



## **Background and Overview of the Nevada Fire Safe Council**

- Purpose:**
- A. To create an organization that serves as a bridge between fire services and public agencies, and communities threatened by wildfire.
  - B. To focus the new organization's activities on creating a network of local community support, and
  - C. To provide assistance to threatened communities to 1. Improve resident's understanding of the fire threat and accept personal responsibility for some level of community protection, 2. Identify and rate the risks and hazards, 3. Develop and prioritize mitigation projects, and 4. Procure funding assistance to implement mitigation measures.

**The Problem:** Throughout the decade of the 90's Nevada's fire management officials became increasingly concerned about the explosive character of wildfires occurring across the state and the growing threat they posed to communities, resources, and human life. While improving fire suppression capability was a direct and obvious approach, fire officials quickly accepted the fact that supplying more engines and crews was only a partial solution to a very serious and growing problem. Grass roots, community level support and action was needed to create zones of modified fuel that would reduce fire intensity, slow the rate of spread, and give firefighters a realistic chance to defend vulnerable communities. An organizational gap became immediately apparent. No organization existed that could bridge this gap, marshal local forces, and establish the critical lines of communication required to convert the vision into a community education and fuel treatment reality.

**Solution:** In the spring of 1999 a broad coalition of concerned Nevadan's closed this gap by endorsing the creation of an independent, membership organization focused on reducing the fire risk and increasing the survivability of at-risk communities. This endorsement and the organizational support that followed gave birth to the Nevada Fire Safe Council. For the first two years the Council struggled and suffered financial starvation. Then in January 2002, following the passage of the National Fire Plan, the Nevada Fire Safe Council received its first sizeable grant. These funds allowed the hiring of an executive director and provided support for education and fuel reduction in two high-risk communities.