
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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600th Community in California Designated 'Firewise'

California Continues to Hold Highest Number of Firewise Communities in the Nation

California has accomplished a new record of designated Firewise USA® communities with the recognition of Rancho/Middle Canyon in Monterey County as the 600th Firewise Community in the state. The recognition by the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) highlights the fact the community has taken steps to ensure that wildfire risk is reduced in their area.

“While we celebrate the recognition of the Rancho/Middle Canyon community, we are grateful to all 600 communities who have worked hard this year to prepare their neighborhoods for wildfire,” said California State Fire Marshal, Mike Richwine.

Earlier this year CAL FIRE established a new division to further focus on community wildfire preparedness efforts, including the Firewise USA recognition process.

“A part of our wildfire preparedness strategy this year has been to work closely with local communities and neighborhoods in earning the Firewise Community recognition,” said Chief Daniel Berlant, Deputy Director of CAL FIRE-Office of the State Fire Marshal’s Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division. “Reaching the 600th community mark is a huge accomplishment, especially since it was just seven months ago that we hit 500.”

The Carmel Valley community of Rancho/Middle Canyon in Monterey County gets the distinction of being California’s 600th Firewise USA Community. The community worked closely with the CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal’s Firewise Southern California Area Liaison, Battalion Chief Gene Potkey, and Monterey County Regional Fire District’s Division Chief Kevin Kamnikar to complete the application. “Building the connection in the community allows us to check on neighbors and check on our neighbor’s properties when an evacuation occurs,” said Mark Angel, community leader. “Community building is the greatest benefit as it is the first line of defense, it is your neighbors that need to stick together and work together, it makes all the difference in the world.”

“Wildfires can impact dozens or hundreds of homes simultaneously,” said Michele Steinberg, NFPA Wildfire Division director. “The work that people do along with their neighbors through Firewise USA helps the whole community to bend down the risk curve.”

The Firewise USA recognition program is administered by NFPA. Individuals and communities participate on a voluntary basis and are recognized as a Firewise community upon the completion of certain tasks, including forming a committee of residents and other wildfire stakeholders, obtaining a written risk assessment form, with assistance from Division Chief Kevin Kamnikar, including hosting an outreach event and ultimately completing their application to become a Firewise community.

To learn the steps and begin the process of becoming a California Firewise community, visit: www.ReadyForWildfire.org/prevent-wildfire/firewise-communities/

To view and download photos from the Rancho/Middle Canyon 600th Firewise Community ceremony, visit: <https://calfire.box.com/s/8awbk0ozo02b1s7jxkj2nb97g6drmygh>

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