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WITH MORE THAN HALF OF COLORADO RESIDENTS LIVING IN WILDFIRE PRONE AREAS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES JOIN FORCES TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO RESOURCES AMID GROWING WILDFIRE RISKS

MAY 4 MARKS 6TH ANNUAL WILDFIRE COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS DAY

DENVER – With more than half of the state’s population now living in or near areas that are prone to wildland fire, public and private organizations across the state are teaming up as a part of Wildfire Community Preparedness Day (May 4) to educate and help Colorado residents to prepare for the growing threats created by wildfires.

According to the Colorado State Forest Service, 2.9 million of Colorado’s 5.7 million residents now live in a wildland-urban interface (WUI). Wildfires in the past two decades have claimed record acreage, properties and lives, as more Coloradans live amid a growing wildfire threat.

“Every homeowner should be aware of their wildfire risk and the associated responsibility to reduce that risk, not only to protect their property, but also to improve the safety of first responders,” said Dan Beveridge, CSFS wildfire mitigation specialist. “There are numerous examples from the 2018 fire season and seasons past showing that proactive wildfire mitigation efforts are effective. Taking risk-reduction actions can also improve insurability and support community adaptation to wildfire.”

The annual Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, created by the National Fire Protection Association, is focused on helping residents and communities prepare for and work together to reduce wildfire risk. Wildfire officials and organizations across Colorado recommend taking steps to reduce wildfire risk and credit homeowner mitigation efforts with saving homes and other structures over the past several years.

These stakeholders offer a diverse range of resources and recommendations to help Colorado citizens prepare for and respond to wildfires, including:

- A consumer-focused *Colorado Property and Insurance Wildfire Preparedness Guide* featuring best practices in wildfire mitigation, defensible space, safety and insurance preparation for property owners, frequently asked questions, and direct links to a wide range of local community resources for residents. The guide is available at ColoradoProjectWildfire.com.
- The Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (CO-WRAP), hosted by the Colorado State Forest Service, is an online mapping tool that provides access to statewide wildfire risk assessment information: www.coloradowildfirerisk.com
- Early warnings save lives – The Colorado Office of Emergency Management works to ensure that Colorado residents are aware of potential threats in their communities, including wildfire risks and hazard evacuation notices so residents are able to take action. Currently, only 20 percent of Coloradans are signed up for the free emergency alert notification system alerts.

Register today by going to www.bitly.com/COAlertSignUp and finding the link to your county emergency alert program.

- Register every cell phone in the home
- Receive alerts by text, phone call or email
- Keep information up to date

With continued development throughout the state’s WUI areas, Colorado’s wildfire threat to people and property will grow as well.

“Unfortunately, Colorado ranks third in the nation for homes located in areas with high wildfire risk,” said RMIIA Executive Director Carole Walker. “As an industry, we understand the importance of insurability of these properties and are working with residents and other stakeholders to be a part of the solution to reduce that risk – a solution that we believe is founded in education, awareness and mitigation efforts by individual property owners and communities alike.”

Wildfires across the United States have claimed more than 100 lives and cost more than \$25 billion in property losses in just the last two years, according to the NFPA.

“While it’s always so difficult to see the negative impact that wildfires can have on our state and our fellow Coloradans, we’ve been encouraged by the news that mitigation efforts have helped alleviate possible damage and destruction of homes and help prevent loss of lives,” said Tyrone Adams, CEO of the Colorado Association of REALTORS®. “We will continue to be proactive in helping educate not only our members but the nearly 3 million Colorado residents that are living in these WUI areas, about the vast resources that are available in their local communities that can help them mitigate their properties and be prepared for the growing risk wildfires present.”

For more information visit ColoradoProjectWildfire.com.

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