

KF Chief Issues Reminder To Public On Fire Hazards Of Christmas Trees

The Klamath Falls Fire Department today issued its annual warning to the public about the fire hazards of Christmas trees and decorations.

Fire Chief Gene Gheller said most natural trees are cut well in advance of their use and therefore dry out and become readily combustible.

He advised that to reduce the hazard to a minimum, persons using these natural trees should saw them off at an angle, at least one inch above the original cut and stand them in water for the period of their use. The water level should be kept above the cut.

Gheller said that persons purchasing natural trees should

take care not to buy trees that have been allowed to dry out extensively.

Despite the claims of manufacturers, Gheller said, it has been found that external flame retardant treatments of trees by the user are generally not practicable. To be of any use, he said, the retardants must coat every needle of every branch, a difficult thing to accomplish.

From a safety viewpoint, Gheller pointed out, metal trees are the best because they won't burn. He said there is virtually no fire hazard with the use of such trees, but there is some danger of them becoming charged with electricity from light fittings. He suggested that metal trees be illuminated by lights not connected to the tree, such as spotlights.

Another type of tree that has become popular in recent years is the plastic or metal-coated plastic trees.

Gheller said the purchasers of these trees should make sure that they are constructed of material that does not burn rapidly. If lights are to be attached to the plastic tree, it must be determined that the limbs will not conduct electricity.

Turning from trees to tree decorations, Gheller said there has been an increasing tendency to use "flock" to simulate snow on Christmas trees. Most of this flock consists of tiny

pieces of rayon fibers to which flame-retardants and adhesives have been added.

Gheller said that if the flock is not flame-retardant, this "snow" can make an otherwise safe tree dangerous.

Commercial "angel's hair" and spray-on "snow" do not individually introduce any additional fire hazards to trees, but if "angel hair" is applied to the tree and followed by a coat of "snow," the result may be combustible. He said in such cases, the "snow" should be applied first, then "angel's hair" added second.

Gheller repeated the annual warning against the use of wax candles on trees. He said lighting sets should be checked for fraying wires before use and that extensive holiday home lighting should be done by a competent electrician. Christmas lights should be turned off before the householder leaves his house or goes to bed.

Throughout the house, Gheller advised, non-combustible materials should be used for decoration. He particularly warned against the use of polystyrene foam, which burns and melts if brought near heat.

OSU Lists Enrollment

CORVALLIS—Klamath County is represented by 185 students at Oregon State University.

The university announced that present enrollment stands at 10,425, including students from 45 states, two U.S. territories and 68 other nations.

All of Oregon's 36 counties are represented and more than 8,000 of the students are from Oregon. Benton County, with 1,833 students, leads all others in enrollment.

Slightly more than half of the 2,030 students from other states are from California. The 10,425 enrollment figure is a record for Oregon State.

Of Klamath County's 185 OSU students, 141 are from Klamath Falls. Other towns and their totals are Bly, 1; Bonanza, 5; Chiloquin, 5; Chemult, 2; Crescent, 1; Fort Klamath, 2; Gilchrist, 3; Keno, 2; Malin, 14; Merrill, 3; Midland, 4; and Sprague River, 1.

CALL OFF STRIKE

DUBLIN (UPI) — Four women called off their 48-hour hunger strike Wednesday night when one of them collapsed from exhaustion. They were protesting alleged failure of the city to provide them with living quarters after their homes were condemned as unsafe.

The women had barricaded themselves in an army barracks.

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