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Retired Fire Chief Grupp Recognized as Guest of Honor at Residential Fire Sprinkler Symposium
Event celebrates the 25th anniversary of Illinois' First Home Fire Sprinkler Ordinance in Long Grove.

Orland Park, Ill. (March 14, 2013) — On Wednesday, March 6, Dave Grupp, home fire sprinkler advocate and retired fire chief of the Long Grove Fire Protection District, was featured as the guest of honor at the Illinois NFPA 13D Residential Fire Sprinkler Symposium. Twenty-five years ago, Grupp helped the Village of Long Grove pass the first NFPA 13D home fire sprinkler ordinance in Illinois. He was recognized at the symposium in front of more than 230 attendees from Illinois municipal fire and building departments and representatives from state and national fire organizations.

At the time when Grupp began researching home fire sprinklers, they had just begun gaining momentum in municipal ordinances in California. Grupp proposed the controversial idea of an ordinance to the Long Grove Village Board and testified to the benefits of requiring home fire sprinklers, focusing on the safety of residents, other occupants and first responders. Ultimately, the Village Board decided in favor of an ordinance, which was enacted on April 12, 1988. Today, over 1,500 homes are protected with fire sprinklers in the Village of Long Grove.

In a 2008 interview with the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NIFSAB), Grupp stated that in 1988 he didn't know that no other communities in Illinois had a fire sprinkler requirement that included single-family detached homes. "At that time there wasn't even a smoke detector requirement. I just thought the home fire sprinkler ordinance was the right thing to do," he says.

Grupp's most noteworthy memory in relation to the passage of the fire sprinkler ordinance came on Christmas Eve of 1993 when he was on duty at a huge warehouse fire and received a radio call for a house fire in Long Grove. He recognized the street name of the house fire and was relieved to know that all the houses on that street were new and sprinklered. After the warehouse fire was out, he went to the house and talked to the owner who told Grupp that the fire had been extinguished before firefighters even arrived.

Long Grove's ordinance became a groundbreaking event for home fire sprinklers in Illinois. Since that historic day in 1988, another 87 jurisdictions in Illinois have joined Long Grove with home fire sprinkler ordinances of their own.

"Dave Grupp has been a trailblazer for public safety and continues to be a wonderful advocate for fire sprinklers," says Tom Lia, executive director of the nonprofit Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NIFSAB). "Dave's most important message of fire sprinkler advocacy is that 'A house without a fire sprinkler system is a defective house.'"

Also at the Illinois NFPA13D Residential Fire Sprinkler Symposium, some of the Illinois communities that have more recently passed home fire sprinkler ordinances were recognized with awards by the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association, Illinois Fire Inspectors Association, Illinois Fire Sprinkler Coalition and NIFSAB. Those communities included Elgin, Flossmoor, Gurnee, Homewood, Manhattan Fire Protection District, Palos Heights and the Warren-Waukegan Fire Protection District.

California State Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover was the keynote speaker at the symposium. She discussed her successful efforts to pass a statewide residential fire sprinkler code in California for all new construction one- and two-family homes built as of January 1, 2011, noting the emphasis on life safety during the proposal process.

"The summit was extremely successful because it provided a great forum for various professionals from life-safety organizations, including fire and building officials, fire safety engineers and industry officials to share information and methods in support of residential fire sprinklers and their lifesaving value here in Illinois and across the nation," says Fire Chief Bob Tinucci, director of the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association and chairman of the Illinois Fire Sprinkler Coalition.