

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 6, 2008

**Suffolk**  
VIRGINIA

*It's a good time to be in Suffolk*

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### **FIRE PREVENTION WEEK: October 5-11, 2008**



SUFFOLK, Virginia (October 6, 2008) All across the nation, Fire Stations will be commemorating Fire Prevention Week from October 5-11<sup>th</sup>. Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public health and safety observance on record, and has been a national observance since 1925. Its history, however, goes back even further. Legend has it that the Great Chicago Fire, which was supposedly started when Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over a lamp on October 8, 1871, was the best-known blaze in our nation's history, however, the largest, most devastating fire was actually the Peshtigo Fire, which also occurred on that same date and roared through Northeast Wisconsin, burning down 16 towns, killing 1,152 people and scorching 1.2 million acres. On the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of these tragic events, the Fire Marshals Association of North America (today known as the International Fire Marshals Association), decided that the anniversary should be observed in a way that would keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention, hence the modern day observance of Fire Prevention Week.

The theme for this year is "Prevent Home Fires". Consider these startling facts:

- Cooking fires are the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries.
- Unattended cooking is the leading factor contributing to ignition in home cooking fires.
- Over 50% of all cooking fire injuries occur when people try to fight the fire themselves.
- Electrical distribution and lighting equipment are also contributing factors in home fires.

- Smoking materials (cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc.) are the leading cause of fire deaths in the United States.
- In 2005, over 15,000 residential structure fires started by candles were reported in the United States.
- In 2007, there were an estimated 399,000 reported home structure fires resulting in 2,865 civilian deaths and 13,600 civilian injuries and \$7.4 billion in direct damage in the United States. Home fires caused 84% of civilian deaths and 77% of injuries.
- Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in home structure fires in half.

Suffolk Fire & Rescue has scheduled many activities to educate Suffolk's citizens about the dangers of home fires, and will commemorate the observance with official Fire Prevention Week banners placed at each Fire Station in the city. In addition, they will debut their new, state-of-the-art Fire Safety House at Peanut Fest. Presentations are also available for area schools, churches, civic leagues or other groups. For more information on fire safety, Fire Prevention Week, or to schedule a presentation, contact the Office of the Fire Marshal at 514-7540 or 514-7550.

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