



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 25, 2016

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Colorado Association of REALTORS® and West Region Wildfire Council Bringing REALTOR® and Homeowner Wildfire Awareness and Education Program to West/Southwest Colorado

RIDGWAY, Colo. – As the next step in the expansion of its *Colorado Project Wildfire*, the Colorado Association REALTORS® has teamed up with the West Region Wildfire Council to offer educational programming for REALTORS® and property owners in the west/southwest counties of our state. The partnership was announced at the Log Hill Volunteer Fire Department near Ridgway where wildfire mitigation experts provided an informational session and tour of both mitigated properties and those in need of mitigation.

Over the past two decades, frequent, large, destructive wildfires have claimed hundreds of thousands of acres of land, damaged or destroyed hundreds of homes and structures, caused deaths and injuries and displaced residents for extended periods of time across the state of Colorado.

“Safety is of the utmost importance to our REALTOR® members,” said CAR’s Colorado Project Wildfire Chair, Bonnie Smith. “We act out that concern with each of our clients through careful selection of safe properties, the use of professional inspections and providing access to resources homeowners can use themselves to enhance the safety of their properties. Everyone – not just those living in a WUI – is affected by wildfires. Helping homeowners (and future homeowners) in those areas understand how to mitigate the danger is the very reason we started Colorado Project Wildfire.”

According to the Colorado State Forest Service, more than two million Coloradans live in the [wildland-urban interface \(WUI\)](#), an area where man-made improvements are built close to, or within, natural terrain and flammable vegetation, and where high potential for wildland fire exists. With continued development throughout the state’s WUI areas estimated to grow by 300 percent in the next 15 years, the wildfire threat is real and it is not going away.

“As a regional organization that works to reduce wildfire risk and promote fire adapted communities, we’re excited to collaborate with the Colorado Association of REALTORS®,” said Lilia Falk, director of the West Region Wildfire Council. “We have a collective responsibility to prepare our homes, properties and communities for the possibility of wildfire. Colorado Project Wildfire helps promote this message while connecting residents with local resources, like the West Region Wildfire Council, that are available to assist with wildfire education, mitigation and preparedness efforts.”

The Colorado Association of REALTORS® (CAR) launched *Colorado Project Wildfire* last year, an education program designed to help reduce and/or prevent the destruction of land and property, injuries and loss of life by raising awareness of and access to wildfire mitigation resources. With 23,000-plus REALTOR® members spread across the state, CAR and its members are working in partnership with other like-minded fire prevention organizations to bring education and awareness, as well as access to local resources directly to residents.

CAR's *Colorado Project Wildfire* website, <http://www.coloradoprojectwildfire.com>, provides information and direct links to information regarding:

- Protecting Your Home Before a Wildfire
- Current Colorado Danger Zones; and
- Who is Affected by Wildfires.

From basic property cleanup recommendations and wood chipping programs to detailed action plans and property evaluation services from fire and safety professionals in local communities, the website offers access to city, county, state and federal resource organizations, mitigation education and more through its Resources and Tool Kit tabs.

“We are very excited to partner with the West Region Wildfire Council on this event,” Smith said. “Their experience in bringing together WUI residents, fire districts, agency representatives and other partners in educating, promoting risk reduction and providing resources to help homeowners and communities reduce risk will be invaluable to our REALTOR® members.”

Log Hill Fire Department Assistant Chief Tom Austin added, “Our highest priority is the safety of our residents and firefighters. By collaborating with the West Region Wildfire Council, we have enabled our homeowners to take concrete steps to protect their homes and therefore reduce the danger to them and our firefighters. The tools offered by Colorado Project Wildfire and the Colorado Association of REALTORS® will further empower homeowners to protect their property and lives from the danger of wildfire.

Joining representatives from CAR and the West Region Wildfire Council were representatives from the Log Hill Volunteer Fire Department, Ouray County Commissioners, Colorado State Forest Service, Firewise of Southwest Colorado, Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control and the office of Emergency Management. Six area REALTOR® organizations - Durango Area Association of REALTORS®, Delta County Board of REALTORS®, Montrose Association of REALTORS®, Telluride Association of REALTORS®, Gunnison Country Association of REALTORS® and the Four Corners Board of REALTORS® - are co-sponsoring the program and helping educate their members, clients and residents throughout their communities about wildfire danger and mitigation.

About CAR

The Colorado Association of REALTORS® is the state's largest professional, voluntary, non-profit, real estate trade association that is dedicated to serving more than 23,000 REALTOR® members across the state. These agents are also members of 34 local associations statewide and the National Association of REALTORS®. CAR's purpose is to protect all issues and fields of Colorado's real estate industry including property owners, land owners, home owners, commercial brokers, residential brokers, resort brokers, rural brokers and property managers.

For more information: <http://www.coloradoprojectwildfire.com> and <http://www.coloradorealtors.com/projectwildfire/>

About West Region Wildfire Council

The West Region Wildfire Council (www.cowildfire.org) promotes wildfire preparedness, prevention and mitigation education across Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel counties. As a collaborative regional focal point for wildfire related information, the West Region Wildfire Council:

- EDUCATES homeowners about wildfire risk and promotes activities that help communities and homeowners increase fire adaptedness.
- PROMOTES wildfire risk reduction through community preparedness and planning.
- PROVIDES funding to assist landowners with hazardous fuels reduction projects and defensible space.
- SUPPORTS cooperator efforts to collaboratively achieve common wildfire related objectives.

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