

Sunrise in the Smokies

NEWS THAT AFFECTS YOU

Pigeon Forge seeks to become Firewise

Submitted
PIGEON FORGE — Wildland Fires have affected Sevier County even before the disaster that struck the area in November 2016. Sevier County natives can tell “remember when” stories of wildland fires in the past; and out of the fires from last November there are personal accounts which will be permanent records in local history — but there are ways to prevent disasters.

The Pigeon Forge Fire Department is hosting an opportunity to learn more. A public meeting will be held Aug. 22 at the LeConte Event Center from 6-8 p.m. to help residents learn more.

The losses in the wildland fire were tragic and

to not heed some of the “lessons learned” would be unfortunate. There are scientifically proven things that can be done to protect people and property from wildfire in the future. Citizens can be reduce the risk to their homes and businesses by adopting practices to protect their investments through the Firewise USA Program.

The City of Pigeon Forge has adopted this program and this first in a 3-part series over the next several weeks will provide public education and focus on the process of becoming Firewise.

Education

Where we live in Sevier County with its mixture of woods,



residences and rental cabins falls into a land classification called the Wildland/Urban Interface. Firefighters, and other disciplines, that frequently work with the Wildland/Urban Interface often shorten it to “WUI,” pronounced “Wooy.” The WUI is what needs the most preparation in terms of wildland fire mitigation.

Since 1994, the movement to prepare residents in the United

States who live in the WUI has been defined by the National Fire Protection Association as the Firewise USA Program.

This program educates homeowners about reducing their exposure to wildland fire. In the WUI, it’s not usually an all-consuming tidal wave of fire that burns a structure down, it’s usually things like the little embers that are blown into an attic

or into a pile of leaves under a deck.

Preparing homes by using some simple techniques in landscaping and maintenance is what Firewise is all about.

Be Involved

The City of Pigeon Forge is going to become a nationally recognized Firewise Community. This will involve residents and businesses in and around Pigeon Forge voluntarily doing work with guidance from the Fire Department. As laid out in the guidelines, this first public meeting will get people involved.

Ideally, residents will be working side-by-side with firefighters and city planners to create defensible space in and

around their neighborhoods. This is an opportunity to volunteer to make a difference in your community.

At this time, it’s not important that you know what to do, it’s important that you commit to making a difference, helping to plan mitigation projects in Pigeon Forge. Firefighters will instruct and provide the rest of the training.

Come to the City’s Public Meeting on Aug. 22 at the LeConte Event Center from 6-8 p.m. Light hors d’oeuvres and beverages will be provided. For more information before the meeting, contact Lieutenant Kevin Nunn with the Pigeon Forge Fire Department at 865-429-7381.