STATE NEWS

AUSTIN, Texas, Jan. 31, 2008 - Texas Governor Rick Perry has issued a State Disaster Proclamation for more than half the counties in Texas as a result of wildfires that began Tuesday. The governor's order makes 152 of the state's 254 counties eligible for state assistance. Read the entire story at: www.ens-newswire.com (Excerpt from Environment News Service)

KERRVILLE, Feb. 1, 2008 - A haze of smoke covered Kerr County Thursday as wildfires ravaged the Hill Country landscape including several structures. Kerr County Judge Pat Tinley has declared the county to be in a state of disaster. According to the county's Web site, wildfires were reported at Upper Turtle Creek and Spicer Loop and Grenada Springs Ranch. Wildfires at Scenic Acres and Ranchland, Interstate 10 between 483 and 487 mile markers, Panther Creek in Hunt and at Whisper Valley Ranch at Eagle Ridge in Center Point were contained by firefighters Thursday by 6 p.m. Read entire story at: www.dailytimes.com (Excerpt from Kerrville Daily Times)

JIM HOGG COUNTY, Feb. 1, 2008 - Firefighters from across the Rio Grande Valley battled a massive brush fire Thursday night, the second large grass fire in the region this week... Strong winds, low humidity and dry, brittle grasslands have fueled the latest spot of fires. Late Thursday night, 22 agencies from across a wide swath of the Valley had the 6,400-acre fire about 95 percent contained, said Fire Chief Mingo Hinojosa of the San Manuel Fire Department. Read entire story at: www.themonitor.com (Excerpt from the Monitor)

Wildfire Statistics 1/01/08 to 2/01/08: Updated statistics unavailable as of 17:15 hrs 2/1/08

NATIONAL NEWS

Wildfire Statistics 1/01/08 to 2/01/08: Updated statistics unavailable as of 17:15 hrs 2/1/08

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Registration Packets for the upcoming Volunteers Making a Difference Retreat will be distributed next week via email.

IN THE KNOW

Firewise Communities/USA – If you don’t periodically visit the Firewise Communities/USA web site, you are missing out on informative articles and news. Visit: www.firewise.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 7-9, 2008 “Volunteers Making a Difference” Retreat will be held at the HE Butt Foundation Ranch near Leakey. Retreat schedule: Monday, April 7th – Check-In 3:00 pm Tuesday, April 8th – 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Wednesday, April 9th – Check-Out 3:00 pm Price per person is $35 to cover the cost of meals.

BUILDING A FIREWISE TEXAS

Rural Outreach

So often, when one hears Firewise, communities come to mind. But what if you live in a rural area where no homeowner association is present? Unincorporated rural areas can be more prone to wildfire due to no covenant restrictions on outdoor burning. You obviously are aware of this potential for wildfire in your area; now, how do you get your neighbors to adopt Firewise practices? Wildfire knows no boundaries. Creating defensible and survivable space around your own home is tantamount and is even more effective if your neighbors do the same. In areas that neighbors may be separated by several acres or even miles, how do you get the word out?

Lead by Example

• Post a sign on your property visible to passing neighbors “Wildfire Mitigation Project in Progress.”
• Know the Texas Forest Service UWI web site address so you may give to concerned citizens: www.texasfirewise.com
• Have pre-printed information available. Ready-to-print brochures are available at: www.texasforestservice.tamu.edu
• Document your project with photos.
• Submit an article to your local newspaper. Texas Forest Service has ready-to-release articles that can be modified with your personal project details. Contact us for assistance: www.texasuwi@tfs.tamu.edu.

We don’t inherit the earth from our parents, we borrow it from our children. -Rusi Vulakoro, Fiji