

PRESS RELEASE—Contact DSPS Newsroom at dspsnewsroom@wisconsin.gov

October 8, 2024
DSPS Communications
608-220-1553

Wisconsin DSPS Recognizes Fire Prevention Week

Agency honors groups saving lives across Wisconsin

Madison, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) kicked off Fire Prevention Week Monday with a couple of stops highlighting groups that keep Wisconsin communities safe from fire.

“Most people associate our agency with licensing professionals, but I like to remind people that SAFETY is in our name,” said Wisconsin DSPS Secretary Dan Hereth. “Our work with the state fire service is among the most important safety-related work we do because local fire departments and EMS units are the backbone of safety in Wisconsin communities.”

DSPS Secretary Dan Hereth started his morning at Milwaukee’s Survive Alive House, which the city has used for more than 40 years to teach school children the dangers of fire, as well as reinforce important safety and prevention tips.

“The data tells us 80% of the cost of fires comes from 1% of calls to the fire department,” Sec. Hereth explained to a group of second graders, firefighters, and others at the event. “So, fire prevention is not only important to saving lives. It also saves resources that can be used in other ways to benefit our communities.”

At the Survive Alive House, the students learned fire prevention techniques and took part in a simulation of how to escape from a house fire.

“After leaving here today, I want you to go home and warn your parents about the dangers of fires. Teach your families what you learn here today,” Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson told them.

Monday afternoon, Hereth presented a proclamation to the Wisconsin State Fire Inspectors Association (WFSIA) from Governor Tony Evers, declaring it Fire Prevention Week in Wisconsin.

“We chose to present this year’s proclamation to the WFSIA because of the various work the group does to prevent fires and keep our communities safe,” Hereth said.

“We want to thank Secretary Hereth, DSPS, and Governor Evers for the recognition,” said WFSIA President Peter Fletty, Chief of the Onalaska Fire Department. “Fire prevention is at the center of our work, from inspections to code management to public education. I’m so proud and happy that the WFSIA board and membership were recognized for their commitment and dedication to fire prevention, not just during Fire Prevention Week, but year-round.”

Fire Prevention Week is the longest-running public health observance in the U.S., first being observed in 1925. The observance always takes place in early October to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire and the Peshtigo, WI Fire, both of which started on October 8, 1871. The Peshtigo Fire is considered by many

to be the most devastating forest fire in American history, burning down 16 towns and killing more than 1,100 people. This year's Fire Prevention Week theme is *Smoke Alarms: Make them Work for You*.

About DSPS: DSPS issues more than 240 unique licenses, administers dozens of boards and councils that regulate professions, enforces state building codes, and maintains the Wisconsin Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, which is a key tool in the multi-faceted public health campaign to stem excessive opioid prescribing. A fee-based agency, DSPS is self-sustaining and receives no general fund tax dollars for its day-to-day operations. With 250 employees throughout Wisconsin, DSPS collaborates with constituents and stakeholders across a wide range of industries to promote safety and advance the economy.

About the Survive Alive House: The Survive Alive House offers a 90-minute program designed to teach 2nd and 5th grade students fire safety and prevention techniques. It is jointly managed by the Milwaukee Fire Department and Milwaukee Recreation, a department of Milwaukee Public Schools.

About the Wisconsin State Fire Inspectors Association: The WSFIA provides the people of Wisconsin with effective life safety strategies through comprehensive inspection, public education, code management, and fire investigation training and awareness. The association strives, through diligent practice and enforcement, to keep all persons, including members of the fire service, safe.

###