

WILDFIRE

NEWS AND NOTES

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Bush Seeks Cuts In Wildfire Funds

(The following was written by Tamara Lytle and originally appeared in Florida's Orlando Sentinel on March 15, 2001.)



In the first two months of 2001, Florida experienced over 1300 wildfires, covering 90,000 acres. Interstate 4 between Tampa and Orlando was closed several times due to fire and smoke.

The Bush administration wants to cut back on the amount of money aimed at preventing and fighting wildfires just as Florida is headed into one of its worst years for potential flare ups.

During the past three years Florida and many western states have experienced an onslaught of wildfires that has strained the system for fighting the blazes and focused attention on the need to get rid of brush and other vegetation that feeds the flames.

Congress came through last year with an extra \$2.9 billion. That will pay for more than 5,000 additional firefighters at the Department of Interior and the Forest Service.

"Although only 35 of them will be based in Florida, others can be quickly deployed into the state," said Lyle Laverty, fire coordinator for the Department of Agriculture, which oversees the Forest Service. The extra money also will buy \$1.4 million worth of equipment and a \$3.3 million upgrade for the Lake City Air Tanker Base.

Bush's budget for next year would eliminate \$600 million in fire-fighting costs from the Department of Agriculture and \$385 million from a similar program in the Department of the Interior. Laverty said approximately \$142 million also would be cut from a program to clear out brush that fuels fires.

Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., said it's a bad idea to "pull back the money and undercut the plan in the second year."

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Lockheed Martin Software to Aid Wildfire Fighter Coordination

(The following article is reprinted from a story originally published by PR NEWSWIRE Philadelphia on March 1, 2001.)

SEABROOK, Md. — Software developers at Lockheed Martin Corporation (NYSE: LMT) have delivered a new web-based application to the National Wildfire Coordination Group that will help federal, state and local firefighter organizations locate and call up people, equipment and materials needed to combat major wildfires in the United States.

Lockheed Martin's Information Support Services business unit was awarded a GSA task order in September 1999 from the U.S. Forest Service to tackle the problem of integrating data from the member organizations of the National Wildfire Coordination Group and allow these organizations to quickly react to fires such as those that affected the western U.S. last summer. The 2000 forest fire season involved thousands of workers from states across the nation. To find and mobilize the right people took agencies days of effort.

The new application is called "ROSS" for Resource Ordering and Status System. Using Java, Lockheed Martin's development team in Denver created a web application that will enable managers to find out the current status of firefighting resources within the member organizations and quickly place orders for those resources.

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Firewise Program Building

by Glenda Wallace

This article features excerpts from the complete story, which can be accessed on the Firewise website at www.firewise.org.

They meet on a chilly winter afternoon in one of the most dangerous places in western Montana (from a wildfire perspective). It's a heavily forested drainage looking much like its neighbors for hundreds of miles in any direction. Increasingly populated by people, wooden structures, decorative plants, and its own vegetation, Mill Creek is a natural dead-end for firefighters and residents during a firestorm, and that's why the fire chief chooses it for his first field rendezvous.

Standing on a one-lane road in about a half foot of snow with a tree-sheltered home just barely visible behind him, Frenchtown Fire Chief Scott Waldron issues his listeners a challenge: "Imagine there is a wildfire roaring down that mountain," he says, "and your job is to help protect those homes."

The group – about 30 junior- and senior-high school students and a few teachers – react with murmurs, but not about the first part of Waldron's challenge. They can remember too well the nightly news reports and the heavy smoke from nearby fires, including the Bitterroot Valley fires (about an hour southwest of Frenchtown), which claimed 72 homes and whose flames could be seen from the Interstate.

It is precisely their proximity to catastrophic wildfire that motivates this group... they are heeding the call of the Firewise Community.

This is no coincidence. The fire chief is a graduate of the national Firewise Communities Program, which is sponsored by more than 30 organizations, including the land management agencies of the U.S. Interior and Agriculture departments, the national Fire Chiefs and State Foresters associations, the Insurance Services Organization, and the American Red Cross. Recognizing their common objectives, these entities have joined for one purpose: to create a wider community dialogue and greater individual action about the matter of homes burning down in the wildland/urban interface.

At the heart of accomplishing this goal is the Firewise Communities Workshop series. Centered around a day-long, interactive exercise (complete with *fictional* wildfire, town in peril, and formal requests for new developments in wildland areas), the workshop series is designed to bring together the community leaders who can really influence how well a neighborhood is protected from wildfire. These people include bankers, builders, developers, community planners, county commissioners, architects, landscapers, realtors, insurance agents, homeowners, students, teachers, and fire protection specialists.

"We've known for some time now that the fire suppression community can't do it alone anymore," says Dan Bailey, Firewise Communities Program Coordinator for the U.S. Forest Service. "We need the help of the people and professionals who decide what, where, and how a structure, or a subdivision, or a community gets built. We need them to see this fire problem through our eyes and we need them to share with us what it takes to build in a Firewise manner from their perspectives."

A veteran of the 2000 season as well, Bailey says the workshop exercise allows this interaction to take place. "It's become the focal point of our three-day event," he says. "It allows [groups of] people to sit around a table and interact in a way that's very effective. People share ideas and develop solutions together as they progress through the various scenarios and they're forced to talk about their issues, as realtors and bankers and such."

Program Expansion

The pilot Firewise Communities Workshop was held in Deerfield Beach, Florida, in the fall of 1999. At that time, nine national workshops were scheduled through October of 2001. Now, there are almost two dozen lined up to occur across the United States through 2003.

"Based on the information I learned from attending the Skamania workshop, I began looking at the things that I wanted to know about my district," says Fire Chief Waldron. "Recognizing my limitations on

personnel, I visited with the high school because I knew they had some computer programming. It turns out they actually have a class dealing with GPS information and they were looking for things to do to make the class more interesting and realistic for the students."

Waldron says a group of about eight students and a firefighter advisor go out every other week to do fire hazard/risk ratings for homes and property in his jurisdiction. The students also map road access and fire protection benefits such as nearby water sources. This data is then entered into the computer program along with any additional information, such as addresses from the county database and fuel layers from the U.S. Forest Service.

"It's become a real community-wide project that has a number of layers. We're going to end up with a product that's very usable," says Waldron. "And we're providing students with some real down-to-earth, practical experience. Plus, they become Firewise reps at home with their parents. It's a good way to spread the word."

Once a local businessman and volunteer firefighter for the district, Chief Waldron's work with local students is one of the reasons that his community is now being awarded the *first* Firewise Communities technology package, which consists of GIS-based mapping software.

According to Jim Smalley, co-organizer of the workshop series and a fire specialist for the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a private company and workshop partner called ESRI [Environmental Systems Research Institute] is donating one Arc View software package per workshop, "to stimulate the people who are doing the planning," he says.

"This package is intended for the smaller communities that have put together a planning team and have calendar of events, areas to address," he explains. "We want to give them this software, so they can start mapping their [wildland/urban] interface areas."

Smalley says Groom Creek, Arizona, a community outside of Prescott, will receive the second Firewise Communities/ESRI Technology Award. In exchange, workshop

Continued on next page

Safer Communities

organizers want a full report on how the selected communities use the software. "Because at the end of this, we have to go back to Congress [who has provided some of the program funds], and we want to be able to say, 'See, these are the communities we've touched'," says Smalley.

Workshops at Work In Communities

Chief Waldron is pleased his community is receiving the mapping software. It relieves him of having to rely solely on the high school, which had acquired an Arc View package through educational channels.

Meanwhile, the Firewise Fire Safety Permit he has implemented for subdivisions within his division has expanded county-wide. Though current subdivision guidelines in Missoula County are based on Firewise principles (and most of its commissioners and at least one county planner have attended a workshop), Waldron wanted more enforcement authority. He found it in the Uniform Fire Code.

"We need to mitigate the ongoing problem of homes being built in forested areas," he says. "While we can't arbitrarily eliminate people wanting to build a 'dream home' in the forest, we can provide guidelines that make it safer to do so, [through] mechanisms like the Uniform Fire Code, which gives the fire chief authority to require fire permits in high-hazard areas."

In Volusia County, Florida, there is another fire chief nurturing a Firewise subdivision: His test ground is a 2,700-lot development. During the historic 1998 Florida fire season, the first phase of this upscale, developing neighborhood (called Hunter's Ridge) was threatened by "three or four fire storms," according to Ormond Beach Fire Chief Barry Baker, "coming from different directions as the wind shifted."

Although the city of Ormond Beach is sprawled along the Atlantic Coast, expensive homes are growing up in the pine forests to the west. "Florida's vegetation burns pretty readily when it's green," Baker says. "Palmettos burn much like Pacific Coast vegetation."

During the fires of '98, the residents of Hunter's Ridge were evacuated for three and half days. Baker says, "We didn't lose any homes." He admits, "There was some damage... but the neighbors were very appreciative of our efforts."

The Integral Role of Non-Fire Personnel

The fire department also developed a close relationship with the subdivision's builder, a man name Jerry Upson. "He had all the plans of where things were," says Chief Baker. "There was a lot of development going on in Hunter's Ridge, and we worked with him to plan adequate – and timely – evacuations.

Both Baker and Upson have attended a Firewise Communities Workshop. Baker participated in the pilot program in '99, while Upson recently attended a mini-(one-day) workshop that Florida and a variety of partner agencies hosted in four locations around the state in April, 2000.

"What [Jerry] has provided us is information," says Baker. "He told us that for every \$1,000 we raise the price of a house, he loses 70 potential buyers. It forces them out of the market. So, what we're trying to do is come up with ideas that are Firewise in nature, but don't increase the cost of a home."

Jim Harrell, wildfire mitigation coordinator for the Florida Division of Forestry, helped organize the Florida Firewise Communities mini-workshops. He reports getting a good mix of attendees for the series, and now other counties and states are requesting their help in workshop presentations.

Even so, Harrell and his fellow Firewise Florida steering committee members will admit that the program is still a "hard sell" for area builders, developers, and realtors, who are pressed for time. "The one-day workshops make it easier to talk to them one-on-one," he says.

Workshop Reach

According to the national program's organizers, more than half of the 484 people who have attended the workshop series

(as of late January) represent federal and state agencies and local fire departments. The remainder are non-fire professionals. They include builders and bankers (10), university educators (13), homeowners/association representatives (15), county planners (23), emergency managers (42), public officials (29), insurance agents (18), and representatives from tribal agencies/other private industries (41).

Each workshop is limited to 100 participants. And each workshop features a core of speakers, ranging from author, actor and inspirational speaker Tom Sullivan, who was born blind, to Jack Cohen, a U.S. Forest Service research scientist who has been studying the ways and reasons that structures burn down during wildfire events.

The workshop series also features regional education/mitigation "success stories" and the perspectives of national stakeholders, including the American Red Cross, the American Planning Association, and the National Association of Home Builders.

Proactive Community Outreach

Meanwhile, back in Florida, they're preparing for another potentially heavy fire season. And to remind the public about the timeline of fire protection, the Division of Forestry has published a Firewise Communities calendar. They feature a blue sky picture of tall, fire-scarred trees dwarfing a family home under construction. The photo's caption concludes: "Unless homeowners adopt a 'FIREWISE' attitude and take positive action before wildfire strikes, interface homes will continue to burn, be re-built, and burn again... a phenomenon known as the wildfire disaster cycle."

It's a cycle that has no place in a Firewise Community, and the Firewise Communities Program wants everyone to know it.

For more information about the Firewise Communities Program, or the list of workshop locations, log onto www.firewise.org/communities.

State Farm Abandons ISO Grading Schedule: Fire Chiefs Wonder, 'What Now?'

(This story contains edited excerpts from an article provided by Bill Kang, Courtesy International Association of Fire Chiefs.)

For many years, the fire service has been dependent on the insurance industry to provide a graduated standard to determine a community's fire-fighting capability. The Insurance Service Office (ISO) developed a long-standing rating system called the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule that grades a community's fire-fighting ability.

This schedule is based on a grading system known as the Public Protection Classification (PPC). The PPC rates a community on three factors: how well the fire department receives alarms and dispatches its resources, the number of engine companies and the amount of water required for incidents, and the community's water supply. Significant emphasis is placed on a community's ISO rating. This rating is generally used by property/casualty insurance companies to establish residential insurance rates. In the fire service, this rating has been used as a tool by fire departments to use in strategic planning and fiscal considerations. Now the creditability of the standard's usefulness is under scrutiny due to changes among one of the world's largest property insurance companies.

Late in 2000, State Farm Property/Casualty Insurance Group abandoned their use of the ISO PPC. They developed their own rating system, known as the Subzone Rating Factor. This system is based on State Farm's prior claim experience for many types of insured losses including fire, wind, hail, water damage, theft, and liability. Hence, this rating system emphasizes an all hazards approach to contend with property loss. Additionally, the Subzone Rating Factor's zones are based on the five-digit zip codes.

State Farm estimates that 70 percent of claims paid under their Homeowner's Program are deemed non-fire losses. The purpose of the Subzone Rating Factor system is to reduce operating costs, respond more rapidly to local claim trends, and ultimately save money for State Farm customers. The system is based on past experience and does not consider assessed capabilities. Therefore, improvements in fire service capabilities theoretically have a beneficial effect on local rates under this plan. As of January 15, 2001, the plan has been introduced in Illinois, Texas, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

While this policy shift by State Farm is significant to the insurance industry, it is unclear how it will affect the rest of the industry. Standard and Poor's Insurance Profile describes State Farm Property/Casualty Group as "by far the largest property-casualty group in the world." State Farm insures approximately 20 percent of all residential properties in the United States.

The industry question is whether other insurance companies will follow State Farm's lead and abandon the ISO PPC, or whether they will continue to use the ISO rating system.

ISO is currently working on enhancements to their PPC program. With four major insurance companies testing the enhanced PPC program, ISO plans to release the results of this study in the near future.

What does this shift by State Farm mean for the fire service? Many fire departments across the nation use the ISO PPC as a tool to conduct strategic planning for staffing, equipment, station locations, and water supply issues. In many instances, the ISO PPC is used as a justification tool for budget considerations. The ISO PPC measures a community's fire-fighting capabilities.

Regardless of the outcome of this development, it is evident that the fire service is not in complete control of this issue and lends credence that the fire service should also have significant say in how to determine the prudent practices of a fire department's ability to serve their community.

BUSH SEEKS CUTS IN WILDFIRE FUNDS - Continued from page 1

Bush has proposed a new \$5.7-billion fund that would cover a range of emergencies such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and other disasters. But Dicks said that isn't good enough when it comes to dealing with fires. Firefighters need to be hired in advance and prevention efforts needed to be started before there's an emergency.

"You can't just have a pot of money at the White House," Dicks said after a hearing of the House and Senate Interior Appropriations subcommittees Wednesday.

Those committees, which control the purse strings, are loaded with Western lawmakers sympathetic to the cause because of severe fires there. When Dicks noted the Bush budget cut proposal, Senator Conrad Burns, R-Montana, chairman of the Senate panel, shot back: "It ain't done yet." And Representative Joe Skeen, R-New Mexico, head of the House subcommittee, said he heard plenty of justification Wednesday for more funding.

The fire danger has increased in recent years because of the combination of dry weather and sprawling development, which has brought homes to areas closer to wildlands in danger of burning. Florida's drought index is dangerously high this year and Central Florida already has been hit hard by wildfires.

Last year, 7 million acres burned nationally, including almost 7,000 acres in Florida. At one point last year, Lavery said, the Forest Service was stretched so thin that if one more fire had broken out in Colorado, no one would have been available to respond. "Across the country last summer, we ran out of resources."

Lavery said nationally there are more than 70 million acres of federal land at high risk for fires. This year, the Forest Service will clear 1.8 million acres of the vegetation that feeds the fires and the Department of Interior will clear another 1.4 million acres. Even without budget cuts, Lavery said, it will take 15 years to get all the risky areas cleared.

FEMA Director Signs Final Cerro Grande Fire Compensation Regulations



Washington, March 15, 2001 — Joe Allbaugh, director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) signed the Final Rule to implement the Cerro Grande Fire Assistance Act. After the document was signed, the Final Rule was submitted to the Federal Register, where it will become effective immediately upon publication. It is expected that the Final Rule will be published during the week of March 19, 2001.

“The publication of the Final Rule will help in removing roadblocks and provide the victims of the Cerro Grande Fire a clear path in finalizing their claims,” Mr. Allbaugh said. “President Bush’s intent is for FEMA to provide the best possible service to the victims of the fire, and we believe this document addresses many of the concerns in the community.”

The Final Rule leaves most provisions of the Interim Final Rule, published on August 28, 2000, and the policies issued by the Director of the Cerro Grande Fire Assistance Office unchanged. A few of the significant changes to the rules include:

- Individual and business claimants will receive a lump sum payment for incidental expenses, including personal time, incurred in seeking compensation through the Cerro Grande Fire Assistance Act. The lump sum payment will be 5% of the Claimant’s insured and uninsured fire related losses with a maximum payment of \$15,000 per business or household. This has been increased from the previously announced policy of 1% with a maximum payment of \$3,000. Anyone who has already signed a Release and Certification Form may reopen their claim to receive the higher amount.
- The new rules provide the Cerro Grande Fire Claims Office with additional flexibility to resolve claims quicker, and with less documentation, where appropriate.
- The final rule allows FEMA to advance homeowners the money to design and construct mitigation measures, rather than waiting for a reimbursement. In addition, mitigation money will be made available to homeowners who suffered structural damage as well as those who suffered a total loss.
- Up to \$68.25 million, which is 15% of the total funds that Congress appropriated for the payment of Cerro Grande fire claims, is available for community-wide mitigation projects to reduce wildfire, flood and other natural hazard risks that were heightened by the fire.
- FEMA will continue to reimburse property owners in Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, and Santa Fe counties who wish to purchase flood insurance.
- The final rule is much easier and streamlined for claiming additional losses after the initial Proof of Loss is submitted and for reopening claims after a Release and Certification Form is submitted.

Once published in the Federal Register, the rules will be available on FEMA’s web site: www.fema.gov/cerrogrande. Copies will also be available at the five Customer Service Centers as well as at the Los Alamos County Library.

Individuals with questions about their specific claims can call their claims reviewer. The Cerro Grande Help line number is 888-748-1853 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday.

LOCKHEED MARTIN SOFTWARE TO AID WILDFIRE FIGHTER COORDINATION - Continued from page 1

Linda Gooden, president of Information Support Services, credited Lockheed Martin’s experience in complex development projects as key to program success. “We are excited about achieving this milestone for a program that one day will have a positive effect on saving the lives, homes and businesses of millions of Americans in potential wildfire areas,” she said.

Lockheed Martin delivered the ROSS application to the National Wildfire Coordination Group in early February. Field testing will begin in March, and modules of the system will be incrementally rolled out over the next year.

The National Wildfire Coordination Group was established to coordinate programs of the participating wildfire management agencies so as to avoid wasteful duplication and to provide a means of constructively working together. Members include representatives of: U.S. Forest Service; Bureau of Indian Affairs; Bureau of Land Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife; National Park Service; National Association of State Foresters; Federal Emergency Management Agency, and U. S. Fire Administration.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global enterprise principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced-technology systems, products and services. The Corporation’s core businesses are systems integration, space, aeronautics, and technology services. Information Support Services is a business unit of Lockheed Martin providing information technology business systems, managed services and infrastructure solutions to major government agencies.

For more information on ROSS, visit <http://www.nwcg.gov/ross>

REGISTER ON-LINE NOW! Don’t miss a single issue of WN&N! Simply go to www.firewise.org and follow the directions for registration.

FIRE Grant Program Final Rules Are Posted

By Pat West, Content Director,
FireFighting.com

The long awaited Federal Register publication of the rules for the new Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (popularly known as the FIRE Grant Program) was posted today at the U.S. Fire Administration Grant page on the Internet at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/grants> And not a moment too soon, since the 30-day application period for the 2001 round of grants began Monday, April 2.

The rules for the program outlined in the Federal Register document spell out just about everything your fire department needs to know about these grants — how the funds will be distributed, who qualifies for them, what you'll need to include in your application package, and the criteria for evaluating grant applications.

Generally the "interim final rule" is published in the Federal Register as a way to gather comments on the fairness of the rules for 30 days before the rules go into effect, but FEMA is invoking an exception because of the short time period available to distribute the grants. Appropriated three months into the fiscal year by a Defense Authorization Bill in December, the \$100 million appropriated for 2001 must be distributed by Sept. 30.

The application period will be from April 2 to May 2, with two copies of each application package due before the end of business hours at FEMA's USFA Grant Program Technical Assistance Center in Emmitsburg, Md.

Much of what's contained in the document has already been announced. But one section in the rules that contains new information is a section describing "Evaluation Criteria" for grant applications. The rules delineate specific evaluation criteria for each of the six categories of programs that these grants will support (training, wellness and fitness programs, firefighting vehicles, firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, and fire prevention programs).

In the training category, for example, the interim rules say: "We believe that more benefit is derived from direct delivery of training than from the purchase of training materials and equipment. Therefore, appli-

cations focused on direct delivery of training will receive a higher competitive rating." Basic firefighter training will get a higher competitive rating than officer training programs, it says.

The evaluation criteria for grants for firefighting vehicles, firefighting equipment and personal protective equipment favor the "have nots" over the "haves". A higher competitive rating will go to the fire department with few or no vehicles than a fire department with large fleets of vehicles. Similarly, in the PPE category, the rules say: "We will give a higher competitive rating to fire departments in which a large percentage of their active firefighting staff do not have any personal protective equipment and to departments that wish to purchase enough equipment to equip 100 percent of their active firefighting staff."

The rules also project how the \$100 million should be distributed, based on category of funds and type of fire department (volunteer and combination departments vs. career departments). Grants in the category of Personal Protective Equipment for firefighters should receive the largest share, \$35 million of the \$100 million appropriation. Training and fitness programs each are to receive \$6.5 million; firefighting vehicles and equipment are to get \$15 million; and fire prevention programs \$12 million.

As for how funds will be distributed between career vs. volunteer departments, the rules break it down according to population protected. According to the latest survey by the National Fire Protection Association (1999), volunteer and combination departments protect 57 percent of the population of the United States and career departments protect 43 percent of the population, say the rules. "Therefore, the target distribution of funds is 43 percent for career departments and 57 percent for volunteer departments."

For the complete picture of the program, personnel from all fire departments are encouraged to download and read the full Federal Register Interim Final Rule from the USFA Grant Web site. As is common with governmental documents delivered on the Internet, the document is a PDF file, which requires that the Adobe Acrobat software to download. FEMA's Web team

has provided a link to download the free Adobe Acrobat Reader right below the Federal Register document.

Departments without Internet service are at a disadvantage here, but they can also get a copy of the rules by mail or by contacting the FIRE Grant Program Assistance Office at FEMA.

The Grant Assistance office is accepting toll-free calls and faxes to help departments get their final applications ready. The toll free number is (866) 274-0960. Calling hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST. The line will also accept voice-mail messages after hours, on weekends, or if the line is busy. Questions may also be sent to a toll free fax line, (866) 274-0942, or e-mailed to usfagrants@fema.gov

EENET, FEMA's satellite-based distance learning program, has scheduled a live show airing from 7 to 9 p.m. Eastern Daylight Savings Time (EDT), Monday, April 9, to answer questions about the FIRE Grant Program. During the program, viewers will be able to ask questions of experts by phone, e-mail or fax. For more information in how to participate in the satellite show, visit EENET on the Web at <http://www.fema.gov/emi/eenet.htm> or call 1 (800) 500-5164

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Firewise Feedback

The following letter was submitted on-line, from a Firewise participant in Missoula, Montana:

"I had the chance to participate in the Missoula, Montana Firewise Conference last week. As a homeowner seeing the fires last year and not knowing much about planning and how to do things right...I was so pleased at how the workshop was presented. It is without a doubt the best I have ever participated in. The Team that put it on was so professional, knowledgeable, and friendly and helpful. I was surprised... My hat is off to your program. Thank you so very much!!! Keep up this ... important work."

CALENDAR

June 23 to 24, 2001

NVFC Grant Writing Course

Instructors Provided by VFIS, With Support From USFA. The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), in conjunction with the U.S. Fire Administration and VFIS, is offering a Grant Writing and Coalition Building for Fire Departments course at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Program Description and Instructors: The two-day seminars addresses the challenges facing the volunteer fire service in the grant writing and coalition building areas. The new federal FIRE Grant Program application process will also be discussed. The information-packed seminars will cover these five areas: Potential Sources of Grant Funding for ESOs, Planning, Elements of the Grant Proposal, Marketing Your ESO and Building Coalitions Within Your Community and Short Form Grant Requests

Fees: While seminar fees are normally \$250, this is a special offering from the NVFC — at only \$50. The NVFC will cover the costs of the seminar and meals for both days. Participants will be responsible for travel and hotel/room accommodations.

Visit the NVFC website to register online at www.nvfc.org or call 1-888-ASK-NVFC. Space is limited, so register today! For more information, contact: Heather Schafer, executive director of NVFC, at (202) 887-5700.

August 6 to 10

International Conference on Disaster Management, to be held at Rosen Center Hotel in Orlando, Florida

November 1 to 4

IAFC Volunteer Symposium in Orlando, Florida. Visit www.iafc.org for more information. Or, contact Gary Briese at..

November 5 to 8

The Wildland-Urban Interface: Sustaining Forests in a Changing Landscape – Gainesville, Florida

Registration Information: Early registration (on or before September 25, 2001) is \$295. After that date, the fee is \$350. Registration fee for full-time students is \$185. Registration includes a conference packet, abstract booklet, copy of the USDA Forest Service Southern WUI Assessment, reception, cookout, continental breakfast, lunch on Tuesday and Wednesday, and refreshment breaks. The field trip costs an additional \$50 for lunch and bus transportation. CFE credits available through the Society of American Foresters.

For more information, contact IFAS Office of Conferences and Institutes, (Phone) 352-392-5930; (Fax) 352-392-9734; (E-mail) dwpowers@mail.ifas.ufl.edu. To register on-line, visit the conference website at www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/urban/

November 7 to 10

Division of Forestry Wildland Fire Conference to be held at Hilton Hotel in Ocala, Florida. For more information, call Jim Harrel at 850-921-3733.

MAILING LIST UPDATE

We are updating the *Wildfire News & Notes* mailing list. • Please fill in the information below, making any corrections regarding recipients and address changes, or to indicate removal from further mailings. Then clip this form, making sure that your mailing label is on the reverse side, and mail to *WN&N*, c/o NFPA, Public Fire Protection Division, 1 Batterymarch park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101.

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Web Site of the Day:
incident.com

It seems whenever you turn on the news or read the latest headlines a disaster has occurred somewhere around the world. This website, put together by Art Botterell, gives you an overview of where the most recent natural disasters have occurred. You can also find satellite views around the globe, check temperatures of all the world's oceans, and even view a photo of the sun to see solar activity.

For the United States, you can access information on fire danger, river levels, and climate threats. There's even more information available and, with the relationship between nature and travel conditions, this site gives you the really big picture on what to expect. <http://www.incident.com>

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