

Difference in fires shows need for sprinklers

On June 29, a four-alarm fire at the Upper Bucks Senior Center in Quakertown burned for more than six hours, destroying the property. One of the 200 firefighters on the scene was injured. Conversely, a two-alarm fire at the Brandywine Assisted Living Facility in Moorestown, where there were 200 residents, was contained in under an hour. This was due to a properly installed sprinkler system, which saved residents and the facility.

This year, New Jersey passed laws requiring all nursing homes to retrofit fire sprinklers. While these laws faced opposition, the extinguished fire in Moorestown vs. the blazing one in Quakertown shows exactly why passing these laws was so important. The number of fires and fire fatalities continues to rise in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and the elderly are one of the most at-risk populations for injury or

death from fire.

Fire sprinklers, thankfully, will be installed in all nursing homes in New Jersey by 2010, as well as at group homes, though many more citizens still remain vulnerable. These groups include children and those who live in close quarters such as multi-apartment buildings and high-rises.

Too often, tragic news stories are explored and uplifting ones are ignored. At the Brandywine Assisted Living Facility, disaster was avoided quickly and minimal intervention was required. More disasters can be avoided if we approach our legislatures and local officials to increase our states' dedication to fire protection.

Vincent Fichera

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sprinkler laws important

To the editor:

A two-alarm fire occurred at the Brandywine Assisted Living Facility in Moorestown, NJ, but because there was a fire sprinkler system in place, the fire was contained in less than an hour and over 200 elderly residents were evacuated safely.

Earlier this year, New Jersey passed laws requiring all nursing homes and group homes in the state to retrofit fire sprinklers. While at first these laws faced opposition, the extinguished fire in Moorestown shows exactly why passing these laws was so important. The number of fires and fire fatalities continues to rise in our state and the elderly and disabled are two of the most at-risk populations for injury or death from fire.

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Too often, tragic news stories are explored and uplifting ones are ignored. A devastating inferno will make front page news while another story of a successfully extinguished fire goes unnoticed. At the Brandywine Assisted Living Facility, disaster was avoided quickly and fire services required minimal intervention. More disasters can be avoided in the future if we approach our legislatures and local officials to increase our state's dedication to fire protection. These 200 elderly citizens were saved, but many others remaining at-risk may not be so lucky unless we take action now.

Vincent Fichera
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New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board



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Sprinklers save lives

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Here's proof sprinkler laws save lives

A two-alarm fire occurred at the Brandywine Assisted Living Facility in Moorestown, but because there was a fire-sprinkler system in place, the fire was contained in less than an hour and more than 200 elderly residents were evacuated safely.

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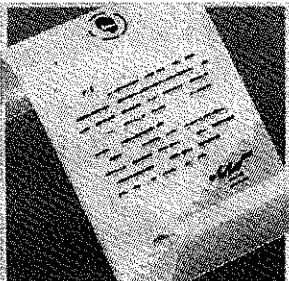
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*Boon for
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Retrofitting facilities with sprinklers avoids disasters

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