

## Wildfire-defense home certification cards due

*by Bend Weekly News Sources*

(Deschutes County) The Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act of 1997 was first implemented in Deschutes County in the fall of 2004. A major component of the interface fire protection act is the individual certification cards each homeowner should return to the Department of Forestry within two years of receiving the certification package. Each certification card identifies the particular owner and home site that meets the standards of the act.

Homeowners in Deschutes County, that are included in the Oregon Department of Forestry protection area, are reminded that if their property is not certified within two years of receiving the initial certification package the homeowner could be liable for up to \$100,000 in fire suppression costs associated with a fire starting on their property.

“To date the agency has received over 10,000 certification cards from homeowner™s within Deschutes County,” stated George Ponte, Unit Forester with the Oregon Department of Forestry. “This is both positive and encouraging; however, approximately the same amount needs to be sent in by remaining homeowners. We are encouraging them to do so as soon as possible; preferably before the 2007 wildfire season. “As an agency, in regard to this legislation, we hope we are not in a position of having to bill a landowner for the extra fire suppression costs; especially since all that is necessary, to avoid this potential liability, is to certify the property.”

Homeowners that have questions or concerns about the certification process or those that would like to request another certification package may contact the Oregon Department of Forestry at (541)549-6761.

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