

Fire Department Practice Praised By Residents

A long-time practice of the Sylvania Township Fire Department was newly introduced to residents of a neighborhood off Holland-Sylvania Road near where the department had recently fought a house fire.

Firefighters generally wait until the next weekend after a fire and then canvass the area offering to test residential smoke alarms and offer to replace defective ones, provide batteries if they find some no longer functioning or supply working smoke detectors to homes which had none.

The practice elicited a letter of appreciation from a couple who were visited by members of the department a few days after the firefighters fought a house fire on Greenacre Road.

The couple who wrote the letter to John Zeitler, township administrator, noted that they have lived in the township for 26 years and recalled that they had received "incredible service and response when we needed emergency service."

They added that many people are quick to whine and complain, "but you need to know that the service township employees provide this community is exceptional."

Mr. Zeitler said he appreciated getting a letter of congratulations and noted that the township department regularly undertakes actions that are more than is usually expected.

Fire Chief Jeffrey Kowalski also was pleased with the written recognition the department got for what is a routine practice by the township department after house fires.

He said one of the reasons for the timing is that residents feel a heightened sense of awareness after a nearby house fire and are sometimes dramatically reminded that such an event can happen to them.

Members of the department contacted 90 homeowners on Whiteacre, Greenacre and Westacre roads and found four which had no smoke detectors. They were able to put 12 in working condition.

Deputy Chief Michael Froelich said that at the first house he went to, he was assured that the family regularly checked their alarm.

He said when he tested it, it didn't work. He replaced the batteries and it still didn't work, and eventually replaced the unit.

He and Chief Kowalski noted that working smoke detectors are something every house should have. The need can't be overstressed because they can and do very literally save lives, they said.

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