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Florida Legislative Alert

Senate Bill 846 preempts the authority of the Florida Building Commission by removing fire sprinkler protection from the Florida Building Code. The International Residential Code (IRC) is the base document for residential construction in 48 states, including Florida. The IRC, and all national model codes, now recognize the critical need for fire sprinkler protection in all new residential construction in order to protect occupants and firefighters.

WHY LEGISLATIVE ACTION IS NOT WARRANTED

- The legislature created the Florida Building Commission to provide a public review process managed by builders, code officials and a wide range of experts. It makes no sense for the legislature to step in and target residential fire sprinklers as a single issue requiring legislative action while allowing all other health, safety, welfare and energy conservation code requirements to be adopted through the Florida Building Commission process.
- Fire sprinkler incentives help to offset the cost of the system. Incentives, such as reduced street width and property separations, fewer fire hydrants and smaller water mains, reduce infrastructure costs as compared to un-sprinklered communities. Developers can then pass these savings on to home buyers.
- Insurance companies reduce premiums on individual homeowner policies for homes equipped with fire sprinklers, providing a permanent and recurring financial benefit to the homeowner.
- Adoption of SB 846 will lead to increased insurance rates because rate penalties are assigned to communities that do not adopt the latest codes.

Adoption of SB 846 will force a greater emphasis on local property taxes in order to protect citizens in lieu of the protection provided by residential sprinkler systems.

Upcoming Events for the FFSA

While many organizations slow a little during the holiday season the Florida Fire Sprinkler Association continues to be very busy. Here are some of the highlights of upcoming events:

January 2010-

Ken Isman of the Engineering Staff at NFSA will be the featured speaker at eight Area Interest Meetings (AIMs) across Florida. He will provide updates from the fire sprinkler industry as well as review recent challenges. Please see our website at: www.FloridaFireSprinkler.com for the meeting times and locations. The AIMs are:

January 11- Panhandle
January 12- Tallahassee
January 13- Orlando
January 14- Jacksonville
January 19- Lake Worth
January 20- Hollywood
January 21- Ft. Myers
January 22- Tampa

FFSA Education Committee Steps up Actions

At the December 2009 FFSA Board of Director's Meeting, the Education Committee of the FFSA Board of Director's, chaired by newly elected SAM Director Top Myers, was directed to develop and implement a new education program resulting from the work product of the "Red Tag/Green Tag" committee. The committee consisted of members of FFSA, Florida's AFSA Chapter, and input from several of Florida's AHJ's.

Efforts of the committee included developing methods to clarify elements of Florida's ITM issues regarding **69A-46.041 Inspection Requirements for Fire Protection Systems**, including issues related to tagging water based fire suppression systems. Several issues identified early in the process included the need to clarify definitions in NFPA 25 and consequently develop a program to educate AHJ's, as well as provide information that needs refined in 69A-46.041.

It is the goal of the Education Committee to develop the "AHJ Program" and roll it out at the May FFSA Contractor's Conference.

More information will be provided as the program development progresses.

Business Thursday On-line Seminars First Half of 2010

Building on the success of the “Technical Tuesday” online seminars that the NFSA has been conducting for many years, we are pleased to announce its first half of 2010 schedule.

Aimed at the contractor or project manager rather than the technician, these seminars will follow the same format, starting at 10:30 am Eastern time and continuing for 1 to 1-1/2 hours. The schedule of dates and topics is as follows:

Date	Topic	Instructor
February	Strategic Planning for Contractors	Don Pamplin
March	The "State of the Economy" for the Fire Sprinkler Industry	Buddy Dewar
April	How to Use Sprinkler Save Information	Bob Kleinheinz
May	Working with the News Media	Dom Kasmauskas Bob Kleinheinz
June	Gathering Stakeholders and Building Bridges for the IRC Adoption	Bruce Lacair

You can attend a NFSA Seminar without traveling to a classroom. For more information and to view a demonstration, visit our Website at www.nfsa.org, or call Dawn at (845) 8784200 x 133.

Notes from the FFSA Executive Director

The following is an email response that I sent to the FFSA Visionary Committee, following my attendance at the NFSA Annual Staff Meeting in New York in mid-December, in response to our committee's actions to explore our future:

I understand the original email contained was from the FFSA Visionary Committee, but I wanted to share it and my response to the entire Board, as the issues are of top importance.

Thanks for the great notes. We are finishing our annual staff meeting in New York this morning and I will VERY HAPPILY be returning to some warmer climes later today.

Much of our discussions have been centered around two major issues, both very much in-tune with major issues identified in our recently past FFSA Board discussions and include:

- 1) How do we prepare for the upcoming "residential revolution"?
- 2) How do we move forward with ITM clarity, enforcement, etc.?

At the national level, there are some clear directions regarding resources and plans to make sure that our contractors stay "in the game".

When I get back, we'll start sharing some of the information that will be forthcoming.

When you have a minute, take a look at the national site www.NFSA.org and click on the two new links on the left side of the home page (IRC and ITM updates)...take a look around to see updates on what's happening around the country on both of the issues. I want you to see two things:

- 1) The issues we face in Florida are similar to issues around the country.
- 2) You'll see that we are making progress in both areas (currently 5 states have or will shortly have adopted the IRC requirement for one and two family) and that this is a "team" effort nationwide if we're all to succeed.

I reported in my briefing of the Florida region to our staff (also in attendance the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Sec/Treas. of the NFSA Board) that while Florida shares the same economic and business issues that the rest of the country shares, the strength of Florida's sprinkler industry lies in the partnership and activity of our contractors and members, and other stakeholders and that as a team, we're positive in taking on the issues.

It is my hope that my words tended to "lead by example" in getting other states to develop the coalitions and partnerships that keep us moving forward in Florida.

Again....more later, but the Association is "all over" the issues. There are some very strong steps that are underway to support the issues. You are on-track and we'll keep you informed as we move forward.

MEANTIME, from Helen and I, we wish you the happiest of holidays and the best for your health, happiness, and a prosperous New Year. See you soon.....Dave