



## FireSmart program heating up

by Jim Pendergast,  
Fire Prevention Officer

**W**ildfires are an essential component of the natural ecosystem, but also a source of great danger and destruction to human life and property. With extensive urbanization of wild lands, these fires often involve destruction of suburban homes located in the urban-wild land interface, a zone of transition between developed areas and undeveloped wilderness. Such fires present unique challenges and obstacles that must be addressed through practical, proactive, community-based solutions.

Sustainable Resource Development hosted an open house in Bragg Creek on June 12, 2007, to provide residents with information on forest management challenges and actions in their area. The event included remarkable displays and offered educative handouts. Experts were on-hand to discuss several forest management issues, including mountain pine beetle, FireSmart, forest land use planning, forest regeneration, forest hydrology, forest ecology and wildlife.

The open house emphasized that the aging forests in the Bragg Creek region face increased risk of infestation by mountain pine beetle, a small insect about the size of a grain of rice, that destroy the host pine trees. Subsequently, dry, dead timber intensifies the threat of catastrophic wildfire. The message delivered to over 80 participants was that the need for effective forest management planning is essential,

and these challenges can be met while ensuring protection of other forest values and habitat.

Rocky View Fire Services have responded by establishing a FireSmart Committee in the Bragg Creek area. Members include a representative of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, the Division 1 Councillor, four members at large, and staff from the Community Services and Agricultural Services departments. The FireSmart Committee will guide the community zone planning process, plan effective emergency response, and provide public education addressing wildfire threat and individual accountability.



■ Bragg Creek forests face infestation by the Mountain Pine Beetle.

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## THE COMMUNICATOR

The formation of the Bragg Creek FireSmart Committee is an excellent first step towards the development of an effective, proactive community. The campaign will thrive on the contributions of homeowners, municipal planners and authorities, developers, and fire personnel to name a few.

Now is the time to reduce the threat of wildfire to your homes and communities. Take the initiative to learn about your role in the prevention of wildfires, and look for opportunities to become involved in your community.

The Bragg Creek FireSmart Committee is currently looking for two more volunteers to join the committee Board. For more information about the FireSmart program, volunteer or public education opportunities, please contact Jim Pendergast, Fire Prevention Officer, Rocky View Fire Services, phone 230-1401. ■



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# AIM HIGH & ACHIEVE GREATNESS

*Rocky View*  
Municipal District

is actively seeking  
**PAID VOLUNTEERS**  
to join its family of  
Fire Services personnel.

For more information, please contact  
the Emergency Services department, phone (403) 520-8151.