

OFFICE of the STATE FIRE MARSHAL

October 2010 Report

OSFM Monthly Report
• Message from Tonya L. Hoover



*Acting State Fire Marshal
Tonya L. Hoover*

October Message from the Chief:

"As an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure..." said Benjamin Franklin when he recognized the importance of prevention in 1735 in the February 4th issue of the Pennsylvania Gazette. One hundred eighty-five years later President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation. Since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed during the week of October 9th and since 1925 every President of the United States has signed a proclamation for a national observance of the week. It is the longest running public health and safety observance on record.

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,400 structures (NFPA, 2010). But the Great Chicago Fire was not the only blaze destroying lives on Oct 8, 1871. The biggest blaze that day was not in Chicago but in Peshtigo, Wisconsin; the Peshtigo Fire has the distinction of being the most devastating forest fire in American history as it burned down 16 towns, killing 1152 people and destroying 1.2 million acres before its destructive path ended. History believes that each of these destructive fires was attributed to carelessness and both fires changed the way fire and public officials thought about fire safety. On the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, an organization now known as the International Fire Marshals Association decided that the anniversary of the fire should be observed to keep the public informed about fire prevention.



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The Importance of Fire Prevention

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), in 2009 there were 1,348,500 fires reported in the United States. While that is a decrease of 7% of the 2008 totals; sadly, there were 3,010 civilian deaths, 17,050 civilian injuries, and \$12.5 billion in property damage. The statistics indicate that one home structure fire was reported every 87 seconds, one civilian fire injury was reported every 31 minutes; one civilian fire death occurred every 2 hours 55 minutes; and in 2009, 82 on-duty firefighter deaths occurred in the U.S. The devastation of fire to life, property, and the environment takes a critical toll on each and every one of us.

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I encourage all to observe and participate this week and during the month of October in the events that range from open houses at local fire stations to national events recognizing those individuals that have given their lives in the mission of protecting the public from the destruction of fire. Fire prevention is about the elimination and reduction of those incidents that put people in harms way; and protecting our citizens, our firefighters and our environment

This month is about “**People Practicing Prevention**” (the three Ps); and remember, the 2010 Fire Prevention Week message is, “**Smoke Alarms: A sound you can live with**”.

Be safe!



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