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**Subject: Zero Fire Deaths for Portsmouth, Va**

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## **ZERO FIRE DEATHS FOR PORTSMOUTH, VA**

At the beginning of 2011, Portsmouth Fire, Rescue and Emergency Service set some high goals including zero fire deaths and a reduction of fires by 10%. Thanks to the citizens of Portsmouth and a dedicated fire prevention staff, these goals were not only met, but exceeded. There was a 12% reduction in fires, and this is the first year since 2005 where the City of Portsmouth has had zero fire deaths.

New fire prevention programs created opportunities for enlightenment and education, which was central in meeting these goals. A Home Safety Survey Program, where citizens can request for firefighters to come into their home and give fire safety advice, continues to be a successful new initiative. Also, a monthly news article in the Virginian-Pilot by Fire Chief Don Horton, as well as a designated Public Information Officer help provide the community with information and education.

Attendance and participation by fire department personnel at civic league meetings was increased 200%, and "After the Fire" brochures have been available to people affected by fires. The department held its inaugural Citizen's Fire Academy, where citizens gained insight into the many duties of a fire fighter.

Fire Chief Don Horton states, “As we begin the New Year, Portsmouth Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services will continue initiatives such as installing free smoke alarms and batteries, to keep fire deaths obsolete.”

For more information on any of these programs, please contact PIO Anna E. Silva at 393-8689, extension 203.

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