

NIFSAB's Tom Lia Honored with NFPA "Home Fire Sprinkler Champion" Award

Orland Park, IL (April 16, 2013) – On April 15, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recognized Tom Lia, executive director of the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NIFSAB), with the first-ever "Home Fire Sprinkler Champion" award for his successful home fire sprinkler advocacy efforts in Illinois. Lia was presented the award during the NFPA's Home Fire Sprinkler Summit in Chicago.

The award was presented as part of NFPA's Fire Sprinkler Initiative, which is a nationwide project that aims to save lives by encouraging the use of home fire sprinklers through increased awareness and adoption of local ordinances or model codes.

"Tom is a terrific example of what this effort is — passionate, driven individuals working all across the country to save lives and property from fire with the proven, effective technology of fire sprinklers, says Jim Shannon, NFPA president. "As a result of his leadership, hard work and dedication, more than 80 communities in Illinois have adopted NFPA 13D single-family home fire sprinkler ordinances."

In fact, the number of communities has just reached 90, with the recent additions of Niles and Hazel Crest. When Tom Lia left the fire service and was hired to lead NIFSAB in 1999, the State of Illinois only had three communities with fire sprinkler requirements for new construction homes. As a result of his leadership, hard work and dedication, a significant surge of communities began enacting home fire sprinkler requirements in 2000.

Lia is also involved with the effort to assist State Fire Marshal Larry Matkaitis with updating the state's current edition of NFPA 101 Life Safety Code to the 2012 edition, which would include fire sprinkler requirements in one- and two-family homes and townhomes statewide.

Working with the fire service, Lia has great success educating elected and building officials about home fire sprinklers. The side-by-side fire and sprinkler burn demonstration is one of the educational demonstrations that Lia is best known for, not only in Illinois but also nationwide. He has assisted with well over 300 such demonstrations throughout the years. In fact, when the national nonprofit Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition created its free Fire and Sprinkler Burn Demonstration Kit for public education use by fire departments throughout the U.S. and Canada, Lia was the technical consultant and it was based on his model.

On the following day after receiving his award, Lia presented a case study of Illinois' success, "One City at a Time," at the Home Fire Sprinkler Summit.

About the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NIFSAB)

NIFSAB is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting progressive legislation, raising public awareness, and educating code officials and governmental policy makers by demonstrating the proven performance of fire sprinklers in saving both lives and property. For more info, visit www.firesprinklerassoc.org.