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**FREE CHIPPING SERVICE BEGINS MARCH 3 FOR NAPA COUNTY
RESIDENTS**

Local Fire Agencies Help Residents Build Defensible Space

NAPA, CA, February 22, 2008 – CAL FIRE/Napa County Fire Department and the Napa Communities Firewise Foundation announce the return of their popular free chipping program on March 3. The program is designed for residents living in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas; these are high fire-risk areas of the county where fire-prone vegetation has become part of the urban landscape and a danger to public safety.

Gabrielle Avina, Napa County Fire Marshal, is pleased with last year's results. "In 2007, the Firewise chipping program responded to over 400 requests totaling nearly 60,000 cubic yards of vegetation. This is a far cry from the 10,000 cubic yards we processed in 2004. We are elated at the public's response. From an environmental standpoint, chipping instead of burning has eliminated over 75,000 pounds of particulate matter from entering the air we breathe. Everyone benefits."

Alicia Amaro, Assistant Napa County Fire Marshal and Firewise Chipping Coordinator, says the program has become a key ingredient in defensible space preparation. “Many residents of the county don’t realize state law requires all homeowners living in wildland urban interface areas to have a 100 foot perimeter around their home and structures where trees and vegetation have been reduced or removed to provide a safe haven for firefighters and a safety zone for residents in the event a wildfire encroaches.”

“Participation in the chipping program is quite easy,” says Amaro. “Visit our Web site at www.napafirewise.org and click on the “Chipping Program” tab. Fill out the online application and your chipping request will be processed. And don’t forget, chipping is not intended for general land clearing.”

For information about defensible space planning and free chipping, visit the Napa Communities Firewise Foundation Web site at www.napafirewise.org or call the Firewise hotline at 707.967.1426. The Napa Communities Firewise Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation designed to provide Napa County residents with help in developing grassroots fire safety programs, wildfire awareness education and community organizing support.

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