Industry PR Efforts Prompt Media Coverage Of CSST/Gas-related Lightning Fires

As part of our commitment to the protection of people and property from the lightning hazard, the LPI has been working to educate the public and media about the serious risk associated with corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) installation under lightning strike conditions. The press release (bold type below) was distributed in conjunction with the 2007 NFPA World Safety Conference on June 4. The release received extensive pickup as reported by our media monitoring services, which detailed approximately 299 accesses (230 public & 69 media). Access from media types include: Blogger, Consumer Periodicals, Freelance/Writer, Newspaper, Radio, Television, Trade Periodicals, Interestalert.com, Web/On-Line Services, and Wire Services. Popular sites displaying our press release included:


The release was also distributed through the NFPA Convention press kits and the NFPA Public Affairs office made this release available to attendees show media as “National Fire Protection Association News.” This story was also of interest to media, fire safety officials and insurance professionals who attended the NFPA Convention. Good Morning America (ABC) has also contacted LPI for more information about this issue and is considering featuring the story on their morning program. The publicity created by this release will be helpful ammunition for our industry in resolving code issue goals with NFPA 54 and the NEC. The coverage received represents huge distribution for our news and important exposure for lightning protection and the Lightning Protection Institute. More information about this issue is available on the LPI website.

Release Headline: Lightning Fires Linked to Problem Gas Tubing

HARTFORD, Conn., June 4 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A Class Action Lawsuit against four manufacturers of a relatively new type of fuel gas tubing has identified the installation of a lightning protection system as a remedy for the fire risk associated with CSST (corrugated stainless steel tubing) gas piping systems. CSST is a type of flexible piping that has been widely used in homes and commercial applications in recent years. Unlike traditional, heavy-walled gas pipes, CSST is extremely thin and therefore susceptible to damage from lightning.

Continued to back page
Lightning Strikes the Insurance Industry

By The Coitline Insurance Group
Paul Insurance Agency
Sara Watts

WEST ROCKPORT (June 22): Lightning Striking Again and Again:

New LLI Study Finds Increase in Lightning Claim Costs

NEW YORK, June 21, 2007 — They say that lightning never strikes in the same place twice, but for insurers, it strikes over 250,000 times per year, causing hundreds of millions of dollars in damages. In fact, the total cost of homeowners claims for damage due to lightning strikes has increased dramatically—up 20 percent over the last three years.

Insurance Industry Supports Lightning Protection

The insurance industry continues to demonstrate its support of lightning protection in publications, website recommendations and press releases. In conjunction with Lightning Safety Awareness Week, the Insurance Information Institute (III) distributed a major news release titled, "Lightning Striking Again and Again: New LLI Study Finds Increase in Lightning Claim Costs." The release reviewed the increase in lightning claims and under “Preventing losses,” the release recommended the installation of lightning protection systems and use of surge protectors.

As part of our continued outreach efforts to the insurance industry, LPI plans to meet with Chubb Commercial Insurance loss control and risk analysis professionals from across the U.S., at the company’s headquarters in New Jersey. The three hour lightning protection presentation is scheduled for this October.

UL Master Label to be Reinstated

Changes are coming for Underwriters Laboratories’ lightning protection inspection certificate. Based on feedback from the installing community UL initiated meetings with LPI’s board members to discuss coming program improvements and a decision to reinstate references to UL’s Master Label on inspection certificates. The reinstatement is being implemented now and will be formally announced by UL on their website and through bulletins to listed installers shortly.

Charles Moore Receives Ph.D

Atmospheric physics researcher, Charles B. Moore was recently awarded an honorary Ph.D. at New Mexico Tech’s commencement ceremonies on May 17, 2007. Moore, professor emeritus of physics, is internationally known for his research on the electrical aspects of thunderstorms and volcanoes. He is considered an expert in atmospheric research, including the scientific and political aspects of weather modification and the scientific and practical issues of lightning protection. Moore nominally retired from New Mexico Tech in 1985, but since then worked with the NFPA 780 Committee and conducted research which revealed blunt-tipped lightning rods to be better strike receptors than sharp pointed rods. Currently, Moore is assisting with a New Mexico Tech study which is using X-rays to investigate how lightning bolt leaders propagate.

Trade Show Update

The LPI took its lightning protection message on the road, exhibiting at several major trade shows and conventions. The LPI revamped its booth graphics and disseminated lightning protection information to architects, fire-safety professionals, engineers and other target audiences at the AIA Convention in San Antonio, TX (May 3-5), the NFPA World Safety Conference & Expo in Boston, MA (June 3-7), and the CSI Convention in Baltimore, MD (June 20-22). The LPI will also participate in the IFMA Trade Show, scheduled for October 24-26 in New Orleans, LA and the IBHS Annual Conference on Property Loss Reduction on November 17-18 in Tampa, FL.
Media Report:

Recent PR & Promotional Events

LPI marketing and communication efforts increase exposure for the industry and its members.

Students from St. Edward-Epiphany School enjoyed a lesson in lightning safety from Leon the Lightning Lion as they worked with Comcast Spotlight producers to film LPI's Public Service Announcement.

Lightning Safety Awareness Week 2007

Publicity efforts in conjunction with the recent National Lightning Safety Awareness Week Campaign (June 24-30th), gained nationwide exposure for lightning protection and lightning safety. LPI's press release pitching the campaign and the introduction of the Leon the Lightning Lion public service announcement, received incredible pickup across the country. Here's a quick look at where our news has been spotlighted in recent weeks:

Release Headline: Public Service Campaign Introduces Mascot for Public Safety

Release clear time: 6/19/2007 at 8:50 a.m. Our media monitoring services reported approximately 162 accesses (108 public & 54 media). This past June, NOAA and the National Weather Service's LSAP team distributed 1,000 copies of the PSA on DVDs to their weather affiliates across the country. Since the initial PSA distribution, NOAA LSAP team members have also asked for reserve tag versions of the PSA to share with their local media outlets. WestGlen Communications is also distributing a reserve tag version to 70 specific media markets across the country. These are markets that have either requested our type of PSA or are located in states that have had lightning deaths in 2007. WestGlen will be providing a clip report to let us know which of these markets broadcast our PSA. LPI members who are interested in running the PSA in conjunction with their local TV advertising, should contact LPI Media Communications Consultant, Kim Loehr for details and information. The PSA is available for viewing on the LPI website.

Feature Articles on Lightning Protection

LPI is seeing continued success with editors running our feature stories and news articles on lightning protection. Here are a few highlights of recent stories that have put lightning protection and the LPI in the spotlight:

Construction Specifier Magazine – July 2007 Issue

"Lightning Protection at Ground Level" was a 9-page article depicting color photographs of lightning protection systems, a glossary of terms for lightning protection and a system layout. The magazine is published monthly and is targeted to design professionals, engineers, project planners and construction personnel.

Your Church Magazine – July/August 2007 Issue

"Lightning Does Strike — But it Doesn’t Have to Destroy" was a 5-page feature on lightning protection which included color photos of lightning protection components, references to national safety standards, an interview with Bud VanSickle and several references to LPI, including a link to the LPI website. The magazine is published bi-monthly and is targeted to pastors and church leaders interested in managing congregational business affairs.
Lightning traveling on the CSST can burn holes in the tubing and allow gas leakage and fire. In worse case scenarios, such leaks have led to catastrophic gas explosions. The CSST has been found to be susceptible to damage from direct and even nearby lightning strikes.

CSST has been widely used in recent years because it is easy to install. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) however, no tests on the effects of lightning on CSST were conducted prior to its approval for use. One CSST manufacturer has acknowledged that the installation of a lightning protection system addresses the lightning hazard associated with CSST, yet homes with CSST are rarely equipped with lightning protection systems. Lightning strikes the United States more than 25 million times each year. A single bolt of lightning can carry over 100 million volts of electricity, making the hazard to homes outfitted with CSST a serious concern.

"Lightning does not have to strike a building directly in order for the CSST to be affected," explains Guy Maxwell, president of the Lightning Safety Alliance. "The reports of CSST related fires that I have seen have involved strikes that were near the structure."

In March 2007, the four defendants in the Class Action suit filed in the Circuit Court of Clark County Arkansas reached a Settlement. Under the guidelines of the Settlement, owners of structures in the U.S., in which CSST was installed prior to September 2006, can obtain vouchers to defray the cost of mitigating the CSST hazard. Remedies identified by the settling parties include installing a lightning protection system and/or making bonding and grounding connections to certain systems in a structure.

"Unfortunately, there hasn't been a lot of publicity given to this situation which is estimated to affect a million or more homes," explained Bud VanSickle, executive director of the Lightning Protection Institute in Maryville, MO. "Property owners have just a few short months to take advantage of these vouchers. Whether property owners take advantage of the Settlement vouchers or not these folks have a serious fire risk in their homes that needs to be addressed."

The deadline to enter a claim under the CSST Settlement is September 5, 2007. For more information call 1-800-420-2916 or visit the website at http://www.csstsettlement.com.

Contact: Kim Loehr
804-314-8955 or LLpeo@aol.com
http://www.lightningsafetyalliance.com

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Mark your calendars now . . . .

LPI/ULPA Annual Conference
February 13 – 16, 2008
Walt Disney Resort Hotel, The Grosvenor
Orlando, FL

Come join us for professional development and industry updates at our Annual LPI/ULPA Conference in Orlando. Enjoy an elegant stay at a reasonable price (member rate of $139/room) at the Grosvenor, in the Downtown Disney Resort area.

Children can plan to dine with their favorite Disney characters. Adults will appreciate the complimentary transportation from the resort to any of the theme parks. Everyone will love the ½ acre of recreation and water sports at the resort – 2 heated swimming pools, a therapeutic European thermal spa, outdoor refreshment center, a tennis center, wall-to-wall video games in the onsite Game Room and lots more. Check the resort website, www.grosvenorrresort.com for more information.

The Lightning Protection Institute plans to offer our new Engineering Seminar prior to the education sessions of this year’s conference also at the Grosvenor Resort.

Watch your mail and this website in the future for more information on these exciting events.

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The Lightning Protection Institute
Saving Lives & Protecting Property Since 1955
25475 Magnolia Drive • P.O. Box 99 • Maryville, MO 64468
Tel: 660-582-0429 • Fax: 660-582-0430 • 1-800-488-6864
Email: LPI@lightning.org • Website: www.lightning.org