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ADVISORY

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NEWS OF INTEREST TO THE PVC AND VCM INDUSTRIES

ANTI-PLASTICS VIDEO DISCREDITED IN PBS BROADCAST

Capt. Daniel "Boone" Gardiner, Director of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors, appeared on Chicago TV Dec. 26, refuting arguments against PVC. The PBS talk show, "Chicago Tonight," hosted by John Calloway, matched Capt. Gardiner against Martin Holland, head of the Chicago firefighters union. Most of the discussion related to the ATCOR-funded film, "Burning Issue," with Capt. Gardiner opposed to the film's anti-plastics message, while Holland defended it.

From the outset, Capt. Gardiner got the better of the debate. Host Calloway, learning of ATCOR's major role in the production of "Burning Issue," immediately questioned the film's validity. He had other questions: Why were there no opposing viewpoints? Were plastics experts contacted? Why were there no independent scientists? Responses to these queries were weak. Meanwhile, Capt. Gardiner articulated several arguments in support of vinyl. Along the way, he cast serious doubts about the legitimacy of "Burning Issue." He said no valid toxicity test supports the film's thesis that plastics are more toxic than other materials. Moreover, "The issue isn't toxicity. The issue is fire," he stressed.

The televised debate was a result of successful efforts by the VI to stop the film from being aired on PBS stations. In an open letter to all of the PBS stations in the United States, and an advertisement placed in Broadcasting Magazine, the VI said, "The film portrays vinyl and other plastics as unusually hazardous materials that cause needless loss of life in fires, a charge that fire statistics disprove."

The Vinyl Institute acknowledges the outstanding contribution of Dr. William Carroll, Research Manager of Occidental Chemical and Chairman of the VI Fire Research Subcommittee, providing technical assistance to Capt. Gardiner in preparation for this appearance.

PVC PRODUCTION
UP 7.2% IN 1984

SPI president, L. William Sessions, announced last month that production and sales of plastics resins in the U.S. in 1984 will reach record levels. Polyvinyl chloride production will total 6.5 billion pounds, up 7.2% from 1983. Sales and captive use will increase to 6.4 billion pounds, a 4% rise.



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HOLIDAY FIRE
SAFETY URGED

VI cutive Director Roy T. Gottesman appeared on a New Jersey cable television news program, "Meadowlands '84," last month to discuss fire safety during the holiday season. Using excerpts from the VI-sponsored film, "Vinyl: Trial By Fire," Dr. Gottesman demonstrated to viewers that ignition-resistant vinyl Christmas trees are safer than wood trees. He also urged families to protect themselves against fire with smoke detectors and sprinkler systems.

ANTI-PLASTICS
CRITIC ACKNOWLEDGES
TOXICITY TESTING
WILL NOT REDUCE
FIRE DEATHS

In a Dec. 4 article in Newsday, professor Yves Alarie, the University of Pittsburgh professor who claims that burning synthetic materials--such as polyvinyl chloride and other plastics--are six times more toxic than wood, admitted, "I don't think testing for toxicity itself is going to reduce the number of fire deaths. We have to attack the problem from many different aspects: ease of ignition, flame spread, heat release, smoke release that impairs visibility. It's part of a total picture."

This is significant coming from Prof. Alarie. His dubious test was recommended to the State of New York as the basis for a "data bank" on combustion toxicity. The NY proposal calls for manufacturers of insulation, duct work, furniture, window treatments, mattresses, bed pads, interior wall finishes, electrical wire insulation and conduit, water distribution and sanitary pipes, and other materials, to file toxicity data about their products. Such information would presumably guide purchasing decisions. SPI and the VI oppose the NY proposal.

ACSH PAPER
HIGHLIGHTS
"SCARE" TACTICS
OF ANTI-PVC
COMPETITIVE
MATERIALS
PRODUCERS

The November/December issue of ACSH News & Views, a publication of the American Council on Science and Health, featured an in-depth article by ACSH research associate, Sharon Lynn Campbell, titled, "PVC: How Toxic is the Smoke?" Ms. Campbell wrote, "The smoke from burning polyvinyl chloride (PVC) conduit is little, if any, more toxic than ordinary wood smoke." She also cited "scare" tactics by competing industries such as steel and metal, as well as the shortcomings of the research documented by Yves Alarie. "Experts in the field generally agree that the current tests are of value primarily as scientific tools. They are inadequate as a basis for regulations," she wrote.

The article revealed that much scientific evidence which allegedly shows the extreme toxicity of PVC smoke comes from the Foundation for Fire Safety and the Public Interest Scientific Consulting Service. Campbell reported that the Foundation for Fire Safety is funded by large contributions from ATCOR.

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