

### Del Sur Kindergartners Win Award

A class of kindergartners at Del Sur Elementary School received the Grand Recognition honor at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Innovative Video In Education awards.

Almost 400 student videos from throughout San Diego County were entered in 15 categories.

In the elementary division, Megan Power's class at Del Sur received the top award for its "The Kindergarten Tree" presentation (competing in the kindergarten to second grade cross-curricular category).

"When they started to announce the 'epic kindergarten movie' that won the Grand Recognition Award my heart was pounding," Power said. "Surely the judges would see the amount of work and learning my young students put into this movie. As they announced 'The Kindergarten Tree' I felt excited and honored that my students were able to have this opportunity and get recognized for their hard work. Just being a part of the Awards is inspiring (this was my third time). Winning it showed my young students that even though they are little they are capable of so much."

The Grand Recognition award included a trophy, Sony video camera and \$500 from San Diego County Credit Union for the winners' schools to use for their multi-media needs. The annual contest is organized by the San Diego County Office of Education. Winners were announced in May.



### Splash Down Event Features Fun, Food

Del Norte High School's Splash Down event – hosted by the new DNHS Foundation and underwritten by several local businesses – provided the campus community of staff, teachers, students, parents and supporters to connect and build cohesiveness in a friendly family atmosphere.

Held at the campus aquatic complex in June, the event featured open swim time, swimming and diving demonstrations, contests, a catered Hawaiian dinner, and the opportunity to view the "Finding Nemo" movie. In addition, student singers and musicians – plus the school band – provided entertainment.

Sponsors for the event included the Tutoring Club, Party Pals, Shay and Associates Realtors, Visual Photography and Jostens.



### Firefighters Show Rescue Techniques

Rancho Santa Fe Firefighters Association Local 4349, in conjunction with the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District, hosted a Spaghetti Dinner and Live Rescue Demonstration in June at 16930 Four Gee Road in 4S Ranch.

In addition to providing dinner, firefighters demonstrated rescue techniques and offered informative displays including auto fire extrication, rescue rappel rope systems from the tower, and an antique engine display.

Firefighter Association merchandise also was available for purchase.

"This was a great chance for the community to see their fire station as well as some live demonstrations of the things we do," said Engineer Brian Slattery, who organized the dinner.



### 4S Resident Joins PUSD Foundation

A 4S Ranch resident -- Fred Pierce, CEO and President of Pierce Education Properties -- is a new member of the Poway Unified School District Foundation Board of Directors.

The Foundation also announced the appointment of Christopher Rowe, President of Echo Pacific Construction to the board.

"Both Fred and Chris have long ties to the Poway Unified School District. We are delighted the District will now enjoy the benefits of their respective expertise, vision and leadership in a new and more meaningful way," said Board President Toni Kraft.

Pierce's company is dedicated to student housing and real estate serving educational institutions. "I ran for the PUSD Board of Education in November because my significant experience with fundraising for educational institutions could help bring increased private support to PUSD and its schools," Pierce said. "I was honored when subsequently asked to join the PUSD Foundation Board and look forward to helping build on its solid foundation to bring significant additional financial resources to support our schools during a historic time of need."

Pierce and wife, Christine, have two children attending PUSD schools.

Pierce and Rowe will join existing board members Kraft (President), Jane Vvedensky-Martini (Vice President), Tiffany Lynch (Treasurer), Jon Alan Baker, Lance Witmond, Brian Maienschein, Malliga Tholandi, and Kathleen Porter (Executive Director). The Poway Unified School District Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to raising funds to support student programs across the district that prepare students for college and careers; advance the development of science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) skills; and support rigor, relevance and relationships in every classroom. Poway Unified School District serves over 34,000 students throughout 38 schools. For more information about the Foundation visit [www.powayusd.com/foundation](http://www.powayusd.com/foundation).



## Entities Get Foundation Grants

Three local entities received awards from the 4S Ranch-Del Sur Community Foundation recently.

Monetary gifts were presented to Oak Valley Middle School Physical Education, 4S Ranch Youth Soccer Association, and the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Dept. The awards were announced at the Foundation's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Grant Awards Celebration at The Reserve at 4S Ranch.

After Judy Simeroth, Foundation board chair, kicked off the festivities



4S Ranch-Del Sur Community Foundation President Judy Simeroth presents \$5,000 grant to Oak Valley Middle School's physical education department



(above L to R): Judy Simeroth, Jessica Braux, Tammy Koch, Tanny Joyce



(above L to R): Bobby Asher, Fred Cox, Scott McElleney, Patricia Michel, Tony Michel

and welcomed guests, board member and Grants Committee Chair Herb Mutter introduced the recipients and presented the grants.

The Oak Valley Middle School Physical Education Department will use its \$5,000 award to expand and upgrade the workout/fitness room at the 4S Ranch campus. The upgrades will allow for more students to do weight and core training programs. Specifically the funds will be used to purchase floor padding and flooring to cover the school's exercise room.

The 4S Ranch Youth Soccer Association will utilize its \$5,000

grant for field repairs at Oak Valley Middle School. Not only do the participants in 4SRYS utilize the fields, but so do Oak Valley Middle School physical education students.

Rancho Santa Fe Fire Dept. plans to use its \$2,500 grant to make homeowners in the area aware of their fire sprinkler system and educate them on maintaining it.

Simeroth also recognized sponsors of the event: Two Jinn Inc., Sony Electronics Inc., and Shea Realty. Special recognition was given to Randy and Tami Koch, Ray and Theresa Shay, and Herb and Carol Mutter for "their generosity in sponsoring and hosting major membership events" for the Foundation.

For more information on the Foundation, contact Trudy Armstrong at 858-674-6979 or [trudy@sdfoundation.org](mailto:trudy@sdfoundation.org), or visit [www.sdfoundation.org](http://www.sdfoundation.org).

## Fry's Helps Boosters Raise Funds

As part of Fry's Electronics community outreach effort, Del Norte High School Music Boosters group was invited to sell hot dogs and drinks at the San Diego location to raise funds.

Fry's donated everything to the local organization, including hot dogs and buns, soda, condiments, the grills, and even its employees to set up, tear down, and work side-by-side with the Del Norte volunteers. The Boosters sold more than 3,000 50-cent hot dog/soda combos at the May event – and Fry's donated the entire amount to the group.

In addition, members of the Del Norte Music program entertained customers both outside and inside the store for several hours.



## Del Sur Elementary Receives Top Ranking

Del Sur Elementary School received a top score in the California Department of Education's statewide rankings released in May.

The rankings are part of a system that measures schools based on testing conducted last year.

In addition to Del Sur, two other schools in the Poway Unified School District also received top scores: Los Penasquitos Elementary School and Rolling Hills Elementary School.

## Free Water Use Evaluations Available

4S Ranch and Santa Fe Valley homeowners – and other residents in the Olivenhain Municipal Water District – can request a review of their household and irrigation systems for leaks and maximum efficiency.

All OMWD customers are eligible for free assistance from landscape and household water specialists through the utility's Water Use Evaluation program. Such evaluations are grant-funded and free to OMWD customers while funding is available.

To schedule an evaluation, call 760-632-4236 or email [watersaver@olivenhain.com](mailto:watersaver@olivenhain.com).



Deputy Fire Chief Dismas Abelman, Jim and Sharon Harrison



Christy and Trevor Krueger



Gabe and Asher Nicolae



Keith and Heith Berger



Zachary and Cori Fusselman

**RSF Firefighters Spaghetti Dinner**

The Rancho Santa Fe Firefighters Association Local 4349, in conjunction with the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District, hosted a Spaghetti Dinner and Live Rescue Demonstration on June 18 at Station 2. In addition to providing dinner, firefighters demonstrated rescue techniques and offered informative displays. Photos/Jon Clark



Adam and Fara Chohan



Bryan and Jann Mayer



Chase Sikute



Brian Bazzeni and Fire Chief Tony Michel



Colton and Chandler Manusky



Phoebe and Noah Sullivan



Carrye and Connor Bramble

Dave McQueen, Chris Galindo, Brett Davidson

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# Rancho Santa Fe REVIEW

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## Local school districts allocate millions in federal money differently

BY MARSHA SUTTON  
SENIOR EDUCATION WRITER

At the first meeting, last December, of the Del Mar Union School District's newly elected board of trustees, the school board unanimously approved the payment of about \$440,000 to district employees from the \$763,852 given to the district under the Federal Education Jobs Fund.

The \$440,000 was the total cost after \$1,000 was given to each full-time employee in the district, including superintendent Jim Peabody, the three assistant superintendents and the district's eight principals. The \$1,000 allotment — described in the Dec. 15, 2010 school board packet as a "one-time employee cash incentive" — was pro-rated for part-time employees.

DMUSD assistant superintendent of human resource services Tim Asfazadour called it "a one-time stipend" and said it was "to offset the increased cost of health benefits."

Asfazadour said the district employs about 300 full-time and 300 part-time people, 21 of whom work at the district office rather than a school site. Because one condition of the Federal Education Jobs Fund is that the money can only be spent on school site personnel, the 21 district office employees received their money, totaling about \$21,000, from the general fund, he said.

Cathy Birks, DMUSD assistant superintendent of business services, said that, in addition to the \$440,000 distributed to employees, about \$60,000 more was paid for fringe benefits such as unemployment, social security, workers' compensation, Medicare, the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS), and other labor costs. This brings the total cost for the cash incentive program to about

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## New church planned for El Camino Real area

BY KAREN BILLING  
STAFF WRITER

The Carmel Valley Community Planning Board reviewed a new Armenian church planned for El Camino Real (across from the polo fields) at its June 23 meeting. St. John Garabed Armenian Apostolic Church is being proposed to be built on El Camino Real, behind the Evangelical Formosan Church.

Plans for the 113.37-acre parcel include a 350-seat church, a multi-purpose hall, a library and education building and a gym for youth recreation. The developers submitted plans to the city last week and expect comments from city staff by late July.

The planning board's

regional issues subcommittee will receive more details on the project in August or September. If approved by the city, they will also need a coastal development permit from the California Coastal Commission.

The project manager, Marcela Escobar-Eck, principal of the Atlantis Group, said she is very familiar with the challenges and environmental sensitivity of the San Dieguito River Valley. She said she takes great pride in the area as she was involved in the preservation and worked with the city's El Camino Real widening project on creating a safe, adequate wildlife under-crossing near the church site.

"The biggest challenge

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### TPHS Football Golf Classic

Dan Plashkes, Scott Brewster and Bob Ward were among those who participated in the 16th Annual Torrey Pines High School Football Golf Classic held June 20 at Fairbanks Ranch Country Club in Rancho Santa Fe. The event, sponsored by the TPHS Foundation, featured a golf tournament, dinner, auction, wine tasting and more. See more inside. Photo/Jon Clark



### Hollywood Hits

The RSF Big Band, featuring vocalist Marie Addario, performed "The Music of the Movies" to a full crowd June 26 at the Village Church. See more inside. Photo/Jon Clark

## Celebrate Fourth of July at RSF Parade and Picnic

The 30th Annual Fourth of July Parade & Picnic will be held in the RSF Village on Monday, July 4. The parade, which begins at 1 p.m., will form at 12:15 p.m. in the RSF Association and RSF Community Center parking lot on Avenida de Acacias. (Bikes, floats, golf carts and more!) The picnic and concert will begin at 1:30 p.m. at the parks in front of The Inn. Food will be sold by the RSF Community Center and the RSF Golf Club. The event is sponsored by the RSF Association, RSF Community Center and RSF Polo Club. For more info., contact Chaco Clotfelter at chacoclot@gmail.com or Shannon Mountain at 858-568-6876.

## RSF Patrol more than ready to move into new digs at fire station

BY KAREN BILLING  
STAFF WRITER

In Matt Wellhouser's 30-plus years as the chief of the Rancho Santa Fe Patrol, he's overseen six moves: Four within the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Station headquarters, one to temporary portables on the Dacus property, and the latest move, back to where they started but to the opposite end of the station. The Patrol will be taking over the fire district's administration offices as the district moved its administration offices to a new Cielo station in late March. The RSF Patrol expects to be moved in by July 6 when construction is complete.

Wellhouser said he is excited to move the Patrol into the largest space they've ever had at 2,700 square feet.

"This allows our officers to have more elbow room and space, and it's nice that we're not going to be looking for a new facility or having to remodel," Wellhouser said. "It's a plus for the community because we're close to the school, right next to



Rancho Santa Fe Patrol Chief Matt Wellhouser in the reception area of the new Patrol offices at the fire station. Photo/Karen Billing

dispatch and we have a really good relationship with the fire department. Working with all those folks is a good thing."

Since 2009, the Rancho Santa Fe Association had been searching for a permanent home for the Patrol since it was moved out of the fire station due to the fire district's lack of space. Several options were studied, including building a new facility on the Osuna property, but the best one remained heading back home — especially after the fire district's space issues were solved when it relocated its administration offices.

With the new Patrol offices, residents will have a place

to come to ask questions of the Patrol and conduct business—the Patrol never had a room where people could sit down and talk to officers, now they do.

"We've never had a storefront as it were," Well-

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## MONEY

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\$500,000, all of which was paid from the Federal Education Jobs Fund.

The federal government allocated about \$1.2 billion in Jobs Fund money to California school districts, the purpose of which, according to a fact sheet distributed by the California Department of Education, is "to save or create an estimated 16,500 kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) jobs."

The federal money was given to all school districts in the nation, and U.S. Department of Education guidelines offer a number of options for spending the money, which is to be used "only for compensation and benefits and other expenses, such as support services necessary to retain existing employees, to recall or rehire former employees, and to hire new employees, in order to provide early childhood, elementary or secondary educational and related services."

According to the Calif. Dept. of Education, "This includes salaries, performance bonuses, health insurance, retirement benefits, incentives for early retirement, pension fund contributions, tuition reimbursement, student loan repayment assistance, transportation subsidies, and reimbursement for child care expenses. Funds may be used to restore reductions in salaries and benefits or to implement increases. They may also be used to eliminate furlough

days."

The funds may also be spent on employees other than teachers who provide support services at school sites. But the money cannot be used for "administrative expenditures related to the operation of the superintendent's office," board members, fiscal services or human resources.

The money allocated to each district, which is based generally on enrollment figures, is intended to be used in the 2010-2011 school year, but unspent money can be carried over one more year as long as it is all obligated by September 30, 2012.

**Other local districts**  
Other local school districts used their Jobs Fund money differently.

The Jobs Fund allocation to the Solana Beach School District was \$503,820, which was all used, said SBSB superintendent Leslie Fausset, "to retain seven temporary teaching positions in 2010-2011."

If not for the Jobs Fund money, Fausset said either the teachers would have been released or programs would have been cut.

The same use was made of Jobs Fund money at the Rancho Santa Fe School District, which has so far received \$119,668 of a total entitlement of \$132,964.

Denise Stevenson, RSFSD director of finance, said the money was used "to save some positions." She said it is paying for 2.4 temporary teachers whose jobs would have been in

jeopardy had the money not been available. Without the funding, she said teachers would have been released, programs would have been eliminated, or class sizes increased.

"The money received from the Federal Jobs Fund enabled our district to retain teachers that would have been reduced due to the cuts imposed by the decrease in property taxes and the state's compulsory Basic Aid fair-share contribution," said RSFSD superintendent Lindy Delaney in an email.

At the San Dieguito Union High School District, associate superintendent of business services Eric Dill said his district was allocated \$2,413,491. "We've spent \$1,800,174 so far — all on teachers' salaries and associated benefits," he said. He emphasized that this was not a salary increase or a bonus but was used "to offset the general fund's general education classroom teacher expense."

The balance of \$613,316 will carry over into 2011-2012 because it's not yet been received, he explained, saying the money, when received, will be used again for the same purpose.

Of the \$1.8 million spent, \$1.5 million went to teachers' salaries and \$300,000 paid for benefits that included CalSTRS, Medicare, unemployment and workers' compensation.

According to Dill, the \$1.5 million in Jobs Funds substituted for \$1.5 million that would have come from the district's general fund to pay for salaries, thereby freeing up \$1.5 million in unrestricted general fund money and allowing the district to avoid further budget cuts.

"That is what I mean by an offset," Dill said in an email. "The total expense for certificated salaries didn't go up or down."

Without the Jobs Fund, Dill said the district would have had to consider other options to reduce costs — "either eliminate/reduce programs, bring back fewer temporary teachers, raise class sizes, further reduce counselors, make more reductions in non-classroom areas like transportation, athletics, etc. The list of options we had goes on and on, but we didn't have to go there because we had this funding."

Dill said the Jobs Fund money was used to maintain programs by offsetting the losses suffered to the general fund from years of reduced education funding by the state. "Since our goal has been to preserve programs, we see the use of the funds as job retention," he said.

**Del Mar's Job Funds distribution**

The Del Mar Union School District, which welcomed three new board members to its five-member board in December, has allocated about \$500,000 of

its \$763,000 in Federal Education Jobs Funds to the employee cash incentive program, about \$230,000 to implement a Supplemental Employee Retirement Plan, and the rest to pay for retiree health benefits.

The goal of the federal Jobs Fund was "to save the jobs of current employees," Asfazadour said. "One of the options available was to offer a retirement incentive which the board of trustees approved based on a recommendation from the superintendent." The other option embraced by the district was to give employees the one-time cash incentive.

When asked how it was decided by the district to use the Jobs Fund money for a cash incentive, Asfazadour said, "We look at all the revenue receive[d] and determine the best use of the funds. In this case, the decision was made to use one-time money for a one-time stipend."

He said the \$1,000 per employee cash incentive saves employees' jobs because "it keeps them from potentially leaving the district and looking for other jobs."

The December 2010 board report states that the \$1,000 per employee cash incentive offer, costing a total of \$500,000, was presented to the Del Mar California Teachers' Association union in September 2010 during contract talks.

According to the Dec.

15, 2010 board report, "Representatives of the DMCTA and the DMUSD reached agreement on a MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] during negotiations on September 23, 2010. The MOU was then overwhelmingly ratified by the DMCTA unit members."

The MOU was not brought forward earlier, Asfazadour said, because the DMCTA had to poll their constituents which took time.

"The direction for use of the funds was made prior to the current board but was approved by them at the December 15, 2010 board meeting," he said.

## PATROL

continued from page 1

houser said of the reception area, where a dispatch administrative assistant will man the front desk.

The front reception area was getting a fresh coat of paint on Monday afternoon, after the removal of "1970s time warp" wallpaper that had covered the walls, Wellhouser said.

Contractors, The Finish Touch Incorporated, made few changes to the layout of the offices, except one big office that was divided into a smaller office and a locker room for officers.

"We added more lockers than we needed to make room for expansion," said Wellhouser of the wooden changing stalls.

New carpet will also be added and the change will also result in the Association's director of field operations Dick Brockett finally having his own office.

"He's really excited," Wellhouser said.

Wellhouser also has his own office, large enough for a table to hold meetings with staff.

The Patrol office connects to the fire station through a door—the fire station still houses emergency crews and a battalion chief. Dispatch is located upstairs.

The temporary buildings on the Dacus property will be taken down by August and the land turned over to the Rancho Santa Fe School District, which purchased the lot from the Association in 2009.

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 The North County Times - Californian

## Fire fee a solution for strapped Western states

By **DON THOMPSON and JEFF BARNARD** | Posted: Friday, July 22, 2011 1:11 pm

The wildfire season in California has been tame so far, but that isn't stopping lawmakers from trying to make sure the cash-strapped state has enough money to fight future fires.

They already have a solution: charge an annual firefighting fee to people who live in or near forests.

Neighboring states have been using similar fees for years. As more people move closer to forests and wildfires become more costly, a fee may prove more attractive to legislators when the alternative is to cut programs elsewhere in the budget.

Critics of the California fee call it unfair, saying rural residents already pay taxes to the state and should expect basic services in times of emergency. Supporters disagree, saying that people who live in fire-prone areas should pay for their own protection.

"This bill recognizes that a portion of the costs borne by the state for wildland fire prevention and protection services should be funded by the landowners in these areas," Gov. Jerry Brown said in his signing statement.

The West has seen an explosion in the amount of acreage burned by wildfires during the past decade. At the same time, costs have increased to fight fires in the growing communities nestled in what once were remote areas.

Nationwide, the equivalent of California's population \_ nearly 38 million people \_ has moved into areas where forests border cities and suburbs over the last 20 years, said Mark Rey, who had oversight of the U.S. Forest Service during the George W. Bush administration. Rey said that vastly complicates the job of fighting wildfires.

The firefighting fees have been helpful in Oregon, Rey said. "I don't think Oregon otherwise would have the quality of firefighting response it has today without those," he said.

In California, a \$150 annual firefighting fee will be levied on rural homeowners. According to the state, more than 846,000 homes covered by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection would be affected.

The department is responsible for preventing and fighting wildfires on 31 million rural acres. The vast area covers about one-third of California, including much of the Sierra Nevada foothills and the coastal mountain ranges from Santa Barbara to the Oregon border.

The federal government is primarily for firefighting on another roughly 40 million acres, mostly at higher elevations.

California expects to collect \$50 million in the first year the fee is imposed and ultimately \$200 million a year, which would equal 20 percent of the annual budget of the Forestry and Fire Protection department.

The fee and the revenue eclipse much smaller fees on far fewer owners in Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

Owners of smaller parcels in Washington pay \$18 a year, while most Oregon forest homeowners pay about \$66 annually. The assessments date back decades, to the years when private timber companies first taxed themselves to pay for fire protection.

While the dedicated firefighting fee is a budgeting solution where it's been implemented, officials in three Western states that have suffered major wildfire damage this year or last \_ Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado \_ say they have no plans to impose one.

To help defray the costs of fighting wildfires, Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper recently signed a bill transferring some \$3 million in taxes the state receives from drilling and mining to the state's Wildfire Preparedness Fund. That money typically goes to local governments to offset the effects of drilling, such as damaged roads.

A legislator representing a forested district in eastern Arizona \_ where a fire this May and June became the largest in state history \_ said she hasn't heard talk of such a charge.

"We're moving in the wrong direction if we think we solve this problem by making people pay more taxes," Republican Sen. Sylvia Allen said. "We have to get really serious about thinning and removing debris in the forest and stopping these catastrophic fires."

State officials say the state likely used its entire \$5 million budget to fight fires for the just-concluded fiscal year in May and June alone.

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez said this week that her administration is not considering a wildfire fee.

Oregon Associate State Forester Paul Bell said it costs 48 percent more to fight fires around homes than it does in the open forest because of the more intensive use of helicopters and bulldozers and a higher concentration of firefighters. In addition, he said more fires start around homes than in the wild.

Oregon landowners are responsible for the costs of fighting fires on their property, and Bell said the state fees have done a good job of covering that liability. The fee raises about \$7 million annually, which in some years is more than the entire cost of fighting wildland fires.

Richard Scanlon said he was barely aware that he paid Oregon's fee as one of 1,251 of homeowners in the Black Butte Ranch vacation home community in the forested central part of the state, but said the levy makes sense.

"For those people in peril like we are, close to a potential situation, I think, yes, why not?" said Scanlon, who had two neighbors who lost their homes in 2002 when a wildfire forced the community to evacuate.

States' firefighting costs vary widely, depending on the number and severity of wildfires. But that variability only adds to the unpredictability of trying to balance a budget in already lean times.

California, for example, spent a recent low of \$93 million in the 2005-06 fiscal year, followed by a record \$372 million during an extremely active season two years later.

Oregon spent \$57 million in the 2002-03 fiscal year, which included a 500,000-acre blaze in southwestern Oregon that was the biggest in the nation that year, but just \$2 million two years later.

An Associated Press analysis of fire cost data during the past decade shows that 12 Western states from the Rocky Mountains west to Alaska spent at least \$377.5 million. Some states did not have data for all 10 years, and Hawaii is excluded from the calculation.

Lake Tahoe, straddling the California-Nevada border, where homes have been crowding around one of the country's natural wonders for decades, is among the areas where the potential for a devastating wildfire is acute.

Four years ago, a fire driven by high winds and densely packed trees destroyed 254 homes, caused \$140 million in property damage and scorched 3,100 acres in a subdivision that had sprouted on the California side of the lake near its southern end.

Many homeowners have rebuilt amid charred stumps and barren soil, looking out over acres of blackened trees against a backdrop of snowcapped peaks. Several offered opinions about California's \$150 wildfire fee on a recent afternoon.

"We said when we moved in here in 2005, if you want to live in nature there will be a slight risk of a wildfire," said Kenn Wulff, who tried to fight the flames with a garden hose before fleeing with his wife, dog, and his parents. Wulff said the fee should be voluntary, but said he probably wouldn't pay it because there's nothing left to burn in his community.

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Barnard reported from Grants Pass, Ore. Associated Press writers Paul Davenport in Phoenix, Tim Fought in Portland, Ore., and Kristen Wyatt in Denver contributed to this report.