



For Immediate Release

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**Year Ends with Significant Drop
in State Fire Deaths**

(Jackson)- Diligent efforts from the Mississippi State Fire Marshal's Office to reduce fire deaths in the state are seeing positive results. Based on preliminary reports the total number of 2012 fire deaths in Mississippi was 62, down from 80 fire deaths in 2011. Today, Commissioner of Insurance/State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney announced that is the lowest number of fire deaths recorded in a single year since the office has been keeping such records.

Since 2009, Mississippi's fire death rate per year has been reduced by 35.76%.

"Mississippians are starting to, and should continue paying heed to the fire safety messages we're advocating and taking advantage of fire safety programs the State Fire Marshal's Office is promoting," Chaney said.

"More and more people are creating family escape plans, taking care with what heating methods they use during freezing temperatures like we are having this week, and most importantly are making sure homes have working smoke alarms. Our efforts are beginning to pay off, and even though numbers are going down we need to keep stressing the importance of fire safety."

In 2009, the State Fire Marshal's Office began partnering with local fire departments and community groups in an effort to install working smoke alarms in homes throughout Mississippi. The alarms were made available through three Fire Prevention and Safety grants received through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighter's Grant program in an amount totaling \$1,995,383,000.

"These grants have allowed our Office, working with fire departments and other community interest groups to provide over 49,000 alarms to approximately 32,000 homes," Chaney said.

In addition to standard smoke alarms, the State Fire Marshal's Free Smoke Alarm Program has been able to obtain and install alarms for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The State Fire Marshal's Office Fire Safety Education Division has also made over 100 fire safety presentations.

For heating fire safety information, visit the special “Holiday and Heating Fire Safety” web page on the Mississippi Insurance Department website at www.mid.ms.gov. (Look for the link in the notifications tab). Daily safety tips will be tweeted from @MSInsuranceDept or @MSFireSafe

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