



North Carson Fire Safe Council hopes to prevent fires through awareness

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Ken Sullivan has lived in north Carson City for nearly 10 years. Right now, his large piece of property is overgrown with dry brush and in a condition he describes as "a fire waiting to happen."

Sullivan has tried a variety of methods to clear brush. He used to have a burro and horses grazing off potential fire fuel. After the animals were gone, he tried a controlled burn to get rid of dangerous weeds and grasses. It's something he's not going to attempt again.

"It scared me," he remembered. "It's safer to take it to the dump."

But for many people, it takes numerous hauls to get rid of the vegetation. People try to avoid this by simply stacking the dry growth away from their homes.

"That's dangerous, too," he warned.

This is why Sullivan was one of the first people in his neighborhood to sign up for the North Carson Chapter of the Nevada Fire Safe Council. It is the city's newest chapter; members come from the far-north section of the city. Monday's meeting drew only 10 people, but it's only the group's fourth gathering since its inception in November.

The biggest enticement for joining up? Not having to haul the dried-up plants to the dump. Seeing the damage done by the Waterfall fire and other area blazes also had a lot to do with it, Sullivan said.

He and approximately 649 other homeowners in that part of the city will be the first Carson residents to participate in an experiment: Will bringing receptacles to the residents, instead of waiting for the residents to bring the waste to the city dump, result in a drop in the number of controlled burns?

According to Bruce VanCleemput, Carson City's assistant fire chief and fire marshal, there are 250 permits issued for controlled burns each year. The city would like to see this number substantially reduced because controlled burns cause pollution and easily get out of control, he said.

The fire department recently obtained three trash trailers and three containers for gathering fire-fuel debris. The receptacles will be available for no additional charge to members of the fire council. And residents in the council area can join when they take their dry growth to one of the containers in their neighborhood.

What else do they get for their membership of \$10 for two years? Along with participating in events such as this one, firefighting professionals from the city, state and federal government have joined with University of Nevada Cooperative Extension to provide fire-safety tips, such as how to best create firebreaks and what types of plants are the least flammable.

UNR Cooperative Extension is the lead agency behind the nonprofit group, which was formed in 2000 to promote fire safety. There are six fire-safety councils in Carson City and dozens of chapters across the state.

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