



Safe Fire council seeks new means of funding chapters

Susan Voyles (SVOYLES@RGJ.COM)

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While trying to create neighborhood chapters, the Nevada Safe Fire Council has lost

\$1 million in continued support from the Nevada Legislature.

"In this legislative session, money was a little tighter, and we didn't receive any project funding," said Andrew List, council director.

List said he is hopeful federal grants through the Nevada Division of Forestry will be available to help neighborhood chapters clear brush and thin trees. List said the council can no longer guarantee funding.

"We will do everything we can to find funds for the chapters to do their work," he said. "At the very least, we can provide educational services."

In the last year, chapters in the suburbs around Reno and Sparks have obtained \$350,000 in grants to clear 200 acres of fire hazards, removing 1,500 tons of fuel, said Elwood Miller, the founding council director. He said that doesn't count several thousands of hours in volunteer time.

In the past month, four chapters have been organized in Washoe County in the Scotch Pines Estates in the Galena Forest, Saddlehorn, St. James Village and Red Rock Estates.

"Everybody wants to know what they can do to keep their house from burning," said Marty Scheuerman, Reno fire division chief. "This is it."

Mario Roberti has filed papers to form a chapter for Scotch Pines Estates and hopes to mobilize everyone in his neighborhood. He said he and his neighbors are worried after getting very little snowfall and little to no rain this past year.

His neighborhood is in an area considered most at risk of a catastrophic fire in Washoe County because it hasn't burned since 1910. At his house, Jeffrey pines stand at least 100 feet tall.

"It's a beautiful place to live," he said. "We live in the core of the forest."

Three chapters exist in the Galena Forest, two in Incline Village and one each in Virginia Foothills, West Washoe Valley, Pleasant Valley, Vista Point in Caughlin Ranch and the Bordertown area.

In the past two years, the council has helped form

70 chapters and obtained grants totaling \$4.5 million for projects to thin trees in Nevada and the Tahoe Basin, List said.

This year, it provided \$71,000 for the Sierra Fire Protection District to have a firefighter go door to door in West Washoe Valley to inspect homes for defensible space.

The grant also covers a curbside wood-chipping program where people can put piles of branches along the street for grinding into chips.