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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Fireworks Could Lead To An Explosion Of Trouble, Aldermen Say

*News Conference Wednesday to Remind Residents About Dangers, Law Banning
Possession & Use of Fireworks*

Online stores and flashy full-color mailings sent unsolicited to homes have helped propel sales of illegal fireworks skyward, but members of the Common Council say people who use the illicit pyrotechnic devices are playing with fire.

“Possessing fireworks within the City of Milwaukee is illegal, and anyone caught with them or seen setting them off faces extensive fines and sanctions,” said Ald. Terry L. Witkowski, co-chair of the Common Council’s Fireworks Task Force.

A news conference will be held at 11 a.m. tomorrow (Wednesday, June 20, 2007) at 1711 W. Mitchell St. publicizing the dangers of fireworks and drawing attention to the law banning the possession of fireworks in the city. Ald. Witkowski will be joined at the news conference by Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr., Ald. Joe Davis, Sr., Ald. James N. Witkowiak and other city officials.

The Mitchell Street residence where the news conference is being held is significant because the home sustained \$55,000 in damage by fire sparked by illegal fireworks on July 4, 2006. Just two days earlier a fire also started by fireworks caused \$75,000 damage to a building at 1007 W. Mitchell St. -- located as well in Ald. James N. Witkowiak’s 12th District.

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Fireworks News Conference/ADD ONE

Milwaukee neighborhoods have been blanketed by full-color, multi-page brochures and catalog mailings showing various types of illegal fireworks being offered for sale at retail outlet stores. Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr. said the flashy mailers are strikingly similar to toy catalogs and ad sections, making them attractive to children. "One brochure has a cartoon figure prominently featured, giving it almost a comic book appearance," he said.

Ald. Joe Davis, Sr., co-chair of the Fireworks Task Force, said the task force was established in 2006 and has been meeting monthly since January 2007. He said the task force's report and recommendations should be released soon.

-30-