



HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 5, 2010

CONTACTS: HFD Public Affairs, 713-495-7906

May 2- 8, is National Arson Awareness Week, HFD, Harris County Fire Marshal Office Host Fire Safety Event

WHAT: In recognition of the National Arson Awareness Week, the Houston Fire Department and Harris County Fire Marshal Office have teamed up once again for a free fire safety night.

WHEN: Thursday, May 6, 2010, 5:30pm to 8:30pm

WHERE: The Children's Museum of Houston, 1500 Binz Houston, TX 77004

DETAILS: The United States Fire Administration (USFA) announces this year's Arson Awareness Week, May 2 – 8, 2010, theme – Community Arson Prevention. Arson robs communities of its valuable assets – lives and property. Arson destroys more than buildings: it can devastate a community resulting in the decline of the neighborhood through increased insurance premiums, loss of business revenue, and a decrease in property values.

Members from the HFD and County will be on hand to provide safety literature, answer questions, and fire trucks will be present for children to see first-hand.

According to the USFA's National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) data and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), an estimated average of 316,600 intentional fires are reported to fire departments in the United States each year causing injuries to 7,825 firefighters and civilians. In 2006, ten firefighters died as a result of arson. In addition to needless injury and death, an estimated \$1.1 billion in direct property loss occurs annually.

Communities can develop a Watch Program, partnering with their local fire department, law enforcement, insurance providers, business leaders, churches, and local community groups. Neighborhoods can reduce the likelihood of arson occurring by promoting neighborhood watches and educate people about recognizing and reporting unusual activities along with implementing improved internal and external security for homes and businesses.