

Alpine View Evacuation Drill Summary

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Rationale: An evacuation drill was seen as a way to introduce residents to the procedures necessary in the event of a wildfire evacuation. No such drill or event has happened in at least 13 years and there are many new residents in the area. There have been several situations where an evacuation was imminent and many in the neighborhood felt that guidance and practice would be useful. In addition, it was felt that county agencies that would be involved in a wildfire evacuation could use practice in implementing their procedures. In order to attract more residential participants, it was decided to couple the drill with the annual homeowners association picnic.

Prior to the drill: Residents were notified via multiple postal letters (owners only), email and through the Nextdoor online neighborhood bulletin board that a planning meeting and drill were to take place. In addition, poster board signs, provided by Ann Grant, were placed on saw horses at prominent intersections in the community. Douglas County Search and Rescue (DCSAR) placed electronic reader-board signs along Jack's Valley Rd a few days before the drill itself. East Fork Fire and Paramedic (EFFP) personnel were consulted in the early planning stages but they were not able to actively participate in the final planning meeting, the drill itself or any arrangements leading up to the drill. Reverse 911 notification was requested but EFFP and County Emergency Services decided against this. Discussions with Douglas County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT-Dave Thomas) were ongoing so that activities among all participants were well coordinated. Dave was instrumental in arranging a last minute change of venue for the meeting and drill when construction at the planned site (Jack's Valley School) prohibited it's use.

Planning Meeting: Approximately 50 people attended a planning meeting on June 25, 2019 at Sunridge Fire Station. A number of residents who were not able to participate in the drill itself came to learn how to prepare and evacuate during a wildfire. Presentations were made by Lee Elson, Jason Zona (DCSAR), Dave Thomas (CERT) and Ann Grant (CERT). Participants learned how to plan for an evacuation including what to take, how to prepare houses and cars, how evacuation notification occurs, where to go and what to wear. Participants were also given To-Go bags generously provided by the Living With Fire - University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Program.

Evacuation Drill: Early on June 29, 2019, DCSAR set up a command center south of Alpine View and began notifying residents of the evacuation drill using 3 teams of volunteers. They were able to approach all residences except for those with locked gates and were able to complete this task in about 75 minutes. At the same time, Alpine View members of a pre-configured phone tree went into action and 32 residences were contacted by phone or text. CERT set up an evacuation center at Sunridge Fire Station with 14 volunteers. They brought their evacuation trailer as well as the animal trailer for pets. They eventually processed 36 evacuees including some with pets. I estimate that about 25% of the Alpine View residents participated in the drill. Informal feedback from some who were involved was positive with no serious shortcomings noted.