



News Release

For Immediate Release

Avoid Illegal Fireworks

One Incident Led to a \$9,000 4th of July Celebration

Ketchum, Idaho (June 30, 2014) – It was not too long ago that a local resident set off a \$9,000 bottle rocket near Ketchum. The pyrotechnic started a fire in dry sagebrush, and the resident was held responsible for the costs of extinguishing the fire.

Ketchum officials remind party-goers that aerial fireworks such as bottle rockets, mortars and Roman Candles are illegal in Blaine County, even though they are legally sold in parts of Idaho.

“Vegetation is so dry this year that we hope people will be particularly cautious,” Ketchum Fire Chief Mike Elle said. “We’ve seen the effects of two major forest fires in the past decade. We are asking everyone to cooperate in preventing another one.”

If a wildfire starts because of fireworks, the person responsible may be held liable for damages, he stressed.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, more than 32,000 fires occur each year because of mishandling of fireworks. Property damages average more than \$30 million annually, and hospital emergency rooms treat more than 10,000 people. A third of the injuries are to children under 14.

In Idaho alone, over the last five years, there were eight forest fires and more than 300 grass and brush fires caused by fireworks.

In addition, the noise of fireworks scares pets, with many getting lost after fleeing Fourth of July noise. For tips on taking care of pets, see the recent edition of the city of Ketchum’s e-newsletter at ketchumidaho.org.

Any fireworks that go more than 20 feet in the air or travel more than 15 feet along the ground are illegal in Idaho. Sparklers, smoke bombs and “snakes” are legal, although the city urges people to take appropriate precautions to prevent fires. Details on the law in Ketchum are at <http://ketchumidaho.org/index.aspx?NID=166>.

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About the City of Ketchum

The City of Ketchum is located in the Wood River Valley in south central Idaho. Founded in 1880 during the mining boom, Ketchum is now regarded as one of the most popular destinations for winter and summer visitors due to its world-class skiing, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, restaurants, art galleries and shopping. The City of Ketchum hosts the famous annual Wagon Days Parade, held on Labor Day weekend, and numerous other year-round attractions. Ketchum is home to more than 10,000 full- and part-time residents. For more information about the City of Ketchum, visit www.ketchumidaho.org.

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