

Rebuilding Together and NAFRA Partner to Launch “Celebrate Safely” Campaign to Improve Holiday Fire Safety

WASHINGTON, D.C. December 1, 2014 /3BL Media/ —Rebuilding Together, a national organization devoted to safe and healthy housing, and the American Chemistry Council’s North American Flame Retardant Alliance (NAFRA), a group that represents manufacturers of flame retardants, today jointly launched a campaign to improve home fire safety over the holidays. The month-long campaign, Celebrate Safely, comes in response to an annual increase in home fires during the winter holiday season.

“The holidays are a wonderful time for families to celebrate together. Unfortunately, the combination of flammable decorations, lit candles and increased cooking activity means that the number of home fires rises during the holiday season,” said Charley Shimanski, President and CEO of Rebuilding Together. “This year, Rebuilding Together and NAFRA are showing people what they can do to combat the danger of home fires.”

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, there are over 150,000 fires each year during the winter holidays, claiming 630 lives and \$936 million in property damage. Candle fires are 1.5 times more likely to occur in December, compared to the rest of the year, according to the National Fire Protection Association, and approximately 230 home fires start with Christmas trees each season. The low-income homeowners Rebuilding Together serves are disproportionately impacted by home fires, as holiday risks are compounded by deferred maintenance and alternative heating sources.

“The good news is that there are steps families can take to reduce the risk of holiday fires,” said Steve Risotto, Senior Director of the American Chemistry Council. “The Celebrate Safely campaign will offer tips that every family can, and should, do to improve their fire safety over the holidays.”

The Celebrate Safely campaign will run throughout the month of December and will focus on five tips to stay safe:

- **Decorate Safely** Choose decorations that carry a UL or CSA label, indicating that they have been tested for fire safety. The American Red Cross recommends placing Christmas trees and holiday decorations at least three feet away from heat sources like fireplaces, heaters, and candles.
- **Cook Safely** Keep things that can catch fire, such as oven mitts, towels, and wooden utensils, away from stoves and ranges.
- **Observe Safely** Make sure to blow out lit candles when you leave the room and keep your Christmas tree hydrated.
- **Play Safely** Keep matches and lighters out of reach from children and in locked cabinets where they cannot play with them.
- **Entertain Safely** Make sure guests know about fire exits, be mindful of crowds near open flame sources, and make sure smoke detectors work properly.

These tips and more can be found on a new website devoted to the campaign: www.celebratesafelycampaign.com

Throughout the month, Rebuilding Together (@RebldgTogthr) and NAFRA (@AMChemistry) will be using Twitter to share additional tips on how to stay safe from fires during the holiday season. Both organizations will be using the hashtag #CelebrateSafely and invite individuals around the country to take part in the conversation.