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January 31, 2011

Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
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Support for H.B. No. 5068 AN ACT CREATING A REBUTTABLE PRESUMPTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF AN INLAND WETLANDS PERMIT FOR A DRY HYDRANT.

Mr. Chairman
Members of the Environment Committee

My name is Jeffrey S. Bond. I am a resident of Burlington and the Public Information Officer for Burlington Volunteer Fire Department. I would like to support H.B. No. 5068 AN ACT CREATING A REBUTTABLE PRESUMPTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF AN INLAND WETLANDS PERMIT FOR A DRY HYDRANT.

The purpose of this Bill is to simplify and standardize the inland wetlands activity permit process for a dry hydrant. Each Town or Municipality in Connecticut addresses the application process for a dry hydrant differently. In many rural areas in Connecticut, there are no fire hydrants. The only viable solution for firefighters is a dry hydrant.

Dry hydrants are permanent structures placed into a water resource, (lake, pond or stream) that enables many State of Connecticut fire departments to access water for fire suppression. Fire departments, many of them volunteer, must rely on water from portable tankers, ponds, or streams to provide the water necessary to put out a structure fire. A fire in Simsbury several years ago required an estimated 90,000 gallons of water, over 800 gallons per minute to provide for fire fighter safety and fire suppression.

A dry hydrant provides the fire department access to large volumes of water everyday. These structures are placed below the established frost and ice margins enabling them to be used in every season. They provide a reliable water resource to the fire officer, reduce homeowner insurance rates, provide for fire fighter safety and keep large fire tanker trucks from multiple emergency trips to and from a dedicated water resource. With the extreme winter weather conditions this year such as deep snow, varying ice conditions and many narrow roads, dry hydrants will benefit nearly every Town in Connecticut.

An example of the current process for obtaining an inland wetlands permit for a dry hydrant has five phases. 1. Identifying a water resource that can be used by the fire department for a dry hydrant (obtaining property owner permission) 2. Engineering and completing the inland wetlands permit. 3. Attend the inland wetlands commission meeting reviewing the site permit

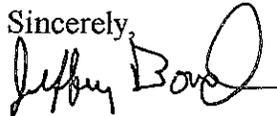
application. 4. Participate in the public hearing regarding the application. 5. Construction of the dry hydrant (if approved and a permit is granted). In many areas of State, this process is driven by the local volunteer fire department. Most fire departments do not have the technical expertise to complete a dry hydrant application for the local inland Wetland and Watercourse Commissions. We see dry hydrants as a necessity not an option for public and firefighter safety.

H.N. 5068 is designed to standardize the development of dry hydrants in Connecticut. It provides for a more efficient permit process that increases Public Safety. Dry hydrants are inexpensive to install, have a minimal impact in a wetland, and are recognized by the National Fire Protection Association as the standard hydrant for rural firefighters.

It is estimated that there are 22,150 volunteer firefighters and 4,425 career firefighters in the State of Connecticut. Dry hydrants benefit both volunteer and career firefighters. From communities along the shoreline to interior Connecticut there are many areas not serviced by a public water utility. Our only solution is to install a dry hydrant.

In 2007, the 242 Connecticut Fire Departments submitted loss reports in excess of \$56,000,000. There were 235 reports of civilian injuries and 25 civilian deaths. Please support your local fire services by supporting H.B 5068.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey S. Bond

enclosures

Crews Battle Rural Stafford Fire *Firefighters Bring In Water Amid Lack Of Hydrants*

POSTED: 11:25 pm EST February 20, 2009
UPDATED: 12:35 am EST February 21, 2009

STAFFORD, Conn. — A lack of fire hydrants proved to be a challenge for firefighters battling a Friday night blaze in a rural section of Stafford.

The blaze broke out on Chestnut Hill Road at about 8 p.m.

Firefighters said when they arrived, the home was engulfed in flames and that crews couldn't immediately get inside the building.

The fire chief said he believes the blaze began near the center of the house.

About 50 firefighters from the Stafford area responded to the blaze. They said the lack of hydrants in the rural area meant extra man power and equipment had to be called in.

"We bring in water, actually DOT came and salted the road," said West Stafford Fire Chief Joe Lorenzetti.

Fire officials said several pets were rescued from inside the home. No one was injured.

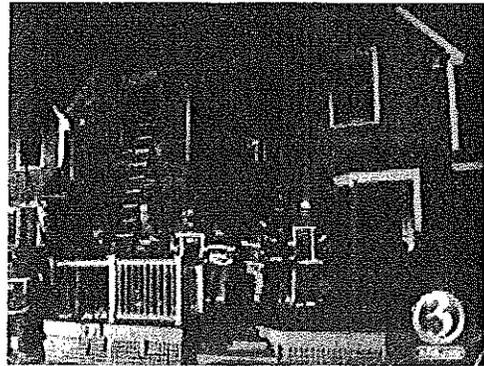
The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

E-mail news tips to Eyewitness News, or dial: 866-289-0333.
Connecticut's latest breaking news is on WFSB.com and Channel 3 Eyewitness News.



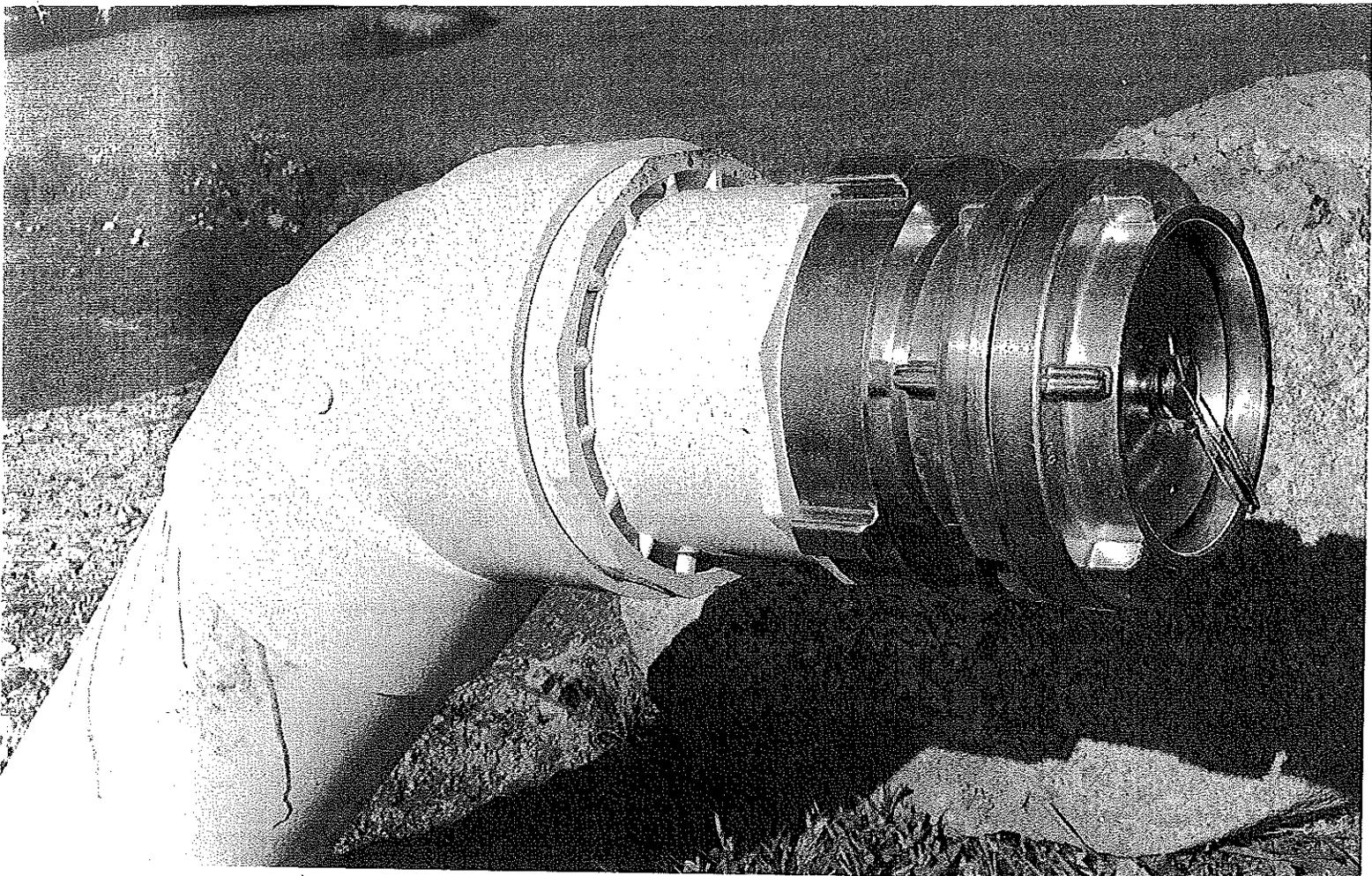
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Video: Pets Rescued From Stafford Blaze

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Sprawl exceeds reach of hydrants

Lack of water outlets is a growing fire hazard

By Joseph Gidjunis
USA TODAY

SALISBURY, Md. — When Robert and Tammy Weber bought their dream home in 2004, they didn't give a thought to the fact that the nearest fire hydrant was more than a mile away.

"Having the entire house burn down is one of those things you don't ever think is going to happen to you," Robert Weber says.

On July 17, that's exactly what happened. Three tankers of water couldn't put the fire out in their late 1990s subdivision house.

Six out of 10 homeowners in Wicomico County, Md., a growing area between the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, do not have hydrants within the recommended 1,000 feet, says Jack Lenox, county planning and zoning director.

Nearly a fourth of U.S. families face the same protection inadequacies as the Webers because they live in extended suburban or rural locations with no hydrants, says Lori Moore-Merrell, an operations analyst with the International Association of Fire Fighters. The lack of fire hydrants is a growing problem as more homes are built outside urban and suburban infrastructure, she says.



By Todd Dudek, The (Salisbury, Md.) Daily Times

Destroyed: Firefighters are unable to save Robert and Tammy Weber's home in Salisbury, Md., on July 17. The Webers bought the house in '04.

States create their own standards, and localities may or may not enact stricter rules, says Chris Jelenewicz, an engineer with the Society of Fire Protection Engineers.

"Municipalities and county governments are finding with this far-flung development it costs a lot to extend the basic infrastructure," says Anthony Flint, public affairs director of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

In Wicomico County, it costs about \$15,000 per house to run water and sewer service into a new development, Salisbury, Md., City Manager John Pick says.

Hydrants, which are recom-

mended every 1,000 feet, cost about \$1,200 apiece, according to Jim Smalley of the National Fire Protection Association.

Proximity to hydrants and fire stations has always been important to homeowners because it influences insurance rates.

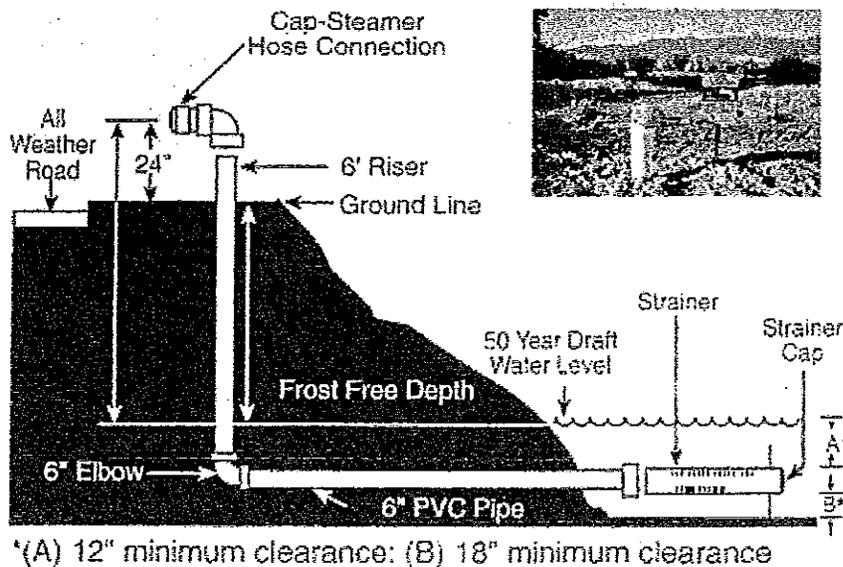
In Lexington, Ky., for example, the owner of a \$100,000 home in the city limits pays about \$400 a year, but the rate is \$1,200-\$1,500 a year on the outskirts of the county, says Donna Pile, president of the National Association of Professional Insurance Agents.

Gidjunis reports for *The Daily Times* in Salisbury, Md.

USA Today
August 24, 2007
Friday / Saturday / Sunday

Sec. 7-312. Liability as to use of water holes. Any municipality, as defined in section 7-314, or any property owner on behalf of any such municipality, may construct or maintain open water holes for the purpose of providing fire protection for such municipality, and no such municipality or property owner shall incur any liability as a result of injury to any person arising out of the maintenance of such water hole, provided such water hole has been approved by the fire-fighting organization and the municipality within whose jurisdiction such water hole is situated and provided such approval has been communicated, in writing, to the property owner on whose premises such water hole is situated.

CT General Statutes.



Click on image to enlarge

The system is assembled aboveground and lowered into the trench. The strainer is positioned in the water.



Click on image to enlarge

What Are Rural Fire Hydrants

Rural fire hydrant systems, otherwise known as "dry hydrants," which are non-pressurized fire hydrants that can be installed on farm ponds, lakes, streams, rivers or below-ground tanks.

The heart of the rural hydrant system is the head assembly and external strainer assembly. The head assembly provides the fire department with the appropriate NST thread connection, which allows the firefighters to connect their suction hose to the hydrant system and pump water. The strainer is the intake device, which is affixed to the end of the pipe and is positioned at an optimal location in the water source.

These products are constructed of 6" Schedule 40 PVC, stainless steel, bronze, aluminum and polymer parts that are all non-corrosive materials. 6" Schedule 40 PVC pipe is used to connect the strainer to the head assembly.

How Rural Dry Hydrants Are Used

Dry fire hydrants are basically used in rural fire fighting two different ways. First, if a dry hydrant is located within a few hundred feet of the fire site, fire hoses can be stretched from a fire truck to a burning structure and water can be pumped directly from the water source to fight the fire.

Second, if the fire site is located beyond the reach of fire hoses, tanker trucks can be filled at a dry hydrant site and water can be shuttled to the location of the fire. A network of dry hydrants, one every three square miles, is required to reduce the travel time of tanker trucks and promote an efficient water shuttle operation.

The trench is then backfilled and the water remains in the pipe all the way to the vertical rise because the horizontal pipe is below water level.

Once installed, the fire department can connect to the hydrant head and start pumping water within seconds.

A community-wide savings ...

In August 1993, Mountain Rest, South Carolina, a small rural community of approximately 2,000 families, experienced a community-wide



Click on image to enlarge



Click on image to enlarge

Benefits of Rural Hydrants

Dry fire hydrant systems can be plumbed several hundred feet from water sources to all weather roadways, allowing fire departments to pump water quickly and easily. Dry fire hydrants enable fire departments to use untreated water to fight fires instead of treated water, saving money, saving energy and protecting utility water systems. Dry hydrants are economical to install and can be used to supplement pressurized hydrants for large demand situations. In some cases, dry fire hydrants can lower home owner insurance premiums. Insurance agents and fire chiefs should be consulted to evaluate potential savings.

For more information on Dry Fire Hydrants contact your community's Volunteer Fire Department or Contact your County Commissioner for Assistance.

increase in cash flow. Starting that August, approximately \$200,000 a year would be channeled into the community. This was a result of the Mountain Rest Volunteer Fire Department ISO rating re-classification from an ISO Class 9 to a Class 7.

The Mountain Rest Volunteer Fire Department was well trained. They had the manpower and equipment requirements to be rated much lower than an ISO Class 9, but they were lacking in one very important area-rural water supply.

The difference between a Class 9 and a Class 7 from an insurance standpoint, is approximately a 40% savings on homeowners' premiums. This savings, community-wide, has been estimated to be approximately \$200,000 a year.

The material cost and labor expense for the installation of these 13 dry fire hydrant systems was less than \$20,000.

The Valley Press

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Firefighters attach a hose to a dry hydrant during a demonstration of how a dry hydrant is used on Wednesday, Dec. 30, in Burlington. From left: Techs. Yvesquis, Lt. Derek, Former Capt. Peter Zurles, firefighter Lindsay Caponech and firefighter, PIO Jeffrey Bond took part in the demonstration. Photo by Abigail Albair

Dry hydrants provide safer, faster water resource for firefighters

By Abigail Albair
Editor

If there were a fire in your home, you would hope for a fast response time from the fire department, but would you stop to

wonder if they would have enough water to put out the blaze?

It is a real concern, said Jeffrey Bond of the Burlington Fire Department. In rural areas like Burlington, outside of big urban centers, there is no place for us to

get water. On Dec. 21, the town of Burlington installed its 13th dry hydrant to allow for more and easier water access for firefighters in the event of an emergency.

Continued on page 3

"Dry hydrants are really the answer for us to get water in the winter. Water is the thing we all need for a fire, and if we have to bring it in by truck or find it on our own, it takes a lot longer," Bond said.

A dry hydrant is placed into a pond, stream or river below the frost and ice line. "Unlike a regular hydrant, no water is pressurized in it. The trucks have a vacuum hose on them that pulls out the air and the water follows up and into the pump on the truck," Bond explained. "This allows us to get water with less risk to the firefighter that comes with drilling through ice. One firefighter told me about one incident where he had to go out on the ice to drill for water. He had no idea how thick the ice was and had a great concern of falling through."

Aside from the concern for firefighter safety when searching for water, there is the additional concern of firefighters and residents in burning buildings.

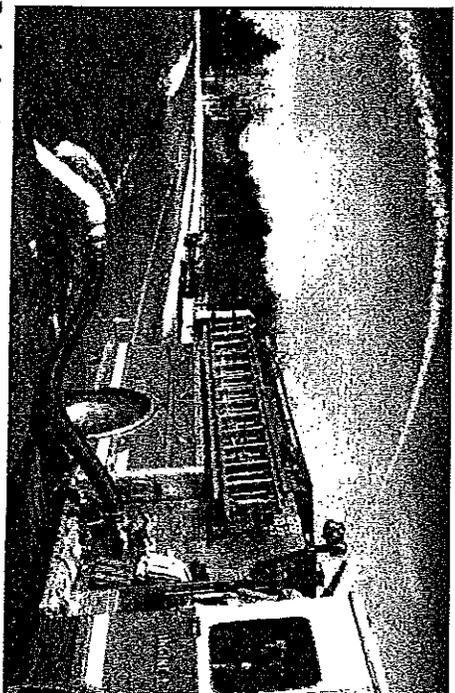
Bond said, "Firefighters or the people that live in buildings which catch fire could get trapped inside without any water while we wait for it to be delivered."

Last February, 90,000 gallons of water needed to be transported to a Simsbury fire by six department tankers. "It is a danger to other drivers to have those trucks going back and forth with lights and sirens making the road slick and icy from spilling water," Bond said.

"This is really a statewide issue," Bond said. There have been reports of a lack of water in other rural areas of Connecticut, including one in Stafford last winter, where a lack of hydrants meant that extra manpower, resources and equipment had to be called in, delaying the firefighters' ability to enter the building.

"It is hard to get firefighters these days," Bond said. "To add in the problem of trying to look for water at a fire means we have to pull resources from Avon, Canton, Farmington, New Hartford and other surrounding towns and take the resources out of their town temporarily to provide fire protection here."

Burlington has made it mandatory in the last few years that any new housing developments have water on site for the fire department, either a natural resource such as a stream or pond, or a tank placed in the ground.



Dry hydrants are placed in the ground near ponds, lakes or streams below the frost line (as pictured on right) to allow firefighters to get water in the winter without having to drill through ice. On left, a fire truck sprays water taken in from the dry hydrant. The truck was able to circulate nearly 2,000 gallons of water in under seven minutes during a Dec. 30 demonstration for The Valley Press.



Having a dry hydrant also reduces homeowner insurance rates. "If somebody has one of these within a thousand feet of their home, most insurance companies will give them an insurance break," Bond said.

Currently, the fire department has permits for another hydrant to be put in during the next few weeks, and Bond says the town will most likely need another seven or eight more to have a strong network of reliable water resources.

The largest obstacle Bond has seen so far, and anticipates he will continue to see, is the inland wetlands permitting process.

"It has been a huge struggle," he said. "The inland wetlands concern is that it will harm the environment, but there is actually very little impact on the ponds and streams that they are put into. We could probably cause more damage to a pond if we had to drive a fire truck into the area damaging the ground and leaking fuel than we would putting a pipe in and reglating it the right way."

Fire Chief Michael Boucher attended an Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission meeting with Bond to stress the need for dry hydrants.

He told The Valley Press, "The bottom line is that we can take control of anyone's property to get water through any means necessary in an emergency; something that often creates a greater disruption to the eco-system." He added, "Jeff pushes forward. He has been a big force behind getting this done."

Bond put his support behind first-time proposed legislation S.B. No. 500, "an act creating a rebuttable presumption for the approval of certain inland wetlands permits" last winter. The legislation was aimed to maintain the local inland wetlands permit process, but to simplify and facilitate it so that once the application for a dry hydrant is completed, a rebuttable presumption for approval would exist.

Bond explained that "eventually, everyone agrees that it is the right thing to do, but it is a time-consuming process that delays the installation. If a property owner, fire department and the town agrees to it, we should be able to move forward." The process he refers to involves public postings and several hearings with the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission.

"[The legislation] takes a step out of the process," Boucher said. "As long as there is an engineer plan and the property owner gives their permission, we can go ahead. These are necessary things and, right now, the process makes something that should take four weeks, often take months."

The legislation did not make it through the Environment Committee, but Bond said he is working with local senators to propose it again this February.

The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission did not return calls for comment at press time.

The hydrants are relatively inexpensive, according to Bond, costing only approximately \$1,000. The town has assisted in the cost, and the fire department has also applied for a grant through the Department of Environmental Protection Forestry Division that provides partial funding for dry hydrants.

Bond said, "We can afford at this point to put in one to two a year with what the town gives us, which is very generous. They provided a fund of \$4,500 to \$5,000 a year to install the hydrant once we find a willing homeowner."

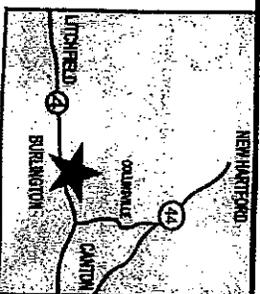


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***** MEDIA ADVISORY*****

BURLINGTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT INSTALLS DRY HYDRANT

Who: Burlington Volunteer Fire Department

What: Will install the 13th Dry Hydrant in the Town of Burlington to assist Firefighters and Home Owners

WHEN: December 21st, 2009

WHERE: 35 Heather Lane Burlington

BACKGROUND:

Nearly everyday a fire occurs in Connecticut. In some municipalities, the fire department will use the public water supply hydrants to obtain water to put out the fire. In many parts of Connecticut, however, there are no fire hydrants. When water is not available, it puts firefighters at risk, increases property loss and may result in the loss of a life. In these parts of the state, firefighters must look for water in ponds, swimming pools or rivers. The answer in rural Connecticut is a Dry Hydrant.

A Dry Hydrant is placed into a pond, stream or river below the frost and ice depth. It is "Dry" meaning no water is pressurized within the hydrant like a public water supply. This allows the fire department to obtain water every day without risking lives of firefighters by cutting a hole in the ice.

A house fire in Simsbury last winter required 90,000 gallons of water. This water was bought to the fire scene by six fire department tankers.

A Dry Hydrant provides for a reliable water resource to the fire officer, reduces homeowner insurance rates, provides for increased firefighter safety and keeps large fire tanker trucks from multiple emergency trips to and from a dedicated water resource.

The men and women of the Burlington Volunteer Fire Department are proud to be a part of the Town of Burlington and provide for Fire Protection, Emergency Medical Services, Rescue Services, Emergency Preparedness, Fire Education and Public Education.

More information can be found on the Burlington Volunteer Department Website at; <http://www.burlingtonvfd.com/>

CONTACT: Jeffrey Bond, PIO Burlington Volunteer Fire Department
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860-335-6269 (Cell)

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