

A CRR SUCCESS TRILOGY

PARTNERING IN COOKING FIRE PREVENTION

Cooking is the leading cause of household fire and fire injuries in the United States. There are many champions across the U.S. who advocate cooking fire prevention as an essential component of their local fire prevention initiatives. Among them are the following three who, through their hard work and effort, have clearly demonstrated the value of building strong and vibrant partnerships and how cooking fire prevention technology can significantly improve Community Risk Reduction (CRR) outcomes.



Success Location: Worcester, MA
Champion: Lt. Annie Pickett , Worcester Fire Department
Theme: Low/No Income High Risk Seniors - “A Recipe for Fire Safe Cooking”
Partners: Worcester Fire Department, Worcester Housing Authority, FEMA.

The Challenge: A thorough analysis of fire incident data and discussions with the Worcester Housing Authority (WHA) revealed that 759 low to no-income senior’s apartments (4 buildings) had an average of 12 fires/month resulting in \$223,889 in property loss in 2015. 86% of these residents suffered from physical mobility or mental disability putting them at a much higher risk of fire injury or death.

The Solution: The Worcester Fire Department (WFD) partnered with the WHA to secure a FEMA Fire Prevention & Safety grant to help fund a program focused on preventing cooking fires from starting in the first place. The program consisted of: the installation of SmartBurner™; a property manager/tenant education program; and a protocol for measuring the impact of the program.

Results to Date: There have been NO stovetop fires reported in any of the project apartments; no complaints from residents; and a 97% reduction in cooking related fire department call volume. The WFD received permission from FEMA to retrofit an additional 60 apartment units following a stovetop fire in a different WHA complex that destroyed two apartments and displaced four residents.

The WFD recently secured a second grant for another 800 apartments and is currently seeking a third round of funding to help protect the remainder of the WHA’s highest risk residents.



Success Location: Wilson, NC
Champion: Retired Fire Chief Don Oliver, Wilson Fire & Rescue Services
Theme: Mandate Cooking Fire Technology - City Ordinance
Partners: Wilson Fire & Rescue, Wilson Housing Authority, North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs, Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs and Wilson County

The Challenge: The City of Wilson had a cooking fire problem significantly higher than the national average (53% versus 42%).

The Solution: Wilson Fire & Rescue partnered with the city’s Housing Authority and local politicians to pass a city ordinance requiring that ALL electric coiled cooking devices in tax-supported housing be equipped with listed/approved “temperature limiting control” technology by the end of 2016.

Wilson has been installing Safe-Elements and SmartBurners in public housing units since the ordinance was passed in 2011.

Results to Date: To date there have been NO stovetop cooking fires reported in Wilson buildings equipped with either “temperature limiting control” solution.

The Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs passed a resolution supporting available technology for reducing fire loss and injury from stovetop cooking fires.

At the time, Congressman G.K. Butterfield of North Carolina’s 1st District wrote: “New cooking technology that has proven to reduce stovetop fires, the number one cause of household fire in our state and in our nation, will have long reaching benefits for the health of our citizens, our rank and file firefighters, the environment and importantly our economy.”

This ordinance can be used as a model for communities looking to implement similar standards.



Success Location: Gwinnett County, GA
Champion: Assistant Chief/Fire Marshal Stephen Hrustich, Gwinnett County Fire & Emergency Services (GCFES)
Theme: SeniorBSafe Program – A Senior’s focused fire & injury prevention program
Partners: GCFES, Gwinnett Christian Terrace, Gwinnett County Senior Services, Friends of Gwinnett Seniors

The Challenge: Gwinnett Christian Terrace (GCT) is a partially sprinklered, six story, 125 unit senior housing complex that was experiencing between two to four cooking related fires per year. Seven years of data provided insight into the severity, dangers and challenges cooking fires presented in this environment. Cooking fires are the predominant cause of fire in the county, representing over 52% of all structure fires in one or two-family dwellings and 48% in other residential occupancies.

According to NFPA and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), at age 65, people are twice as likely to be injured or killed by fires compared to the general population and by age 75, that risk increases to three times and then to four times by age 85.

The Solution: GCFES partnered with Friends of Gwinnett Seniors to conduct a pilot project in 2015 installing SmartBurners in all 125 apartments at Gwinnett Christian Terrace to help prevent cooking fires and protect its highly vulnerable population from injuries and deaths caused by fire and fire related hazards.

Results to Date: Documented results show that there have been NO stovetop cooking fires at Gwinnett Christian Terrace since the SmartBurners were installed three years ago and the residents love the way they look and cook.

The success of the Gwinnett Christian Terrace project paved the way for the retrofit of SmartBurners in hundreds of other high-risk seniors’ homes in Gwinnett County and plays an integral role in the department’s multi-hazard SeniorBSafe Community Risk Reduction initiative.

Product Information



SmartBurner™ easily replaces electric coil burners and helps prevent cooking fires. It also delivers a fantastic return on investment through insurance savings, restoration and lost rent costs, energy savings, and maintenance savings.