

Sen. Smith fights fire with new legislation

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Creates Tax Incentives for Building Owners to Install Lifesaving Fire Sprinklers

U.S. Senator Gordon H. Smith (R-OR) has introduced legislation to encourage building owners to upgrade fire prevention systems to protect workers and residents and potentially reduce fire deaths across Oregon. High upgrade costs deter building owners from installing new sprinkler systems until they are forced to do so by government. The Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act reduces the depreciation period for sprinkler systems from nearly 40 years to five years, greatly easing the financial impact of retrofitting a building.

“Fires are avoidable tragedies,” Smith said. “The loss of life or devastating property damage does not have to happen. Requiring building owners to upgrade sprinklers is one thing, creating an incentive to do (so) promptly will help prevent a tragedy.”

Twenty eight Oregonians lost their lives to fire in 2005, and another 301 were injured, as reported by the Oregon State Fire Marshall. According to the National Fire Prevention Association, in fires with sprinklers present, the chances of death are reduced by one-half to three-fourths and the average property loss is cut by one-half to two-thirds.

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