



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Santa Clara County FireSafe Council revs up wildfire prevention program with Department of Homeland Security Grant**

San Jose, California, March 5, 2006 – Late last week, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced the latest round of recipients in their Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program and a small, little-known Santa Clara County non-profit could not have been more pleased.

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCFSC), a group that focuses their efforts on wildland fire prevention, is one of 39 grantees in the fifth round of funding for this program. The Council was awarded \$87,580 to reach out to residents (with a particular focus on children and seniors) living in the Wildland Urban Interface areas of Santa Clara County. The focus of this outreach will be to educate residents about the need to create defensible space zones around their homes and teach children about the dangers of wildfires.

The Council, a partnership of members from local fire departments, utility companies, park and open space districts and resident groups, has been working to prevent an Oakland Hills fire storm from ever occurring in Santa Clara County.

“This grant could not have come at a better time,” said council president Patrick Congdon, general manager of the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority. “Frankly, we’ve had an uphill battle to gain momentum and get our message out to residents living in the hills on either side of the valley. With more people moving to these areas and the build up of fire prone fuels it is just a matter of time before we have our own fire disaster. In addition, we are excited about the prospect of bringing more federal funding into Santa Clara County.”

The council will now have an opportunity to turn its attention from surviving as an organization to fulfilling its mission to educate the public, develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans and conduct Hazardous Fuel Reduction projects. SCFSC members will be out in force over the next year speaking to residents at homeowner association, service club, and other small meetings as well as some larger events such as home and garden shows and other community events. Council members also will be reaching out to Santa Clara County kids at community events and at area schools in attendance areas that are prone to wildfires.

Residents may contact the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council at (408) 975-9591. More information is on the SCFSC Website at [www.SCCFireSafe.org](http://www.SCCFireSafe.org). The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is a non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve California's natural and man-made resources by mobilizing the people of Santa Clara County to make their homes, neighborhoods and communities "Fire Safe."

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The United States Fire Administration (USFA) is a division of the Preparedness Directorate within the Department of Homeland Security. The mission of the USFA is to reduce life and economic losses due to fire and related emergencies, through leadership, advocacy, coordination, and support. For more information on USFA, please visit the Website at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov>.