

North Lake Tahoe Bonanza

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Sierra tree-removal project slated

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The Chimney Rock Chapter of the Nevada Firesafe Council has embarked on its first project to reduce the threat of catastrophic fire in their neighborhood, employing two hand crews and one tree removal service to get rid of dead trees and debris in the area.

The chapter received \$120,000 in a grant from the State of Nevada for its project.

Last year, the lower Kingsbury Grade neighborhood got a wake-up call when a report on fire danger in the Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District ranked it as the only area with "extreme" fire danger. It is surrounded by National Forest land.

"That was the catalyst to get active and form this chapter," said chairperson Bob McDowell, a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Forest Service himself.

While the Forest Service has been concentrating on reducing flammable debris from areas near development, fire protection agencies throughout the basin have been encouraging homeowners to implement "defensible space" by removing debris from their private property.

In the case of the Chimney Rock neighborhood, there are too many trees for a healthy forest, said McDowell.

The chapter incorporated last September, McDowell wrote the grant application by its due date of Nov. 15 and the money was granted by Feb. 7.

The Nevada Fire Safe Council is a nonprofit coalition of citizens, businesses and representatives from local, state and federal government agencies with the aim of reducing the threat of wildfires. It is the first organization of its kind in the country.

The council serves California and Nevada neighborhoods of the Lake Tahoe Basin. To inquire about starting a chapter, call Jennifer Arrowsmith at (530) 573-0515.

[BACK](#) ←