



Abandoned Building Program

In 2005, the City of Sandusky, in cooperation with the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) and the United States Fire Administration (USFA), launched its "Abandoned Building Project" program.

This program, spearheaded by the Sandusky Fire Division, utilizes a committee approach to building evaluation and designation. The committee is made up of representatives from the City Manager's Office, City Engineer's Office, Law Department, Police Department, Community Development and the Fire Division. The task of the group is to evaluate abandoned or vacant structures within the City of Sandusky and recommend a course of action to identify the owners, secure the buildings and identify specific life hazards to our safety forces.

This program was developed by the I.A.A.I. and the U.S.F.A. to educate communities about the hazards of vacant/abandoned buildings and to provide training and materials for evaluation and marking of these structures. As we all know, vacant or abandoned buildings are unsightly, attract criminal activity and are a threat to public safety wherever they exist. More than 12,000 fires occur each year in abandoned buildings and 6,000+ firefighters are injured as a direct result. Seventy-two percent of these fires are of incendiary or suspicious origin.

Once an abandoned or vacant building is identified, a representative of the Community Development schedules a site visit. The site is evaluated for security measures, hazards to life safety and hazards to public safety providers. Recommendations are then made to the building owner/occupant and a 24" x 24" sign, red in color, is then posted on the building indicating the relative condition of the building.

A sign with a red field reflects normal building stability at the time of the marking. A red field with a white line diagonally on the field " \ " reflects interior operations can be undertaken with extreme caution. A red field with a white "X" reflects exterior operations only unless a known life hazard is present.

To date, three structures in the City of Sandusky have been examined and will be posted accordingly. Six additional structures will be scheduled for examination in the spring of 2006. It is the goal of the "Vacant/Abandoned Building Task Group" to identify hazardous structures and provide for timely remediation, renovation or demolition of these structures.