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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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## Fireworks Safety Reminders Explode In Cyberspace *City Agencies Use Social Media to Emphasize Safety*

Sparky the rocket is once again bringing a message of fireworks safety to residents but this time he is doing it on Facebook. The city launched its Sparky campaign last year with a number of public service announcements on billboards and bus shelters and this year, Sparky is expanding his message to Facebook fans.

With tonight's traditional "opening night" fireworks display for Summerfest, the Fireworks Task Force (2007-2008), co-chaired by Aldermen Joe Davis, Sr. and Terry L. Witkowski, want to remind residents that penalties for possessing or using fireworks are stiff (up to \$1,000 per violation). Sparky is being used to inform residents that fireworks are illegal in the City of Milwaukee and to encourage the public to participate in the professional displays offered by festivals, U.S. Bank and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Commission.

"All fireworks within the City of Milwaukee that have not been permitted by the city are illegal, and anyone caught with them or seen setting them off now face much more extensive fines and sanctions," said Ald. Witkowski.

The fines for possessing illegal fireworks are \$500 to \$1,000 per violation. Failure to pay fines can also result in up to 40 days' jail time. Parents and legal guardians may receive a fine of up to \$1,000 for allowing minors to use fireworks, a move that solidifies the goal of the Fireworks Task Force.

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## **Fireworks Safety/ADD ONE**

Last year, changes in the ordinance brought increased fines and this year, the city is sponsoring a broader awareness campaign to help encourage residents to participate in festival and holiday revelry sponsored by professionals.

Residents can become a “fan” of Sparky Sparkowitz on Facebook and follow updates and calendar entries related to scheduled public fireworks displays in the City of Milwaukee. More information on fireworks safety, the city’s policies and Sparky is also available on his webpage, [www.milwaukee.gov/sparky](http://www.milwaukee.gov/sparky).

Ald. Davis said “So many children are unnecessarily hurt by these dangerous explosives. The goal of the task force has been to remind people to be safe and to take advantage of the professional fireworks displays rather than dealing with the illegal explosives on their own.”