

**For Immediate Release****July 19, 2010****State Fire Marshal Delivers First Smoke Alarms  
Purchased by Federal Grant**

**Hazlehurst-** Copiah County firefighters got some valuable new tools today to help them protect the lives and property of the communities they serve. In fact, through their County Fire Coordinator, they received 200 important tools in the fight against fire and fire deaths in the form of free smoke alarms presented by State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney and the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) Free Smoke Alarm Installation Program.

The 200 special sealed smoke alarms with a 10-year battery are just the first shipment of 50,000 smoke alarms purchased with the nearly \$1 million in funds awarded to the SFMO by the Department of Homeland Security Assistance to Firefighters Grant-Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program. Copiah County was among the first applicants for smoke alarms following the announcement of this grant in March 2010.

In 2009, there were 368 fires; five fire deaths and five fire injuries reported in Copiah County according to the Mississippi Fire Incident Reporting System. Losses from fires in the county totaled just over \$4.1 million. There has been one fire death reported in Copiah County thus far this year.

"Every smoke alarm installed helps save lives and property. There are far too many fire deaths in Mississippi - even one life lost to fire is one life too many," Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said.

There have been two documented cases where smoke alarms installed through the State Fire Marshal program has saved lives and property. At least six other saves with smoke alarms through the program have been reported to the SFMO but those cases have not been documented.

“Working smoke alarms in your home cut your risk of dying in a fire by almost half, and if you do not have a smoke alarm you should get one of the free smoke alarms distributed through our program.”

Installation and delivery of smoke alarms through the State Fire Marshal’s Office Free Smoke Alarm Installation Program is coordinated through county fire coordinators. During the visit to install alarms firefighters will provide fire prevention and home escape planning education and leave educational brochures for the residents to review after the firefighters have left. Low income families, senior citizens, families with children under 14 and persons with disabilities are being targeted to receive smoke alarms.

The State Fire Marshal Free Smoke Alarm Installation Program will be distributing future shipments of alarms throughout the remainder of the year. This was the second Federal grant to be awarded to the State Fire Marshal’s Office. With a previous grant the SFMO office purchased and distributed 32,000 smoke alarms.

Communities wishing to participate in the program should contact their local fire department or county fire coordinator to apply. For additional information on protecting your lives and property from fire, visit the State Fire Marshal Page on the Mississippi Insurance Department website at [www.mid.state.ms.us](http://www.mid.state.ms.us) or find the Mississippi State Fire Marshal on Facebook or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/msfiresafe](https://twitter.com/msfiresafe).

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