



# FRIENDS OF ORACLE FIRE DEPARTMENT Firewise News



News from your local Fire Department to the community . . .

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SPRING 2009

## ORACLE: A FIREWISE COMMUNITY

After three years of outstanding accomplishments towards becoming a safer community, Oracle was nationally recognized in January of 2006, as a Firewise community. Former Governor Napolitano presented the community of Oracle with a plaque which is proudly displayed in the fire station office.



Oracle's Firewise program started off with just a handful of concerned citizens, who cared enough about their community and about their safety to do something about it themselves.

Several public meetings and Firewise workshops were held in 2003 and 2004 to promote wildfire awareness, and to provide fire prevention education. Many Oracle citizens stated during these meetings, that they would be glad to participate in the Firewise program, but they needed a method to dispose of their tree trimmings.



Chief Albert Ortiz and former Gov. Napolitano in 2006

An existing brush disposal program was relocated and expanded to the west end of American Avenue, where it still operates today. Information regarding the brush disposal program can be found at the [www.oraclefire.org](http://www.oraclefire.org) website, or by contacting the Oracle Fire Department at 896-2980.

In many cases, advance preparation for a wildfire can be done inexpensively, and in just a few short days. Sometimes just simple, basic landscaping and yard cleaning can make a huge difference in how your home would survive a wildfire.

Recent fires in Australia, and even more recent fires in Texas, should serve as a wakeup call for those living in Oracle who have not yet prepared their homes and properties for the very real possibility of a catastrophic wildfire.

The Oracle Fire Department will gladly provide a courtesy Firewise Evaluation of your home and property.

*Battalion Chief, Larry Southard,  
Oracle Fire Department*



## NEW! COMPOST PIT AT THE BRUSH DISPOSAL SITE

A composting pit has recently been added to the Brush Disposal site. The pit will accept **non-brush items such as grasses, leaves, and livestock manure**. Once the composting process is complete, local gardeners will be allowed to remove the compost to use in their gardens.

It is located just inside of the Brush Disposal Site entrance gate. When empty, the pit measures 30 feet by 30 feet by 4 feet deep, and will hold approximately 133 yards of compost material. A sloped ramp allows vehicles to back down into the pit to unload composting material. Additional material will be accepted until the pit reaches near full capacity. Then another layer of dirt will be spread, covering the entire area. The site is graded to allow rain water runoff from the access road to keep the compost wet.



## BRUSH DISPOSAL SITE

OPEN: 7am - 5pm • Mon.- Sat.

Cost \$3.00 per load

Check out a gate key available at the fire station.

**RULES . . .** The site is open to residents of Oracle. Items gladly accepted are: tree trimmings and brush.

Items NOT accepted are cactus, garbage, lumber, stumps, paper, plastics, metal, fluids and site cleaning materials. Grass, leaves, and weeds go to our new compost area.

## OFD HIGHLIGHTS

### TRACI SOUTHARD – FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR AT OFD



Each year the Elks Lodge in San Manuel recognizes firefighters, law enforcement officers, and EMS personnel for outstanding accomplishments to their agencies and to their communities. For the year of 2008, **Traci Southard** was selected to receive the Oracle Firefighter of the Year award. Traci's 2008 accomplishments include receiving an EMT certification, Wildland Firefighter certification and for being currently enrolled in a structural firefighter academy. Traci also attended 36 of 36 training drills held at Oracle Fire Dept.

Traci is a third-generation firefighter, with her oldest daughter soon to become a fourth-generation firefighter. The Oracle Fire Department is proud to have Traci represent the department as Firefighter of the Year.



### NEW OFD PATCH

The new Oracle Fire Dept. patch logo was designed by Traci Southard and is now being worn on several of our staff uniforms.



It picks up the "Oracle ship" from past logos and brings in traditional fire fighter and medical symbols and uses Arizona colors and star from our state flag.

## TRAINING AT OFD

Oracle Fire Department has been hosting Arizona Fire I & II, EMS First Responder, EMT-B, and Healthcare Provider CPR classes through Central Arizona College since 2002. Basic Wildland Firefighter and other wildland classes have also been held here.

CPR and Basic First Aid classes are now being provided for the public. Sign forms are available at the station.

OFD personnel are encouraged to continue training throughout their career. Selected firefighters are allowed to attend the Wildfire Academy each year in Prescott, Arizona and the Arizona State Fire School in Mesa, Arizona. Several OFD firefighters have recently completed advanced training, such as Swift Water Rescue and other technical rescue classes. Three in-house drills are provided each month. Drill schedules are posted in the Captains Office, listed on the "shift schedule" and also announced each month at our public meeting. Firefighters wishing to remain on the shift schedule are required to attend at least one drill per month.



*An EMS helicopter pilot offers safety instructions around helicopters.*



*An engine drafts water from a 3000-gallon portable tank during a drill.*



*EMT students are shown how to apply a neck brace.*

**CERT News:** CERTs are a group of people trained to assist the fire dept. but for non-hazardous duties. CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) members have had classes in first aid, safety procedures, incident assistance, and other venues. Ongoing classes and training continue as often as time allows. This fall, a visit to local schools showing the use of fire extinguishers by CERTs Doug Johnson and Vivien Mayer was a success. Getting people comfortable with the extinguisher was the goal.



*Ladder technique is taught in drills.*

## SPECIAL NEEDS RESIDENTS

Residents with special needs or limited mobility have several helpful options available to them in Oracle in an emergency: Telephone Reassurance, Home Alone Kits and Pendants, and the Cell Phone Program.

If you would like to find out more about these programs, please call Karen Lombardi at 896-9470 or fill out the form to the right and mail to OFD.



If you anticipate special needs during an evacuation, please fill out this information, mail to OFD, PO Box 977, Oracle, AZ 85623 and we will contact you OR you may contact Karen Lombardi at 896-9470. All information is strictly confidential.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Needs \_\_\_\_\_

## ANNUAL EVENTS

**HALLOWEEN Night 08** – On Friday, October 31 the Fire Explorers had a blast when setting up a great Halloween Haunted House at the old Fire House on Dodge in Oracle. Lots of kids (and adults) went through the paces of many different scary creatures.



**THANKSGIVING Dinner 08** – Our annual Thanksgiving dinner on Tuesday, November 25 was considered a great success, and, we had lots of donors, cooks, and volunteers. It was extremely well organized with Vivien Mayer at the helm. We served an estimated 225 dinners with about 35 takeouts and 12 pickups.



Future firefighter Brendan is shown here receiving a 10-year pin on behalf of his father Brian from Chief Ortiz.



**SANTA VISIT 08** – Santa Claus, assisted by Doug Johnson, Robert Miller, and Larry Southard, surprised local school kids for the holidays. Just ask 4-year old Julian!

## BEING FIREWISE

**What does “being firewise” mean?** Firewise people create “defensible space” around their homes – meaning that you have a 30-foot perimeter of space around your home that is lean, clean and green. **Lean** means you prune back shrubs and tree branches within 15 feet of any structures. **Clean** means you clean out dead plant material from around your home. **Green** means you have planted fire-resistant vegetation and are keeping it healthy and green.

Make sure your home is properly house-numbered for emergency access and has its entryway clear from flammable material. Most of all, have a plan in case you need to evacuate due to fire.

**Before** you are confronted with an emergency, have the following emergency plans in place. Take into consideration family health needs of specific family members who may suffer from disabilities or medical conditions.

- Post your local non-emergency fire (896-2980) and sheriff (520-866-5111) numbers by your home phone and program them into your cell phone. Consult our website for more information. [www.oraclefire.org](http://www.oraclefire.org)
- Decide where you will go or meet in case of a fire and plan how you will get there.
- Plan for your pets and their safety as well. Portable cages should be handy.
- In case of fire, have tools available such as a shovel, rake, axe, handsaw, chainsaw and a 2-gallon bucket.
- Have on hand: flashlights and extra batteries, a first aid kit, a dust mask to help filter air, wrenches or pliers to turn off utilities, battery or a hand-crank radio with extra batteries, local maps and if possible a three-day supply of non-perishable food and plenty of water.

*Oracle Union Church is a good example of a firewise property.*



### GETTING ON THE EMERGENCY AUTO-DIALER WITH YOUR NEW OR ALTERNATE NUMBERS:

If we do not have it already and you want your *new landline number* (new since January 2009), *work number*, and/or *cell phone number* programmed in the **Emergency Auto Dialer System**, you will need to provide a *written* request to the Oracle Fire Department. Fire department personnel cannot accept verbal requests. Fill in the form below and you can fax it to 896-2749, or mail to POB 977, Oracle, AZ 85623, or drop it off to the Oracle Fire Department at 1475 W. American Avenue.

Yes, I wish this information to be given to the Oracle Fire Dept. for use in the Auto Dialer System in case of emergency. I understand that this information is kept strictly confidential.

Name (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address (*mailing*) \_\_\_\_\_ Physical Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tel (home) \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Oracle Firewise Board**  
 Oracle Fire Dept.  
 1475 American Ave.  
 Oracle, AZ 85623

**BE FIREWISE:**

**LEAN**  
**CLEAN**  
**GREEN**



**"Shiloh" the Fire Dog asks "Are you Firewise?"**



*Current Box Holder*  
*Current Resident*  
**ORACLE, AZ 85623**

**www.oraclefire.org** – Recently, our website was used to show photos of the Nugget Burn for those people who could not get email photos to download. We would like you to become familiar with using the site especially for an emergency. We are showing Oracle precipitation numbers on the home page as well as the totals for last year and the current year. Besides showing current photos of what is happening at OFD, there is useful tidbits on the history, the staff, and other information. Let us know what you want to see.

**Oracle's fuel thinning crew** (aka Florence Wildland Fire Crew) was temporarily re-assigned to work on a project in Marana for the new "Super Tanker."

*Dropping of slurry (fire retardant) from the aircraft required thousands of cups to be placed on the ground to*



*determine the effectiveness of the slurry. Wildland crews provided labor to help with the testing project.*



**Captain Slyter** overseeing a drill operation



**Did You know?** In May of 2006 a Congressional Committee in Washington DC selected Oracle Fire Dept. to receive a

*Congressional Recognition Award for outstanding service to the community. At that time OFD was the only fire department in Arizona to have received an award of this type.*

*If you are interested in being on the OFD public safety email list, email your contact info to Oraclefd@qwest.net*