We are very proud of our communities’ achievements with all three of our member communities having renewed their Firewise recognition for 2016. Additionally, we are pleased to be part of a growing movement with 140 new member communities nationally.

The new Firewise communities of 2015 come from 23 different states across every region of the nation.

The top 5 states for new community growth in 2015 are Oregon, Colorado, California, Georgia, and Minnesota.

The new communities represent over 110,000 residents playing their role as the resident in wildfire preparedness.

The new communities also achieved over $2.5 million in reported volunteer hour and project related investment around their communities to enhance mitigation, preparedness, and education of residents.

Firewise - NFPA

Defensible Space - Get Your FREE Personal Review

Do this exercise: Imagine it’s summer, it’s hot, there’s a brisk wind and FIRE is COMING! Now, go outside, look at your home and property and decide if you are ready for FIRE? Do you have adequate defensible space? Is your property:

- Clear of brush and ladder fuels?
- Are your rain gutters and roof free of combustible debris?
- Is your landscaping fire resistant, with proper spacing between bushes; are trees appropriately trimmed & limbed up?
- When it’s summer, it’s hot and when fire is coming, it’s too late!

Please review this defensible space brochure <Brochure Link>. Remember the FREE CHIPPING SERVICE offered by EDC Fire Safe Council <LINK>. For those who would like a hard copy brochure, please let us know and one will be delivered. Also, help our communities by reaching out to your neighbors; share this brochure and information about a property review.

If you are unsure if your property has been cleared to comply with Fire Safety requirements, El Dorado Hills Fire Department is offering personal defensible space / safety reviews for those who request them. In order to participate, please call Stephanie Parrish at 916-933-6623 ext. 1044 to schedule your appointment.

Winter and Spring offer the ideal timeframe to plan and perform your defensible space work. Be prepared for fire and at the same time reduce risk by doing your part. Working together, agencies and private land owners, our actions will protect human lives, natural resources, residences, and wildlife and make all safer from a catastrophic wildfire.

EDC Fire Safe Council is developing a Countywide CWPP. Please take the survey at: <LINK>

Your input is important. Please make the time to take the survey. Be heard and be counted, before the survey closes.

Speaker
Kristine Oase-Guth and her team from El Dorado County Public Health - Emergency Preparedness
This is a great presentation on how to be ready for emergencies. Their outreach program has been well received at other fire safe councils.

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Your input is important. Please make the time to take the survey. Be heard and be counted, before the survey closes.

Reporting Numbers to Call
Report non-desired activities in a proper and timely fashion.
- Report illegal parking or traffic problems to the Highway Patrol (916) 861-1300.
- Report illegal parkland activities to State Parks (916) 358-1300.
- Report illegal activity on non-park properties to the Sheriff (530) 621-6600.
Early Spring? First Sightings! - NPR 2.2.16

Groundhog Day: Punxsutawney Phil Did Not See His Shadow

A crowd gathered at Gobbler's Knob early this morning, awaiting the emergence of the groundhog named Punxsutawney Phil. After a tap of a cane on Phil's tree-trunk cage, his door was opened, and the animal emerged.

He was held aloft to cheers and applause. Phil did not respond, other than to blink. Placed on top of the trunk, he attempted to flee before his actions were closely analyzed.

Interpreting Phil's behavior, the Groundhog Club emcee proclaimed, “There is no shadow to be cast! An early spring is my forecast!”

The findings were independently verified by a groundhog in Canada, where Shubenacadie Sam also saw no shadow. Of course, other groundhogs are available. There's always Staten Island Chuck in New York and General Beau Lee in Georgia — both of whom concur with Phil. That's enough to make up what some would call a repetition of groundhogs (which is evidently the collective noun for the animals, although that seems a bit too cute).

Whether Punxsutawney Phil and his friends are correct or not about an early spring, the up and down temperatures we have been experiencing have produced the first reports of both a shoreline fire and rattlesnake sightings. Please be aware of your surroundings as snakes become active and report any illegal activities to the proper agencies as noted on the front page of this newsletter.

Tackling Gutters to Reduce Wildfire Risk - NFPA

When protecting your home from wildfire you need to get your mind in the gutter

We often say how the small things matter BIG when it comes to protecting your home from wildfire. Gutters on your home certainly fall into this category. Gutters perform yeoman’s duty in getting water off of your roof and away from your foundation, certainly a very important function. But when wildfires happen, they become a hazard filled with dry dead leaves, pine needles and debris that give blowing embers a foothold for ignition to your home.

Keeping gutters clear of flammable debris is not only important, it’s not something you have to do once a year and then forget about. Maintenance of your home ignition zone is an ongoing process whether it is your gutters or other parts of your property.

And that’s not the whole story. What your gutters are made of is equally important…..metal gutters, while more expensive and sometimes requiring additional maintenance tend to fair much better under fire conditions than vinyl, which can often melt and ignite carrying fire to other parts of the structure.

Reducing Wildfire Risk Means Thinking Close to Home...like 0-5 feet - NFPA

Trying to reduce your wildfire risk around your home does not have to be complicated or overwhelming. In fact, most folks can significantly improve their homes wildfire survivability over a couple of weekends. If you have fire resistant roofing and siding, you are well on your way to getting your home prepared. Next on your list is to evaluate what the ignition potential is within 5 feet of your foundation.

NFPA’s Firewise Principles and information contained in its “Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone” course are sources of information on what to do in this critical zone. The 0-5 feet zone is the “non-combustible” zone. You want to make sure that you have nothing flammable in this zone. Natural mulches should be replaced with decorative stone or rock. Make sure if you have a deck, that it is clear of debris underneath and remove patio furniture cushions when fire weather conditions are present. Woodpiles should be no closer than 30 feet to the structure. Leaves, debris and pine needles need to be absent from roofs, porches, decks and from the 0-5 foot zone. If wood fences connect to the home, consider a metal or non-flammable section that abuts the structure.

Nooks and crannies need special attention. Think of where leaves, debris and snow blow in and around the home, this is also where embers will land before, during and after wildfire passage. Embers landing in dry debris beds of dead leaves and pine needles will gain an ignition foothold right against your home.
Safety Tips

- Pets are curious. They may bump into, turn on, or knock over cooking equipment. Keep pets away from stoves and countertops.
- Keep pets away from candles, lamps, and space heaters.
- Always use a metal or heat-tempered glass screen on a fireplace and keep it in place.
- Keep pets away from a chimney’s outside vents. Have a “pet-free zone” of at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from the fireplace. Glass doors and screens can stay dangerously hot for several hours after the fire goes out.
- Consider battery-operated, flameless candles. They can look and smell like real candles.
- Some pets are chewers. Watch pets to make sure they don’t chew through electrical cords. Have any problems checked by a professional.

Smoke Alarms

- Have working smoke alarms on every level of the home. Test your smoke alarms at least once a month.
- If the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out.
- Never go back inside for pets in a fire. Tell firefighters if your pet is trapped.

Pets and Wildfires

Make sure pets are included in your family’s wildfire evacuation plan. Build an evacuation kit for each pet in your household. Ensure each kit is a size and weight that can be quickly and easily loaded into a vehicle when packing to evacuate.

Fact

Pets and wild animals have a part in starting about 700 home fires per year. Roughly three-quarters of these fires were started by cooking equipment, fireplaces or chimneys, lighting, or candles.