



For Immediate Release

June 26, 2012 –The City of Beloit Fire Chief Bradley Liggett has issued a ban on all open burning and consumer fireworks use, effective immediately. This ban includes fires in all outdoor fireplaces or pits and the private use of consumer fireworks. This ban includes sparklers and novelty fireworks but does not prohibit residents from using grills for cooking food. In addition, burning lawn waste, trash, and open air camp fires are all illegal in Beloit. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources designated Rock County as a High Fire Risk Area. Rock County is experiencing extremely dry conditions; high heat, strong winds, and below average rain fall has left area fields, urban forests, and area wetlands with tall tinder dry vegetation. Chief Liggett states, “I need all of our citizens to take extra precautions when dealing with ignition sources during this very dry summer.”

Chief Liggett is especially concerned about the 4th of July fireworks season stating, “The ban is necessary to protect our urban grasslands and forestry.” This is a temporary ban and an unfortunate inconvenience to 4th of July revelers. The fire department acknowledges the public’s desire to show their patriotic enthusiasm with fireworks; however, it is simply too dangerous at this time. The burning debris from fireworks can cause urban grassland and forestry fires. In addition, fireworks used near brush, vegetation, and mulch around your home can also cause a fire that may spread to your home.

Chief Liggett encourages residents to find alternative summer activities like a game of kick ball, whiffle ball, corn-bag toss, taking a bicycle ride, visiting Riverside Park, golfing at Krueger-Haskell Golf Course, or going for a swim at Krueger Municipal Pool. Please consider your neighbors and refrain from using outdoor fire pits or fireworks until the Fire Chief lifts the burn ban.

Chief Liggett urges residents to use care when discarding of cigarettes and charcoal grill embers. Simply throwing your residual smoking material from the car can cause an urban forest or wetland fire. Charcoal embers should be allowed to cool at least 24 hours or be completely extinguished with water before discarding.

In the meantime, if you wish to enjoy the splendor of a 4th of July fireworks show, residents are encouraged to attend a community show. The City of Beloit will hold the annual fireworks show. The fire department will make special preparations on the show site to minimize the effects of fireworks show fall out. The fire department will burn the field prior to the show in a methodical and planned burn. Chief Liggett states, “This is a mitigation strategy to prevent a large fire occurring when the area is heavily populated with fireworks show patrons. If we control burn the field ahead of time, we can prevent the effects of a large, rapidly moving fire.” The fire department will clear the field of vegetation this weekend and will work with specialized resources to carry out a controlled and well managed prescribed prairie burn.