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November 15, 2010

For Immediate Release

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UFD Partners With Lead Prevention Program on Home Inspections *"More than 300 Addresses Cited for Chipped, Peeling Paint"*

The exterior of more than 300 houses in some West Utica and Cornhill neighborhoods designated as 'high risk' for lead poisoning have been inspected by the Utica Fire Department over the past several months for chipped and peeling paint as part of a partnership program between the Oneida County Health Department and the City of Utica's Rental Occupancy Permit program, Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. said today.

"It's going to take the cooperative efforts of the entire community to end childhood lead poisoning in the City of Utica and through this partnership with the UFD's Rental Registry Program we can 'close the loop' on rental property owners who do not maintain their properties and are putting children at risk for lead poisoning," Picente said. Picente added, "By citing and ensuring the repair of more than 300 properties each year, we can eventually create a stable base of lead safe housing stock for our residents."

Chipping and peeling paint on exterior surfaces contributes to lead in the soil and on porches which can then be walked into the house. Houses with chipping and peeling paint are in violation of the New York State Property Maintenance Code and those creating conditions conducive to lead poisoning can be cited under Public Health Law. The streets chosen for the inspections were based on GIS mapping of areas at 'high risk' for lead poisoning and houses found to be in violation were cited. Due to impending cold weather, owners will have until June 1st, 2011 to repair exterior hazards. The Lead Primary Prevention Program, through its grant with the New York State Department of Health, is sending out information on lead safe work practices and a schedule of training classes to all property owners who are cited.

According to Utica Fire Chief Russ Brooks, the Rental Occupancy Permit Program was designed to ensure that all rental units are inspected on a regular basis to insure that all are equipped with smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and safe emergency exits. The process also compels property owners to be in compliance with the State's Property Maintenance Codes for chipping and peeling paint.

"My department, through Chief Fire Marshall Raymond Beck's office, has worked closely with Oneida County's Lead Primary Prevention Program to inspect housing in designated high risk areas of the city in order to identify properties that are not in compliance with the codes. We have developed a joint facsimile process that allows the lead program to verify that all

houses it inspects have been inspected by and are registered with the City of Utica," Brooks said. Brooks added, "This type of collaboration is essential if we are to be successful in our efforts to bring all rental properties into compliance and protect the community's children from the hazards of lead."

The City of Utica has one of the highest rates of lead poisoning in New York State due to the substandard condition of much of its aged housing stock. Children are often lead poisoned through the ingestion of lead-based paint chips or the inhalation of lead dust created by the friction of opening and closing old, single pane windows that have been covered with the lead-based paints commonly used in houses built before 1978.

For more information on lead hazards and lead safe work practices contact the Lead Primary Prevention program at 266-6147 or visit our web site at www.ocgov.net.