

Long Grove First Village to Pass a Home Fire Sprinkler Ordinance in Illinois 30 Years Ago

When Dave Grupp was fire chief of the Long Grove Fire Protection District 30 years ago, he had a vision; to protect all new homes with automatic home fire sprinklers. Working closely with stakeholders and elected officials, Long Grove was the first village in Illinois to pass a home fire sprinkler ordinance on April 11, 1988.

Last May, the now retired Chief Grupp was recognized at the first ever Home Fire Sprinkler Day event held at the Barrington Countryside Fire station and 50 other communities across the U.S. and Canada. Home Fire Sprinkler Day was initiated by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) to raise awareness of the growing dangers of home fires and the life-saving benefits of installing fire sprinklers in new homes.

Four of the leading fire service organizations, the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association, Illinois Fire Services Association, Illinois Fire Inspectors Association and the Illinois Fire Sprinkler Coalition, presented Grupp with a plaque honoring this achievement.

Chief Grupp proudly presented the plaque to the Long Grove Village Board.

"I looked forward to bringing this plaque to the current Village Board and to reflect on a bit of history in enacting the first ordinance in the state," Grupp said. (Note: This quote is a little awkward. What about this? It would transition well to the next paragraph. "I look forward to bringing this plaque to the current Village Board," said Grupp. "I am proud to be part of the history in establishing the first ordinance in the state for home fire sprinklers.")

As the first village to pass an ordinance, Long Grove was also one of the first with a successful activation. Three days before Thanksgiving in 2001, a fire started in a 9-year-old child's bedroom. Filled with stuffed animals, the fire was hot enough to activate two sprinklers that controlled the fire and prevented flash over. The homeowner and children evacuated the home and called 9-1-1. When the fire department arrived, they extinguished a small amount of smoldering material under the bed. The homeowner admitted that she would not have chosen to have a sprinkler system installed in the home if it would have been an option and not a requirement.

According to NIFSAB Executive Director Tom Lia, Grupp paved the way for other fire chiefs to educate decision makers and their communities to understand the importance of protecting their citizens and firefighters. Today more than 100 Illinois communities and districts have passed ordinances.

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