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New safety campaign aims to prevent fire deaths

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi State Fire Marshal’s Office (SFMO), in partnership with the Mississippi Firefighters’ Association and Mississippi Fire Chiefs’ Association, has launched a new campaign to prevent fire deaths. The campaign theme is “Turn Your Attention to Fire Prevention.” Similar campaigns have been used in Alabama and Georgia.

As part of the new campaign, SFMO is purchasing 22,000 smoke alarms to be distributed to city and county fire departments and other organizations. SFMO will also provide training to departments and individuals on how to properly install the alarms.

“There were 80 fire deaths in the state in 2018 and something must be done,” Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said. “One of the messages I want Mississippians to hear is that smoke alarms can save your life, but you must install and maintain them. Once your home or loved one is gone, you can’t turn back time.”

In more than half of the fire deaths investigated by SFMO in 2018, there were no working smoke alarms present. In 12 cases there were smoke alarms but they didn’t work.

SFMO educators reached over 41,000 people in 2018 and visited more than 300 schools. Under the “Turn Your Attention to Fire Prevention” campaign, a greater emphasis will be placed on reaching adults and senior citizens.

“One way the Fire Marshal’s Office plans to do that is by working with local officials,” said State Chief Deputy Fire Marshal Ricky Davis. “We need county and city leaders across the state to step up and partner with us in order to get in front of people and educate them on fire safety.”

Other elements of the campaign include regularly sharing fire safety messages with county and city fire departments and digital billboards displaying safety messages.

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