

July 2002 International Sprinkler Conference to be in Prague

The International Fire Sprinkler Association has agreed to host the 4th International Fire Sprinkler Conference, and has scheduled it to be held in Prague in the Czech Republic on July 9-10, 2002. The first such conference was held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1990, with additional conferences at four-year intervals in Kauai, Hawaii in 1994 and Glasgow, Scotland in 1998. Those who attended the 1998 conference will recall the special nature of the event, with an unparalleled opportunity for international networking in a memorable setting.

The Prague location was selected based on its central location within the European continent, where there is a major effort underway to increase reliance on the fire sprinkler concept. The conference program, still being finalized, will focus on the use of automatic fire suppression systems to address the fire challenges of dwellings, schools, heritage buildings and other occupancies that constitute non-traditional use of sprinklers. There will also be a focus on the use of water-based fire suppression systems to protect the environment.

The Czech Republic, considered one of the most beautiful countries in Europe, is becoming a popular site for international meetings, and should provide a relaxed but stimulating background for the two full days of educational sessions. The sprinkler conference will be held at the Prague Marriott, centrally located in the heart of the city close to Old Town Square. Opened in 1999, the hotel has all the amenities of a new hotel amidst old world charm. It is fully sprinklered.

Tentative plans are being made for a special social event on Tuesday evening, July 9th at the Nelahozeves Castle, owned by Prince William Lobkowitz. Buses will depart from the Marriott to take seminar registrants to the Renaissance château. Cocktails will be followed by a gala dinner on the first floor of the castle. Guests will also be given a guided tour of the 2nd floor art collection, which is entitled "Six Centuries of Art Patronage" and is considered one of the most significant private art collections in Europe.

A special discounted advance registration fee is available until January 31, 2002. Attendance will be limited, so please use the enclosed registration form to register early.

World Sprinkler News

Performance of Sprinklers Noted in Terrorist Attacks on U.S. – Sprinklers were credited with saving some lives in the terrorist attacks on the United States that took place on September 11, 2001. The plane that was crashed into the Pentagon building in Washington struck a portion that was just completing renovation, including the installation of sprinklers. At a Department of Defense press conference on damage to the Pentagon, renovation project manager Lee Evey credited the building's fire sprinklers with limiting the damage caused by the terrorist attack. A transcript of the press conference includes the following passage: "Fire sprinklers. Interestingly, you know, there was a fire that raged through wedge two, the unrenovated area. If you look at wedge one, except in those areas where it was clearly fueled by jet fuel, the fire, when it tried to spread into other wedge one areas, was knocked down immediately by the fire sprinklers. There was virtually no spread whatsoever, so we saw a tremendous beneficial effect from that." A workman in the Pentagon was interviewed on television and stated that he was unable to escape until the sprinklers activated to knock down the tremendous heat from the fire.

The World Trade Center in New York City had been retrofit with sprinkler protection in the late 1970's and early 1980's. It is not known if the existence of the water piping and tanks within the building were able to help delay the collapse of the building for some extra measure of time.

ISO Group Meets in China - Despite the disruptions to international air travel that occurred as a result of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, the meeting of ISO/TC21/SC5 on sprinkler and water spray system equipment proceeded as scheduled in Tianjin, China on September 18-20, 2001. The attendance was smaller than usual, but five countries were represented: China, Germany, Israel, Japan and the United States. Richard Ferron and H.C. Kung of Factory Mutual had traveled to China in advance of the meeting and were able to serve as the U.S. delegation.

NFPA Releases New Sprinkler Report - The NFPA has released a September 2001 update to its *U.S. Experience With Sprinklers* report. Authored by Kimberly Rohr of the Fire Analysis and Research Division and based on information retrieved from fire departments, the report recognizes that the data (through 1998) on which the report is based excludes many fires that are quickly controlled by sprinklers and for which therefore no report to the fire department is made. The report is useful in evaluating the extent to which sprinklers are used in various occupancies, based on the percentage of fires in which the fire department reports sprinklers present. This ranges from 0.7 percent for one and two-family dwellings to 76.9 percent for facilities for care of the aged and 77.1 percent for hotels at least 7 stories in height. Sprinklers are credited with a reduction in civilian fire deaths ranging from 60% for manufacturing properties to 91% for hotels and motels to 100% for public assembly, educational, industrial and storage occupancies. With regard to property damage from fires, sprinklers are credited with reductions ranging from 40% for residential occupancies to 70% for public assembly occupancies. Copies of the 57-page report can be ordered for US\$31.50 for NFPA members and US\$35.00 for others, but is free to the fire service (osds@nfpa.org)

Sprinklers on National T.V. in U.S. - A live fire sprinkler demonstration was featured on ABC's Good Morning America on September 4, 2001. Ron Hazelton, ABC's Home Improvement Editor, discussed the life and property-saving benefits of fire sprinklers.

Mist System Extinguishes Ship Engine Fire - A U.S. Coast Guard report has been issued on the June 15, 2001 fire in the Royal Caribbean cruise ship Nordic Empress. The ship suffered a major engine room fire on its way to New York from Hamilton, Bermuda due to a failed flange on a fuel line. A "Flexi-fog" local application mist system was discharged over the main engines and is credited with extinguishing the fire. This is believed to be the first reported fire experience with a local application mist system in a marine machinery space. Following the fire it was discovered that the Halon protecting the adjacent purifier room was depleted some time prior to the fire.

Sprinkler Usage Growing in UK Schools - In an article in the July 2001 issue of *Fire Prevention* magazine, Mark Barry of Zurich Municipal reports that nearly 40 schools have been protected with automatic sprinklers in the United Kingdom since 1992, with no malicious damage incidents to date. Maintenance costs are difficult to quantify, but appear to be about £500-700 per year, less than the cost of maintaining fire doors. Barry cites investigations by the British Building Research Establishment that showed about 30% of fire doors are actually open during a fire. The cost of school fires in the UK in the year 2000 is reported to be in the region of £65 million, with over 75% caused by arson.

NFPA Names European Representative - Sultan Javeri of Vendrest, France, has been appointed by NFPA as its Director for Europe. A former loss control engineer and past member of NFPA's Board of Directors, he will work to promote the use of NFPA consensus codes and standards throughout Europe. His e-mail address is sjaveri@nfpa.org.

Upcoming Meetings, Seminars, and Exhibitions of Interest

November 10-14, 2001 – NFPA Fall Education Conference, Dallas, Texas, USA, NFPA

December 3, 2001 – IFSA Board of Directors Meeting, Barcelona, Spain

January 23-25, 2002 - Fire Suppression and Detection Research Applications Symposium, Tampa, Florida, USA, Fire Protection Research Foundation, NFPA (www.nfpa.org)

April 25-27, 2002 – NFSA Annual Seminar, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA (Fax +1-845-878-4215 or www.nfsa.org)

May 20-24, 2002 – World Fire Safety Congress & Expo, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, NFPA (www.nfpa.org)

June 16-18, 2002 – CASA Annual Meeting, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA, Canadian Automatic Sprinkler Association (www.casa-firesprinkler.org)

June 19-21, 2002 - Fire Australia Exhibition and Conference, Brisbane, Australia, Fire Protection Association Australia, (Fax +61-3-9890-1577 or events@fpaa.com.au)

July 9-10, 2002 – 4th International Fire Sprinkler Conference, Prague, Czech Republic, International Fire Sprinkler Association (Fax +1-845-878-42015 or www.sprinklerworld.org)