



SERVING TUOLUMNE COUNTY

MONTHLY UPDATE

December 2021

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Contents:

In This Issue...

Pages 01

Notes From The Program Manager

Page 02

10 Safety Tips for Wildfire Risk Reduction

Page 03

CERT Radios Reprogrammed

Page 04

Safety Tips For Winter Weather

Page 04

Winter Driving Safety Tips

Pages 05 & 06

Decorating is Fun!

Page 07

Heroes of the Twain Harte

Christmas Parade

Page 08

Water Issues

Page 09

December Storm

Page 10

How to Properly Dispose of
Fireplace Ashes

Pages 11 & 12

Goals for THA-CERT in 2022

Page 12

Upcoming Events

Page 12

IN THIS ISSUE...

Just when you think you have everything planned out, Mother Nature hits you with "Snow-mageddon". Yes, the weather outside was frightful. Then the power went out. Then the main Tuolumne canal was ruptured. It truly was a December to remember! So this month's newsletter is not only late, but some of our planned articles got pushed to next month.

For most of us, winter means slowing down and curling up by the fire, or hitting the ski slopes. For our firefighters, it means getting ready for the next fire season; assisting with controlled burns, clearing excess vegetation, and brushing up on their training.

In this month's issue, we will look at different aspects of preparing our properties for next year's fire season and provide some winter safety tips.

As usual, Program Manager Carol Hallett starts us off, this time with reflections on her time as Team Leader.

We hope you enjoy this month's issue. Our goal is to provide information to the community, focusing on safety and health.

If you have a suggestion for future articles, please contact twainhartecert@gmail.com for consideration of the topic by the board.



NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

by Carol Hallett

WHAT? It is the end of another year! Really? Already! How does this happen so fast? December!?! The end of 2021! Wow!

Sorry to all those English teachers out there...I just needed to declare my astonishment. It is simply amazing to me how fast time is flying by that said this year included some magnificent achievements for THA-CERT.

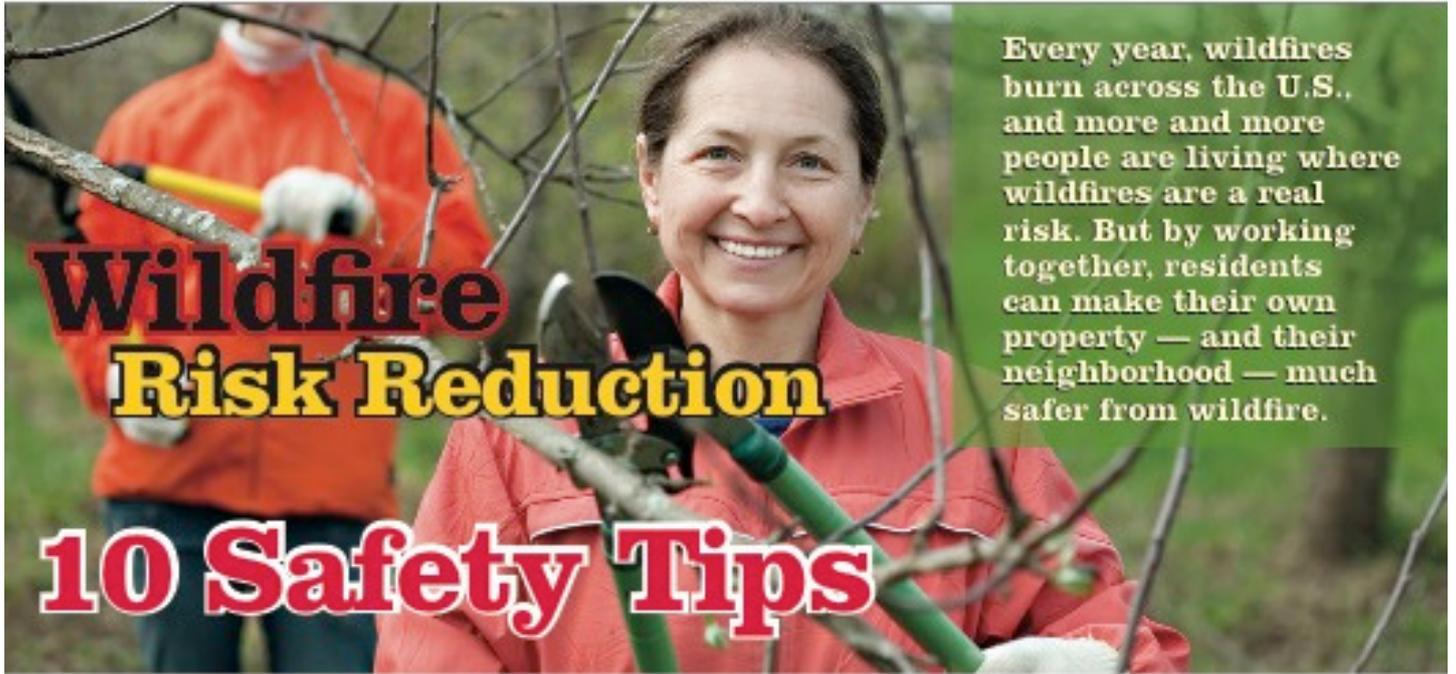
Training has been a bit of a challenge since the start of the pandemic. Typically we like to do monthly trainings for the community and our members to help them get more prepared for any emergency that might happen. This year and last it has been a bit hard to gather. We also like to have one Basic Training Class a year that too was out of the picture. Still we had 8 people who persevered and finish the on-line Basic CERT training course. We are excited to have new members join the team. Congratulations to each of you!

When the membership grows so does the need for the staff and we did just that this year. We have the promotion of Mike Mandell to Team Leader, which is a true benefit for THA-CERT. It has been my great honor and pleasure to be picked as the Team Leader for THA-CERT back in April of 2014 (again, where has the time gone?). We started out asking “Now what do we do” went to “Grass roots, Baby” then to preparing for a “Pandemic; just in case Chicken Little was right the sky can fall” to being ready to respond to the calls for support from the community.

It has been an amazing ride. It will be really awesome to watch where the team goes from here, me as the Program Manager and Mike as the Team Leader.



10 SAFETY TIPS FOR WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION



Every year, wildfires burn across the U.S., and more and more people are living where wildfires are a real risk. But by working together, residents can make their own property — and their neighborhood — much safer from wildfire.

Action Items to Improve Your Home's Survivability:

- **REMOVE** leaves, pine needles, and other flammable material from the roof, gutters, and on and under the deck to help prevent embers from igniting your home.
- **SCREEN** areas below decks and porches with 1/8" wire mesh to help prevent material from accumulating underneath.
- **COVER** exterior attic and soffit vents with 1/8" wire mesh to help prevent sparks from entering your home.
- **ENCLOSE** eaves to help prevent ember entry.
- **INSPECT** shingles or roof tiles. **REPLACE** missing shingles or tiles. **COVER** ends of tiles with bird stops or cement to help prevent ember penetration during a wildfire.

Tips for Landscaping Around Your Home

- **REMOVE** dead vegetation and other flammable materials, especially within the first 5 feet of the home.
- **KEEP** your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to help reduce fire intensity.
- **PRUNE** tree limbs so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet above the ground to help reduce the chance of fire getting into the crowns of the trees.
- **MOVE** construction material, trash, and woodpiles at least 30 feet away from the home and other outbuildings.
- **DISPOSE** of branches, weeds, leaves, pine needles, and grass clippings that you have cut to reduce fuel for fire.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Increase your wildfire safety. Make simple low-cost changes to your home and landscape starting today.



Visit www.firewise.org for more information.

**TWAIN HARTE
CREATING
FIREWISE
NEIGHBORHOODS**



IT'S A BIG WORLD.
LET'S PROTECT IT TOGETHER!

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CERT RADIOS REPROGRAMMED

by Mike Mandell, Team Leader, THA-CERT

Last month we were able to get our Bendix/King fire radios programed!! Thanks to Sonora Fire Department's radio tech. He did have some trouble though. Out of the fourteen radios THA-CERT owns, he was able to program only seven of them; the other radios were to old to program to CalFire's new frequencies.

We now can communicate with all emergency agencies. Anyway, it is nice to see the continued support from the Twain Harte Community Service District, Twain Harte Fire District, and CalFire. Thanks to Sonora Fire too!! We could not do it without all their cooperation.

SAFETY TIPS FOR WINTER WEATHER

by John Buckingham, Safety Officer, THA-CERT

As winter (finally) settles in, here are some tips for staying safe when out in wet and icy weather:

- 1) walk slowly and carefully. Wear slip resistant footwear
- 2) use special care when entering and exiting your vehicle. When necessary, use the vehicle for support
- 3) watch for slippery floors when entering and exiting any building or home
- 4) watch for black ice
- 5) Try to avoid carrying items or walking with your hands in your pockets outside, so you have the ability to catch yourself if you lose your balance
- 6) Carry winter emergency supplies in your car at all times; warm blankets, flashlight, snow chains, a bag of kitty litter or sand (to give traction in case of being suck in snow or ice), and a shovel
- 7) Logic check routes when relying on GPS for directions; do not bypass road blocks or barricades

Have safe and magical holidays!



WINTER DRIVING SAFETY TIPS

Editor's note: Here are a few more safety tips, courtesy of the internet...

The #1 icy road driving tip: Reduce your speed.

Slowing down is the most important thing to do when driving on ice and snow. High speeds make it both easy to lose control and difficult to stop. You should never be driving faster than 45mph in any vehicle when roads are icy - not even on highways! In many cases, much slower speeds are necessary. You can slide off of the road on certain types of more treacherous icing - like black ice - at 10mph or less! If you are fishtailing or sliding at all, it means you are going too fast for the conditions.

You don't have the skill to drive at normal speeds on icy roads. A factor in many of the serious and fatal crashes is overconfidence in one's abilities and/or equipment (traction control, antilock brakes, stability control, winter tires). Some feel that they have sufficient experience in winter driving, and can therefore continue normally (at or above the speed limit). But a fishtail on ice that occurs at highway speeds is usually unrecoverable by even the most quick-witted and experienced drivers. Practicing slow-speed slides in parking lots is useless for what happens to a vehicle at highway speed. A person who enters a high-speed slide will quickly learn that it is something they can't handle - but all too late.

The #2 icy road driving tip: Don't drive on icy roads.

The best way to avoid an accident on an icy road is to simply stay off the roads until the threat passes. Nothing can inconvenience you more than a wreck or getting stuck!

Wear your seat belt!

Even though wearing your seat belt should already be a no-brainer at all times, during the winter it's even more critical. An alarming number of road ice fatalities occur with minor accidents where the vehicle occupants were not wearing seat belts.



vehicle's direction if the wheels are sliding.

Pay attention to the weather.

Make the weather forecast part of your daily routine during the winter. Awareness of conditions will help you be more prepared. Read more about warning signs to watch for.

Go easy on your brakes.

Brake application is a common trigger of slides that result in a loss of vehicle control. ABS (anti-lock brakes) do not work well on ice and snow, and often will lock up your wheels regardless. Sliding wheels are uncontrollable, that is, steering input will not change the

Turn into a slide

If you're fishtailing or sliding, it usually means you are going too fast. Reduce your speed so you won't need to worry about this! Most high-speed slides are difficult to

WINTER DRIVING SAFETY TIPS, cont'd

correct successfully. If you're caught off guard and begin sliding, turn your wheels in the direction that the rear of your car is sliding. It helps to look with your eyes where you want the car to go, and turn the steering wheel in that direction. It is easy to steer too far, causing the car to slide in the other direction. If this happens (called over correcting), you'll need to turn in the opposite direction. Read more about correcting a slide.

Icy road accidents happen in multiples.

Your own accident is sometimes not the greatest threat to you - additional out-of-control vehicles often are. Read about what to do if you are in an accident on an icy road.

Don't stop for accidents or stranded vehicles along an icy roadway.

Being a Good Samaritan is a noble thing, but on an icy road, it can cause more problems than it solves. Parking on the side of an icy highway can cause passing drivers to brake and lose control, putting the lives of everyone involved in danger. Unless the stranded driver is in immediate danger, the best thing you can do is contact the authorities (call 911), who are equipped to safely block the road or divert traffic while a tow truck can do the job properly.

Avoid hills or other dangerous roads during icy conditions.

The laws of physics are unforgiving! If you attempt to tackle a steep enough incline, there is nothing you can do to stop gravity from taking its toll.



DECORATING IS FUN!

by Carol Hallett, Program Manager, THA-CERT

We had enrolled our Firefighter Rehab Vehicle in the Twain Harte Christmas Parade. You cannot just have a vehicle in the parade; it must be decorated so we did just that with an amazingly talented group of people.

This year, Mike Mandell, Lise Lemonnier, Sandra Walker and I did the decorating. Mike and Lise brought everything you can imagine to do the job. We had lights, ladders, tape, hooks, lights, a wreath, wire, lights, batteries, and a generator...and did I mention lights?

We looked at what we had to work with made a plan and started hanging lights. We teased and laughed through out



(above) Mike Mandell and Lise Lemonnier put lights on the Firefighter Rehab vehicle while Sandra Walker (front) goes to get still more lights



the process and ended up with a well-balanced, well-lit vehicle. It only took us an hour, which in the end we decided was just the right amount of time and lights.

It was daylight when we tested the lights and we thought it looked ok but when I saw the THA-CERT Firefighter Rehab vehicle rolling through the parade I was so proud. Mike Mandell (our new Team Leader) was driving it and he turned on the emergency lights as well as the Christmas lights. It was a spectacular sight to see.

Lise Lemonnier (left) and Sandra Walker hang lights

HEROES OF THE TWAIN HARTE CHRISTMAS PARADE

by Carol Hallett, Program Manager, THA-CERT

The weather was delightful, the music was wonderful and the lights were beautiful. It was the perfect setting for a Christmas Parade with Twain Harte being the ideal place to be.

To put on this event there are many groups behind the scenes; these are the heroes of the Twain Harte Christmas Parade. The Christmas Committee consists of representatives from Rotary, Businesses in town, Twain Harte Fire Department, THA-CERT, CSU, all overseen by Lori Smith who is a caring resident that has been involved with the parade for over 30 years.

The committee met several times at Rich and Marilyn Knudson's house where we received our marching orders. Each member followed up on their tasks and did it to the best of their abilities. The flyers were created and distributed, there were Public Service Announcements on the radio, and Babs Desrosiers (All that Matters) was a guest on "Newsmakers", all in an effort to promote the event. The promo worked because this was the largest group of spectators arguably in the history of the parade.

Some highlights preceding the parade were the decorating of Santa's sleigh and the stage in the park for Santa done by Twain Harte Rotary. The boughs that were made by Twain Harte residents were hung around town along with all the beautiful Christmas lights that sparkled together created an ambience that was beyond compare. It would be hard to go through all the tasks and who accomplished them but suffice it to say that without all this effort the parade just would not happen.

The night of the parade arrived and so did the volunteers. They stood at their corners to ensure the safety of the participants and spectators alike. The crowds of people started to arrive with singing in the street a give away that the festivities had begun. The lighting of the Christmas tree was the start of the parade as magic rang through our little town. The staging of the parade participants (Lisa and Jay) is so challenging but it was accomplished with the ease and experience that takes years of practice.

There were a record number of floats, bands, vehicles and singers marching through the streets. It was a spectacular scene, which concluded with Twain Harte Fire Department in all the glory of their rigs followed by a bright sleigh that held the Big Guy himself.



Carol (age 3) and her brother, Patrick, visit with Santa

There I was standing on the side lines in my CERT hi-visibility vest ensuring that the little children, who were so enthralled with the sight of Santa, did not get over anxious and end up getting hurt. I looked up into the brightly lit sleigh and who was looking down at me? Santa! He winked and blew me a kiss. I immediately transformed into a 5 year old little girl who felt the magic of Christmas well up in my heart as one of my heroes went by with a wave.



Our hero Santa

WATER ISSUES

by Carol Hallett, Project Manager, THA-CERT

We have always known that there was a high probability that if we had either a wildland fire or a big winter storm that they could take out our water source up the hill...a wooden flume.

This year it happened. As of the writing of this article the latest up date is:

“PG&E has begun repairing damage to the Tuolumne Main Canal and hopes to have the work completed by Saturday. Officials learned that a large tree fell and damaged a flume. TUD is asking customers to conserve water until repairs are completed. No water is currently being conveyed through the main canal due to the damage. Weather permitting, PG&E hopes to have repairs done by this Saturday, January 1, 2022.”

Mymotherlode.com Dec 30, 2021



Aerial view of the damage to the main Tuolumne ditch

DECEMBER STORM

by Carol Hallett, Program Manager, THA-CERT

We definitely got our wish for a White Christmas and then some! The snow was so heavy that the trees had a hard time standing straight and many toppled over or broke with the heavy load they were trying to hold. Those trees hit power poles and lines then there went the power. This really effected from Twain Harte all the way up the hill. It was also happening in the high country in Calaveras County so the PG&E crews were busy. We all put into action our skills we have learned over the years. Preparedness was our test, how well did you do?



For some the power was only out for a few hours at time. For others it was out for days... a week and in some cases the power is still out. Along with the quietness that a snowstorm brings we had the hum of generators running to keep us warm. Snowplows (big and small) attempted to clean the streets but in some cases could not get through. We saw local tree companies as well as residents using their chainsaws to cut down trees that were blocking the roadways, driveways or leaning up against our homes. Neighbors were using winches to pull cars out

Randie Revilla assesses damage from a tree falling on her deck of ditches. Amazing to see people working together to solve a problem.

THA-CERT was asked to get two teams ready, our Warming Center and UAV team. Linda Postma volunteered to open the warming center. She walked down to the Community Center to find that the plow had left a berm of snow about 6-8 feet tall and the parking lot had not been plowed. Jason at THCS D went down to plow only to find a car in the parking lot that was buried in snow. Linda was on standby in case anyone needed to warm up.



Storm damage in Twain Harte

We were told about the flume being compromised and that everyone needed to conserve water. We were called to put together our UAV team to deploy if needed. Michelle

Wagner and Randie Revilla got the equipment ready to go, the team was ready to deploy and on standby. We were not called as PG&E found the tree that fell on the flume using a helicopter. THA-CERT volunteers were ready to help others even while they were trying to help themselves.

HOW TO PROPERLY DISPOSE OF FIREPLACE ASH

by Jeremy Biswell and Carol Hallett, Program Manager, THA-CERT

Did you know there's a right way to dispose of your fireplace ashes? Improper disposal of ashes can lead to burns, create a fire hazard or pose a carbon monoxide risk. Safe disposal of fireplace ash is simple; it just requires following a few steps to ensure that the ashes have fully burned out and that they are ready for disposal.

Step 1: Allow ashes to build up within the fireplace.

One of the biggest mistakes people make is clearing ashes from the fireplace every time a fire is burned. A small cushion of ashes at the bottom of the fireplace helps insulate the fire, causing it to burn hotter and longer. You should allow for about an inch of ashes at the bottom of the fireplace. Consider clearing away the ashes once they pile up beyond that point; if the ashes are touching the bottom of your fireplace grate, you're overdue for ash removal.

Step 2: Give the fire plenty of time to cool.

Hot embers can hide in a fireplace ash bed long after the fire has seemingly burned out. It's crucial to be sure that the fire has completely cooled before you attempt to remove the ashes. It's advised that you wait at least 24 hours after the fire has been extinguished to remove the ashes.

Step 3: Shovel the ashes from the fireplace.

Always treat your fireplace ashes as if they could still be hot. When it is time to dispose of the ashes, transfer them to a metal container and wet them down. Keep the metal container outside your home and away from any combustibles until the refuse is hauled away. **DO NOT** place any other combustibles in the metal container. **DO NOT** use a combustible container.

If you plan to keep the ashes in your house (not recommended), the bucket should be closed with a firm fitting metal lid, or place them in the garage or a well ventilated space. If combustion is still taking place, the ashes can emit carbon dioxide, which can pose a real danger inside your home.

Step 4: Dispose or reuse the ashes.

Once the ashes have been allowed to cool for several days, it's safe to assume they are completely cooled and can be disposed of. You can bag them and throw them away with your regular garbage, or you can find many ways to reuse your fireplace ashes around your home. Fireplace ashes are a gardener's dream; they can be used to add nutrients to compost, mixed in the soil around calcium-loving plants or sprinkled around garden beds to keep away pests like slugs and ants. Fireplace ashes also can be used to create traction on icy surfaces, to camouflage stains on cement or to scrub glass fireplace doors or even silver.



Proper disposal of your fireplace ashes is simple, but following those simple steps is important to keep you and your home safe from accidental burns, a fire or carbon

HOW TO PROPERLY DISPOSE OF FIREPLACE ASHES, cont'd

monoxide poisoning. Remember that your fireplace requires more than just ash removal; you should make sure to clean your flue at least once a year.

GOALS FOR THA-CERT IN 2022

by Mike Mandell, Team Leader, THA-CERT

We have some catch up to do to bring our group up to date with training therefore we will be attempting to hold our monthly trainings as we have in the past. These trainings are for our members as well as our community members. The first of those trainings will be held in January. Training for Firefighter Rehab will be this January at the monthly meeting on the 29th.

I will be working with Chief Gamez to activate teams in emergencies.

Grow the team. I would like to continue to grow volunteers for UAV.

Drivers needed. We will be looking for volunteer drivers to be trained to pull the trailer and drivers for FF Rehab vehicle.

Fill Operations Section Chief position. This person would oversee FF Rehab, UAV, and vehicle operations.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Here are some of the events happening in January, 2022:

The best way to make a difference is right at home. The Twain Harte Community Services District holds monthly board meetings and they invite the public to join. You will be amazed what is happening in Twain Harte and this is one way to find out.

Join Twain Harte Community Services District Board Meetings online via Zoom.

January 12 at 9:00 am.

For more information, please go to:
<https://www.twainhartecsd.com/board-meetings>

All are invited to the THA-CERT monthly training meeting, held the last Saturday of the month (this month's meeting is on the 29th) from 9 am to Noon in the Twain Harte Community Center Manzanita Drive, Twain Harte



Pre-pandemic monthly meeting/training session