

BUY
PHOTO
REPRINTS
ONLINE

SUBSCRIBE TO
THE GAZETTE
ONLINE
OR IN PRINT

GAZETTENET.com

Daily Hampshire Gazette - Established 1786

Amherst Bulletin

The Recorder

Valley Advocate

Pioneer Valley

Many Hands

Hampshire Life

Sign out

Account

Trouble finding something?

Contact us

Classifieds

news search

Local News State/Region U.S./World Obituaries Sports Business Schools Colleges Politics Opinion Entertainment Health Living Sci/Tech

Local stores see run on fire safety items

By CATHERINE BAUM
Staff Writer

Email this page Printer-friendly version

Thursday, December 31, 2009

NORTHAMPTON - Area hardware store managers report they have sold as many smoke detectors, fire escape ladders and fire extinguishers in the three days that followed nearly 20 deliberately set fires early Sunday as they normally would sell in three months.

Managers at Foster Farrar on King Street, Wal-Mart on North King Street and Home Depot in Hadley noted that in many cases customers who bought smoke detectors said they didn't have the devices installed in their homes prior to the fires, which broke out in less than two hours beginning at 2 a.m. Sunday. The blazes killed two men - Paul W. Yeskie Sr. and Paul W. Yeskie Jr., both of 17 Fair St. - and destroyed several homes and vehicles.

"Smoke and fire alarms are kind of like getting a large snowstorm - people don't think about it until they need it," said Paul Czapienski, co-owner of Foster Farrar, which ordered more smoke detectors and fire escape ladders after its supply sold out this week. "This weekend definitely put a threat into everyone. I don't like to profit off of the misery that's being caused by this. It's not a very good feeling."

Gerald Budgar, president of the Ward 3 Neighborhood Association, and Mayor Clare Higgins are in discussions with Foster Farrar and Northampton Lumber about providing discounted fire safety items to city residents in the Ward 3 neighborhood, where the fires broke out. Both stores said they are willing to help.

"This company here is in Ward 3 - I'm the third generation and I do feel a connection to the area," said Michael White, manager at Northampton Lumber. He noted the store has sold a couple of fire extinguishers, although it is not the first place people go to purchase the items because it primarily sells lumber and building materials.

Foster Farrar sold 25 fire extinguishers, 10- to 20 motion sensor lights, all four of its fire escape ladders and more than 100 smoke and fire alarms in the past few days. Wal-Mart in Northampton has sold about 20 fire extinguishers and 30 smoke detectors since Sunday. Home Depot in Hadley declined to release specific sales figures, but corporate public relations manager Jennifer King reported a "definite" increase in sales since the fires, in some cases to customers who did not own smoke detectors.

Customers have asked Czapienski if smoke detectors would work on their porches, where many of the fires were set. Unfortunately, Czapienski said, the sensors on most fire and smoke alarms will not function once the temperature drops below 45 degrees. In addition to recommendations from public safety officials to remove trash and debris from front porches, Czapienski advises people to remove wood piles and stored items from their front porches. Residents should also check their alarm batteries every six months or so, he said.

"People are still not changing their batteries as often as they really should," Czapienski said. "That's probably one of the more important things."

Jamison Davis, manager of the hardware department at Wal-Mart, said the North King Street store sold 30 smoke detectors since Sunday.

30 TAX TIPS

Click Here to Get Them!

Daniel W. Polachek, P.C.

Daniel L Polachek, MBA

Staff Accountant
335 South St., Northampton
413-584-5809
www.dwpolachek.com



Popular stories

- Discount supermarket eyes Hadley opening
- Longtime Thornes cafe may bow out
- Teddy Forance goes Hollywood: Local dancer to take the stage during the Academy Awards ceremonies
- Amherst superintendent fires back at critics regarding sick leave
- South Hadley parent sues, alleging harassment after secret recordings came to light

"Normally we only sell those in October, when it's fire safety month," Davis said.

Sunday's fires dominated the conversation among customers who shop in Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Northampton Lumber and Foster Farrar.

"You could sense in the customers the overall fear of the past weekend," Czapienski said. "The best solution to this all would be to catch the person that's doing it."

To that end, White said, "I think it'd be hard on people if things just quiet down and nothing's resolved. I think that'd kind of weigh on people."

Catherine Baum can be reached at cbaum@gazettenet.com.

Filed Under: [fire](#) [local](#) [news](#) [northampton](#) [northampton fires](#)

Comments

Post new comment

Your name:

[Catherine Baum](#)

Subject:

Comment: *

Input format

Filtered HTML

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Allowed HTML tags: `<a>` `` `<i>` `` `` `<code>` `<cite>` `` `` `` `` `<div>`
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

Full HTML

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

unfiltered HTML

[More information about formatting options](#)



[Local News](#) | [State/Region](#) | [U.S./World](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Schools](#) | [Colleges](#) | [Politics](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Health](#) | [Living](#) | [Sci/Tech](#) | [Blogs](#)

[Copyright Notice](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help Center](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Subscribe to the Gazette](#) | [Advertising](#)

Daily Hampshire Gazette © 2008 All rights reserved