



For Immediate Release

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Santa Clara County FireSafe Council Exceeds Expectations for 2007 Wildfire Prevention

San Jose, October 25, 2007 – The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCFSC), a local non-profit group dedicated to preventing wildfires in Santa Clara County, has exceeded the goals for their 2007 Defensible Space Chipping Programs. These programs, which reduce hazardous fuels in selected areas of the county, are funded by federal grants from the USDI Bureau of Land Management as well as matching funds from local companies.

As of October 1, 2007 program results include protecting over 1,400 homes, over 4,000 people and over \$1,400 million in property values.

“We are very happy with our accomplishments to date,” said SCFSC president, Patrick Congdon. “Our programs were extremely successful in the community of Lexington Hills. There has been concern about excessive overgrowth blocking roads, which is a real access issue for fire engines and other emergency vehicles. Also, there are a number of homes in the area that are at risk because of dead and fallen trees. Through our chipping program, we helped mobilize fuel reduction efforts to clear roads and private property.”

With the help of the Lexington Hills community, including SCFSC Secretary and Summit Road resident Rick Parfitt and SCFSC Area Coordinator and Aldercroft Heights resident Kim Gardner, SCFSC hired clearing and chipping crews that worked on chipping projects in Redwood Estates, Chemeketa and Aldercroft Heights and cleared roadways including Summit Road. Through the Federal Grants and local matching funds, SCFSC is able to provide these services free of charge and offers additional assistance to qualified seniors and disabled residents through its SNAP (Special Needs Assistance Program).

“Our goal is to engage more communities within the County to provide Defensible Space Chipping Programs as well as general wildfire prevention education,” Pat continues.

SCFSC has hired three new coordinators focused on reaching out to the eligible Communities at Risk from wildfires which are East Foothills, Gilroy, Lexington Hills, Morgan Hill, parts of San Jose, Los Gatos, San Martin, and adjacent fire prone Wildland Urban Interface areas. With the addition of the Area Coordinators, SCFSC anticipates even greater results and increased efforts to raise awareness of all SCFSC programs and resources.

To learn more about these free Chipping Programs, or the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, visit the SCFSC Website at www.SCCFireSafe.org.

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The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is “Mobilizing the people of Santa Clara County to protect their homes, communities and environment from wildfires.” The council meets at 2:00 PM on the second Tuesday of each month. Interested organizations and individuals are welcome to attend! For more information and meeting locations, see www.SCCFireSafe.org, e-mail info@SCCFireSafe.org or call (408) 975-9591. SCFSC appreciates tax-deductible donations of any amount.

Funding for this Chipping Program provided by a National Fire Plan grant from the Bureau of Land Management through the California Fire Safe Council and by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Santa Clara County Fire Department, Santa Clara Valley Water District and other contributors. Our Community Outreach, Education and Youth programs and other council activities are also funded by a grant from the Department of Homeland Security, Assistance to Firefighters Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program and by grants and donations from local agencies, companies, foundations, organizations and individual donors. The views and conclusions contained in this press release are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the California Fire Safe Council, the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, local government or fire agencies, or the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute an endorsement by the California Fire Safe Council, the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council or the U.S. Government.