

Fire Safe Council offers Firewise Consultations to residents outside of fire districts

The Plumas County Fire Safe Council with a grant from the Plumas National Forest is offering a free Firewise consultation to residents outside of a fire protection district. According to County parcel data, there are at least 3,400 parcels outside of a fire protection district that have a structure value of at least \$25,000. The Council would like to extend an invitation to those residents to receive a free homeowner Firewise consultation that assesses the risk of their home's loss or damage from a wildland fire. Consultations will be offered on a first come first served basis and the number selected may be limited due to funds available or time. If requests exceed funding, the Fire Safe Council may request additional grants to meet the demand. Residents are encouraged to call by October 15, 2002. For residents inside of a fire protection district, the Fire Safe Council has contacted each fire department chief to determine their interest, and to date thirteen fire districts in the County have chosen to participate either this year or next year.

Plumas County residents are and will continue to be "at risk" of wildland fires. Many of you have experienced the concern and threat from wildland fires in the past, such as the: Willow Fire-1987, Portola Fire-1988, Layman Fire 1989, Greenhorn Fire 1990, Cemetery Fire-1999, Mt Hough Complex fires-1999, Horton Fire-1999, Storrie Fire- 2000 and Stream Fire-2001. However, the actions taken by residents can have a dramatic effect on the resulting property damage and loss from these catastrophic wildfires.

If residents choose to have a Firewise consultation, a trained consultant will visit your home and assess the vulnerability of your residence to a wildland fire. The assessment considers access, roofing material, siding, windows, openings to attics and decks, adjacent hazards, and vegetation flammability both adjacent and up to 300 feet away from the home. Resident's will have an opportunity to discuss and better understand factors that contribute to a home's loss or damage from a wildfire. This consultation takes about one-half hour, and can be scheduled at your convenience.

Residents are reminded that it isn't always the flames directly adjacent to the structures that cause the home to be lost. It is often the ember blizzard, with tens of thousands of sparks, frequently traveling up to ¼ mile away when trees and brush explode in flame. It is these embers that land in receptive fuelbeds of shake roofs; needles or leaves on and around the structure; openings into an attic, or under a deck; that cause many homes to burn. Many homes that burn in a wildfire are lost from just a spark not the "wall of flames", and many homes burn before or after the main fire passes. We have been fortunate in the past, but we need to understand and take appropriate actions to prevent catastrophic losses in the future. It is not a question of if, but of when a wildland fire threatens lives and property in Plumas County.

For more information you can call 283-0829 or (800) 973-3320 to schedule a free consultation, or you can visit the Plumas County Fire Safe Council's web site at www.plumasfiresafe.org. County residents are also invited to become members and attend the monthly County Fire Safe Council meetings, on the second Wednesday of each month at 9:00 am at Feather River College.