



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Fire & Building Department
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3000
www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

MEMORANDUM

To: Dave Ramsay, City Manager
From: Grace Steuart, Fire Marshal
Date: May 23, 2006
Subject: Special Presentation to Arson Alarm Foundation

RECOMMENDATION:

The City Council give official recognition to the Arson Alarm Foundation for its assistance in finding and arresting the persons responsible for a major fire at the Gospel Hall on 132nd Avenue NE in March of 2005.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The Arson Alarm Foundation is funded by the Northwest Insurance Council, and offers reward money each year for private citizens who provide information that helps Police and Fire personnel arrest and/or convict arsonists.

The fire at the Gospel Hall caused approximately \$300,000 in damage to the structure and its contents. With the financial incentive provided by Arson Alarm Foundation, tips from private citizens were provided to fire and police authorities. As a result of these tips, fire investigators were able to interview two juveniles who subsequently confessed to lighting the fire at the church with fireworks.

Attached is additional information regarding Arson Alarm Foundation and the Northwest Insurance Council and their mission.



Put the Heat on Arson

Arson: A Crime You Can't Afford to Ignore

Arson is the number-one cause of property damage due to fire in the U.S. Arsonists destroyed \$1.1 billion in insured property in 2002 – including factories, residential buildings, churches and motor vehicles. Arson isn't just a property crime, either. Arson kill nearly 350 people every year.

Arson, the act of deliberately setting fire to a building, car or other property for fraudulent or malicious purposes, is a crime in all states. Insurers have a vested interest in preventing and detecting arson because such fires cause needless loss of life and property and push up the cost of insurance for homeowners, vehicle owners and owners of commercial buildings.

Arson Facts

- ◆ Studies point to vandalism as the leading cause of arson.
- ◆ In 2002, intentionally-set structure fires cost \$919 million in property damage.
- ◆ In 2002, 41,000 intentionally-set vehicle fires destroyed an estimated \$222 million in property damage compared with \$219 million in 2001.
- ◆ **More than half of all arsons are committed by children under 15-years of age.**
- ◆ An Insurance Research Council study suggests about 14 percent of arson suspects are motivated by a desire to defraud an insurance company.
- ◆ Arson is a difficult crime to solve – only 16 percent of cases ended in arrests in 2002, according to the FBI.

Fighting Arson

The Arson Alarm Foundation, funded by the NW Insurance Council, offers a \$10,000 reward fund each year for private citizens who provide information that helps authorities arrest or convict arsonists. If someone has information that can help solve an arson crime, he or she should call the **Arson Hotline at 800-55-ARSON**. That person may be eligible for an award. Nominations can be made by any fire, police, or insurance investigator and prosecuting attorney. If you'd like to nominate a person, call the NW Insurance Council at (206) 624-3330 or (800) 664-4942 to obtain a nomination form.

The Arson Alarm Foundation has presented more than \$100,000 in awards over the past 10 years.

Arson Alarm Foundation

The foundation seeks to reduce loss of life and property by increasing arson awareness and teaching the public how to fight arson. The foundation has developed several arson-prevention programs including:

- ◆ \$10,000 per year Arson Awards Program.
- ◆ Grants to help local agencies obtain arson-detection and investigation equipment and training.
- ◆ Media campaigns to educate the public on how to reduce arson
- ◆ Toll-free statewide Arson Hotline (800-55-ARSON) that allows citizens to provide anonymous tips that lead to arrests or convictions of arsonists.

Through networking and information sharing, the Arson Alarm Foundation promotes public awareness by partnering with agencies such as:

- ◆ Washington State Fire Marshall's Office
- ◆ Insurance companies
- ◆ Statewide fire departments
- ◆ Federal Bureau of Investigation
- ◆ Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives
- ◆ King County Juvenile Firestoppers