



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**

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**WHERE: Fire Museum of Memphis**  
118 Adams Street, Memphis, TN 38103

**WHAT: Fire Museum gives FREE fire safety tours to Seniors**

The Fire Museum of Memphis has received a grant from the H.W. Durham Foundation to teach senior citizens about fire safety and prevention. The grant will pay for admission and transportation for any group in our local area to come to the museum and take a personally guided fire safety and prevention tour conducted by specially trained Memphis Fire Department Educators.

The primary mission of the Fire Museum is to educate the public in fire safety and prevention. The Fire Museum opened in October 1998 in Fire Station #1 in downtown Memphis. The museum's historical displays and interactive exhibits are extremely effective in teaching fire safety to the thousands of visitors who come each year. In 2001 the museum received a grant to pay the admission and transportation of any school group to the museum. To date, over 45,000 children have taken the fire safety tours. Now the museum will be able to reach seniors, the next most vulnerable group to fire injury and death.

The Fire Department's Fire Prevention Educators provide fire safety tips during their tours. The museum's interactive exhibits are entertaining and educational. The most dramatic and impressive exhibit is the FedEx Fire Room which shows a video of the escalation of a fire once a lit cigarette is dropped into a trash can. Within 3 minutes the room is engulfed in smoke (the most deadly aspect) and flames with all its contents destroyed.

The tours will have a question and answer period and refreshments at the end of the tour. **To schedule a tour, please call 901-320-5650 between 8:00 and 4:30 Monday-Friday.**

Background:

The two groups most vulnerable to fire injury and death are seniors and children. According to the National Fire Protection Association in 2000 there were: 368,000 home fires that caused 3,420 deaths, 16,975 injuries and \$5.5 billion in property damage in the United States. Nationwide, adults age 65 and older suffer 30% of the fire fatalities and approximately 2,500 are injured each year. Most occur because of carelessness in smoking or cooking and because they don't have working smoke detectors.

The South has the highest fire death rate in the country. Since 1998 when computerized records were begun, 39% of fire deaths in Memphis have been residents 50 and older. In 2000 here, there were 24 fatalities with 9 of those adults 50 years and older. But, Memphis is making progress. In fact in 2002 there were only 8 deaths- 4 of those were seniors (plus 1 in Shelby County), 50% of the total. These deaths were preventable. With education and assistance from the Fire Department (including free installation of smoke detectors), fire fatalities and injuries in our area can be eliminated.

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