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NEWS

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Colorado Becomes Third State to Achieve 100 Firewise Communities

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – More than 100 Colorado communities have now earned Firewise Communities/USA® recognition – an accomplishment achieved by only three states – for taking steps to reduce their wildfire risk.

“Reaching the one hundred community benchmark is a major accomplishment,” said Cathy Prudhomme, the community outreach program manager for the National Fire Protection Association’s Wildland Fire Operations Division. “Until now, only two of the program’s 41 participating states have achieved that level of participation.”

The national Firewise Communities/USA recognition program is administered by the NFPA and provides a template for wildfire safety at the neighborhood level. The Colorado State Forest Service serves as the liaison between Colorado communities and the NFPA to help private landowners with wildfire mitigation and education efforts.

Under the program, communities develop an action plan that guides residential risk-reduction activities, while engaging and encouraging neighbors to become active participants in building a safer place to live. To become a recognized Firewise Community/USA, communities must:

- Obtain a wildfire risk assessment from the state forestry agency or a local fire department.
- Form a board or committee, and create an action plan based on the assessment.
- Conduct a “Firewise Day” event at least once every year.
- Invest a minimum of \$2 per capita in local Firewise actions annually.

“Becoming a Firewise Community/USA helps communities learn about wildfire risks while working with local firefighters, forestry professionals and national researchers to reduce those risks,” said Courtney Peterson, wildfire mitigation education coordinator for the CSFS. “Neighbors build stronger bonds with each other when they rally toward a common cause for the good of the neighborhood.”

In just the past three weeks, three Colorado communities received the Firewise Communities/USA designation for the first time, bringing the total of such communities in the state to 101.

For more information about the Firewise Communities/USA recognition program or to view a full list of Firewise communities, go to www.firewise.org. To learn more about wildfire mitigation in Colorado, go to <http://www.csfs.colostate.edu/>.