

## NLTFPD Defensible space rebate program gets low response

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Incline Village/Crystal Bay residents have filed 40 requests for a \$1,000 defensible space rebate in the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District.

That number is a little lower than Ryan McDermott, project coordinator with the Nevada Fire Safe Council, would like it.

The rebate program, which was launched at the beginning of summer by the the council, gives Tahoe Basin homeowners a \$1,000 rebate if they get a defensible space evaluation from a local fire district and then have defensible space work done on their property. The rebate is available to all Lake Tahoe residents on both the California and Nevada sides of the Lake.

"I was hoping for an influx of people once we announced this, and we're still hopeful people will take advantage of this program before the summer is over," McDermott said.

Of the 207 rebates allotted to the NLTFPD, only 40 have been filed so far with the fire safe council.

"Getting your defensible space work done is extremely important," McDermott said. "It's really the only thing homeowners can do to protect from a disaster. It gives the fire district a leg up if you have good defensible space at your home and buys them some time to protect your home."

He said that once a wildfire closes in on a home, it's too late to tend to overdue defensible space work.

It's not that NLTFPD residents aren't getting defensible space evaluations, though. Evaluation requests are well ahead of last year, as the NLTFPD has received 297 through Thursday. Through July 31, 2007, the district received only 197.

Incline/Crystal Bay residents also aren't taking advantage of the rebates as compared to their basin neighbors. North Tahoe Fire Protection District, which covers from the California state line West to Tahoe City has already doled out 150 of their 207 rebate allotment. Lake Valley Fire Protection District residents have received 120 of their 207 rebates, and Tahoe-Douglas recorded 82.

One of the people who are taking the fire safe council up on their offer in Incline is Vicki Ingersoll. A 10-year resident of Jennifer Street, Ingersoll said the rebate was a deciding factor in having her defensible space done this year for the first time.

"It did help, we had about 16 trees taken down and that was quite expensive so the rebate was a really big influence on our decision," Ingersoll said.

She said the threat of forest fires spurred she and her husband to action in addition to the rebate.

"We're very thankful to have our home and want to protect it. We have about 80 trees on our property and just wanted to thin it out to make things a little healthier," Ingersoll said. "We're hoping we can be a big influence to others on how to stay safe, we want to be a good example."

In interviews with the Bonanza, firefighters from the NLTFPD who fought the fires in California over the last month



- Bonanza Photo -Jen Schmidt

and a half echoed McDermott's statement, saying homes in the path of a wildfire fare much better if they are equipped with good defensible space and homes without defensible space are a danger to protect.

Greg McKay, asst. fire chief for the NLTFPD, said the program is a nice benefit and encouraged residents to take advantage of the program since many rebates were still available.

<http://www.tahoebonanza.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080803/NEWS/682902526/1061/MISC98&parentprofile=-1&template=printart>

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