



For Immediate Release
July 22, 2010
www.iccsafe.org/NWUIC

Contact: Dan W. Bailey, International Code Council
1-888-ICC-SAFE (422-7233), ext. 6277
Contact: Andrew Gordon, NRC&D Council
202-434-4863

Coalition Formed to Combat Wildfire Threat Where U.S. Urban Neighborhoods Meet Wildland Areas

As the U.S. population grows, housing, office buildings, schools and other structures needed to support an urban environment are being constructed closer than ever to wildland areas. One unwanted result is the increased number of wildfires and the danger those fires pose to life and property.

The just-formed [National Wildland Urban Interface Council](#) (NWUIC) will address those and other challenges associated with the growing threat from wildfires in urban neighborhoods that border wildland areas. The alliance was developed by the [International Code Council](#) (ICC) and the [National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils](#) (NARC&DC).

Just about every state is at risk for wildland urban interface fires. Wildland fires cost taxpayers, local communities and businesses in excess of \$10 billion annually. Since 1990, the wildland urban interface has experienced an unprecedented growth rate of three acres a minute, 4,000 acres a day and close to two-million acres annually of conversions from wildlands to wildland urban interface. The cost to fight wildfires annually is estimated at \$4 billion and insurance losses are estimated at more than \$1 billion annually.

“With more than 70,000 communities, 46 million homes and 120 million people across the United States at risk from wildland fires, this growing crisis needs new emphasis to save lives, reduce injuries and protect property,” said ICC CEO Rick Weiland. “This is an important public safety and building safety issue.”

NARC&DC President James Sipperly said, “The new National Wildland Urban Interface Council blends a strong national emphasis to combat wildland fires. Our Council’s contribution to this effort includes an effective, existing grassroots organization, with more than 32,000 local

volunteers. It directly affects more than 180 million people in 2,614 counties in all 50 states, as well as the Caribbean and the Pacific Basin.”

The NWUIC was a primary recommendation of a [National Blue Ribbon Panel on Wildland Urban Interface Fire](#) organized by the Code Council. The panel brought together more than 40 national groups including public safety organizations, federal agencies, forestry programs, local government associations, insurance companies and conservation groups. The panel identified the need for a unified, collaborative approach to combat the loss of life and damage caused by wildland fires adjacent urban locales.

More than 120 organizations and agencies are expected to begin working together on this important issue for the first time, hosted by the [National Association of Home Builders](#), at a meeting scheduled for Nov. 3–4 in Washington, D.C.

###

Sources available for interviews

- Rick Weiland, CEO, International Code Council, Contact: ICC Communications, 888-422-7233 ext. 4212 ; sdaggers@iccsafe.org.
- James Sipperly, President, National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, 860-343-8085 x147, james.sipperly@cityofmiddletown.com.

About us

The **International Code Council**, a membership association dedicated to building safety, fire prevention and energy efficiency, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states choose the International Codes, building safety codes developed by the International Code Council. The International Codes also serve as the basis for construction of federal properties around the world, and as a reference for many nations outside the United States.

NARC&DC has a 40-year history with the primary purpose to encourage and improve the capability of volunteer local elected and civic leaders in designated RC&D areas to plan and carry out projects for resource conservation and community development. These local councils deliver coordinated resource conservation and rural development assistance throughout America. By working together on local RC&D Councils; communities, all levels of government, and grassroots organizations collaborate to develop and implement solutions to widespread problems including the wildland/urban interface fire problem facing more than 70,000 communities across the U.S.