

Utah Prevention Strategy - 2012

Utah is experiencing historic fuel moisture conditions. All of the fire danger index measurements are pointing to a situation potential of catastrophic fires in the state. The US Forest Service, on behalf of the federal and state interagency fire services, requested a National Prevention and Education Team to be in place from June 18 through July 2, 2012. The Team's primary mission is to support the agencies in their wildfire prevention messages.

The goal of the Team is to develop a unified message for the Utah fire agencies and systematically deliver the message throughout the state to address the current wildfire concerns due to extremely dry vegetation and very high fire danger.

The Delegation of Authority was signed on Jun 18, 2012 with the following guidelines for the Team.

Objective 1: Develop a region-wide Communication Strategy with statewide messages to help the public become aware of the severe drought conditions and high fire potential in Utah.

Strategy:

- Research historic, current and expected drought condition information and prepare visual depictions of the material
- Research historic and current fire occurrence – perform a fire-cause analysis and visually map the results for demonstration and meetings
- Develop messaging needs for each of the 5 regions of the state
- Develop a three-pronged approach to disseminate the prevention messages using Media, Agencies, and Community Engagement

Objective 2: Create PSAs with statewide known celebrities that will be provided throughout the assignment.

Strategy:

- Develop text and obtain approval to place PSAs on radio stations
- Be receptive to suggestions and celebrities furnished by the host
- Get a PSA for Governor Gary Herbert fire danger message
- Explore using the voice of Maverick personality

Objective 3: Develop a statewide media campaign making contacts with local media markets such as KSL, KUTV, FOX news, KTVX and other local media stations to run stories about the drought and the high potential for fires.

- Develop distribution list of key media
- Discuss prevention issues with field prevention personnel to explore feature and special interest stories, and immediate informational needs, then prioritize
- Focus messaging on human-caused fires
- Develop targeted messages and products on target practice and shooting fire cause
- Develop targeted messages and products on fireworks and pyrotechnics
- Disseminate fire restriction messaging in a timely fashion

- Prepare explanation of Stage II restriction possibility and meaning

Objective 4: Utilize the UtahFireInfo.gov website to develop a dynamic banner that all partners can place on their websites and share with other publics to be placed on their websites.

Strategy:

- Contact webmaster to discuss inclusion of banner from team
- Use the developed message theme for the banner and general theme image
- Discuss the opportunities to include one-link access to special map files, documents, and other relevant prevention information
- Provide input into how prevention messages can be enhanced through website use, specifically a ‘one-stop-shop’ for Utah prevention
- Discuss linkage from website to specific agency restrictions

Objective 5: Work with billboard companies to fill empty space boards with advertisements either designed by the Team, resources assigned to the team from the agencies or from existing AD Council Smokey Bear material.

Strategy:

- Research potential billboard vendors and space availability
- Develop billboard graphic using central message theme
- Place billboard materials in most strategic locations maximizing value

Objective 6: Coordinate Team efforts with fire prevention employees from all agencies within the state.

Strategy:

- Develop listing of key prevention contacts throughout the state
- Have conference call with key contacts to discuss prevention needs and opportunities for Team assistance
- Meet with field personnel as requested to discuss specific concerns or projects
- Ensure that central theme and information reaches all prevention resources

Objective 7: Provide advice and counsel to all State and Federal agencies.

- Assess current situation, make observations, be available, and discuss Team’s areas of concern.
- Provide documentation of conversations and potential projects, lessons-learned, and recommendations.

Objective 8: Develop fliers and other materials, if time permits, for the various federal and state agencies.

Strategy:

- Develop strategy of product and imaging needs
- Explore needs for support of graphics designer
- Produce products short and long-term, staying within the central theme

Objective 9: Provide Team administrative documentation of budget, personnel, and Team activities.

Strategy:

- Maintain all budget information for the assignment and keep host agency informed of funding percentage expenditures
- Provide Final Report documentation for historic record and description of process, contacts, and accomplishments
- Adhere to safety procedures for the Team
- Adhere to applicable local, state, and federal laws
- Provide for a harassment free work environment

Prevention Implementation Strategy

The initial strategy to develop and implement the prevention message for Utah consists of central message theme development and network distribution. A central theme must be inclusive of all agency prevention message intent and be applicable in a broad array of venues for display and use.

Distribution of the central message theme is intended to extend to as many network recipients as possible. Each recipient receives a similar message (the central theme) in the language of the network user group.

Developing the Central Message

The Team develops the central message in consultation with agency representatives. Graphic design presents the message in as few words as possible, yet communicating the theme. The Team utilizes existing prevention messages that have been successful in the past, or refreshed messages the agencies feel are effective. The meaning of the message is further defined by listing actions the public can do.

Distribution of the Prevention Message

The Team recommends the message be distributed in three primary methods.

Media: Media distribution reaches a very broad audience of viewers in print, television, radio, and social media distributions. An advantage of media is that messages can be widely varied in content and recipients hear the message in different formats.

Agency Distribution: Each agency has unique sets of clientele and user groups. Each user group interprets a message in slightly different terms. Additionally, each user group may interpret the message differently. Recipients are, often members of more than one group. The result is the recipient hearing the same theme in a variety of ways and with different interpretations.

Agencies are asked to:

- Use the central theme on their websites and communications with the public
- Promote the theme and use to expand the prevention message
- Identify user groups and key networks
- Refine the central message to the language of the user group
- Request the message be sent out through the user group networks
- Request a copy of their message and volume of distribution

Community Engagement: Areas of the state with unique or special prevention challenges are handled through engaging the community. It is recognized that community issues are more mitigation oriented than fire-cause driven. Prevention professionals identify communities that have a desire to take responsibility and work to assess and plan a strategy of action.

Community Assistance:

- Identify areas of concern within the state
- Assess the opportunities and prioritize
- Provide assistance through meetings, making information available, and facilitating community action

Summary of Implementation Strategy

Agencies are diverse in regard to their mission, user-groups, and interaction with the public. Restrictions, regulations, laws, ordinances, and closures are also specific to the agency and public function. The implementation of the central message is designed to be universal for all agencies and groups. The simple message is to ask to do our part and prevent wildfire from human-caused ignitions.

This level of implementation is intended to reach broad audiences in different ways over an extended period of time. Specific fire cause information will be developed to supplement the needs of the state and particular situations and target groups.