

# TOWN OF VERNON

## Office of the Mayor

14 Park Place • Vernon, CT 06066

Tel: (860) 870-3600 • Fax: (860) 870-3580

[www.Vernon-CT.gov](http://www.Vernon-CT.gov)



### MEDIA ADVISORY

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#### Press Contact:

David Owens, Communications Specialist

Desk (860) 870-3574

Cell (860) 494-5973



**Daniel A. Champagne**  
*Mayor*

**Michael J. Purcaro**  
*Town Administrator*

**Dawn R. Maselek**  
*Assistant Town Administrator*

## Fire Marshal and Vernon Firefighters Urge Residents to 'Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety' for Fire Prevention Week

### *Vernon Fifth-Grader Chase Kopcza Honored for Winning State Fire Prevention Poster Contest*

**(VERNON, Connecticut)** – Smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors make distinct noises and it's essential for people to understand what those noises mean. "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety" is the theme of this year's Fire Prevention Week, which is October 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Vernon Fire Marshal Dan Wasilewski and Vernon firefighters will carry that message to kindergarten through second grade students when they visit elementary schools during the month of October.

"Fires are on the decline in Vernon thanks to the prevention work of our Fire Marshal and Fire Department," Mayor Dan Champagne said. "Fire Prevention Week is an opportunity to continue that momentum and to learn what can be done to keep yourself and your family safe from fire. And please, make sure you have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home."

Also, during Fire Prevention Week, Lake Street School fifth grader Chase Kopcza will be recognized for winning the 2020 State Fire Prevention Poster Contest. His poster, which urges people to prevent forest fires, was judged to be the best in Vernon, Tolland County and the State of Connecticut. Chase's poster will be on display in the State Legislative Office Building this week during Fire Prevention Week.

Fire Marshal Wasilewski said you should never ignore the sounds emitted by smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. "When an alarm makes noise — a beeping sound or a chirping sound — you must take action," Wasilewski said. "A continuous set of three loud beeps means there is smoke or fire. Get out, call 9-1-1, and stay out." A single chirp every 30 or 60 seconds means the battery is low and a fresh battery should be installed, Wasilewski said.

“Chirping that continues after the battery has been replaced means the alarm is at the end of its life and must be replaced,” Wasilewski said. “All smoke detectors must be replaced after 10 years.”

Fire Chief Stephen Eppler urges families to talk to children about what to do when a smoke or carbon monoxide detector sounds.

“Practicing good fire safety at home saves lives,” Chief Eppler said. “Everyone in the home should understand what the sounds mean, and what to do.”

People who have questions about where to place smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are urged to call the Fire Marshal’s office at 860-870-3652.



*Chase Kopcza and his prize-winning poster.*

“My staff and I are always available to answer questions about the proper placement of smoke and CO detectors and will visit your home to conduct an evaluation if need be,” Wasilewski said. “And don’t forget to have smoke and CO detectors that meet the needs of all family members, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.”

Representatives from the Fire Marshal’s office and members of the Town of Vernon Fire Department will visit all of Vernon’s elementary schools during October to give children age appropriate training on fire safety. Children will also have a chance to meet firefighters and check out fire trucks.

Students in third and fourth grades will also be able to participate in the annual Fire Prevention Poster Contest. Chase Kopcza’s hard work on his poster contest entry earned him \$900 in prizes and \$500 for Lake Street School, in addition to the honor of having his poster displayed at the Legislative Office Building. Chase’s poster will also be the cover of the annual state Fire Prevention Calendar.

### **About the Town of Vernon**

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of approximately 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in “New England’s Knowledge Corridor” with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870- 3670 or visit [www.vernon-ct.gov](http://www.vernon-ct.gov).

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