



ORACLE FIRE DISTRICT (OFD)

# Firewise News



News from Oracle Fire District to the community . . .

520-896-2980

www.oraclefire.org

VOLUME VIII

PO Box 977 • 1475 W. American Ave., Oracle, AZ 85623

SUMMER 2018

## To Residents of Oracle . . .



It is my privilege to have been your Fire Chief for over a year. Prior to my appointment in January 2017, I served as Assistant Chief, Captain, Firefighter and yes, an Explorer with the Oracle Fire District (OFD). As a long time resident of Oracle, it is my privilege to call this community home for my family and myself.

Rural Communities like Oracle are different than our large city neighbors. There are many things we must provide for ourselves especially during this wildfire season. The Oracle Fire District, The Community Emergency Response Team (CERTs) and the Firewise board have brought many tips to you at the Town Hall Meeting in March and the Oaks Festival in April. Please take a moment to read this newsletter and also check out the information on the [www.oraclefire.org](http://www.oraclefire.org) website. Sign up for a free property assessment and be sure your name, address and phone number are included in the Emergency Notification System by contacting the Oracle Fire District. Remember it's the preparations we make now, that may save our families and home in a wildfire.

Respectfully, Robert Jennings, Fire Chief, Oracle Fire District

## Firewise Assessments and Grants

You know that there is work to be done to get your property into top Firewise shape for the current fire season, but just don't know where to start? No problem! Call the fire station to schedule your FREE Firewise assessment with a trained volunteer. The Firewise assessor will walk around your property with you and discuss what should be done, help you prioritize the projects, and offer many useful tips. You will also be provided with a customized assessment form that will help you render your home and property safer for wildfires. For those residents needing more help for heavily vegetated or large overgrown properties, OFD has applied for, and has been awarded, numerous grants over the years. These grants offer financial assistance for those in critical need of brush thinning. A "fuels reduction" grant through FEMA has recently been signed and will commence at the beginning of October 2018. Another grant application, through the State of Arizona, has been submitted, and if approved, will fund work through 2019. If you are interested in applying for grant assistance, please call Tina or email her at [tacosta@oraclefire.org](mailto:tacosta@oraclefire.org).



Before and after on Cody Loop



## Why Defensible Space?

With the threat of wildfires ever present, there are things that we as a homeowner can do to reduce the risk of our home being consumed by a wild fire. The area within **30 feet** of your home is Zone 1 or the "**Home Ignition Zone**," which we also call the Lean, Green and Clean intensive fuel reduction zone. Trimming up trees, mowing grass short, removing dead leaves and pine needles, cleaning out gutters and seams in your roof line, and moving wood piles out of this zone and away from any structures or other flammable items is key to protecting our homes. Keeping only a few plants close to the home, green and well-watered, is also beneficial. Keep decks and staircases clear of anything flammable underneath. Changing air vent screens from 1/4" to 1/8" will help keep embers from entering and finding a place to ignite. Zone 2 is "**Survivable Space**," which extends at least **100 feet** from structures, and is considered the "**Moderate Fuel Reduction Zone**." Don't forget to mow and trim along your entire driveway!

**Did I say embers?** Embers can burn down homes! They have been known to fly several miles from the fire, across lakes and multiple-land highways to burn down homes, as evidenced by wildfires in California last year. Your Zone 3 is the "**Managed Wildland Zone**," extending at least **200 feet** from structures. Proper thinning and pruning in this zone will make a significant difference protecting our homes by reducing the amount of embers that are broadcast into Zone 1. **Be Ember Aware!**



## Sparks = Fire

Did you know that sparks produced by dragging chains start more roadside fires than discarded cigarettes? Be aware of current fire restrictions on public lands, which often include the prohibition of campfires, use of explosives, smoking, welding, discharging firearms (if not on a lawful hunt), etc. **One less spark means one less wildfire!**

## Options

- **OFD BRUSH DUMP** Open 7 days, 7am-5pm. Fees are \$3 for one load, \$5 for two loads (back of a truck and a trailer), and \$10 for a dump truck. Fees help pay for all costs associated with the brush dump and funds remaining are spent on community projects. This Firewise facility is intended for vegetation and very dry cactus. Construction materials and other trash are not allowed.
- **PINAL COUNTY TRASH VOUCHERS** Call 520-866-6000 to find out how to obtain free trash vouchers for Waste Management.



Oracle Fire District • [www.oraclefire.org](http://www.oraclefire.org)

This publication is paid for by a federal grant from Secured Rural Schools, Title III, for Firewise Communities.

## What does Firewise and CERTs do for Oracle?

In the event there is an emergency, volunteers on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) are trained to assist OFD and local law enforcement with such things as sending messages through the ENS, providing office support, firefighter rehab, and traffic control. Volunteers on the Firewise Board help OFD provide fire prevention education to the community, with an emphasis on teaching how to be Firewise. There is a volunteer position for everybody in these two groups. If you are interested in learning more, please attend one of the meetings, which takes place every second Tuesday of the month at 4pm, at OFD.

## Community Events

The two teams have combined their efforts at various community events over the years such as at Town Hall meetings, information booths at the Oracle Oaks Festivals, Firewise Day events and H.O.P.E. week at Mountain Vista school. For more information about these activities go to: [www.oraclefire.org](http://www.oraclefire.org)



OFD's Rescue 691 leading the kids along Estell during H.O.P.E. Walk.

## Oracle Emergency Notification System (ENS)



An important tool for community emergencies purchased for Oracle by the Oracle Firewise Board using brush dump funds is the Emergency Notification System (ENS). This "Reverse 911" system is unique to Oracle, confidential, and not shared with or sold to any other entity. In the event of a wildfire or other catastrophe, OFD is able to send a message to your home or cell phone alerting you to the danger and the need to possibly evacuate. There is no cost to the homeowner or property owner to be included in the ENS system. To ensure you are included in the system, please complete an ENS form, available on the OFD website or at the front office and return it to the fire station or mail it to OFD.

## Home Alone

The Pinal County Home Alone Program is available to Oracle residents and provides assistance to those alone or in need. A landline phone is required. Call OFD for more information. Medical Information cards are also available in the OFD front office. Please pick one up!

## Oracle Horse Owners Evacuation Plan (OHO)

**Please have a Horse Evacuation plan!** Our Horse Evacuation Group also includes neighbors who don't own horses but are just available to help! As horse owners you know that horses are very large and emotional animals. If you wait for an emergency when panic is in control, it may be too late for your horse. Being prepared in advance can lower fear levels as well as prevent people becoming injured. It is not unusual for horses to be unwilling to leave their stalls or corrals, or load into a trailer. Your horses must be taken to a secure area.

The Horse Evacuation Group is creating an emergency plan, which, along with leaving early, are the keys to success! Get your horses to a safe place and if you can, help your neighbors. Our group is creating lists and phone contact information on ENS so that, in case of a fire, you will be notified. In addition, we are identifying staging areas and

lists of people willing to pick up additional horses with their trailers, and/or offering their properties as temporary shelters.

The group welcomes suggestions and your input! Remember, all your family and pets should be included in the evacuation plan. If you are interested in learning more about OHO, please email Tina at: [tacosta@oraclefire.org](mailto:tacosta@oraclefire.org) or call her 896-2980 and attend the next meeting on Aug. 9 at 6pm.



Leading horses out at Kearney Fire 2015 / photo: MinerSunBasin

## Emergency Evacuation List:

### Important Documents:

- Birth certificates
- Social security or ID cards
- Drivers licenses, house titles,
- Vehicle titles, full gas tank
- Medical prescriptions
- List of savings & bank accounts
- Photos/list of valuables
- Credit cards, checks, cash
- Insurance policies

### Personal Items:

- Eyeglasses and cleaner
- Prescription Medications
- Cell phone and charger
- Contact phone numbers
- Photos, flash drives
- Jewelry
- First aid kit

### For Children:

- Toys, books
- Spare clothes
- Infant supplies

### Pet Needs:

- Water, food & bowls
- Leashes, collars, & tags
- Crates, toys, chews, blankets
- A photo of you and your pet

### Other:

- Water: at least 1-gallon per person/per day
- Food
- Whistle
- Towelettes
- Can opener
- Family communication plan, contact person
- Blankets, clothing, pocket knife,
- Rope, candles, plastic bags
- Paper towels, plates, cups
- Plastic silverware, matches
- Flashlight & batteries
- Face masks

*This list is available on our website.*

## Smell Smoke? Call 911

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