

NOTE:

There will be a Thanksgiving Luncheon immediately following the meeting. Remember to bring your food item. Please call or email Antta (akroth@acogok.org) by Nov. 10 regarding what you plan to bring. We will take contributions for the meat dish.

**PLEASE NOTIFY ACOG AT 234-2264 (TTY 234-2217) BY NOON,
NOVEMBER 12, 2004 IF YOU DESIRE A SIGN LANGUAGE
INTERPRETER AT THE MEETING**

OPERATION FIRESAFE OPERATIONAL COMMITTEE
& BURN PREVENTION COMMITTEE AGENDA

10:00 a.m., November 16, 2004

Association of Central Oklahoma Governments
21 E. Main – Suite 100
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. INTRODUCTIONS
- III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES--REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 21, 2004
(Attachment IV)

Action Requested: Motion to approve minutes from the September 21, 2004 meeting.

- V. COMMITTEE REPORTS
(Attachment V)

INFORMATION: Committee Chairpersons will lead discussions on the following committee activities.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| A. Fund Development Committee----- | Glenda Vassar |
| B. Program Development Committee----- | Jimmy Gibson |
| C. Public Education Committee----- | Tim Adams |
| D. Mental Health Committee ----- | Lois Pokorny |

Action Requested: Discussions.

VI. FIRE PREVENTION WEEK COVERAGE
(Attachment VI)

INFORMATION: Organized by Martha Collar at SAFE KIDS, KFOR-TV-4 ran a valuable five-part series during Fire Prevention Week describing the dangers of candles, importance of escape plans and smoke alarms, and problems associated with juvenile firesetting and the availability of Operation FireSAFE. The program received some press coverage as well (articles attached).

Action Requested: None, information only.

VII. REVIEW VIDEO REGARDING GASOLINE IGNITING FIRES

INFORMATION: Tim Adams would like to share a 30-minute video regarding gasoline fires to the group.

Action Requested: None, information only.

VIII. OPERATION FIRESAFE PROGRAM STATISTICS

Action Requested: For information and discussion.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

X. ADJOURNMENT

OPERATION FIRESAFE OPERATIONAL COMMITTEE
& BURN PREVENTION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 21, 2004

The fifth meeting for the calendar year of the Operation FireSAFE Operational Committee convened at 10:10 a.m., September 21, 2004 in the ACOG Conference Room, 21 East Main, Suite 100, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The meeting was held as indicated by advance notice posted at the ACOG Offices at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting.

PRESIDING

Ken Pontius, Chairman, Moore Fire Department

PRESENT

Jim Hock, Del City Fire Department
Greg Graves, El Reno Fire Department
Jason Duff, El Reno Fire Department
Bo Bedford, Midwest City Fire Department
Marie-Helene Lareault, Midwest City Fire Department
Getty Williams, Newalla Fire Department
Darryl Troupe, Norman Fire Department
Tim Adams, Oklahoma City Fire Department
Jimmy Gibson, Shawnee Fire Department
Chris Davis, Tinker Air Force Base Fire Department
Martha Collar, Oklahoma SAFE KIDS Coalition
Glenda Vassar, State Farm Insurance Companies

GUESTS

Linda Sumner, Consumer Product Safety Commission
Monica Healy, Red Cross of Central Oklahoma

STAFF

Jane Sutter, Division Director
Jerry Church, Special Programs Officer

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ken Pontius called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self-introductions were made around the room.

III. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ken Pontius announced that there would be an interview with a juvenile firesetter who set a fire a few years ago and his mother. This will be during Fire Prevention Week. KFOR has agreed to cover fire prevention stories throughout that week. A KFOR reporter will be interviewing FireSAFE representatives and this juvenile firesetter and his mother at Station #2 on Friday, September 24th.

Ken said Channel 4 has asked that all of the interviews be done there at the fire department. He said they would begin readying for those at 2:00 p.m.

Martha Collar reviewed the interview schedules as previously assigned: Jim Hock at 2:30 p.m.; Darryl Troupe at 2:50 p.m.; 3:10 p.m. Tim Adams and Jane Sutter; and Jimmy Gibson at 3:30 p.m.; and finally Ken Pontius and Stacey Snead at 4:00 p.m.

Jane suggested that each speaker be there 20 or 30 minutes before their assigned time to allow for any contingencies that might arise.

Jim Hock will bring Shelley Monroe as part of his report. Shelley will tell the story of when she left a candle burning while she left her house. The candle fell over and ultimately set her house on fire.

Martha Collar said that SAFE KIDS Coalition would issue a statewide press release a few days after the Channel 4 interviews regarding Fire Prevention month to encourage other media coverage.

Ken recommended that an article be run in the Sunday issue of the *Oklahoman* regarding events for October.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 21, 2004

Tim Adams, Oklahoma City, made a motion to accept the minutes of the September 21, 2004 regular meeting. Darryl Troupe, Norman, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fund Development - Glenda Vassar, State Farm, said that she would soon be submitting a grant request to State Farm Insurance Companies for \$500. This represents the \$500 that State Farm awards to the Operation FireSAFE program annually.

Tim Adams recommended that in the next grant application to the Kirkpatrick Foundation that we ask for funds to cover costs for a training conference. Tim said he would investigate possible upcoming conferences.

Program Development - No report.

Public Education - Items already covered in the Chairman's Report.

Mental Health Subcommittee – Jane Sutter reported in Lois Pokorny's stead saying that she sent the letter on behalf of Operation FireSAFE to the *Psychiatry Magazine* and has received no response. Lois also talked to the group that produces the *Fire Chiefs Magazine*. She said that was a successful communication. To date she has not heard from them but feels confident that they will respond sometime the future.

Tim said the *Oklahoma State Firefighters' Association* newspaper would be another possibility for us to approach. Tim agreed to pass along that information to Lois so she could send the same letter to them.

Ken suggested that we ask about running a story about Operation FireSAFE. Tim said there is a column in it that references Kids Corner that we might be able to include a story.

Firesafe Foundation - There was no report.

VI. FIRE PREVENTION WEEK UPDATE

This item was covered previously in the Chairman's report.

VII. OPERATION FIRESAFE PROGRAM STATISTICS

Ken recommended that we include a slot on the statistics card to include "source of ignition" stats. Some of the interviewing departments currently indicate that in their files. Ken suggested that we could include this information in the year-end statistical report.

Darryl Troupe asked how that might affect reporting on the repeat offenders that are included in a repeat interview. Tim said out of almost 2,000 interventions, only approximately 36 represent repeated firesetters. Darryl Troupe said that he instructs the juveniles that once they have received the fire education intervention that they will not be allowed to come through the program twice.

In a group discussion about statistical information, Tim Adams reported that in 1997 the Oklahoma City program intervened in nearly 400 cases, and by year 2003 they saw less than 100, which means there has been a 75% drop from earlier years in child-set fires. He said the public is learning from the efforts of Operation FireSAFE.

Martha Collar referred to a couple of the recent press releases that refer to national statistics from 1999. She asked if that is the last year that we have statistics reported. Tim said the national statistics are made about every five years. Tim suggested that we contact the National Fire Academy to see if they have current statistical information.

Ken mentioned an idea that our FireSAFE representatives might want to mention to their fire chiefs. He said this is being done in other cities across the nation, after obtaining the proper authorization first, and that is that they set up a Safety Village at the site of a burned out house, publicize an event that there will be a tour of the house open to the public. This is done before the insurance company has the house cleaned up. The homeowner must give a release. He said this type of event in Hagerstown has great community approval and involvement. He said this is a great media event as well. He asked that they discuss it more in the November meeting.

Chris Davis showed some of the posters to the group that Tinker Air Force Bases uses in public education efforts. He said he would display them in various buildings at Tinker. Tim Adams asked if the graphics used in the poster could be shared, or if they belong strictly to the military. Chris said he would have to get permission from Air Force and Navy Public Affairs first since the approval was for on-base use and not off-base use. Tim asked that Chris inform the group if that is possible.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Tim Adams said he has a video on the subject of using gasoline to start fires. He suggested that he bring it to the meeting in November and view it as a group. Jane said if the group likes it, it might be a video we want to list to purchase for the interview sites.

Jim Hock introduced Linda Sumner, Consumer Product Safety Commission, who he brought to the meeting because of her knowledge about novelty cigarette lighters.

Linda Sumner said her focus is working with kids under five using lighters, especially the novelty designed lighters, regarding making them child proofed. She said there is an impression of many that novelty lighters are not required to have a safety resistant feature. She said, however, a current report indicates they are required to have a safety feature. However, she said she would check into that further and keep us advised.

The group agreed to have a Thanksgiving holiday luncheon immediately following the regular Operational Committee meeting in November. Jane said we would check with everyone around that agenda time on what item each person would like to bring.

Tim Adams reminded the group that candle fires increase during holiday seasons and asked each community to get that reminder out individually.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Darryl Troupe, Norman, made a motion to adjourn. Tim Adams seconded the motion. The motion carried the following votes. The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

**OPERATION FireSAFE
Operational Committee**

*Ken Pontius, Chairman, Moore
Darryl Troupe, Vice Chairman, Norman
Resource Person: Jane Sutter, ACOG*

**2004-2005
Subcommittees**

Fund Development Committee

Glenda Vassar, Chair

Jim Hock, Del City
Jane Sutter, ACOG

Mental Health Committee

Lois Pokorny, Chair, Okla. City-County Health Department

Kyle Trumbly, Yukon
Liz Petrin, Pottawatomie County Health Department
Debbie Blood, Okla. City-County Health Department

Program Development

Jimmy Gibson, Chair

Public Education

Tim Adams, Chair

Shaum Jennings, Bethany
David Perez, Oklahoma Air National Guard
Darryl Troupe, Norman
Martha Collar, SAFE KIDS Coalition
Resource Person: Jerry Church

The Oklahoman

Oct. 10, 2004

Program helps end fire play

By Chad Previch, Staff Writer

Thousands of Oklahoma City children have set fire to homes, clothes or grass. But before they create a deadly blaze, firefighters often intervene.

"Fire interest in children is normal, as is curiosity; however child fireplay is not acceptable behavior," said fire Maj. Tim Adams, coordinator of a program aimed at child fire starters.

More than 2,000 children have entered Operation FireSAFE since its inception in 1991 after they started a fire or parents thought they had the potential to start one. Only 36 children started fires after completing the program, Adams said.

Almost half of 4,000 fire fatalities in the United States last year were children, Adams said. Most of the children died in fires they created.

Most children who start fires are normal and curious, said Adams. Most are between the ages of 3 and 7, and 90 percent are boys.

They come from a supportive family, have good peer relationships and no problems in schools, Adams said. They usually don't understand the consequences of fire.

"There are usually one or two episodes of fireplay and the child almost always will have feelings of guilt or remorse," Adams said.

Maria Trapp, a licensed Oklahoma City psychologist, said early intervention is the best way to deter a child's fascination with flames. But fire education by itself can fail, she said.

She said if a child still is interested in setting fires by the late elementary school age, there could be a deep-rooted problem with relation-

See FIRE, Page 4A

Fire

Continued from Page 1A

ships with other people.

A child showing anti-social behavior or one who feels alienated from friends and family and is seeking attention could turn to matches and lighters, Trapp said.

"That's the kind of stuff you want to be worried about," she said. "Definitely some kids need more (than the program). I think that's a great start though."

Big red trucks

The program targets all young firestarters. It was created after a 4-year-old boy started a fire that killed firefighters Jeffrey Lindsay, Jimmy Ayers and Benny Zellner in 1989, Adams said.

The child wasn't injured.

Young people from 2 to 17 have been enrolled in the program, which costs the fire department about \$83,000 a year to operate, Adams said.

Versions of the program can be found in many Oklahoma City-area fire departments.

In Oklahoma City, 10 firefighters are trained to work in the program, which begins when the children and their families meet fire personnel at a fire prevention office, Adams said.

Firefighters don't take the children to a fire station, as young people may misinterpret the trip as a reward when they see "big red trucks" and firefighters, Adams said.

A mental health professional reviews a form the family completes and recommends whether counseling is needed, Adams said.

After an interview, the children and their families learn about smoke alarms, exit drills, cause and effect of fires, fire science, the legal impact of setting fires and match and lighter safety.

After the sessions, families must design and practice escape plans, complete a home hazard survey and maintain smoke alarms within the first week of the program. The children then must maintain the smoke alarms in the home for the next year, which in-

cludes testing, cleaning and replacing the battery once a year.

Follow-up calls are made after one, three and six months, Adams said.

The family is returned to the program if the child continues fireplay.

Since the program's beginning, only a few families have refused to participate. Adams said those children usually were put in the legal system, where they can end up doing community service or going to juvenile homes.

Firefighters think Fire-SAFE has saved lives and millions of dollars.

In 2003, a five-year low was reached when 71 children were referred to Fire-SAFE, Adams said. The highest was in 1999 when 133 children were referred.

There also was a five-year low last year on property damage, with a reported loss of \$397,250 in fires that led to child referrals, Adams said. That's about half of what was lost in 1999.

Parental supervision

It's estimated that about half of all fires started by children aren't reported by parents, Adams said. That estimate is validated because "most of the children that come through the program have experimented with fire several times before setting the fire that sends them to the program," he said.

"The prevailing attitude is that child fireplay is a normal behavior that the child will outgrow," he said. "This is one of the longtime myths that has been extremely hard to overcome."

Martha Collar, coordinator of the Oklahoma Safe Kids Coalition, said it's important not to lay blame squarely on the firestarter when parents need to take their own steps to prevent fires.

She said parents need to put lighters and matches away.

"I know it's hard to supervise kids 100 percent of the time," she said. "Parents have to shower, they have to do a lot of things that make it difficult to supervise their kids 100 percent of the time. That's when they get in trouble."

Moore boy learns dangers of fire

Operation FireSAFE credited for change.

By Chad Previch, Staff Writer

MOORE — He's not sure why he started the fire that destroyed his house when he was 4 years old.

Three years later, Jarrod Snead just remembers being in a hall closet playing with his mother's lighter and setting a jacket on fire.

Within minutes, the house he shared with his mother, father and older brother went up in flames. Firefighters found Jarrod hiding in his brother's room.

Jarrod no longer sets fires, after getting help from Moore firefighters. He also has visited with psychologists and therapists.

He is just one of thousands of children enrolled in Operation FireSAFE, a program partially sponsored by the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments.

Twenty-two Oklahoma City-area fire departments participate in the program, said Jane Sutter, the association's director of intergovernmental services.

Jarrod now has a firefighter poster hanging in his room in the family home rebuilt in the 900 block of SE 13.

"I won't play with the fire anymore because it's bad," Jarrod said. "The firefighters saved me."

His mother, Stacey Snead, thinks firefighters saved her son twice — once from the fire and again by deterring his penchant for it.

She remembers Nov. 26, 2001, every time she smells smoke. She has panic attacks several times a week, but takes medication to control the problem.

After the firefighters rescued Jarrod, he was taken to OU Medical Center. Stacey



BY BRYAN TERRY, THE OKLAHOMAN

Stacey Snead and her son Jarrod stand in the hallway near where Jarrod started a fire that burned the house down in 2001. The house was rebuilt. After therapy, medication and firefighter intervention, Jarrod has stopped lighting fires.

Snead was taken to Integris Baptist Medical Center with burns to her forehead. Both suffered smoke inhalation.

Stacey Snead had noticed Jarrod's interest in fire and cigarettes. She kept fire starters away from him and even slept with her cigarettes beneath her pillow.

But while she was on the phone in her bedroom, Jarrod managed to get the lighter and went into the closet.

"I relive it every day," Stacey Snead said. "It was not nothing that I will ever forget. I didn't care about anything else. I knew my son was in there and tried everything, anything to get him out. I felt I couldn't do anything about it. I felt like I was out of control. It (the fire) was uncontrollable."