

LOG HILL

Log Hill Mesa gets national fire safety recognition

SPECIAL TO THE PLAIND DEALER
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Because of its efforts to reduce the vulnerability of homes and landscapes to wildfire, Log Hill Mesa has earned Firewise Communities/USA recognition from the National Firewise Communities Program.

"We're a small community, but we live with a high fire danger and people around here know that. This recognition validates the lengthy mitigation and education efforts of our neighborhood associations and individuals," said Tom Conner, Firewise Committee Chairman and Log Hill volunteer firefighter.

Log Hill Mesa worked with The West Region Wildfire Council and Log Hill Volunteer Fire Department (LHVFD) to conduct a wildfire hazard assessment and develop a plan to address safety concerns. Residents then worked together to implement the plan.

"The mesa has been working for many years to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfires," said LHVFD Assistant Fire Chief Tom Austin. "This award recognizes those early efforts and gives us additional motivation to continue the fight. Working with community groups, residents and local forestry partners to improve fire safety



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Plaindealer photo by Jessi Marlatt

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POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title: Ouray County Plaindealer 2. Publication Number: 4151-260 3. Filing Date: 9/27/12
 4. Issue Frequency: Weekly 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 52 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$36

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®):
P.O. Box 607 Ouray, CO 81427 Contact Person: Alan Todd Telephone (include area code): 970-325-2838

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer):
P.O. Box 529 Ridgway, CO 81432 Publisher (Name and complete mailing address):
Alan Todd P.O. Box 607 Ouray, CO 81427
 Editor (Name and complete mailing address):
Beecher Threatt P.O. Box 529 Ridgway, CO 81432
 Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address):

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):

10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)

Full Name: Alan Todd Complete Mailing Address:
Beecher Threatt P.O. Box 607 Ouray, CO 81427
Alta 550 Publishing, Inc.

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box None

Full Name: David Mullings Complete Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 981 Ouray, CO 81427

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)
 The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes.
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

13. Publication Title: Ouray County Plaindealer 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: No. 17 Sept. 20, 2012

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		2,457	2,457
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	710	623
	(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	571	577
	(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®	756	608
	(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	—	—
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b(1), (2), (3), and (4))		2,037	1,808
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	—	—
	(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	6	64
	(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)	—	—
	(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	—	—
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d(1), (2), (3) and (4))		6	64
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		2,043	1,872
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		0	0
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		2,043	1,872
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)		99.7%	96.8%

16. Total circulation includes electronic copies. Report circulation on PS Form 3526-X worksheet.

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c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies	2,168	2,012
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies)	99.7%	96.8%

17. I certify that 80% of all my distributed copies (Electronic & Print) are paid above a nominal price.

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
 If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the 9/27/2012 issue of this publication. Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Alan Todd Date: 9/25/2012

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improves the safety of our residents and firefighters and increases our ability to protect Log Hill Mesa."

To receive Firewise Communities/USA recognition, Log Hill Mesa met a rigorous set of requirements. The community completed the following activities:

- Completed the Log Hill Mesa Community Wildfire Protection Plan which provided each homeowner with specific recommendation on how to improve the survivability of their home.
- Conducted vegetation and fuel mitigation projects throughout the mesa.
- Worked with local fire and forestry agencies to remove flammable vegeta-

tion from around homes and other neighborhood structures through annual brush chipping days.

· Held a community Emergency Preparedness Open House and distributed Firewise educational materials to the community.

· Conducted several community meetings and open houses to explain and educate the community about the Firewise Communities plan and the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

"Achieving Firewise recognition is not a quick or easy process. Log Hill Mesa has done an outstanding job of creating a local Firewise Task Force and implementing Firewise principles," said Michele Steinberg, support manager of the Firewise Communities program. "By preparing homes, structures and landscapes before a wildfire occurs Log Hill Mesa has dramatically increased the chance that homes and structures will be protected when a wildfire

occurs." Working through the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), state forestry agencies support the Firewise Communities/USA recognition effort. The program is a nationwide initiative that recognizes communities for taking action to protect people and properties from the risk of fire in the wildland/urban interface. This program is of special interest to small communities and neighborhood associations that are willing to mitigate against wildfire by adopting and implementing programs tailored to their needs. The communities create the programs themselves with cooperative assistance from state forestry agencies and local fire staff.

Fire-prone communities can work with local professionals to earn Firewise Communities/USA status by meeting the following criteria:

- Enlist a wildland/urban interface specialist to complete a community assessment and create a plan that identifies agreed-upon achievable solutions to be implemented by the community.
 - Sponsor a local Firewise Task Force Committee, Commission or Department, which maintains the Firewise Communities/USA program and tracks its progress or status.
 - Observe a Firewise Communities/USA Day annually, dedicated to a local Firewise project.
 - Invest a minimum of \$2 per capita annually in local Firewise projects. (Work by municipal employees or volunteers using municipal and other equipment can be included, as can state/federal grants dedicated to that purpose.)
 - Submit an annual report to Firewise Communities/USA that documents continuing compliance with the program.
- Communities interested in earning recognition may visit www.firewise.org/usa for more information.

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