



Oak Hill Area
**FIRE SAFE
COUNCIL**

Spring 2026



FIREWISE USA
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

Dear Neighbors,

Upcoming Events:

April 21 (Tues) 6:30 - 8:30 Quarterly Meeting and Talk:

Pleasant Oak Baptist Church meeting room, 1731 Pleasant Valley Rd.
Talk at 7: Learn about the new local radio messaging and public safety program for all, and recent move away from GMRS

April 25 (Sat) 11 - 2 Community Day Picnic

Oak Hill Fire Station, 1834 Pleasant Valley Rd. See article next page

May 9 (Sat) 9 - 4. Green Waste Dumpster Day

Free dumpster for disposing of your slash. Great time to improve your defensible space! - tree limbs, dead leaves, etc.
Oak Hill Fire Station, 1834 Pleasant Valley Rd.



On-Going: Schedule a Free Assessment of your Home

Trained volunteers will meet with you for 1-2 hrs to give advice on effective ways to help your specific home survive a wildfire.

This is a more detailed assessment than what CAL FIRE and the County does with their def. space inspections, and, unlike theirs, is ONLY advice (not regulatory!) and includes home hardening. Contact us at info@oakhillfiresafe.org to get on the schedule.

(The Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council can earn \$50 for each assessment now, thanks to the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council - our parent organization. This helps our council pay for banners, printing materials, etc.)

The OHAFSC's 5th Annual Community Day

Hope you can join us!- Apr 25

Our 5th Annual Community Day Picnic will once again bring residents from Hanks Exchange, Oak Hill, Zandonella, and Pleasant Valley Road areas (between Cedar Ravine and Big Cut) together, with music, free food, fire safe displays, Sierra Wildlife Rescue guest animals, and kids' games and ember hunt.

Add to our posters showcasing just how much area residents have done this year — of home hardening and defensible space work.

We use that info to help us keep our Firewise Community designation - good for insurance discounts (see article pg. 5)

LOCATION: Back of Oak Hill Fire Station, 1834 Pleasant Valley Rd



Camaraderie with neighbors, music, food, and info



Kids games and ember hunt

County defensible space inspections are coming soon to **Oak Hill Road area.**
Watch for more info

Tiger Lily was done in 2024 (CALFIRE) Hanks Exchange done last year (County)
Their coordinated goal: inspect every parcel in the county about every 3-5 years.

Hiring a Contractor to help with defensible space or home hardening?

Wondering where to hire someone that might be wildfire-savvy, rather than just trying to sell you expensive sprinkler systems? (Sprinklers tend to send water everywhere BUT where you need it during the high winds of wildfire!). Here is one possible resource:



[“Living with Wildfire” website](https://www.livingwithfire.org/defensible-space-training/) lists **building and landscape professionals** who **work in our area** and **have gone through a recent full day wildfire training** in Nevada: <https://www.livingwithfire.org/defensible-space-training/>
(Look for the ones labelled as “El Dorado County” or “Placerville”).

Note: *The Oak Hill Fire Safe Council is not able to endorse any particular contractors.*

And Remember, any contractor performing work of \$1,000 or more (combined labor and material costs) must be licensed by the Contractors State License Board (CLSB).

- You can check the contractor license number at <http://www.cslb.ca.gov> to make sure a license is current and in good standing. (Direct link to search tool - <https://cslb.ca.gov/OnlineServices/CheckLicense/CheckLicense.aspx>)
- CLSB also has a brochure on their website that gives more information, including how to inquire about a contractor’s license history and any pending or prior disciplinary actions. https://www.cslb.ca.gov/Resources/GuidesAndPublications/WYSKbro_ENG0525_ADA.pdf

January meeting: **DRIVEWAY/ROADWAY Presentation**

Chief Jacob Poganski, the new fire Marshal for our El Dorado County Fire Protection District, gave an informative talk on making our driveways and roadways safer during wildfire at the January quarterly meeting of the OHAFSC. He answered lots of questions from the 17 or so attendees and we thank him for joining us! Thank you too to the Pleasant Oak church that offered their meeting room.

Some key points:

- For 10 feet in either direction, the area next to private roads and driveways should have only well separated mature trees, limbed up 15 feet, and ground cover less than 18 inches high. Invasive plants, brush and ladder fuels should all be removed.
- Do NOT install speed bumps! These slow down emergency vehicles and evacuations. Firefighters generally hate them.



•**Address numbers** should be at least 4” high on small roadways, and 6” on larger roadways (where speeds are >25 mph). Signs should be kept clear of weeds and should be highly reflective, with text that contrasts with the background color.

•**Street signs** are really important too on all our little private roads. They should also be 4” tall (6-8” for faster roads”), highly reflective with contrasting colors, mounted parallel to the street they name, and clearly visible from both directions. Lettering should be both upper and lower

case.



For more details see [HTTPS://WWW.ELDORADOCOUNTYFIRE.COM/](https://www.eldoradocountyfire.com/preparing-for-wildfire)
[PREPARING-FOR-WILDFIRE](https://www.eldoradocountyfire.com/preparing-for-wildfire). (Scroll down to “access and egress”)

OHAFCSC offers reflective address signs with 4" numbers at cost plus a small donation to the fire safe council. Order at: <https://www.edcfiresafe.org/oak-hill-area-fsc-emergency-address-signs>

Road signs can be purchased from local printing companies such as Spot On Signs (Diamond Springs), Minuteman Press (Placerville) and others.

"If we can't find you, we can't help you."

Chief Poganski

Firefighters or ambulances responding to your neighborhood may not be familiar with local roads and access points and often are driving at night and/or in dense smoky conditions.

Addresses also help with staging their firefighting, letting other fire service members know where they are.

OUR FIREWISE DESIGNATION RENEWED

Last November we were successful in renewing our firewise designation, as is required every 5 years. This means you are eligible for an insurance discount.

To receive this discount. A) verify you are within the OHAFCSC boundary, which includes Zandonella, Oak Hill, and Hanks Exchange area, as well as the areas along Pleasant Valley Rd between Big Cut and Cedar Ravine. See [map](#). B) Find the Firewise certificate for OHAFCSC [here](#), which you can then show to your insurance agent. The discount can be 10% or more of the fire portion of your house insurance. You generally have to pursue this discount annually yourself.

Being Firewise does NOT mean we are Fire Safe- it only means we are actively working on reducing our risk as a community!

Being firewise means two things:

1. **We have a plan and are working to improve** our residents' Wildfire safety

2. **We are eligible still for insurance discounts**, as part of the State Insurance Commissioner's "Safer from Wildfire" program. This applies to everyone within the boundaries of the OHAFCSC. For map, see [here](#)

What Volunteers Driving Around Saw, as we surveyed our Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council:

As part of the Firewise renewal process, we submitted the sum total of work that was done by residents, as recorded at our Community Day. Volunteers also drove around our Fire Safe Council surveying our shared fire risk still remaining. It was observed that:

- Nearly all homes predate 2008 fire safe building code standards, but many have been retrofitted to be safer (Class A roofs, double paned windows, well maintained siding, etc.)
- Very few homes have implemented yet the recommended truly clear Zone 0 (0-5 ft from house).
- 50-60% have good defensible space out 30 ft, but the reduced fuel zone 2 (30-100ft) generally needs more work.
- Many private roads and driveways are overgrown and need vegetation removed (see earlier article on road needs)
- Many large parcels do have good shaded fuel breaks now (especially after grant work was complete) but ongoing maintenance will be needed.

Thank you OHAFSC volunteers Lester Lubetkin, Sandy and Chuck Helms, Michelle Wolken, and Mark Leighton for helping us survey our area for the Firewise application!

Our Firewise plan for the next 5 years is to:

- Keep up community meetings and Community Day
- Update our website and improve social media reach
- Keep up newsletter and annual snail mailing (1)
- Encourage neighborhood meetings and work parties
- Continue and expand home assessments done
- Provide Greenwaste Dumpster days and other support for individuals
- Continue seeking funds to support this plan

Fire Safe Council Planning Meetings

Want to influence what the Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council does? We hold quarterly Community Planning Meetings, generally now at the Pleasant Oak Baptist Church meeting room, and with a talk following. (Third Mondays of Jan, Apr, July, Oct, 6-8PM) We discuss events, grants, ongoing projects etc. in the OHAFSC. We'd love to have you join us and offer your input! Contact us for locations and times info@oakhillfiresafe.org



Sincerely,

The Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council Team

info@oakhillfiresafe.org

Share this newsletter in your neighborhood! Or, did you get this newsletter and want to be added to our email list? Send us your email to info@oakhillfiresafe.org with heading “join OHAFSC email list”