



FIREBRAND

This newsletter provides information about protecting homes against wildfire, preventing fires inside and outside the home, and planning for emergencies. *Firebrand* is produced by the Rogue Valley Fire Prevention Cooperative, which works collaboratively with all fire service agencies in southwestern Oregon to fulfill the outreach and education goals of the Jackson County Integrated Fire Plan. To obtain more details about this project, please visit the Co-Op page at: www.rvfpc.com.

For more information please contact:

Ashley Du Brey

541-664-3328

ardubrey@odf.state.or.us

Defensible Space- What You Can You Do To Protect Your Home?

Defensible space is a topic that Rogue Valley residents have been educated on for many years. The 2009 fire season was proof that defensible space does work and is effective in minimizing fire damage. The Lone Mountain Fire, Ashland's Siskiyou Fire and Medford's Deer Ridge Fire are examples where fuel reduction treatments done by private landowners helped save homes, property, municipal watersheds, livestock, and possibly lives.

Last year in Josephine County's Illinois Valley, a wildfire broke out near Lone Mountain Road west of the community of O'Brien. Due to summer winds and warm temperatures, the fire quickly spread into dense and dry vegetation. Flames over 100 feet high moved toward homes in the community of O'Brien. Fortunately many residents had thinned vegetation around the driveway allowing easy access for fire engines to enter the property. The thinning also slowed the fire's intensity which saved many homes.



Note how the soil was virtually sterilized as the Deer Ridge fire came up the hill toward this home. However, when it hit the "defensible space" the fire laid down, and damage to vegetation and the soil was less severe. Plus, the home survived!

Unfortunately, due to the lack of some owners' awareness of defensible space, five outbuildings burned, including a detached garage with a very valuable old automobile.

Later in the summer a red flag warning (term used to alert forecast users to an ongoing or imminent critical fire weather pattern) was issued in the Ashland area. There was low relative humidity and strong winds pushing from the east. Due to these conditions, the Siskiyou Fire grew to 190 acres in just a couple of hours, which started on the morning of Sept. 21.

Defensible Space

Creating defensible space around your home is the best way to protect your home from wildfires and allowing firefighters to fight fire safely. The first 30 feet surrounding your home is the primary ignition zone. Here are some simple actions that a homeowner can take to help protect their homes from wildfire:

- 1) Removing dead and dying debris - particularly from places that it piles up near the home such as in gutters and planters.
- 2) Storing firewood at least 20 feet away from the home .
- 3) Properly maintaining the plants that are in the area by pruning, removing dead and dying materials, and keeping them well-watered and green.
- 4) Use fire-resistant building materials (such as metal roofing).
- 5) Reducing fuels around your home (such as wood piles).
- 6) Planting fire-resistant plants in your landscape.

To learn more please visit:
www.oregon.gov/ODF/homewildfiresafety.shtml

The winds quickly pushed the fire toward hundreds of homes in the Tolman Creek area. As the fire progressed, 150 homes were evacuated. The community became increasingly concerned that the fire was headed to the Ashland watershed, the city's primary water source.

Fortunately, residents had collaborated with the Ashland Fire & Rescue for years on thinning vegetation around their homes.

Eighty acres of fuels reduction treatment was within the Siskiyou Fire's perimeter. When the fire's front come to the thinned property, it slowed enough for firefighters to establish a controlled fire line. Firefighters used bulldozers and hand-dug line to form a perimeter around the fire. Because the treatment areas had been mapped, firefighters were able to use the information for more tactical suppression as well as to provide safe access and evacuate homes threatened by the fire. Because of the implementation of defensible space, between 25 to 30 homes were saved from fire damage. (See photo above).

Lastly, Medford's Deer Ridge Fire ignited merely four hours after Ashlands' Siskiyou Fire began. The winds were strong and flames grew northward across the hillside terrain below Roxy Ann Peak. In a matter of hours, over 600 acres had burned; however, no houses had been damaged.



Thinning of ladder fuels along both sides of this driveway dropped the Lone Mountain Fire to the ground, thereby allowing Illinois Valley Fire District vehicles to safely reach the home and assist the homeowner in evacuating his livestock and pets!



This photo elaborates on how the fire moved through brush and towards a housing community. This hillside home in Ashland had a defensible space around it. The Siskiyou Fire was traveling in the crowns of the trees rapidly up the hill towards the home. This photo was taken literally moments after the fire hit the thinned defensible space area and died down to nothing.

Photo taken by: ODF

The fire slowed significantly when it approached defensible space area around the home, which helped firefighters to stop the fire from spreading further.

Creating a defensible space will insure a safe environment around your home. Be sure to build a defensible space around your properties and encourage your neighbors to do the same.

By: Sandy Shaffer, Applegate Fire Plan Coordinator

(With thanks for technical assistance to Tim Gonzales, BLM Fire Mitigation & Education Specialist; Greg Kleinberg, Fire Marshall for Medford Fire Department; and, Chris Chambers, Forest Resource

Animal Emergency Planning

Jackson and Josephine counties are developing animal evacuation/ emergency plans and officials are encouraging pet and livestock owners to develop their own emergency plans as well.

There are a few very important steps you can take to ensure the well-being of your animals. Make arrangements ahead of time with friends, boarding facilities, etc. for sheltering animals in the event you need to evacuate. Make sure each animal has identification and is up to date on vaccinations. Have pets' food and medications close by so that you can grab a week's supply quickly. Also purchasing pet carriers can help to keep animals safe during emergencies

Exotic pets may be more difficult to find alternative shelter for, so make sure that you have a plan in place. You don't want your pets left behind in an emergency.



Photo taken by: ODF

Animal Emergency Planning Websites

For more information about animal emergency planning, please visit: http://www.avma.org/disaster/saving_family.asp today.

To better protect your home from wildfires visit: Firewise.org

To help keep your living environment safe visit: Keeporegon-green.org

Read how to prepare for a wildfire at: RVFPC.com

Learn how to prevent wildfires at: Smokey-bear.com

Visit: Fema.gov to create safety zones around your home.



Replacing Your Roof, Doors or Windows This Year Can Earn Tax Credit

Get the details

Please visit:

energystar.gov. Click on the button “Tax Credits for Energy Efficiency” to learn more today.



Photo taken by: ODF

Building materials can substantially reduce the chance of a home becoming endangered by wildfire. Wooden shakes and shingles can increase the risk of structural loss due to wildfire. Because of this, both Jackson and Josephine Counties have prohibited these types of roofing on newer construction in the Wildland/Urban Interface due to their dangers.

If you’ve been thinking about replacing your roof, some windows and an exterior door or two, then you need to know about the federal tax credit available through the end of this year. The credit applies to qualifying Energy Star-rated products, such as certain asphalt roofing shingles, thermal multi-pane windows, and storm doors. A credit can be claimed for 30 percent of a product’s purchase price, up to \$1,500.

Energy efficient roofing material that is eligible for the tax credit is also highly fire resistant. Energy Star-rated storm windows and doors, when properly installed, keep damaging smoke and soot out of a home’s interior much better than older windows and doors. Double-pane thermal windows also resist breakage from radiant heat longer than older double-pane windows.

If you want to take advantage of these tax credits, make sure the products you buy meet the latest ultra-efficient Energy Star standards. Windows, for example, must have U factor and Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) ratings of 0.30 or less; these ratings are found on an Energy Star sticker attached to qualifying products. Doors must also meet International Code Council (IECC) construction standards.

Roofing products covered by the tax credit include metal roofing materials with “appropriate pigmented coatings” and asphalt shingles with “appropriate cooling granules.” Unfortunately, a list of qualifying products isn’t available on the Energy Star website. Consumers are directed to get a manufacturer’s certification statement of tax credit compliance from the roofing product manufacturer.

The tax credit applies only to the cost of qualifying roofing materials, windows and doors, but not for the cost of installation.

Finally, before slapping down your money, check with your accountant or tax preparer to make sure you’re going to qualify. Keep all purchase receipts and the products manufacturer’s certification statements.

Smoke Alarm Refresher

Statistics show that over 3,000 people die in home fires in the United States each year. The majority of these cases are due to nonoperational or a lack of smoke alarms installed. Not having smoke alarms installed in a home is not only illegal, but it is a danger to you and your family. When both smoke alarms and fire sprinklers are operational, the risk of someone dying from fire related injuries is reduced by 82 percent, compared to a residence without either. To ensure your safety, please follow these simple steps:

- Place properly installed and maintained smoke alarms both inside and outside of sleeping areas and on every level of your home.
- Purchase smoke alarms that initiate sound quickly. The U.S. Fire Administration recommends that every residence and place where people sleep be equipped with both ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms or dual sensor smoke alarms, which contain both ionization and photoelectric smoke sensors.
- Test smoke alarms monthly and change alkaline batteries at least once every year, or as instructed by the manufacturer. You can use a date you already know, like your birthday or when you change your clocks as a reminder.
- Avoid painting or covering the fire sprinkler, because that will affect the sensitivity to heat.

If you have any further questions, contact your local structural fire protection district for more information about smoke alarms .



Photos taken by: ODF

Smoke Alarm Upkeep

Once a week

Check the alarm by pressing the button.

Once a year

Change your battery (unless it uses a lithium battery)

Twice a year

Vacuum and wipe the smoke alarm casing to ensure dust isn't blocking the sensor chamber.

Plan Ahead

It is important that families know what to do in an event of a fire. Develop a home evacuation or escape plan with these 3 essentials.

1. Take a strategic look at your living space, where are the closest exits?
2. Where is a safe place to meet outside once everyone is evacuated?
3. Once outside call 911

Forestland Urban Interface Fire Protection Act

This often refers to as Senate Bill 360, enlists the aid of property owners toward the goal of turning fire-vulnerable urban and suburban properties into less-volatile zones where firefighters may more safely and effectively defend homes from wildfires. Basically, the law requires property owners in identified forestland-urban interface areas to reduce excess vegetation, which may fuel fire, around structures and along driveways.

Fire Prevention Team Recruitment

The Oregon Department of Forestry, Jackson County and Rogue Valley Fire Prevention Cooperative are looking for volunteers to help prevent wildfires, and reduce property damage caused by fires. Volunteers who participate in this endeavor become part of a fire prevention team that works countywide to stop potentially damaging wildfires before they start. They also advise residents in fire-vulnerable areas how to protect homes against damage or destruction from wildfire.

Fire prevention team members receive training on the fundamentals of fire causes, fire behavior and suppression. Training also includes fire prevention strategies, Gregorc Learning styles Other interpersonal communication skills are developed as well as roles of local emergency management agencies.

Volunteers receive compensation through accident insurance coverage (during field assignments), meals and beverages . Members primarily work during high fire danger and may be exposed to heavy smoke. Necessary protective clothing such as reflective vests and hardhats will be provided, volunteers must provide personal clothing appropriate for field work, such as boots, work pants and shirts.

Team members must be at least 18 years of age, of good health, and commit to at least 40 hours of community service to receive training. Volunteers who work with children must satisfactorily complete a background check.

Oregon Forestland- Urban Interface Fire Protection Act

The Jackson County Forestland-Urban Interface Classification Committee will meet again this spring. The committee's duty is to identify and classify lands where residential properties are at risk of damage or destruction by wildfires.

The identification and classification process takes place every five years.

Owners of identified properties are required to create and maintain fuel breaks around structures, according to standards in the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act, often referred to as SB 360.

The committee initially identified and classified forestland-urban interface lands in 2004, and landowners were notified by the Oregon Department of Forestry in 2005. The self-certification cards that landowners received at that time become void in July. New cards will be mailed out later this year.

\$400 Fuels Reduction Grant

Fuel-reduction assistance grants are available this year for homes located in wildfire hazard areas in Jackson County. Grants will be administered by the Oregon Department of Forestry's Medford Unit.

Project that results in a 100-foot vegetation fuel break around a home and along the driveway can be awarded up to a \$400 grant. Guidelines for getting a fuel-reduction assistance grant are as follows:

- The lot must be within an approved grant area.
- A fuel reduction plan must be developed before the project begins.
- Both the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) inspector and the landowner must agree to the plan.
- A completion date is established as part of the plan.
- A grant payment cannot be made for fuel-reduction projects already completed.

By meeting the requirements of a fuel-reduction grant, a home will also satisfy the requirements of the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act (SB 360).

Payment will be made upon satisfactory completion of the project. Contact your local ODF inspector and schedule an appointment for a final inspection. If the project has been completed according to the plan, both the ODF inspector and the landowner must sign a project completion form.



Call (541) 664-3328 to schedule a free fuel-reduction inspection and to start the grant process.

Grants are available whenever fire season is not in effect, this is generally from October through May.
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Outcome

Completion of a fuel reduction grant project will greatly increase the chance of a home surviving a wildfire, but it is not a guarantee.

Maintaining the fuel reduction area is important. Periodic mowing of dry grasses, raking of dry needles and leaves and removing dead vegetation will help to keep a fire from igniting in and spreading through a fuel break area.



Photos taken by: ODF

RVFPC

PO Box 3301

Central Point, OR
97502

Smokey Events

Safe Kids Day

Medford Wal-Mart

10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Car seat and bicycle safety, fire safety with Smokey Bear and Fire Safety House

Shady Cove

Wildflower Show

Middle School Gym

10:00a.m.–2:00p.m.

Fire resistant plants and landscaping

Here Comes Smokey!

First graders in Jackson and Josephine counties will see Smokey Bear this spring as he makes his annual circuit to remind children to never play with fire. Smokey and his helpers, members of the Rogue Valley Fire Prevention Cooperative, visit thousands of students to talk about Smokey's Five Points of Fire Safety:

- Smokey's friends never play with matches or lighters
- If matches or lighters are found lying around at home, ask an adult to put them in a safe place
- If these items are found on the school grounds, ask a teacher or other adult to remove them
- If they are found on the way to the school bus, ask the bus driver to pick them up and dispose of them safely
- To report a fire, call 9-1-1

