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Article posted: 3/18/2010 12:01 AM

# Fire officials warn residents to check bath fans

By **Justin Kmitch**

The Aurora Fire Department has responded to three separate fires in recent months on Dorothy Drive on the city's east side.

All the fires had one thing in common: bathroom vent fans.

Fire Marshall Gary Pozzi said homes in the subdivision are about 18 years old and their original bath vent fans may be nearing the end of their life cycle - especially if they aren't maintained.

Bath vent fans are exposed to moist heated air and changes in temperatures due to their location in attic spaces and rely on air flow across the electric motor to keep them cool. Pozzi said a buildup over time of lint or dust on the motor can cause overheating.

"Next thing you know, a spark hits the dust and ignites and you've got a full-on fire in your attic and bathroom," he said. "People need to maintain these fans, much like their dryer lint traps, to keep them safe."

Pozzi said grinding or squealing fans should be replaced immediately.

According to the National Fire Prevention Association, faulty bathroom fans were responsible for 1,850 fires a year from 2003 to 2006. Those incidents resulted in eight deaths, 63 injuries and about $47 million in property damage.

"We didn't want to scare anyone or blow this out of proportion but it was hard to ignore the location and same cause of each of the three fires," Pozzi said. "We just want people to know these bath fans and attic fans need to be maintained and not forgotten about."

Residents with questions about their bath fans should call the Aurora Fire Department's Fire Prevention Bureau at (630) 892-9001.