SPOKANE OVERVIEW

OF

FIRE SPRINKLER INSTALLATION COSTS

October 1, 2009

THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO AGAIN SPEAK TO THE COUNCIL TODAY ABOUT RESIDENTIAL FIRE SPRINKLER INSTALLATION COSTS.

MY NAME IS DON PAMPLIN AND I AM THE CURRENT PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGIONAL MANAGER FOR THE NATIONAL FIRE SPRINKLER ASSOCIATION, HEADQUARTERED IN NEW YORK AND I AM A FORMER FIRE CHIEF WITH 38 YEARS OF FIRE PROTECTION EXPERIENCE.

I AM SPEAKING TO THE COUNCIL TODAY IN OPPOSITION TO R313 AND THE REMOVAL OF THE FIRE SPRINKLER REQUIREMENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE.

MY COMMENTS TODAY ARE A SHORT OVERVIEW OF

A MORE COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE OF MATERIAL THAT I HAVE PREPARED FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS SO THAT THEY MAY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE INFORMATION IN GREATER DETAIL BEFORE YOU MAKE A FINAL DECISION LATER THIS YEAR.

IN ADDITION TO THE TWO STUDIES THAT I REFERENCED IN RENTON LAST WEEK THAT WERE COMPLETED BY NON-PROFIT, HIGHLY SKILLED INVESTIGATIVE ORGANIZATIONS, THERE HAVE BEEN MANY OTHER STUDIES DURING THE PAST 20 YEARS

THAT HAVE IDENTIFIED THE AVERAGE PER SQUARE FOOT COST OF INSTALLING AN NFPA 13D FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM IN NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ONE AND TWO FAMILY DWELLINGS.

ALL OF THOSE FORMER SUPPORTIVE STUDIES HAVE

CLEARLY SHOWN THAT FIRE SPRINKLERS ARE NOT EXPENSIVE AND AVERAGE LESS THAN 2% OF THE TOTAL COST OF A NEW HOME.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT THESE STUDIES GET DEMONIZED BY THE HOMEBUILDING INDUSTRY AS NOT BEING ACCURATE AND NOT REFLECTING THE HORRENDOUS COSTS THAT HOMEBUILDERS SAY WILL MAKE HOUSING UNAFFORDABLE.

MY WRITTEN REPORT TO YOU DETAILS THE INACCURACY OF THOSE HOMEBUILDER POSITIONS WITH DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE AND ONE OF THOSE INCLUDED REPORTS THAT I ENCOURAGE YOU TO READ IS ENTITLED “A COST-BENEFIT TO SOCIETY FOR HAVING SPRINKLERS IN ONE-AND TWO-FAMILY DWELLINGS”

THIS ANALYSIS, COMPLETED IN 2005 BY KENNETH E. ISMAN, P.E. CLEARLY IDENTIFYS THE FOLLOWING:

* THE VALUE OF LIVES SAVED;
* THE VALUE OF INJURIES PREVENTED;
* THE VALUE OF PROPERTY SAVED;
* THE VALUE OF INDIRECT SAVINGS;
* THE VALUE OF INSURANCE SAVINGS;
* THE VALUE OF CONSTRUCTION SAVINGS;
* THE VALUE OF FIRE DEPARTMENT SAVINGS;
* THE VALUE OF INCOME TAX SAVINGS;
* THE NET COST OF SPRINKLER SYSTEMS;
* AND THE CUMULATIVE NET COST PROFIT TO AMERICAN HOME OWNERS OF 62.8 BILLION DOLLARS OVER A FIFTY YEAR PERIOD

IT’S ALSO INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT TODAY, THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOMEBUILDERS, HEAD QUARTERED IN NEW YORK, HAVE CURRENTLY SUBMITTED OVER 1200 CODE CHANGES INVOLVING MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION METHODS FOR THE 2011 INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE.

IN THEIR OWN PRINTED WORDS THEY SAY:

“THESE MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION TRADE-UPS WILL OFFSET THE COST OF PUTTING FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS IN OUR HOMES”.

DOES FIRE SPRINKLERS MAKE HOUSING UNAFFORDABLE ? THE ANSWER IS ABSOLUTELY NO !

INCLUDED IN MY INFORMATION PACKAGE TO YOU IS A 2007 STUDY DONE BY THE ECONOMICS GROUP OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS.

THIS STUDY IS AVAILABLE ON THE NAHB WEBSITE.

THIS REPORT IDENTIFIES ALL OF THE COSTS IN BUILDING A 3340 SQ. FT. SINGLE FAMILY HOME IN A COMPETATIVE MARKETPLACE.

THE TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST OF THE HOME WAS $ 219,000 DOLLARS.

THE PROFIT ON THAT HOME WAS NEARLY $ 51,000 DOLLARS.

THE FOLLOWING TRUE STORY ILLUSTRATES HOW TRAGICALLY WRONG THE HOMEBUILDERS HAVE BEEN OVER THE YEARS.

22 YEARS AGO, A CITY IN CALIFORNIA WAS TRYING TO GET A RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLER ORDINANCE PASSED.

IT WAS OPPOSED BY THE LOCAL HOMEBUILDERS, ONE OF WHICH WAS A LEADING BUILDER OF SIZEABLE SUCCESS.

HE REPEATEDLY STATED THE FOLLOWING UNTRUTHS:

* “NEW HOMES DON’T BURN;
* “MAKING ME PUT SPRINKLERS IN MY HOMES WILL MAKE THEM UNAFFORDABLE”.

SHORTLY AFTER COMPLETION, A FAMILY MOVED INTO ONE OF HIS NEW HOMES AND THE HOME CAUGHT ON FIRE.

WHEN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ARRIVED, THE WHOLE HOUSE WAS TOTALLY INVOLVED IN FLAME AND SMOKE.

AS THE FIRE CREWS WERE ADVANCING THEIR HOSE LINES ACROSS THE LAWN, THE LAWN SPRINKLERS WERE SPRAYING ON THE GRASS AND THERE WERE NO FIRE SPRINKLERS IN THE HOME.

TWO YOUNG CHILDREN DIED IN THAT FIRE.

THE FIRE CHIEF WAS VERY UPSET, DID SOME RESEARCH ON WHAT THE BUILDER HAD SPENT IN THE HOME AND FOUND OUT THAT THE LAWN SPRINKLERS COST 6,000.00 DOLLARS AND THE GRANITE COUNTER-TOPS AND JACUZY HOT-TUB WAS ANOTHER $9,000 DOLLARS.

THE FUNERAL FOR THE TWO KIDS COST OVER $ 10,000 DOLLARS.

THIS FAMILY WAS DESTROYED AND THAT BUILDER CONTINUED BUILDING UNSAFE HOMES.

A 13D RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLER SYSTEM TODAY, AMORTISED OVER A 30 YEAR MORTGAGE WILL COST THE HOMEOWNER ABOUT 37 CENTS PER DAY.

FOR 37 CENTS A DAY, YOU CAN PROTECT YOUR FAMILY, YOUR IRREPLACEABLE POSSESSIONS AND YOUR STRUCTURAL HOME.

37 CENTS IS LESS THAN ONE-THIRD THE PRICE OF A PACKAGE OF CHEWING GUM.

37 CENTS IS ONE-QUARTER THE PRICE OF A TEN OUNCE CUP OF COFFEE.

WHERE IS THE LOGIC THAT SHOWS THAT WE WILL GLADLY PAY OVER $ 22.00 DOLLARS A GALLON FOR BREWED COFFEE BUT WILL ARGUE THAT IT’S TOO EXPENSIVE TO PROTECT OUR FAMILIES WITH FIRE SPRINKLERS FOR 37 CENTS A DAY.

TO ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT TODAY, PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ THE REPORTS I HAVE INCLUDED IN MY HAND-OUT PACKAGE.

FIRE SAFETY FOR PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON STATE REALLY DEPENDS ON YOUR WISE DECISIONS.

THANK YOU.