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It's Fire Prevention Week. Protect your Family from Fire!

The City of Chowchilla Volunteer Fire Department Encourages Residents to Keep their Homes Safe during Fire Prevention Week, October 9-15, 2011

October 5, 2011 -- What's the best way to protect your family from fire? Be ahead of the game, of course. With more than 360,000 home fires reported in the United States in 2009, according to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), your best defense is a good offense. That's why the City of Chowchilla Volunteer Fire Department is teaming up with NFPA during the October 9-15, 2011, to let the community know: "It's Fire Prevention Week. Protect your Family from Fire!" This year's campaign focuses on preventing the leading causes of home fires -- cooking, heating and electrical equipment, as well as candles and smoking materials. Additionally, it urges people to protect their homes and families with life-saving technology and planning.

"In 2009, 2,565 people died in home fires. Nearly all of these deaths could have been prevented by taking a few simple precautions like having working smoke alarms and a home fire escape plan, keeping things that can burn away from the stove and always turning off space heaters before going to bed," says Harry Turner, Fire Chief of the Chowchilla Fire Department. "Fire is a dangerous opponent, but by anticipating the hazards, you are much less likely to be one of the nearly 13,000 people injured in home fires each year."

The Chowchilla Volunteer Fire Department offers the following tips for protecting your home and family from fire:

- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Replace or repair damaged or loose electrical cords.
- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Use deep, wide ashtrays on a sturdy table.
- Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Avoid the use of candles in the bedroom and other areas where people may fall asleep.

"While preventing home fires in Chowchilla is always our number one priority, it is not always possible," Turner continued. "Chowchilla's residents need to provide the best protection to keep their homes and families safe in the event of a fire. This can be achieved by developing an escape plan which you practice regularly and equipping homes with life-saving technologies like smoke alarms and home fire sprinklers."

The following tips will help keep your family safe if there is a fire in your home:

- Install smoke alarms inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home.
- Interconnect all smoke alarms in the home so when one sounds, they all sound.
- Test smoke alarms at least monthly and replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or sooner if they do not respond when tested.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows how to respond if the smoke alarm sounds.
- Pull together everyone in your household and make a plan. Walk through your home and inspect all possible ways out. Households with children should consider drawing a floor plan of your home, marking two ways out of each room, including windows and doors.
- If you are building or remodeling your home, consider installing home fire sprinklers.

The Chowchilla Volunteer Fire Department will be hosting Fire Safety Assemblies at local pre-school and elementary schools during Fire Prevention Week to promote "It's Fire Prevention Week. Protect your Family from Fire!" Through these educational activities, students can learn more about the importance of fire safety and prevention.

To find out more about Fire Prevention Week, please contact the Chowchilla Volunteer Fire Department at 559-665-8626. To learn more about "It's Fire Prevention Week. Protect your Family from Fire!" visit NFPA's Web site at www.firepreventionweek.org.

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