



NEWS RELEASE

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Hinsdale County Deputy Emergency Manager Receives Award

ALAMOSA, Colo. – May 5, 2016 – Rick Hernandez, Hinsdale County’s deputy emergency manager, has been named 2015 “Partner of the Year” by the Colorado State Forest Service for his role as the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Coordinator for the county. The award is bestowed to only one CSFS partner, cooperater or individual each year for exceptional support of, or assistance to, the agency.

Hernandez, a Lake City resident who has experience in wildland fire management, was officially recognized by the CSFS at the agency’s annual meeting and awards ceremony this week in Glenwood Springs.

“Rick exhibits professionalism and excellence in communication and outreach, including in his assistance on defensible space workshops and in helping organize public wildfire education events,” said Adam Moore of the Alamosa District, who took a lead role in nominating Hernandez. “He works tirelessly to educate homeowners associations and landowners on defensible space, and has even helped lay out cross-boundary fuelbreak projects with the U.S. Forest Service.”

CWPPs bring together diverse local interests to discuss mutual concerns for public safety, community sustainability and natural resources, and represent an ideal opportunity to address the challenges of the wildland-urban interface in a way that brings about comprehensive and locally supported solutions.

Hernandez has provided CWPP and other assistance and support to three CSFS districts – Alamosa, Salida and Durango – and to the West Region Wildfire Council. Although Hinsdale County is located exclusively in the Salida District based on political boundaries, Hernandez serves the other districts because of overlapping communities, fire protection districts and watersheds.

Some of Hernandez’s specific accomplishments include working with multiple communities in the upper Rio Grande region, Lake City area and southern Hinsdale County; assisting in defensible space workshops for homeowners; marking fuelbreak boundaries for treatments and home-specific defensible spaces; and acting as a conduit between Hinsdale County fire departments and CSFS districts.

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) provides technical forestry assistance, wildfire mitigation expertise and outreach and education to help landowners and communities achieve their forest management goals. The CSFS is a service and outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University and provides staffing for the Division of Forestry within the Colorado Department of Natural Resources.