



1993 - 2003 Report Providing Intervention for 10 years

Introduction

It is said that it takes a community to raise a child. Over the past 10 years several agencies from within Anoka County have worked together to help children, who have been involved in playing with or setting fires, by providing education and services. Juvenile fire play and fire setting is a problem which impacts the entire community. Thanks to all those organizations involved: fire departments, law enforcement, corrections, county attorney's office, social services, Anoka County Juvenile Center, Regions Hospital Burn Center, State Fire Marshal's Office, and schools.

The mission of the task force is to provide education and services dealing with juvenile firesetting.

This report is laid out first with some history of the task force, then information on the class and lastly all the data collected over the years.

Anoka County Demographics 2000 census

Anoka County is the fourth most populous county in Minnesota. The total population for the county is 298, 084. Of this number, 93,987 or 32%, are persons under the age of 19. Anoka County covers 430 square miles. There are 15 fire departments and 11 police departments which provide services to Anoka County's 21 cities and townships.

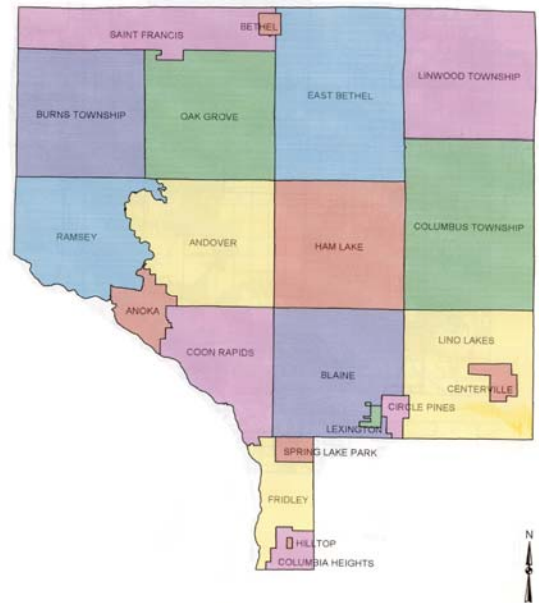
History

In 1993, the Anoka County Juvenile Firesetters Task Force was formed by Guy Johnston of Coon Rapids Fire, Nyle Zikmund of Spring Lake Park - Blaine - Mounds View Fire, Kathy Mischke of Centennial Fire, John Larkin of Columbia Heights Fire, and Michael Chmiel of the Anoka County Attorney's Office. Since the inception of the program it has been listed with the United Way's First Call for Help.

The task force constructed a 5-hour class known as FIP (Fire Prevention Program) which was designed to educate youth about the dangers and consequences of fire play and fire setting in order to deter such behavior in the future. Students attending the class are voluntary, court ordered to attend, or attend as part of a diversion program. A fee, which has been adjusted over the years, is assessed to each student attending the class to help defray the cost of the materials and the instructor. Initially, instructors volunteered their time, but as of February, 1998, instructors have been paid to teach the class.

In 1996, Harlan Lundstrom of Spring Lake Park - Blaine - Mounds View Fire took over as program director and has served in that capacity to this day. With Lundstrom's leadership the task force started keeping statistics. Also, in 1996, the Coon Rapids Police and Blaine Police Departments became more involved in the program. Later, additional agencies became more involved.

Over time the FIP curriculum has been revised. Worksheets were developed for the students to complete during the class. In July, 1998, a decision was made to eliminate from the class the showing of the



Fire Behavior video and the section regarding sprinkler systems and fire extinguishers. This shortened the class from 5 hours to 4½. However, the sprinkler systems and fire extinguisher worksheets, along with the answers, are provided to the students. The lesson plans and worksheets were color-coded. Also, a sub-committee was formed to develop a 1½ to 2 hour program for younger children, ages 5 to 9(Junior FIP).

Evaluations for the parents to fill out were first distributed at the August 15, 1998, class. Instructors at the November class for the first time used a "Cabbage Patch" doll outfitted with burn garments provided by Regions Hospital Burn Center to teach students about burns. Later, two additional dolls, which also were outfitted by Regions, were purchased for use in the Junior FIP.

In January, 1999, the task force distributed three videos ("Look Hot Stay Cool," "Be Cool About Fire Safety," and Hidden Hazards in Your Home") to schools in Anoka County. These videos were purchased by the task force using funds from its fee account. Standard operating guidelines were developed for the task force. The task force gave \$300 along with a recommended book list to each of the Ham Lake, Columbia Heights, and Anoka Public Libraries. A logo contest was implemented for the students. In February, students were required to complete a community impact report. In June, 21 task force books were assembled, one for each agency. In December, the task force arranged to provide bookshelves for Cedar Creek Elementary and East Bethel Community School. Along with the bookshelves, each school received \$300 for the purchase of books.

In August, 2000, the task force began requesting parents to voluntarily complete a questionnaire. In October, the class started using student workbooks. October 27, 2000 at the task force quarterly meeting Anoka County Attorney Michael Chmiel was presented with the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Public Education Award for his commitment and dedication to Fire & Life Safety Education. The class fee was raised back to \$25. Harlan Lundstrom was reelected as coordinator and Denny Nothnagel elected as Secretary, these are 2-year terms.

In January, 2001, the task force adopted by-laws. In July, the task force decided that instructors would do a follow-up consultation three months after the juvenile attended the class.

April 17, 2002 at the quarterly meeting it was decided that juveniles referred from outside Anoka County would pay an additional \$10 to attend FIP. April 25, 2002 a proposal was made to the Anoka County Fire Protection Council to support the program by funding a \$1000 each year, the proposal passed. In July, 2002, with the legalization of novelty fireworks, a fireworks section was added to the curriculum. In August, 2002, a County Assessment Team was formed. October 16, 2002 Election of Secretary and Coordinator, 2-year term: Connie Forster was nominated and elected as secretary. Harlan Lundstrom was nominated and elected for the coordinator.

July 2003 Instructors each received a copy of the Task Force Book (5 copies made)

Officers

The task force has two officers: a coordinator and a secretary. The term of office is two years. Current officers: Coordinator: Harlan Lundstrom (Term expires in October, 2004). Secretary: Connie Forster (Term expires in October, 2004)

Meetings

The task force meets quarterly (January, April, July, October) during the lunch hour. An annual meeting of the instructors was instituted in June, 2003.

Budget

The program was started with a \$1000 grant from the State of Minnesota and within the first year \$600 were collected in juvenile fees. The program has been self sustaining over the years through the fee. The account reached a high point in 1998 of \$5000 which was then spent down on the community projects. The account was at \$2319.58 at the end of 2003.

The proposed budget for 2004 is \$1960 in expenses, which will include postage, instructor, and assessment fees. Anticipated revenue of \$1250 will come from an estimated 50 FIP class students at \$25 each.

Fire Intervention Program (F.I.P.) Class

This was the tenth year of providing the Fire Intervention Program in Anoka County. The classes continue to be offered the third Saturday of each month except for December and held at Lino Lakes Correctional Facility in the Juvenile Day School. The class starts at 8 am and ends at 12:30 pm. The fee for the class is \$25 for residents of Anoka County and \$35 for non residents.

The Instructors

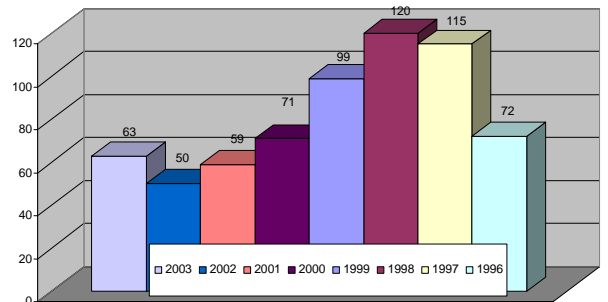
The initial instructors for the FIP class were those that set up the task force, Nyle Zikmund-SBM Fire, John Larkin-Columbia Heights Fire, Guy Johnston-Coon Rapids Fire, Kathy Mischke-Centennial Fire. The fire department from which the instructor came from covered the expense of the instructor. In 1998 the task force took over paying the instructors \$100 for each class. Other instructors have been Dick Larson-Fridley Fire, Denny Nothnagel-Coon Rapids Fire. The current instructors are Harlan Lundstrom-SBM Fire, Ron Sager-Ham Lake Fire, Steve Schahn-Ham Lake Fire, Kathi Osmonson-SBM Fire, Connie Forster-SBM Fire, Rob Morrison-SBM Fire, and Terry Iverson-Isanti Fire.

The data collected over the years should be used to direct prevention efforts for the future. We have been collecting more and more data each year so you will notice as you read through the report that some categories may only have a couple years worth of information. The methods of getting the information has changed over the years from a department sending just a contact form to register a juvenile for the class to assessments now being done by the assessment team.

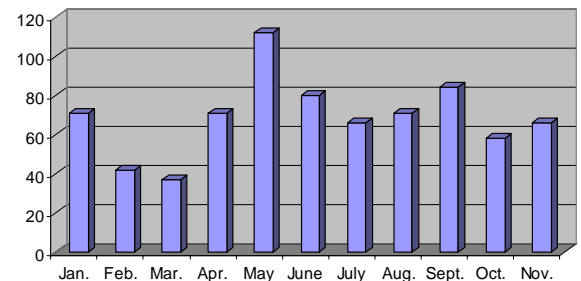
Year	# Attended	# Referred
1993 Sept. – Oct.	10	10
1994	55	63
1995	26	32
1996	72	91
1997	115	126
1998	120	136
1999	99	117
2000	71	81
2001	59	59
2002	50	53
2003	65	63
Total	742	831

Referrals to the class come from many sources and from around the State. The furthest referral has come from Brainerd.

FIP Class Attendance 1996-2003



1996-2003 Referrals by Month



Referring Agencies	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total Referrals
A.C corrections	40	29	13	24	40	25	17	31	219
A.C Sheriff				1					1
A.C Social Services		1		2			1		4
Andover FD	1	2							3
Anoka FD			3	1		3			7
Bethel FD									0
Coon Rapids FD	39	37	50	10	8	3			147
Centennial FD	3	4	3	2	1		2		15
Columbia Heights FD		7	11	14	2				34
East Bethel FD		1	1	3					5
Fridley FD		4	1	4	2	1	1	1	14
Ham Lake FD		5	1	6	1			2	15
Lexington FD						2			2
Linwood FD					3				3
Oak Grove FD				3	1				4
Outside County			13	31	7	14	23	16	104
Ramsey FD			1						1
S.B.M. FD	38	36	39	16	15	10	7	15	176
St. Francis FD					1				1

The juveniles referred from Anoka County Corrections come from the following areas by fire department. Anoka/Champlin-19, Andover-14, Centennial-19, Columbia Heights-32, Coon Rapids-87, East Bethel-15, Fridley-13, Ham Lake-15, Ramsey-14, Wyoming-6, Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View-30, St. Francis-1.

Class Evaluations

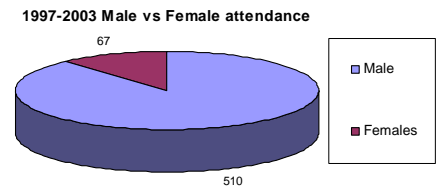
Evaluations have been handed out since 1999 for those parents that stayed for the entire class. There are twelve questions asked on the evaluations which can be rated 5 being very good or 1 being poor. 201 evaluations were collected. The following are the questions and the response percentage for the rating of very good (5).

1. Was the presentation easy to understand, 75%.
2. Content of the videos used, 67%.
3. Visual aids/handouts, 61%.
4. Knowledge gained regarding fire behavior, 72%.
5. Instructors control of the class, 88%.
6. Instructors knowledge, 87%.
7. Instructors encouragement of class participation, 83%.
8. Preclass materials/outline of program, 50%
9. Location of the class, 39%. This shouldn't be a surprise since it is held at a correctional facility.
10. Classroom setting, 33%.
11. Length of the class, 77% said the current time was good.
12. Do you think your child will continue with fireplay/fire setting. 91% said no.

Assessment Team

The purpose of the team is to interview a juvenile of any age that has been involved in a fire incident and to make an assessment of what options are available for changing their behavior. These options may include education, counseling, and/or the juvenile justice system. The interview/assessment comes after an investigation is complete. The assessment team formed August 2002. Since its inception 19 juveniles have had

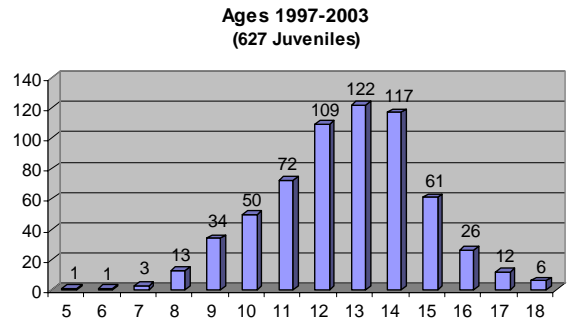
assessments done. The team is currently comprised of Ron Sager, Kathi Osmonson, Rob Morrison, and Connie Forster, Harlan Lundstrom, Jerry Streich, and Ralph Messer. One benefit of doing assessments is doing Pre testing then comparing it with post testing. Of the 19 juveniles tested there was an average of a 21% knowledge gain after attending the class.



Profiles of Juveniles referred

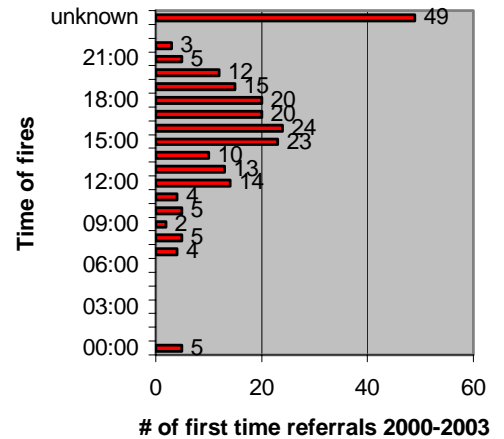
- **Gender** – When it comes to gender males are clearly most likely to be involved in fire incidents. This holds true across the country when looking at national statistics.

- **Age** – Juveniles coming into the teen years are most at risk for setting fires. The majority of the juveniles referred to the program are between 10-15.



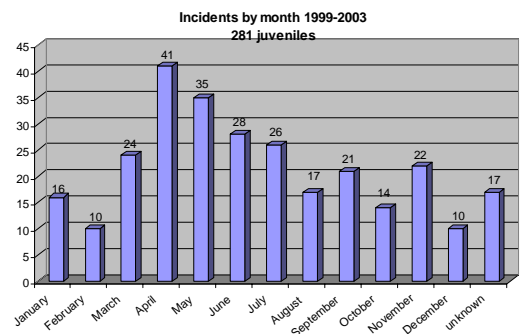
- **Behavior profile** – delinquent behavior accounted for 60% out of the 372 juveniles 1999-2003.

- **Type of fire** –The majority of the fires set by 621 juveniles 1997 – 2003 were grass fires accounting for 28% of the fires. Structure fires were next at 16%.

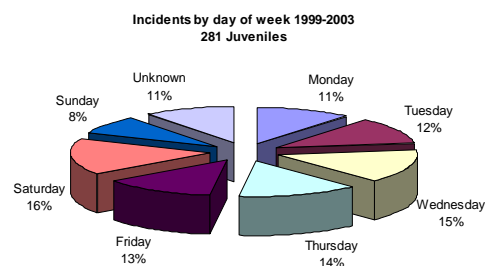


- **Time of day** – Most fires occurred between 4-8 pm for the 98 juveniles 2000-2003. The last few years this has been consistent with most fires occurring late afternoon to early evening.

- **Month of incident** – The spring months seem to be when juveniles are involved in fire setting incidents.



- **Day of week** – The most common day for juveniles to be involved in incidents is Saturday.



- **Common ignition device** – from looking at the chart one can see why having an ignition device ordinance would be a beneficial tool to have for charging juveniles. The Ordinance makes it illegal for juveniles to have possession of matches & lighters. Currently the cities of Oak Grove, Blaine, and Mounds View have an ignition device ordinance. Novelty fireworks were legalized in 2002.

	TYPES OF IGNITION DEVICES USED BY REFERRALS							
	2000		2001		2002		2003	
LIGHTERS	37	46%	29	53%	25	48%	27	42%
MATCHES	21	26%	14	25%	14	27%	10	15%
CIGARETTE	3	4%	2	4%	1	2%	2	3%
CAPS	3	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
LEGAL FIREWORKS	N/A		N/A		N/A		10	15%
ILLEGAL FIREWORKS	N/A		N/A		N/A		6	9%
STOVE/OVEN	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
SAUNA	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
UNKNOWN	17	21%	9	16%	11	21%	10	15%

- **With Other Children** – 51 with others, 11 no, 218 unknown
- **Injured by the fire** – 1 yes, 61 no, 218 unknown
- **Family status** - The juveniles referred to the program came from many different family structures. Out of the 280 juveniles from 1999-2003 the status of the biological parents were: married-104, divorced-66, unknown-60, single-30, adopted-6, widowed-6, separated-5, living in foster homes-3
- **Both Parents work** – 9 no, 9 not applicable, 37 Yes, 225 unknown
- **Type of living Residence** – Juveniles attending the program 1999-2003 lived in the following types of structures: 142 homes, 49 unknown, 41 apartments, 27 town homes, 21 manufactured homes.
- **Prior criminal history** – 133 had no history, 73 yes, 74 unknown. Of those that said they did have a history 21 theft , 7 assault, 7 curfew, 4 vandalism, 3 disorderly conduct, 3 tobacco, 1 driving without license, 1 J-walking, 1 ran away, 1 trespassing, 1 bb gun, 1 smoking, 1 behavior.
- **Suspended from School** – 25 yes, 225 unknown
- **History of fire setting** – 134 none, 79 had a history of fire setting, 67 unknown.
- **Learning Disabilities or counseling** –108 of the juveniles had some type of learning disability (66 with add or adhd), 94 had no disability. 78 unknown.
- **Schools** – Out of the 127 juveniles that reported what school they attended this was used for any trends in schools to target education programs. Coon Rapids HS(16), Edgewood Middle(9), Fridley HS(6), Northdale Middle(6), Columbia Heights(5), Sandberg(5), Westwood Middle(5), Centennial HS(4), Fred Moore Middle(4), St. Francis HS(4), Blaine HS(3), Roosevelt Middle(3), Chippewa Middle(3), Anoka HS(3).
- **Ethnicity** – 89 Caucasian, 4 Hispanic, 4 African American, 3 Asian, 2 malato, 2 Native American, 1 Arabic, 175 unknown.

Cost of Juvenile Firesetting

The estimated response cost by fire departments due to juvenile set fires in Anoka County 1999 through 2003 totaled \$109,867. Property loss came to \$735,744. The cost is considerably more if you figure in Police, County Corrections, and other agencies that get involved in dealing with the incidents.

Follow up

Follow up is done by telephone three months after the juvenile has attended the FIP Class. We have called 91 families to check for any repeated behaviors. Of those called, 59 were reached. They all reported no additional fire incidents.

Accomplishments

- Ten years of offering fire safety/prevention education.
- Introduction of ignition device ordinance.
- Student workbooks
- Data gathering
- Adoption of Bylaws and policies
- Formation of the assessment team.

The Future

- Continue to promote the adoption of an ignition device ordinance for cities.
- Giving back to the community projects – books, videos, etc.
- Getting a mental health component and a representative to attend quarterly meetings.
- Providing the best up to date fire safety/prevention education.