



Berrien Springs Oronoko Fire Department
P. O. Box 214
4411 E. Snow Rd.
Berrien Springs, MI 49103
(269) 473-3731 fax (269) 471-4452

PRESS RELEASE: 2096 Smoke Alarms available to be installed

On November 15, 2011, at 6:25 am, Berrien Springs Oronoko fire Department responded to a house fire on Valley View drive in Berrien Springs. A three year old child perished in this fire and some occupants of this apartment building only escaped the fire by climbing out windows. After the fire, the only working smoke alarm we found was in a kitchen drawer. The loss of any child to a fire is a horrific loss for a family. However, it is also a very traumatic loss to the Berrien Springs Oronoko firefighters.

After the fire, our members wanted to increase our efforts to prevent this loss from occurring again. Lanny Duffel, a Berrien Springs Oronoko firefighter, is also a 911 dispatcher who took the 911 call that morning. Lanny suggested that we try to provide and install more smoke alarms in our community. Using the limited resources we have, we promoted giving out and installing smoke alarms where needed in our community. We installed over 80 alarms in two weeks, but we knew this wasn't enough. Over the years, we have found that less than 35% of the homes we respond to have enough working smoke alarms.

To address this need in Berrien Springs and Oronoko Township, we applied for a Fire Prevention & Safety Grant from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. We have received a \$110,000 Fire Prevention & Safety Grant. Our goal and objective is to provide a fire safe environment for all our residents who live in owner occupied dwellings, multi-residential units and rent apartments in homes that were single-family dwellings. To provide employees a fire safe working environment and provide customers, of a retail business, a safe place to shop without concern for fire safety.

In owner occupied homes, we will check their current smoke alarms and replace any that fail to operate properly or are 9 years or more old. We will install long life dual sensor, both ionization (for hot flaming fires) and photoelectric (for smoldering fires) smoke alarms so your home meets the NFPA standards for residential homes. The standard is one or more on each floor, one in each bedroom and one in the hallway outside the bedrooms. We will do this in a professional manner with great care for your home and possessions. All at NO cost to the home owner.

For multi-residential units, rental homes and apartments in homes that were single-family dwellings, we will assist the landlords with compliance to current fire codes. Owners of commercial, industrial and institutions will receive our assistance with providing a higher level of fire safety by being compliant with current fire codes.

Bruce A. Stover, Chief
Berrien Springs Oronoko Fire Department