



THE KEY TO A SAFER TOMORROW

# FIREWISE BULLETIN

WINTER 2015

## ***A VERY MERRY, HAPPY HOLIDAY EDITION!***

The Napa Communities Firewise Foundation board and staff would like to wish everyone a wonderful Holiday Season along with best wishes for the New Year. This season is a time to be thankful and enjoy time with family and friends.

In spite of the disasters close to home with the Valley, Rocky and Wragg fires this year, we do have a lot to be thankful for. The proverbial glass should be considered half full as we look forward to 2016.



## **ON ALERT?**

Napa County has an excellent public alert system, Nixle, which provides alerts via both text and email. Nixle is used to provide public safety and other advisories such as law enforcement emergencies, road closures, missing persons, severe weather, etc. with last but not least fire alerts.

Nixle is free to residents and registering is as easy as texting your zip code to 888777

or going online at <https://local.nixle.com/registration>.

If you tried past alert systems, you need to be aware that this system works well and quickly. Notices are provided almost real time, without significant delay.

Recently, a Napa neighborhood was asked to shelter in place due to a police



action. Nixle was utilized to alert the community beyond the specific calls made to homes in the neighborhood.

Join Nixle today and be on alert – it's free and easy to do!

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# THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER.....

## A Message from Stephen Gort

ANGWIN is underway! It is my great pleasure to welcome the community of Angwin to the Napa Firewise family. We hosted a "Home Ignition Zone" defensible space workshop at Pacific Union College in August this year and it was attended by 60 community residents. We covered fire history in Napa County, fire safety regulations, home defensible space concepts and a lecture on fire-hardening the home.

Since that time, we have had 20 people sign-up to work on the new Angwin Fire Safe Council. The new Council has held two very productive meetings. Napa Firewise presented the group with a comprehensive community risk assessment, and a list of 20 projects, by neighborhood which will be addressed over time. In the second meeting time was devoted to prioritizing their projects

as well as a lecture on developing their Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which is well on its way.

As with all new communities we will be working to perform a Demonstration Project to alert the residents of the start of the new Fire Safe Council and their plans. The project will take on clearing the roadsides connecting the work done earlier at Deer Park all the way to Angwin village.

I am extremely happy to have this new community off to a great start with Napa Firewise, along with their new Volunteer Fire Department Chief JR Rogers and their CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Jason Martin. Go ANGWIN!

## A CHIPPER RECORD - ONE MILLION YARDS!

NCCF began the chipper program in 2007 to provide free on site brush chipping to those in fire danger zones within Napa County. The goal was to help residents create defensible space in an environmentally friendly way. Incredibly, almost 1,000,000 cubic yards have been chipped to date! Put in perspective, that is equivalent to 100,000 dump truck loads (10 yard capacity) or fifty thousand large debris boxes filled (20 yard capacity). It is a volume that is hard to imagine, so suffice to say that it is a whole lot of brush that was chipped rather than burned or hauled to waste disposal.

In addition to tracking volume of piles to be chipped, labor hours that Napa residents devoted to create the piles are also recorded. An equally incredible number of almost 110,000 hours we spent clearly brush. These hours equate to a service in kind value of over \$2.7 million dollars!

The chipper program runs annually April through October. So now is the time to start hacking and whacking creating new piles to feed the hungry chipper. Piles need to be stacked brush butt end out towards



*A brush hungry beast*

a road accessible by the truck and chipper. Accessible does not infer paved but easily, safely passable, and space to turn around.

Chipping may be requested beginning in March for visits starting in April. As you can see from the tallies above, it is important for us to know and track the volume to be chipped along with the labor hours to create it. Requests may be made online at [www.napafirewise.com](http://www.napafirewise.com) or by phone.

## SO WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

NCCF is an independent, non-profit corporation. We are funded by donations from individuals, companies and Napa County. We are proud to say our goal is to use 80% of our annual budget for mitigation projects – actual project work to reduce fire hazards. The balance

is destined for education, newsletters, wildland and wildfire consultant among other Firewise activities. The NCCF directors and support staff donate their time and efforts without monetary compensation. We are truly a volunteer, charity organization.

We realize that there are many needy organizations and causes. We do appreciate the community's continued support of our efforts and the donations that we receive. Rest assured, money donated to NCCF will be used to help make Napa even more Firewise.

We need your support

[\(CLICK HERE to make a Donation – and Thank You\)](#)

# PG&E DONATES ELECTRIC SAFETY VEHICLE TO CITY OF NAPA

PG&E has an initiative to donate a series of hybrid-type, plug-in electric trucks to local fire departments. In addition to being able to run all electric, the trucks are capable of providing up to 40 kVa exportable power. To put it in perspective, the truck is mobile generator with on board batteries that is capable of powering up to 10 homes. A truck was recently donated by PG&E to the City of Napa.

According to John Callanan, Napa Fire Department Division Chief of Operations, the truck has many potential uses in both emergency and non-emergency situations. The unit could power a block of homes in the event of power failure, provide mobile power for public works personnel, power a cooling center in the summer utilized in conjunction with the Heavy Rescue (USAR) Trailer, among many other uses yet to be determined.

PG&E also partnered with Napa Firewise and donated \$25,000 to our foundation and NCFE donated a vehicle charging station to the City of Napa for the new truck.

The truck is an innovation in response equipment and provides a new level of emergency preparedness to Napa.



## TIS THE SEASON YET AGAIN

The Holiday Season, rains and greening of the hillsides herald another end of fire season and beginning of the other season – the time to prepare for the next fire season. In addition to extending the defensible space perimeter and fuel loads, there are other activities such as:

- Roofs and gutters need to be kept clear of leaves for both proper drainage and fire safety.

- Wood piles and other flammables should not be stored under roof eaves along structures. Wood should be stored a safe distance from structures.
- Chimneys should be cleaned and inspected prior to starting those yuletide fires.
- Homes should be re-evaluated for fire hardening and fire survivability.

The NCFE and CAL FIRE web sites among others each have resources available to assist one with most every facet of being firewise. Printed copies are also available for those who prefer more traditional reading. If actual advice is preferred, now is the time to request a visit from CAL FIRE to personally assess your individual needs. The resources are there, you just need to access them or ask for help.

Donations to NCFE are tax deductible

# REFLECTING ON ADDRESS SIGNS

If your home doesn't already have reflective address signs, please keep reading this article.

The next time you are driving the road at night, start comparing reflective address signs to non-reflective. It is an easy thing to do and the difference you'll see is striking. Non-reflective signs are generally far more difficult to read than reflective. This is true even when lit by headlights or their own lighting.

There is a reason public road signs have reflective numbers on reflective backgrounds – you can read them. It is the same reason the Napa County code for address signage stipulate four inch reflective address numbers on a reflective background.

The numbers on our rural roads often increase and jump inconsistently. There are clusters of homes off common private roads resulting in multiple addresses at one main road exit point. Emergency responders depend upon address signage to find their way. The question to ask yourself is which would you rather have an EMT or a fireman trying to read in a night time emergency

– reflective or non-reflective. When seconds count, reflective address signs do make a difference.

Reflective address numbers and signs are available at all home improvement or hardware stores. There are companies online, such as [www.safetyhomeaddress.com](http://www.safetyhomeaddress.com) with moderately priced (as in \$30 or less) signs made to order. If you have existing signage that you are particularly fond of, don't replace it but augment it with a reflective one.

If you live down a private drive with multiple homes, please make sure to mark each Y or T intersection clearly with reflective numbers. A wrong turn down a narrow road can take minutes to figure out and get turned around, especially for a fire truck. In addition to intersections, your house itself also needs to be clearly marked.

Reflective addresses aren't just a wise thing to do, they are 'Firewise'.



*Which would you rather read at night?*



*Remember to mark each Y on private drives*

## Meet the Board

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