

January 26, 2008 Fire Prevention Meeting for Glenwood and other Pt San Pedro Area Residents

On Saturday, January 26th, more than 60 Glenwood and other Pt San Pedro residents gathered at the Glenwood Elementary School to hear a joint presentation by the San Rafael and Marin County Fire Departments on new fire safety programs designed for our neighborhoods. Also assisting in the presentation were representatives from the Marin Municipal Water District and Marin County Supervisor, Susan Adams.

Representatives from San Rafael Fire Department discussed our city's Wildland Urban Interface Ordinance (WUI) passed into law this past summer that requires homeowners living close to open space areas to maintain a "defensive perimeter" around their homes that is free of excessive or dead vegetation in order to prevent a small fire from turning into a wildfire that destroys hundreds of homes.

Glenwood residents who fall within the WUI area will be required to implement 100 feet of defensible space around their homes by August 2010. Some aspects of the WUI ordinance are easy to comply with, such as removing excess vegetation or moving large woodpiles away from homes. Other requirements are more stringent: plants such as juniper and bamboo may be no closer than 15 feet of any structure and, by 2010, these two plant species will be banned outright in San Rafael because they are highly flammable. For more information, and to see if your home falls within the Wildland Urban Interface, go to the San Rafael Fire Department Vegetation Management website at

http://www.cityofsanrafael.org/Government/Fire/Vegetation_Management_Program.htm

Marin Municipal Water District is offering a number of informational pamphlets for homeowners on how to re-landscape their yards and choose plant types that minimize fire danger. The MMWD is also offering a rebate to homeowners who "retrofit" their yards to achieve a more fire-resistant landscape. For more information, visit the MMWD website at <http://www.marinwater.org> or call their public information desk at 945-1438.

Representatives from Marin County Fire Department discussed a system of firebreaks they will construct on existing fire roads on San Pedro Mountain. Firefighters will clear low-lying, thick brush to create firebreaks designed to stop or slow the spread of wildfire into areas with high concentrations of homes.

Glenwood HOA and the San Rafael Fire Dept plan to hold future public information meetings to educate homeowners on what will be required of them going forward and to inform them of how the Fire Department will partner with residents to meet the requirements of the WUI ordinance.