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# NEWS RELEASE

**Date:** March 10, 2010

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## Changing time means changing those smoke alarm batteries

Spring is less than two weeks away with that season of year comes the beginning of Daylight Savings Time on Sunday, March 14. As the time change approaches when we move our clocks forward one hour, the Branson Fire Department would like to remind residents to make another change that could save their lives – changing the batteries in their smoke alarms.

It is estimated that over 92% of American homes now have at least one smoke alarm.

“Supporting that high rate and striving for 100%, firefighters now focus their efforts on smoke alarm maintenance as we find that almost one third of them do not work because of missing or worn out batteries,” said Ted Martin, division chief with the Branson Fire Department. “We encourage everyone to test their smoke alarm monthly and to participate in the ‘Change Your Clock – Change Your Battery’ campaign.”

Martin said most smoke alarms are inexpensive, usually less than \$10 for a battery operated unit, and they are well worth it.

“For very little money, you provide an excellent tool to warn you of smoke or a fire in the home and give occupants those critical extra seconds to escape,” said Martin. “It’s typically not the fire that kills, but the toxic and super heated smoke, especially when folks are sleeping.”

Smoke alarms should be placed in each sleeping room, on each level of the home and in common areas such as hallways and stairwells. For people in the Branson community that may not be able to afford a smoke alarm, the fire department will provide one free.

“This program has been successful because of the financial support of the Branson Golden Corral restaurant providing 100 smoke alarms to distribute each year,” said Fire Chief Carl Sparks.

Fire officials suggest that residents not only change the smoke alarm batteries, but also push the test button to make sure the alarm functions.

“Finally, develop an escape plan showing two ways out of each room in the home” said Martin. “Once developed, practice that plan regularly with the entire family to the sound of the smoke alarm and gather at a designated meeting place outside the home.”

For more information about this program or other fire prevention topics, contact the City of Branson Fire Department’s Technical Services Division at (417) 337-8580.

