



G · C · H · N · A

# Greater Cement Hill Neighborhood Association

Remember  
to renew  
your  
membership  
by May 1  
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## SPRING 2006 NEWSLETTER

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### State Defensible Space Requirements

by Fred Buhler, President

Over the past two years there has been much discussion about the County's Fire Plan. Feelings both in favor and against the plan are growing stronger.

With all the focus on the fire plan, few seem to have noticed the signing of Senate Bill 1369 in September 2004, which increased defensible space requirements from 30 feet around buildings and structures in most rural areas of California, to 100 feet. We believe that homes in our neighborhood will be impacted by this new requirement.

The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection is currently revising regulations to include the new requirement, which they expect to finish this month. CDF expects to begin training inspectors in April. CDF also expects to publish guidance material for the public this Spring. Even though guidelines are not yet "official," according to CDF's website [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov), CDF is already performing inspections based on the new guidelines. "Until such time that these regulations become effective, staff has been advised to use common sense and professional judgment when advising homeowners on whether they are in compliance with the 100 foot clearance requirement," according

to the website, which goes on to say "If compliance is met to 30 feet but not 100 feet, the homeowner will receive a written notice of violation, (similar to a traffic "fix it ticket") with the recommendations to reduce the fire hazard. The Board and the Department wish to emphasize an educational and cooperative approach with the public to reduce fire hazards."

#### Why 100 feet? Wasn't 30 feet enough? Good question.

In Nevada County it is not a question of will there be a major wildland fire but when and where. The combination of a growing population living in forested areas with hilly terrain on a hot, dry, windy day creates ideal conditions for a catastrophic fire. Living in California means learning to live with fire.

Experiments conducted by the USFS Fire Science Lab in Missoula, as well as analysis on homes burned during major wildland fires, consistently supports the notion that homes with adequate defensible space have a much higher probability of surviving a wildland fire.

Experience shows that by managing vegetation around our homes and employing fire safe landscaping, the potential for structural damage during a wildland fire can be reduced. A study following the

### GCHNA Town Hall Meeting, April 3rd, 7pm

With Fire Season approaching, have you wondered

- If there is a major fire, is it safe to stay?
- How to select an exit route from our neighborhood?
- When to leave?
- How much defensible space is NOW required by state law?
- When are fire permits needed?
- Important fire hazards in our homes?

NCCFD Fire Chief Tim Fike will discuss all this and more at GCHNA's Town Hall Meeting. Monday, April 3, 7pm at the Fire Station on Coyote Street and Highway 49.

Williams Fire concluded that for those houses within the fire zone that did not have defensible space, 85% suffered serious damage or were destroyed. On the other hand, of those houses that did have adequate defensible space only 20% were damaged. Another study found that of those houses with wood roofs and less than 30' of defensible space, 50% were destroyed. For those houses with fire resistant roofs and more than 100' of defensible space, only 0.7% were destroyed. The numbers are compelling!

*Space, continued on page 2*

### GCHNA MISSION

*To protect and preserve the rural qualities of our neighborhood by providing a forum for group action as needed.*

# Fire Suppression Benefit Assessment Providing Better Fire Protection

by Tim Fike, Chief, Nevada Consolidated Fire District

**Web Site:** <http://www.nccfire.com>

I would like to update you on what the District has done since October 2004 when the fire suppression benefit assessment was passed. We created our 2005 budget with the anticipation of proceeds of the assessment hitting our books in December of 2005.

We then held a career firefighter testing process and selected six outstanding firefighters so that we could begin our permanent staffing of the Alta Sierra fire station with two on duty 24/7. This step was completed by July 2005. In the meantime, a good deal of work was done to the station to make it more conducive to 24-hour staffing. The broken cement apron, the septic system, and the 20-year-old carpets were all replaced; some furniture was needed, along with some new paint to spruce it up. Much of the work was done in-house, saving you, the taxpayer, thousands of dollars.

As all of this progressed, our staff worked out the details for ordering our next three fire engines. These 4X4 engines were ordered by October 2005 and have the most up-to-date technology to meet the demands of our urban/wildland interface area. They are capable of wildland firefighting with compressed air foam or pumping 1,500 GPM on a commercial structure fire. We look forward to their delivery by May of 2006. They will be the prototype for future purchases.

In November of 2005, we initiated our staffing of the Banner Mountain Station on Banner Lava Cap road. It is now staffed with two firefighters 24/7. We then promoted three of our personnel to Captain to help manage our diverse 150-square mile response area. (see photo).

For several months in 2005, we went through a rigorous review of our fire district operations by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO). They examine every aspect of our capability from response records, times and number of personnel we use to respond to a fire, our training records (how often, how many hours, what kind, down to the last person), vehicle maintenance records, hose testing (every length has to be pressure tested, all 35,000 feet of it), and business inspection records. Our 911 Dispatch Center was reviewed, NID was reviewed, and the list goes on.

The good news is we maintained the ISO rating of Class 4 that we were given after our last review in 2000. The better news is that it improved the former 49er Fire Protection District area from an ISO rating of Class 5 that they had. The even better news for me was, after I did some research on the significance of a 4 rating, I found that less than 7% of the 46,627 fire departments rated in the nation were an ISO Class 4 or better. The best rating is a Class 1 rating. As of 2002 statistics (the most recently available), only 45 departments in the nation could meet it.

If you are in a Class 9 or 10, 10 being the worst, you can pretty much bet you can't get fire insurance for your home in California. Our Class 4 rating went into effect January 1, 2006

The assessment allowed us to increase full time staffed fire stations from

two to four. The four 24/7 staffed stations are: Coyote at Highway 49, Banner Mountain, Highway 49 at La Barr Meadows, and the Alta Sierra Station. We also staff part-time with Seasonal Firefighters the Alta Oaks Station on Ridge Road at Alta St. and we jointly staff with the City of Grass Valley at the Brighton Street Station and the City of Nevada City on Providence Mine Road. We have seven all volunteer stations that are all volunteer. (a.k.a. Paid-Call).

We have 33 career Firefighters consisting of one Chief, three Battalion Chiefs (Fire Marshal, Operations, and Training), one Fire Prevention Officer, six Captains, 12 Engineers, one Engineer/Mechanic, and nine Firefighters. In addition we have a Finance/Office Manager, a Board/District Secretary, an Administrative Clerk, and a part-time Human Resources Administrator, 10 Seasonal Firefighters and 22 Paid-Call Firefighters.

We are the largest fire district in Nevada County, serving over 35,000 residents in our 150-square-mile area, and responded to 3,558 incidents last year. I am convinced that we have done everything in our power to judiciously spend the \$89 per year that you pay on an improved parcel in order to provide you better fire protection. Thank you for your continued support. ■

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*Space, continued from page 1*

Chief Tim Fike, Nevada County Consolidated Fire District, has agreed to join us at our Town Hall meeting on August 3rd, at 7:00 PM, at the fire station on Coyote Street, to discuss the new defensible space requirements and other fire safety issues. We hope you will be able to join us. ■



## Join GCHNA or Renew Your Membership *(check your membership status at [www.gchna.com/membership](http://www.gchna.com/membership))*

If you haven't joined or renewed your membership to GCHNA, we hope you will do so now. Here's my \$20 GCHNA membership fee for 2004. Enclosed is a check made out to GCHNA.



Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail check & form to: GCHNA, PO Box 1343, Nevada City, CA 95959  E-mailed (PDF) newsletter preferred

### NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATIVES

#### West End Cement Hill

*West end of Cement Hill Road, including Sunshadow Circle, Cedar Song Road, and Garesio Ranch Road.*

**Tim Hagan, ([timhagan@infostations.com](mailto:timhagan@infostations.com)) 265-9746**

#### Applewood Lane

*Applewood Lane, including Indian Shack Road.*

(open)

#### Gochine Drive

*Gochine, including Mr. Auburn Circle.*

**Chip Carman, ([chip@spiral.com](mailto:chip@spiral.com)) 478-9005**

#### Upper Cement Hill

*Upper Cement Hill Road, including Pine Tree Place, Diamond Oak Drive, Bodie Ridge Road, Skyranch Road, and Elysian Way.*

**Willie Brusin, ([brusin@inreach.com](mailto:brusin@inreach.com)) 265-4018**

#### Sunrock Road

*Sunrock Road.*

**Donna Uran 478-1656**

#### Augustine Road / Excelsior Ditch Camp Road

*Augustine Road, including Daisy Blue Mine, Leisure Lane, Lazy Oaks Drive, and Excelsior Ditch.*

**Marty Pezzaglia, ([martypezzaglia@direcway.com](mailto:martypezzaglia@direcway.com)) 265-3288**

#### Crystal View Heights

*Crystal View, including Golden Oaks.*

**Andy Oliver, ([ajoliver@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ajoliver@sbcglobal.net)) 265-0269**

#### Central Cement Hill Road

*Central Cement Hill Road, including Whispering Oaks, Merryhill Way, Gold Court, Spanish Quartz, Ragon Road, and Fox Hill Road.*

**Jeanette Clark, ([cementhill@aol.com](mailto:cementhill@aol.com)) 265-2680**

#### Lower Cement Hill Road

*Lower Cement Hill Road, including West Piper, Deer Crest, Rancheria Court, Red Hill Road, Foster Driveway, Picton, Picton Way, and Foster Road.*

**Glen Cooley 265-4025**

#### Indian Flat Road

*Indian Flat Road, including Country Circle and Robinson King Road.*

**Eileen Jorgensen, ([eileen@themagiccarpet.biz](mailto:eileen@themagiccarpet.biz)) 265-6415**

## 2006 Membership Renewal

It's time to renew your GCHNA membership. Thank you for your support this past year and we hope you will continue supporting your neighborhood association in 2006. Your dues support our newsletter, community service and family picnic, and in return, you get a great propane rate with Ferrellgas. Please fill out the membership form in this newsletter and mail it with your check for \$20 to GCHNA, P.O. Box 1343, Nevada City, CA 95959.

Residents of our neighborhood that were GCHNA members in good standing as of September 25, 2005, should have received a coupon for twenty five gallons of propane from Ferrellgas.

#### Southside Cement Hill

*Highway 49, including Columbine Court, Delphine Lane, Shoshoni Trail, Old Faithful Court, Carli Way, Crooked Arrow Lane, John Barleycorn Rd., Frost Court and Cavanaugh Lane.*

**Lin Donald 265-3334**

#### Wet Hill Road

*Wet Hill Road, including Sierra Springs Circle, Lower North Bloomfield Road, and Elliot Way.*

**Nancy Lakoduk, ([snlduck@nccn.net](mailto:snlduck@nccn.net)) 265-5919**

#### Airport Road

*Airport Road, including Tower Hill Road, West Airport Road, East Piper Lane, and Sheriff Road.*

**Fred Buhler, ([ddinmont2@earthlink.net](mailto:ddinmont2@earthlink.net)) 265-4878**

#### At Large

**Julie Cobden 265-5987**

**Eve Collins, ([collins@theunion.net](mailto:collins@theunion.net)) 265-6540**

**Tom Stone, ([tastone@pacbell.net](mailto:tastone@pacbell.net)) 478-1295**





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## SPRING 2006 NEWSLETTER

*Make Your Home Fire Safe: A Quick Checklist*  
Download the flyer at [www.gchna.com](http://www.gchna.com)

### Who to Contact...

#### Membership Information

Eve Collins – 265-6540

#### Ferrellgas Information

Customer Service – 265-5896

#### Neighborhood Ferrellgas Contact

Tom Stone – 478-1295

#### The Fire Safe Council

#### Brush Chipping

– 272-1122

### Newsletter Contributors

*Editor:* Chip Carman

*Design & Layout:* John Paul

*And a big thanks to all our writers  
and photographers.*



### GCHNA Bi-monthly Steering Committee Meetings

are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday evening of every month. Call your area representative for the meeting location. Meeting agendas are posted 24 hours in advance at the kiosk on Wet Hill and Cement Hill. Non-approved minutes are posted at the kiosk as soon as they are available after a meeting. ■

### GCHNA Mission Statement

The Greater Cement Hill Neighborhood Association is chartered to:

- Protect and preserve the rural qualities of our neighborhood by providing a forum for group action as needed.
- Communicate information quickly and efficiently about matters of neighborhood interest to its members and associates.
- Raise funds and supply volunteer labor for projects that enhance or improve our neighborhood.
- Be an organization through which our neighbors can meet and get to know each other in meetings and social gatherings.

