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**UMM works to ensure campus fire safety**

*Summary:*

(November 22, 2004)-By Jackie Thrasher '05, UMM News Service -- Recently KMSP Fox 9 News sent a fire safety survey to every college in the state of Minnesota as part of an investigation on residence hall fire safety. Out of 34 surveys sent, 26 were returned, including the survey from the University of Minnesota, Morris.

Although the answers were not directly referenced within the news story, they still provided an idea of what UMM is doing to ensure that all dormitories are as safe as possible. Out of six residence halls at UMM, three buildings have sprinklers for fire safety in both hallways and individual rooms. Half of a fourth building was upgraded in Summer 2004, with the second half to be completed in Summer 2005. Plans are in place to equip the remaining halls with sprinklers, with the projected finishing date in 2007.

Another way UMM commits to fire safety is by providing all hallways and each individual room with smoke detectors which are hard wired and have a battery backup. UMM also conducts fire safety drills within the residence halls each semester and provides fire evacuation maps and instructions in each individual room and hall.

UMM is also looking at ways to prevent the spread of a fire once it starts. They are doing so by moving to So Flex mattresses, a more flame resistant mattress. The college uses steel bed frames, rather than wooden bed frames. A new loft rental program with steel lofts is replacing wood construction lofts. Another step in UMM's fire safety is making all residence halls and on-campus apartments smoke free. All residence halls are currently smoke free. On-campus apartments will be smoke free in 2005-06.

"We are committed to having safe residence halls for our students," said Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Sandy Olson-Loy. "The University of Minnesota has been a leader in retrofitting existing residence halls with sprinklers and state of the art fire safety systems. We appreciate the commitment of the Board of Regents and everyone in the University system to doing this important work."

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at [morris.umn.edu](http://morris.umn.edu) or call 888-866-3382.