. Although he acknowledges there are misconceptions to overcome, Deegan remains optimistic. “Like anything of value, there is a significant amount of work that needs to be done,” he said. “You’re not going to change anything over night. Builders who have realized that sprinklers are something good have embraced the idea and used sprinklers to differentiate their product for their customers.”

Deegan says education about residential sprinklers in general is very important to the overall acceptance of home sprinkler systems. Promoting the concept of sprinklers without promoting a specific manufacturer or contractor enhances the acceptability of the information. “Selling the concept in general establishes credibility,” he added.

Reaching out to builders on their own turf with that type of general education is one of HFSC’s top priorities. For the past four years, HFSC has staffed an exhibit booth at the annual International Builders’ Show, the world’s largest construction trade show. Peg Paul, HFSC’s Communications Manager, says it has proven very important to go directly to the builders with the Coalition’s message. “By being on-site at their show, HFSC not only demonstrates good faith to builders, but we are also there on the scene where they can personally ask us the questions that matter to them most,” she says.

Deegan says that home builders have become genuinely curious about sprinklers over the past couple of years, and are in an information-gathering mode. “The presence at the builder show that the sprinkler industry has had over the years has little by little been able to move the perception in a positive direction a little bit more each year,” he says. “Sprinklers are a cost-effective solution for contractors. We’ve got a number of developers and home builders who have already come to that conclusion. We believe that the home builders are an important part of our future.”

HFSC will exhibit in a large booth at the 2004 International Builders’ Show, which will be held in Las Vegas in January (see sidebar on page 2).

Staffing the booth with experts in sprinkler manufacturing and installation, as well as in general fire and life safety issues, has proven to be a successful practice for the Coalition. “One of our greatest strengths is that our primary goal is not to sell sprinklers, it is to give away information,” Keith says. “Home builders are becoming receptive to the idea that we want to help them understand the technology better. Certainly, that ultimately sells sprinklers, but our goal is to increase awareness.”

HFSC materials are also exhibited at the Canada Home Builders’ Association (CHBA) convention, the annual NFPA World Safety Conference & Exposition, and regional exhibits across the U.S. and Canada. HFSC also participates in the annual conventions of the American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA), the Canadian Automatic Sprinkler Association (CASA) and National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA).

For homeowners looking to build, the link between the sprinkler and building industries is absolutely essential. Fuqua believes if builders have the tools they need, they will sell the concept of sprinklers as a “plus” to their customers. And she says the new-home marketing approach needs to be improved to include sprinklers as an option. “We asked for sprinklers when we went to a volume builder, but they said they don’t do that. You can pick a swimming pool, but you can’t pick sprinklers!”

To reach home builders beyond the builder show, HFSC has begun developing collateral materials targeted specifically to the home builder and contractor community and has recently begun advertising in building trade publications. The HFSC “Building for Life” brochure, which is available free of charge, lays out the benefits of installing sprinkler systems in new home construction and details the construction cost-reducing options builders have.

Recently, the Coalition’s Web site ([www.HomeFireSprinkler.org](http://www.HomeFireSprinkler.org)) has been reformatted to provide a new section for builders, which includes facts about residential sprinkler systems and information about trade-ups, installation, and resources of value to builders. “We want to make it quick and easy for home builders to find just what they’re looking for on our site, without having to click through other pages they may not care to see,” Paul says.

“If it sounds like HFSC is going out of its way to reach out to the building community, that’s because it is,” Keith adds. “We don’t mind taking the initiative, especially when the response from so many builders has been genuinely enthusiastic. We have every reason to be optimistic about the future of residential fire sprinklers.” ■

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## Spreading the Good News *cont. from page 5*

Officer for the South Trail Fire and Rescue in Ft. Myers, FL, says HFSC educational materials she uses at community events dispel half-truths about the devices. One of the biggest public misperceptions is that all sprinkler heads discharge during a fire. “People are surprised when they see that sprinklers are individually activated and attractive looking as well,” she says.

Using the Public Educator Kit from HFSC as well as “Protect What You Value Most” helps Jerry Vein, Fire Marshal with the Grand Forks Fire Department, ND, provide information to a variety of groups, including participants at foster care parent training seminars.

Vein says its “all about education. We’ve also used the Home Fire Timeline at an Industrial Technology course at the University of North Dakota.”

“Like other fire service professionals, we don’t have a lot of money to spend,” Vein says. “The HFSC is very good about providing the materials you need for a variety of audiences. There’s so much useful information on the Web site.”

In Glynn County, GA, Glynn County Fire Department Volunteer Chief Joe M. Combs II is taking to cyberspace to get the message out about home fire sprinklers. The Glynn County Fire Department, which launched its Web site this summer, plans to post the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition Fact Sheet on its URL, with a link to the organization at [www.HomeFireSprinkler.org](http://www.HomeFireSprinkler.org).

“This is the first time I have been able to locate materials pertaining specifically to residential sprinkler systems,” Combs said. “These materials will help consumers make better educated decisions regarding home fire sprinklers.”

For more information on home fire sprinklers, call 1-888-635-7222 or visit our Web site: [www.HomeFireSprinkler.org](http://www.HomeFireSprinkler.org). ■

# www.HomeFireSprinkler.org Offers Many Resources for Fire Service

People visiting the HFSC Web site will find it even easier to learn about the life- and property-saving benefits of residential fire sprinkler systems. The newly designed home page now has three sections for visitors. The “Consumers Section” is designed specifically for people who plan to build a new home and want to learn more about fire sprinkler facts, how they work, frequently

asked questions and how to find a contractor. The “Building Professionals” section includes general information about installations, trade-ups, how to find a contractor and other resources. The “Fire Service” section also includes general information in addition to many resources to help educate members of their communities, including:



- Flash timeline comparing a fire in a home with and without fire sprinklers. This program can be downloaded at no charge.
- A Community Educator PowerPoint presentation.
- PDF versions of all the HFSC educational material.
- PDF of Scottsdale Report, 10-Year Study.
- Current and back issues of *The Solution* newsletter. ■

## Successful Activations

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had decided to install fire sprinklers in all of the homes in the subdivision.

Subsequently, during construction, one of the homes experienced a fire. The fire started in the garage of the home. Luckily the door from the garage to the living space of the home had been left open. Although the home was not finished, the fire sprinkler system had been completed and a single head activated and the fire was extinguished prior to the arrival of our fire crews.

— Eric T. McMullen  
Deputy Fire Marshal, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue

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the voluntary approach.” And he finds builders much more open to that method. “We have something good to offer, which will save lives and property, and from a business point of view, home builders see it’s good for them too.”

Neufeld says the alliance between the fire sprinkler advocates and the home builders in Alberta is “absolutely valuable.” Neufeld has served as AHBA president since 2002 and was involved in the Alberta Coalition long before his induction. The main benefit of having builders involved with sprinkler advocates is increased understanding about the technology. And, the key to moving the needle on consumer interest is awareness. “Education is what it comes down to,” he says. “As (consumers) see the value of sprinklers, the needle will move on its own.”

Vandenbrink also identifies the home builder community as a critical ally in raising the profile of residential fire sprinklers, though he says the change will not happen over night. “I think we’re certainly moving in the right direction. I believe there is a greater awareness of residential sprinklers than there was before. We’re putting away the myths that are out there.”

If Alberta is lacking anything, it is not interaction with the builders as much as a broader participation of the fire service, according to Ennis. “We desperately need the fire service as ambassadors,” he says. “They are one of the most respected groups in any community. If you plant the seed of home fire sprinklers in the mind of the public, the public will turn to their local fire chief or firefighter and say, ‘what do you think?’ We need the fire service.”

Vandenbrink says the fire service is on board, but needs to be more proactive about sprinklers, doing more traditional marketing to battle the stubborn myths perpetuated by Hollywood. “We are pro sprinkler; we’re making progress with builders. Our stance is to work with builders and educate consumers.”

In three years, the Alberta HFSC has built an important and very valuable partnership with home builders. “We grew and got people in the sprinkler, building and insurance industries and looked for more and more partners to bring into the fold,” Vandenbrink recalls. With cross participation among the organizations and reciprocal speaking invitations, there has been mutual respect from the start, Ennis adds.

The Coalition continues to make strides, strengthening the alliances between the sprinkler industry, fire service and home builders. This year, Ennis was invited to cut the ribbon at the Canadian Home Builder’s Association conference. Both Neufeld and Vandenbrink were guest speakers at this summer’s CASA annual general meeting.

Vandenbrink is clearly enthusiastic about the teamwork the coalition has embraced. “I think when we look back ten years down the road, we’ll say, ‘Wow, what a difference!’”

Ennis, who is in the process of completing construction on his new sprinklered home, has opened it up as a model for home builders who want to see how a sprinkler system is installed. He plans to keep his home open to builders and others who are curious about sprinklers for a full year after it is built.

The key to increasing home builder interest in residential fire sprinklers is awareness, says Neufeld. “It takes time. The builders are fairly aware; it’s been well promoted to them.” Now, he says, consumers need to see the value to take it to the next level. ■



# Home Fire Sprinkler

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Improved Fire Protection Through Public Education

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**For more information about home fire sprinklers, individuals can call toll-free 1-888-635-7222 or go to the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition Web site at: [www.HomeFireSprinkler.org](http://www.HomeFireSprinkler.org)**

*For further information about HFSC partnership programs, contact Gary Keith at (617) 984-7263 or via e-mail at [gkeith@nfpa.org](mailto:gkeith@nfpa.org)*

### Successful Activation Stories

## Sprinklers Save Home While Under Construction

As a new construction Deputy Fire Marshal with Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue in Oregon I have been involved in many projects that included offering fire sprinklers as a trade-up for various development difficulties.

During the planning process of a large subdivision called Erickson Heights, in the city of Tigard, OR, we discovered several streets that would have grades that exceeded our maximum standards. Through cooperation with the Tigard Building Department and our office, home fire sprinklers were offered as a trade-up and accepted by the developer. I provided the developer with a list of the specific homes to be sprinkled due to excessive grade and the project proceeded. Not long after construction of the homes began, to my surprise, the developer contacted us and indicated that they

*See "Successful Activations" on page 7*

Share your successful activation story with HFSC and we'll post it on our Web site. Send the information to:

HFSC, 342 LaGrange Road, Suite 300, Frankfort, IL 60423;  
Fax: (815) 464-8040; or e-mail: [peg@ppacom.com](mailto:peg@ppacom.com)



# Home Fire Sprinkler

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Improved Fire Protection Through Public Education

*The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition was formed in 1996 in response to the tremendous need to inform the public about the life-saving value of home fire sprinkler protection.*

*The HFSC has developed educational material with details about automatic home fire sprinkler systems, how they work, why they provide affordable protection as well as answers to common myths and misconceptions about their operation. These materials are available upon request.*

## Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition

### Steering Committee

- American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA)
- Canadian Automatic Sprinkler Association (CASA)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA)
- Sharel Stokes Fire Sprinkler Public Education Foundation
- Underwriters Laboratories (UL)
- U.S. Fire Administration (FEMA)

### Affiliate Members

- Advanced Automatic Sprinkler Inc.
- Affordable Fire Protection
- Blazemaster
- Connecticut Fire Marshal Association (CFMA)
- Fire Protection Products, Inc.
- Florida Fire Chiefs' Association
- Mesa Fire Department (Arizona)
- IFSTA/Fire Protection Publications
- National Association of Independent Insurers (NAII)
- New England Association of Fire Marshals
- Plano Fire Department (Texas)
- Quality Fabrication and Supply
- Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Co., Inc.
- Rural/Metro (Scottsdale, AZ Fire Dept.)
- Viking Corporation
- Wirsbo Company, U.S.
- Wirsbo Company, Canada