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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Fire Team USA and Common Voices Encourage Everyone to “Get Involved!”**

The numbers are staggering. The problem will not go away. New problems are built every day. Yes, we are referencing the growing fire problem in America. People are dying at alarming rates. What can we do to change this trend?

“This problem needs a new approach,” says Alan Perdue, Director of Guilford County Emergency Services in North Carolina and International Association of Fire Chiefs Board Member. “For too long we have responded to these horrifying statistics with our standard answers. When are we going to realize that they are not working? Are fire departments doing anything different today in our communities than we did the day before the fire?”

As a fire chief and/or fire official, everyone is encouraged to be members of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Fire Protection Association, and the International Code Council. We must support the IAFC as being the leader in national fire service issues and we must be involved in the NFPA codes and standards making process and the ICC Codes process. These are the organizations and agencies setting the standards for how new buildings are built in our communities. As fire service experts, we must get involved in the process. This means we must continue our efforts in the built environment as well as significantly influence the new construction.

On March 19, 2008 the U.S. Fire Administrator, Chief Greg Cade, issued a press release and position paper on the important role of fire sprinklers. This complete press release may be found at [www.usfa.dhs.gov](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov).

One of the most proactive decisions that a fire service leader can make is to join the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Fire & Life Safety Section. For more information, visit [www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org) or [www.iafcflss.org](http://www.iafcflss.org). This professional organization has resources and educational opportunities available that will aid fire service leaders in providing the best fire protection for their local communities.

The problem is more than statistics—those fire death statistics are people—and they have died in vain if we don’t figure out how to be bold enough to think differently. Chief Shane Ray, of Pleasant View Volunteer Fire Department, highlights the current growth trends and what impact they have on a community in his Fire Team USA presentation. Over 1 million new homes starts are expected in 2008. Our hope lies in building those homes and buildings safer by ensuring the

adoption and enforcement of current codes and standards as well as installing fire sprinklers in all new construction.

“The solution has been around for over 100 years, available in residential occupancies for over 20 years and the solution is FIRE SPRINKLERS,” adds Vickie Pritchett, Fire Team USA Project Manager. “It is exciting to see the numerous organizations that are partnering together and joining forces to help educate Americans about the problem and the solution.”

One such example of this is the recent collaboration between Common Voices, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, and The Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors. The trio collaborated on a video that will be distributed to over 35,000 fire departments across the United States that highlights fire statistics and recent efforts of the three organizations. More information can be found at [www.firehero.org](http://www.firehero.org) , [www.fireadvocates.org](http://www.fireadvocates.org) and [www.phoenix-society.org](http://www.phoenix-society.org).

Fire Team USA encourages all fire service leaders, building officials, and community leaders to become involved in the upcoming codes processes that are available and that will be debating the fire sprinkler issue.

International Code Council members will have the opportunity to address the fire sprinkler concept when it is debated on the floor of ICC Code hearings in Minneapolis, MN in September of 2008. For more information on this opportunity, visit [www.ircfiresprinkler.org](http://www.ircfiresprinkler.org) and [www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org).

“I encourage every fire official in America to reflect on the numbers and to take action,” adds Chief Ray. “We have tried our old approaches for too long, and they are not working. The time is now for us to fight for fire sprinkler systems and to change the way we approach fire protection in the community.”

It's Time to get involved! It's Time for fire service leaders to lead the charge and take action! For the latest information on upcoming codes events and current news stories, visit [www.fireteamusa.com](http://www.fireteamusa.com) and join our Life Safety team!

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