

Be Safe & Warm

Officials stress importance of fireplace safety

By Mike Hazelwood, Visalia Times-Delta Staff writer, Wednesday, November 27, 2002

It's cold, so someone at home lights a candle or lamp, warms a stove, turns on a heater or feeds a roaring fireplace.

But something goes wrong.

Soon the "ahh-this-feels-so-warm-and-toasty" fire turns into the "call-the-fire-department-quick" blaze.

That's not uncommon this time of year, fire department officials say.

For example, take the heating lamp that, along with bedding, started a \$2,000 fire in a Lindsay home Monday.

Or the propane leak in a kitchen that sparked a \$400,000 fire in a home near Kingsburg on Sunday.

Or the improperly installed fireplace that caused \$5,000 damage to a home in Pierpoint Springs above Porterville on Nov. 6.

Or the chimney fire that caused minor damage to an Exeter home Nov. 1 or the furnace fire that caused minor damage to a business in the same city a day later.

"We get a lot this time of year," Tulare County Fire Chief Mike Davidson said.

Officials offer the following tips for keeping your home warm and -- perhaps more importantly -- safe:

- Make sure flammable material is away from all types of heaters.
- Clean heating ducts of lint and dust, and change filters.
- i Make sure your chimney has been swept and cleaned since last season.

You never know if the built-up creosote, which is a flammable residue of chimney fires, is at dangerous levels or if something odd -- such as a bird nest or branches -- has found its way inside. Creosote can burn so hot it can crack brick or mortar, then spread to an attic or roof.

- When using your fireplace or woodstove, use iron or glass doors to shield the fire from other items that may be flammable. Use only dry wood in the fireplace.
- Outside your home, resist the urge to burn trash, tree trimmings or other waste.
- Never leaves candles, burning lamps or electric heaters unattended.

"You can't do any burning without a permit," Davidson said.

Illegal burns, for which the fire department and the air pollution district can issue fines, pollute the environment and can easily burn out of hand.

The Associated Press

Wednesday November 27, 2002, 07:10:05 AM

Bakersfield Californian

PASO ROBLES, Calif.(AP) - The city Planning Commission recommended a downtown ban on fast-food restaurants with drive-through service.

However, Tuesday's commission vote included rules that would allow drive-through banks, coffee shops and pharmacies, some of which already operate downtown. There are no drive-through fast-food joints downtown.

Aesthetics and air pollution were cited as reasons for the ban and there was no discussion of fast-food contributions to the nation's obesity epidemic.

If the City Council approves the ban Dec. 17, drive-through fast-food restaurants will still be allowed in other commercial areas outside downtown.

The San Luis Obispo City Council banned all drive-through businesses citywide in 1982, citing concerns over air quality and visual appearance.

Chrysler to sell Jeep Liberty with diesel engines for fuel economy

Tuesday November 26, 2002, 06:55:04 PM

Bakersfield Californian

NEW YORK -- DaimlerChrysler AG's Chrysler unit will sell Jeep Liberty sport-utility vehicles with diesel engines in the United States in 2004 in an effort to improve the average fuel economy of the cars it sells.

The automaker expects to sell about 5,000 of the Jeeps in the first year it offers the 2.8-liter diesel engine made by DaimlerChrysler's Detroit Diesel Corp. The unit provides the engines for European models of the Jeep, known there as the Cherokee, Chrysler Chief Executive Officer Dieter Zetsche said at a New York conference on auto technology.

Chrysler, along with General Motors Corp. and Ford Motor Co., want diesels, which are about 40 percent more fuel efficient, to meet U.S. fuel-economy standards without scaling back sales of more-profitable pickups, sport-utility vehicles and luxury cars. Current diesels don't meet U.S. limits on smog-causing nitrogen oxides and soot particles that take effect in 2004.

Letters to the Editor for Nov. 26 The Bakersfield Californian

Tuesday November 26, 2002, 06:55:05 PM

Don't forget leaf blowers So let me get this straight. Our air pollution control people have proposed curtailing fireplace use on certain days, but continue to ignore leaf blowers.

Am I the only one who sees the absurdity in this matter? Every day, seven days a week and probably 365 days a year, leaf blowers relentlessly blow dirt and various particles in the air to settle everywhere.

Not only do they seriously contaminate our air, they assault our ears. The practice and reasoning of blowing excess debris behind bushes and into the street only to have it blown back again after a few cars pass totally escapes me.

Gardeners continually push leaves, grass cuttings and dust back and forth from one neighbor to the next. Considering our very poor air quality, this is just nuts.

Until this blower problem is seriously addressed first, I give absolutely no credibility to the air pollution control district. To ask us to direct our attention to our fireplaces and allow leaf blowers is senseless and simply ludicrous.

Don't look for my cooperation until you get your priorities straight.

LARRY BECK, Bakersfield