

Plumas Fire Safe Council meets Thursday Feb. 14th and encourages resident to review their Personal Emergency Preparedness Plans now

The Plumas County Fire Safe Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 14, 2019 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at the Plumas County Planning & Building Services office, 555 Main Street in Quincy. The mission of the council is *To reduce the loss of natural and human made resources caused by wildfire through Firewise Community programs and pre-fire activities.* The Council encourages community members to get involved and join us at our monthly meetings to find out what projects are happening county wide and near your neighborhood. Learn about the Firewise Community program and how you can be a Firewise Community where you live.

February is an excellent time to get your own Personal Emergency Preparedness Plan in place. Sue McCourt, a Fire Prevention Specialist with the Plumas County Office of Emergency Services shares her thoughts on Emergency preparedness. "It doesn't matter if we are talking flood, fire or another emergency, we all need to have a plan in place. It is even more important living in a rural county. Part of that plan may be neighbors helping neighbors as was evident in the recent wildfires like the Camp Fire in Paradise. We are all in it together."

Here are some things you can do now to start your own personal preparedness plan.

1. **Sign up your cell phone with Plumas County's reverse 911** system "Code Red". You must self-register to get emergency alerts. Landlines are automatically in the system, but many of us may not be home to receive a call. Sign up is easy and free. It may save your life in the event of an evacuation notification. Register through the Plumas County Sheriff's office at www.plumascounty.us Look for "Emergency Alert Sign Up" bottom on the home page.
2. **Get a back up battery charger pack for your cell phone.** If the power goes out or you are away from a charging source, this is a valuable thing to have to keep in communication with everyone.
3. Get an **out of town contact** for your family to call. If you get separated from family and loved ones in an emergency you can let them know you are safe. Don't forget texts can get through easier than a phone call when many people are trying to call at once in an emergency.
4. **Know 2 routes out of your neighborhood** in the event of evacuation. Drive them to see if they are still good and make them known to your entire family.
5. **If you had to evacuate, where would you go?** During an evacuation, the Plumas County Sheriff is responsible for the decision to initiate different levels of evacuations depending on the emergency. In the event of a wildfire your route is dependent on which direction the fire is coming from. Shelters will be set up, however, many folks end up staying with friends or family. Now is a great time to think about who you could stay with, hotels (do you have a pet? do they take pets?) or where you would meet your family in different directions on either side

- of your community. Have that plan in place and be sure everyone in the family knows about it.
6. **Have a “Go Bag” ready.** Each person should have a bag packed with essential items, kept ready for use in the event of an emergency evacuation of one's home. Sample lists are available on the Plumas Fire Safe Council’s webpage under Fire and Emergency Preparedness tab. www.plumasfiresafe.org.
 7. **What about your pets?** Be sure you are in contact with someone that knows your pets are at home in case something happens when you are gone.
 8. **Review your home insurance to be sure you have enough coverage.** Talk to your insurance agent and make sure you are comfortable with the limits in your policy in case you lose your home to a fire or flood.
 9. **Videotape your house contents.** Part of your emergency plan should include an inventory of your home contents in case something happens. Cell phone cameras are great- take a few hours and film every room slowly opening every drawer. Don't forget to film the garage, sheds etc. In the event of a fire everything would need to be itemized- you'll never remember it all! If you have the time, photos and copies of all your high value item receipts are the best, but a video that is stored away from home or in the cloud is a pretty quick easy bet.

These official agency Facebook pages are good sites to follow to keep informed of emergencies in the area. Follow the **Plumas County Sheriff's Office** on Facebook for up to date info on evacuations <https://www.facebook.com/plumascountysheriff/> A good source for local wildfire information is on the **U.S. Forest Service-Plumas National Forest** Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/USFSPlumas/>

If you can't make this month's Fire Safe Council meeting, join us at the monthly meetings at 9 AM held on the second Thursday of each month. Citizens, business owners, and representatives from local, state, and federal government agencies come together to share a common interest in preventing loss of life and minimizing loss of property from wildland fires.

For more information about the Plumas Fire Safe Council, contact Council Coordinator, Hannah Hepner at (530) 283-0829.

Written by Sue McCourt