



ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS PHOTO BY TOM MCKINLAY

Duane D. Pearsall, president of the Denver-based Statitrol Corp., holds one of the new SmokeGard units in one hand and plugs up his ear with the other, as Roy E. Douglas, vice president, sales, for the firm blows heat from

his cigarette into the unit to set off the warning claxon. Cigarettes won't normally set off the unit unless the products of combustion are deliberately blown in as Douglas did for the purpose of demonstrating the unit.

Home fire sniffer gives loud warning

A fire sniffer, far more sensitive than the human nose, but with a warning claxon shrill enough to wake up the deepest sleeper, has been developed and brought to market by the Denver-based Statitrol Corp., whose offices and factory are at 140 S. Union Blvd. in Lakewood.

No bigger than a beer stein, the device, called SmokeGard, is designed for home use. It triggers when it detects small or smoldering fires before smoke or toxic gases accumulate.

Duane D. Pearsall, Statitrol president, said the device is an ion detector. Heat doesn't set it off, nor does it need the usual photo cell smoke detector.

When a fire starts, Pearsall said, small and often invisible particles of combustion are released into the air. These particles absorb ions electrically charged atoms, from the air and thus become charged themselves.

The SmokeGard unit detects these charged particles of combustion and instantly sets off its alarm horn to warn of danger.

The manufacturing company was founded in 1963 by Pearsall to make static neutralizers for industry. While experimenting with the neutral-

izers it was found ions created by them were readily absorbed in combustion particles from cigarette smoke.

That made ionization fire detection systems possible, and Statitrol has been building commercial systems like the one at the new Denver General Hospital for years. The systems are used around the world.

But the small home system—which runs on batteries, is self contained, and requires no wiring—is a new breakthrough in the art.

The device was actually worked out and patented by Statitrol consultant Lyman L. Blackwell.

The device attaches to a simple ceiling plate, which is installed with two screws. It runs a year on three small alkaline batteries, and has a chirp-chirp warning built in to let the owner know when the batteries are low.

Normal cigarette smoke won't set it off, but burn a roast in the kitchen and you'll get a claxon that sounds like the old time Mack Truck even before you are aware the meat is burning.

In the middle of the night that kind of a wake-up signal could be a life saver. The device is sold through Denver area department stores at under \$40.