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Angora Fire Teaches Hard Lessons

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Last summer's Angora Fire at South Lake Tahoe destroyed more than 250 homes and burned more than 31-hundred acres of forest. [A](#) | [A](#) | [A](#)
It also taught some difficult lessons...lessons that may help prevent the next big one.

Angora was the fire that had been anticipated and feared by Tahoe Basin firefighters for decades.

As much as possible response had been talked through and planned. Still, when it happened, it was a surprise.

"I have a pretty good imagination," says Lake Valley Fire District Chief Jeff Michael, "but I could never have imagined what happened. How fast it moved and built."

And, Michael told an audience at the Grand Sierra today, it also hit home in ways he didn't expect.

"We knew the faces of those homeowners. They were friends. It was tough.:

Michael was sharing more than his experiences with members of the Nevada Fire Safe Council. He was sharing what the Angora Fire taught firefighters.

The big lesson...a healthy forest is the best defense and homeowners play a key role.

Of the homes that had been treated with defensible space techniques...75 percent survived the fire.

Those that did burn usually were next to property that hadn't been treated.

Many of the homes in Tahoe neighborhoods are second homes, their owners absent much of the year...and that's part of the problem.

Defensible space needs to be maintained.

That's why all those homeowners will be getting notices that they are required to maintain defensible space around their homes.

They'll also be learning about a rebate program to help them cover the expense.

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