

to 6:00PM until sold out. Look for the yellow trailer in the Oak Harbor Rite Aid parking lot, 31645 SR-20. For more information, visit [facebook.com/events/s/opening-day-of-peaches-and-apr/197403428366621/](https://facebook.com/events/s/opening-day-of-peaches-and-apr/197403428366621/)

[Submitted by Teresa Addison, Oak Harbor Lions Club]

#### **Encourage Your Inner Artist to Shine This Summer**

#### **Announcing Civility First's Third Annual Art and Photography Contest**

Civility First and Sno-Isle Libraries invite participants of all ages to submit an original artwork or photograph with the theme of "Choose Civility – Respect Others, Listen, and Be Kind."

Participants will enter the contest in one of the following age categories: children (12 and under), youth (13-18), adult (over 18). A cash prize will be given to the winner and runner-up in each age category. All entries will be submitted electronically.

The Civility First website will exhibit the entries as part of Civility month, October 2020. For complete information about the contest and to enter, please go to [www.civilityfirst.org/art-contest.html](http://www.civilityfirst.org/art-contest.html).

Civility First is a grass-roots movement in Island County promoting courteous public and private dialogue. It is comprised of a group of citizens from across the political spectrum who are concerned about the normalization of uncivil discourse, both online and in other shared spaces. For more information, see [www.civilityfirst.org](http://www.civilityfirst.org).

[Submitted by Elizabeth Guss, Civility First]

#### **WhidbeyHealth Adds Self-Service Fever-Checking Technology**

Beginning Monday, WhidbeyHealth patients and staff began measuring their own temperature.

No-touch self-service kiosks are located at entrances to all facilities. While the user looks into a small screen, the kiosk will quickly measure their temperature. Anyone with a fever over 100°F will be assisted by a staff member. Those without a fever can pick up a 'temp check' sticker with the current date and proceed inside.

"There are several benefits to the new kiosks," said Tim Waldner, executive director of facilities. "They are more accurate than hand-held sensors. We also have some high-traffic periods as patients arrive for appointments and staff come to work, causing a back-up at some entrances. In addition, automation allows staff to focus their time on patient services."

This is another way WhidbeyHealth creates a safe environment for patients and staff, while quickly identifying someone in need of attention.

[Submitted by Nic Wildeman, Lionfish Creative]

#### **Whidbey Island Firewise Program Unites Neighbors, Local and Regional Fire Professionals in Collaborative Community Wildfire Preparedness Day**



With summer now in full swing and wildfire season upon us, many landowners and communities are taking proactive action to help reduce their wildfire risk.

One such community is the Pondilla Estates neighborhood, located in the North Whidbey Fire and Rescue District off Libbey Road. A portion of the community's residents came together June 23, alongside professional and volunteer firefighters from the North Whidbey Fire and Rescue (NWFR) and Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and natural resource staff from the Whidbey Island

Conservation District (WICD) and Washington State Parks (WSP), in an exemplary display of collaboration for a "Community Wildfire Preparedness Day." Residents worked alongside fire professionals to prune back vegetation, limb trees, and create areas of defensible space in two distinct parts of the community, as a way to help adapt their landscape to better living with wildfire.

This effort is one of a growing number of communities on Whidbey who are taking advantage of a free and voluntary service known as the Whidbey Island Firewise Program, an outreach and education program focused on wildfire preparedness uniting neighbors together with guidance from a unique partnership between local and regional fire professionals. Created locally in 2016, thanks to a partnership between WICD, DNR, and the local Whidbey rural fire districts, the program is promoted through all agencies in various ways, but resources and requests for assistance can be found at [www.whidbeycd.org/firewise.html](http://www.whidbeycd.org/firewise.html).

"As a wildland firefighter I love the Firewise program," exclaimed Jason McMillen, assistant Salish Fire Unit manager of DNR. As a seasoned firefighter in the region, Jason and his colleagues at the DNR and NWFR are first responders, whose work in responding to fires, and proactively addressing wildfire risk, is important and essential. "The Firewise program brings the community together to help make the neighborhood more resilient if there is a wildfire in or near the community. It also gives the opportunity for the community to build a positive relationship with the firefighters and, most importantly, their neighbors. All this focusing on a common goal – community wildfire preparedness."

Referring to Pondilla Estate's recent Firewise Day, Salish Fire Unit Manager Kirk Troberg mentioned, "It's always refreshing when so many entities, both private and public – and from different levels of government – can come together and accomplish something, and leave all participants happy with the end result."

With Island County having entered Phase III of Governor Inslee's Safe Start the Friday prior, June 23rd's event aligned perfectly with the start of wildfire season to allow residents, firefighters, and natural resource staff to come together safely outdoors with social distancing and accomplish a collaborative and proactive mission of wildfire preparedness within the community. In today's world where connection is craved amidst all the divides, the event displayed dedication and volunteerism that was both refreshing and inspiring - a true showcase of how you can come together, safely, for a cause rooted in helping others.

"The turnout of firefighting volunteers exceeded all expectations," shared Jim O'Connor, captain of North Whidbey Fire and Rescue. "NWFR and DNR working together were able to clear at least two driveways to residences that were blocked by tree limbs which would not allow a fire engine to reach the residence. Now, NWFR engines can reach the homes without causing extensive damage to the apparatus."

A few weeks prior to Pondilla Estates' Wildfire Preparedness Day, the NWFR put out an "all-call" to its volunteers and staff to see who'd be interested in assisting the community. The positive response was inspiring, drawing over 20 NWFR volunteers and staff, including the fire chief, battalion chief, office manager, 911 dispatcher, a host of volunteers throughout the district, and even members of the marine rescue program, who were interested in learning about fire prevention on land. "The mix of people was beyond belief," continued O'Connor. "All NWFR folks felt helping residents in that community was important enough to be there and perform the work. Efforts exerted by all participants were extraordinary. Everyone can be part of the Firewise Program. You don't need special skills, just the desire to devote some time to help your neighbors."

The day began early, and ran late, but showed immense dedication on behalf of all participants – residents and fire professionals alike.

**BITS & PIECES CONTINUED ON PAGE 9**

#### **Holmes Harbor Rod & Gun Club**

#### **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE**

#### **Join the CASTERS AND BLASTERS**

**Saturday, July 18**

- Club Tours: 12:00-4:00
- Games and Fun!
- Archery
- Falling Plate Target Shooting
- Grilled Burgers and Dogs
- Fishing Club Representation
- Shotgun Clay Shooting
- Sign up to join the club anytime from 12:00-7:00

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**BITS 'n' PIECES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5**

DNR and NWFR fire trucks lined the road, and with brush trimmers, chainsaws, wood chippers, and gloved hands, it was a stunning display of unity in an effort to proactively address one community's unique wildfire risk, something that will benefit both the residents and fire professionals who serve them for years to come.

Josh Ettringer, wildfire operations technician 2 of the DNR, and primary coordinator of the event day alongside NWFR's Captain Jim O'Connor, shared that over 12 wildland firefighters representing DNR's Northwest Region on three engine crews were present. From newly acquainted firefighters just beginning their careers to those with more seasoned experience spanning decades, it was an exercise in unity through thoughtful tree thinning, brush clearing, and chipping alongside NWFR volunteers. The coordination and efficiency of tasks at the event was palpable, as DNR and NWFR have experience working alongside each other when responding to wildfire events within the district.

Pondilla Estates borders the greater Fort Ebey State Park, part of the Washington State Parks system. Area Manager of the Central Whidbey State Parks, Chris Holm, was present to show his support as a neighbor to the community, having worked with Firewise Communities in the southwest part of the nation prior to moving here. "As the manager of Fort Ebey State Park, I wholeheartedly encourage and support having a neighboring community actively participating in the Firewise program. The work being done and the partnerships being formed through this program is a demonstrated win-win."

From the community's perspective, resident and Firewise lead Teri Jo Reiger shared, "Tuesday's Firewise Workday was a phenomenal expression of collaborative work in action. Two significant areas of fuel accumulation in the Pondilla Estates neighborhood were transformed in a matter of hours. The DNR crew worked skillfully and efficiently alongside NWFR personnel. Residents who were involved expressed their increased awareness of how much a difference this has made and those who had not yet shown interest responded with awe and gratitude."

When it comes to Whidbey Island, many may not initially think "wildfire," as our fire regimes are much longer and less frequent than those of our neighbors to the east of the Cascades. But with growing awareness of the effects drought-prone summer trends play in wildfire ignition potential – even here in western Washington – there is also growing interest from communities in becoming more aware of how wildfire works on Whidbey and how to best prepare proactively.

Since wildfire ignition and behavior are based on a set of conditions – fuels, weather, and topography – unique to every region, the resources and recommendations of the program are tailored to each community. It follows a framework based on the National Fire Protection Agency's Firewise USA® Program, which outlines five key steps to success for communities – (1) conducting a community wildfire risk assessment, (2) creating a Firewise committee, (3) developing and implementing an education campaign on wildfire science and what residents can do to reduce their risk, (4) engaging neighbors in Firewise Days, and (5) sharing their community's successes to inspire others. Communities can choose to do one or all five steps based on their goals. If they decide to accomplish all five, they can be recognized as official Firewise USA® sites and join a national network of over 1,500 recognized communities, a number that is growing steadily since the national Firewise USA program began in 2002.

"What is great about NFPA's framework is that it offers a structure that my partners and I can adapt in our Whidbey Island Firewise Program to the island's unique wildfire conditions and communities. As planning and fire professionals, we're here solely in a voluntary capacity, to provide support to our communities on wildfire preparedness as they request it," shared Kelsi Mottet, natural resource planner at Whidbey Island Conservation District. "We encourage communities to get together, share ideas,

provide insight, and help them get organized to take action. Through this, wildfire preparedness can happen in a community and, better yet, friendships and trust can be built between neighbors and local firefighters."

June 23rd's collaborative Community Wildfire Preparedness Day has been a culmination of over a year of outreach, education, and collaboration on both residents' and partnering agencies' behalf in the Pondilla Estates community. Having accomplished all five steps, soon residents hope to apply for national Firewise USA® recognition. The most impactful take-away for many has been more about seeing how effective coming together to achieve something as a community can be.

"From the initial introduction of the Firewise program in Pondilla Estates, to the wonderful progress and outcome this past week," shared Reiger. "My sense is that this has shown how many hands can work together, and that taking care of where we live generates connection among neighbors. Firewise embraces action steps for safety and prevention, while fostering an increased appreciation for the beauty of where we live."

[Submitted by Kelsi Mottet, Whidbey Island Conservation District]

**Big Brother Big Sisters of Island County Seeking New Board Members**

Big Brother Big Sisters of Island County (BBBSIC) is actively seeking new member(s) for the Board of Directors. Join the board's exciting array of professionals. BBBSIC is seeking individuals who are committed to defending the potential of youth in our community through their time, skill sets, and influence in the community.

To complement the existing board, candidates with expertise in accounting, law, nonprofit management, networking, or fundraising are of particular interest. Committed to diversifying the board to better represent our community, BBBSIC encourages BIPOC and LGBTQIA community members to inquire.

Joining the BBBSIC Board of Directors at this time is a unique opportunity to help shape this impactful organization and drive its growth.

Please contact [admin@bbbsislandcounty.org](mailto:admin@bbbsislandcounty.org) for more information.

[Submitted by Tiffany Scribner, executive director, BBBSIC]

**Seeking Applicants for Lodging Tax Advisory Committee**

The Island County Board of Commissioners is seeking two applicants to serve as at-large members of the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee.

The Board of County Commissioners appoints members to the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee to three-year terms and renewed by mutual agreement. The Committee consists of seven members: three members representing the businesses required to collect the tax; three members involved in authorized activities receiving revenues and a member of the Board of County Commissioners who will serve as Chair. The Committee meets twice annually, usually in the fall, for the purpose of reviewing requests and making recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on distribution of monies generated by the Lodging Excise Tax.

Interested individuals should provide a letter of interest and resume by mail or email: Island County Board of Commissioners, Attn: Jennifer Roll, Re: Lodging Tax Advisory Committee Vacancy, Post Office Box 5000, Coupeville, WA 98239. Email applications to: [j.roll@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:j.roll@islandcountywa.gov). Application materials should be received no later than 4:30PM on July 20, 2020. For additional information please phone 360-679-7353 or e-mail Jennifer Roll at the above address.

[Submitted by Jennifer Roll, deputy clerk of the Board]

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