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Montana Selected for Community-Based Institute to Help Stop Deadly Wildfire

Well-known for its battles with big, fast-moving wildfires in recent decades, the state of Montana will host a nationally sponsored Wildland Urban Interface Institute in Missoula on Sept. 16. The daylong International Code Council institute, one of several planned nationwide, emphasizes strategic community partnership and planning to help stop deadly wildfire from occurring in the wildland urban interface (WUI), that area where vegetation and human habitation intermix. When wind-driven fire escapes here, it quickly becomes too intense, dangerous and fast to suppress.

“The devastating wildfires we’ve experienced in the last 10 years can only be stopped by careful community planning,” said International Code Council CEO Rick Weiland. “Having the best emergency response possible is essential, but it’s what communities and residents do *before* the fires arrive that does the most good.”

Held Sept. 16 at Rudy’s Inn and Convention Center in Missoula, the WUI Institute features Code Council experts discussing the WUI fire challenge; mitigation tactics, including defensible space around structures and the International Codes; and collaborative fire planning. They will also discuss how to integrate GIS mapping with web-based, hyper-linked planning. The Institute is for fire and building officials, community planners, elected officials, resource managers, developers, insurance agents, homeowners, and other stakeholders in preventing catastrophic wildfire.

“Community leaders know that good preparation is key to wildfire prevention and mitigation,” said Code Council President Steve Shapiro, “but many are overwhelmed by growth and change, on top of mandates and requests for plans and standards that often don’t relate to each other. Through the WUI Institutes, we want to help untangle all that.”

To learn more or to register for the WUI Institute in Missoula on Sept. 16, visit iccsafe.org/training/WUI/ or call 1-888-ICC-SAFE (422-7233), ext. 33817. The registration fee, which includes lunch, is \$150 for Code Council members and \$175 for non-members. Registrants also receive WUI codes, reports, and continuing education credit.

The International Code Council, a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, 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.

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