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KENTUCKY MEDIA POLL SHOWS 9-TO-1 SUPPORT FOR REQUIRING ELECTRICAL SAFETY FEATURES IN NEW HOMES

More than 90 percent of television news poll respondents favor innovative circuit breakers and child resistant electrical outlets

ROSSLYN, Va. – Television viewers in Louisville overwhelmingly believe new homes built in Kentucky should require electrical safety features that help prevent fires and protect children from severe shock and burns, according to an online poll by Louisville television station WHAS-11.

Fire and electrical safety experts throughout Kentucky are calling upon state Board of Housing, Buildings and Construction officials to adopt the 2008 National Electrical Code, which expands the use of arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs), an electronic form of circuit breaker designed to detect and prevent home electrical fires, and requires the installation of tamper proof receptacles that prevent children from sticking items into the slots of electrical outlets. Despite their overwhelming potential, the Home Builders Association of Kentucky (HBAK) believes these devices are unneeded and too costly, and the group has mounted an intense lobbying effort to keep these new requirements from going into effect.

Results of the survey heavily contradict HBAK's argument, instead running strongly in favor of these innovative safety devices with a whopping 91 percent of respondents saying yes to the question, "Do you think electrical safety features should be required for new homes?"

"The Louisville television news poll illustrates the importance of and support for these potentially life-saving devices," said Brett Brenner, president of the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFi). "Kentucky has the 9th worst fire death record in the U.S., but with these safety features in place, home owners can rest a little easier knowing they are protected with the most advanced electrical fire prevention technology available. It's unfortunate that Kentucky home builders are more concerned with increasing their bottom line than the life-safety of their customers."

Brenner added that the approximate \$300 cost increase to install these devices, which would only pertain to new construction, is relatively insignificant when compared to the hundreds of millions of dollars lost in electrical fires and thousands of children who suffer severe shock and burns each year in the U.S.

"Ask the family of a child who has died or has lost everything they own in an electrical fire if \$300 is too much to add to the cost of a new home," he said.

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Last week, the Board of Housing, Buildings and Construction reversed its previous unanimous recommendation to adopt the 2008 NEC based on a motion made by a representative of the home builder's association.

"It's clear there is strong support for AFCIs among the fire and electrical safety community, and we'll continue the fight to bring these life-saving requirements to Kentucky homes," Brenner said "Kentucky residents deserve nothing less."

Some of the comments left by respondents include:

- *"I feel that the department of building and housing is taking a MAJOR step backwards in fire safety and shock safety...saving a few dollars does not account for someone losing their life."*
- *"Some people, regardless of facts and statistics, continue to close their eyes and minds to these important fire and life safety features."*
- *"If it just saves one life, it's worth it...It seems like everything is coming down to money, not safety."*
- *"It is amazing to what extent the Home Builders Association will go to fight Safety."*

Electrical fires take the lives of 485 people, injure 2,300 others and destroy more than \$868 million in property annually, according to data from the United States Fire Administration (USFA), and according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), each year approximately 2,400 children suffer severe shock and burns when they stick items into the slots of electrical receptacles.

To learn more, visit www.AFCIsafety.org and www.childoutletsafety.org.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFi) is North America's only non-profit organization dedicated to promoting electrical safety in the home, school and workplace. ESFI sponsors National Electrical Safety Month each May, and engages in public education campaigns to help reduce property damage, personal injury and death due to electrical accidents. To learn more about ESFi, visit www.esfi.org.