



February 7, 2014

Sandy Breland, General Manager
WAFB Channel 9

Dear Ms. Breland

My name is Cindy Giedraitis and I am the South Central Regional Manager for the National Fire Sprinkler Association. Yesterday, on February 6, 2014; Andrew Nomura; a reporter from WAFB Channel 9 reported about a Fire in the Catholic Presbyterian Apartments – “Independent Living Apartments” (which mostly houses Seniors).

Unfortunately, this news story created a negative perception about the life saving technology of the fire sprinkler system that extinguished the fire: ***“But, the flames did not do nearly as much damage as the sprinkler system.”*** Damage from the water is always less costly and time consuming than damage from fire. Water damage can be repaired-- but the loss of any life -- no one can repair.

I would like to help your television station to provide more comprehensive coverage about fire sprinkler technology both proactively and when a fire happens in your coverage area. The National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA), the *Louisiana Automatic Alarm Association* and I would be willing to assist you with “quick response” after the fire interviews, live demonstrations, facts and any expert information. Please let your reporters know that they are welcome to call me at **979-324-8934 or LAFAA President Ron Case at Cell Phone 318-422-9800.**

Many of the apartment occupants and/or firefighters could have died in this fire. ***Please review the attached Quebec Nursing Home Fire Story and then the more positive Oklahoma City Nursing Home Fire Story.*** The combination of the fire sprinkler system with smoke alarms gave all of the apartment occupant’s early warning of a fire and early extinguishment of the fire (to keep the fire small until the fire department arrives). To date, **the U.S. has never seen a multiple loss of life due to fire in a structure that has a fully installed and properly maintained fire sprinkler system.** Also, statistics show that automatic fire sprinkler systems and smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire by 82%, relative to having neither present.

To put things in perspective regarding water damage, fire sprinklers flow 20 gallons of water a minute while a firefighter’s hose flows 200 gallons of water a minute. Most fire departments in the US arrive within 10 minutes of a call and stabilize the situation within an average time of 20 minutes. Sprinkler water damage and response time is always substantially less than fire damage and fire department water application. Fire Sprinklers and Fire Departments are on the same team! They work together.

I bring this to your attention because this recent fire could have been a devastating tragedy if the building had not been equipped with fire sprinklers. Fire sprinklers provide added protection for **Louisiana’s** most vulnerable populations - including children, elderly and disabled citizens - who are often without the capabilities to escape in the event of a fire. Research shows that fires can double in size every minute, and can overtake a room in as little as two minutes. Fire sprinklers are effective in preventing loss of property and, most importantly, loss of life.

I urge you to click on this [film footage sprinkler demonstration link](#) and to consider allowing us to do a rebuttal news story that features the positive benefits of fire sprinkler technology when a fire happens. I also encourage you to learn more about how you can protect yourself, your family and your home. Fire sprinklers save lives and property.

Sincerely,
Cindy Giedraitis