

The Community Page



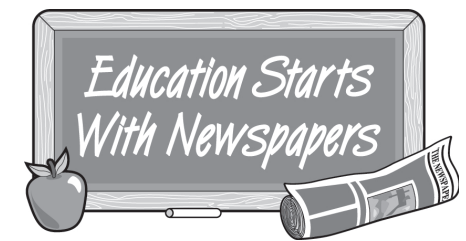
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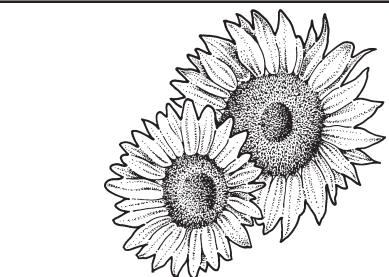


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Helping to prevent fires

Marshal teaching fire safety

State encourages people to test alarms

On Oct. 8, 1871, the Great Chicago fire started, burning for 27 hours, killing over 250 people and leaving over 100,000 homeless. More than 2,000 acres were burned, destroying 17,400 buildings.

This week, on the anniversary of that historic fire, the Kansas State Fire Marshal and other marshals across the country are reminding people to install smoke detectors and help prevent fires. It is the National Fire Protection Association's 80th year sponsoring Fire Prevention Week.

This year Fire Marshal Gale Haag is asking people to "Team Up for Fire Safety."

So far this year, 24 people in Kansas have died from 21 residential fires, he said. Of those, 13 were caused by careless smoking, the marshal's office says.

While those deaths are tragic, Haag said, it is better than this time last year, when 41 people had died.

"The fact that fire fatalities in the home in Kansas have been nearly cut in half from last year demonstrates what we can all accomplish in the area of home fire safety by working as a

team," Haag said, "but I think everyone in the state would agree that even one death is too many."

The "Team Up for Fire Safety" theme encourages fire departments to partner with schools, churches, businesses, health agencies and seniors groups.

"Many fire departments across the state do this now," Haag said. "I commend all of them for their efforts."

School-age kids are encouraged to speak to adults about the dangers of fire this week. They are given information at school, Haag said, and asked to spread it amongst their friends, families and neighbors.

This year's effort concentrates on three essential safety lessons: installing and testing smoke alarms, home fire escape plans and hunting for home hazards.

The Kansas Smoke Detector act calls for the installation of at least one smoke alarm on every level of all homes. A smoke alarm is also recommended in every sleeping area. Batteries should be replaced every six months. The rule of thumb is to change them when clocks are changed to and from daylight-saving time.

Haag said that designing and rehearsing an escape plan can mean the difference between life and death. Plans should include working smoke alarms, at least two ways out of every room and a designated place where family members can meet to be sure everyone has escaped. All family members should know to get out of the house first, then call the fire department for help. Never go back inside for any reason until the fire department approves, Haag said.

Hunting for home hazards calls for all family members to identify and get rid of the hazards which cause house fires. Careless smoking, use of candles, heating devices and cooking have been identified as the top causes of these fires.

Teachers, fire departments and families can find more information on "Team Up for Fire Safety" and other fire safety information by visiting the National Fire Protection Association website at www.firepreventionweek.org.



A Goodland firefighter gave a demonstration to school kids earlier in the year. The state fire marshal is encouraging people to help prevent fires this week.
Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Daily News



The National Fire Protection Association uses "Sparky" to teach kids safety tips, and the picture of a fireman to promote Fire Prevention week.

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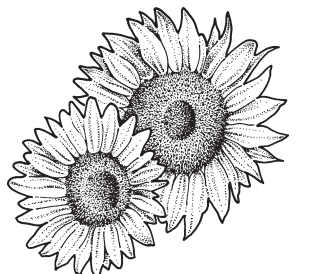
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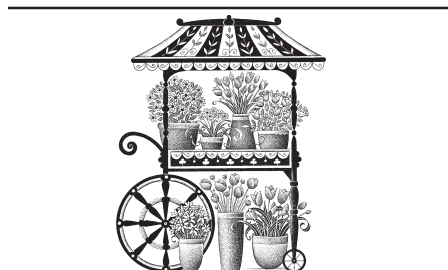
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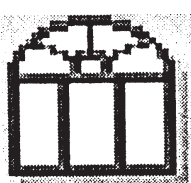


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