

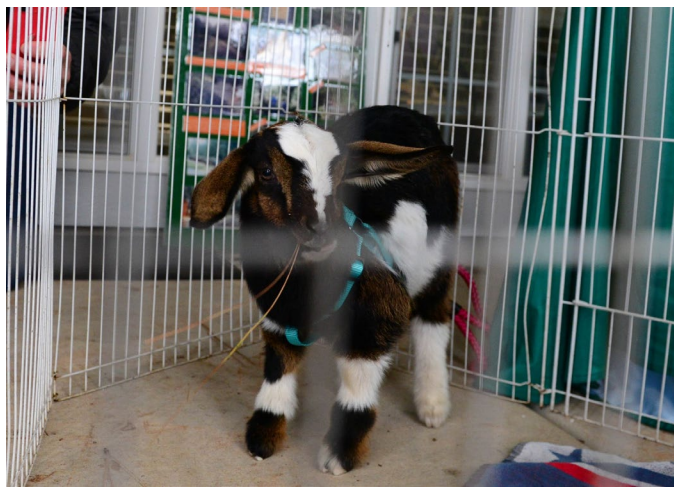
Fire Safe Council invites community to new building

Open house doubles as informational event

By [JAKE HUTCHISON](#) | jhutchison@chicoer.com | Chico Enterprise-Record
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Left to right, former town councilor Melissa Schuster and Paradise resident David Popp speak to GIS analyst Brett Beeson and fire safety planner Wade Killingsworth while gathered around maps on a conference room table at the Butte County Fire Safe Council's open house Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024 in Paradise, California. (Dan Reidel/Enterprise-Record)



Winnie the goat chews a pine needle in a pause between petting from guests and staff at the Butte County Fire Safe Council's open house Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024 in Paradise, California. (Dan Reidel/Enterprise-Record)



Cornhole boards help decorate the Butte County Fire Safe Council's open house Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024 in Paradise, California. (Dan Reidel/Enterprise-Record)

PARADISE — Since the Camp Fire, the Butte County Fire Safe Council has struggled to find a permanent home for both its employees and residents looking for resources.

The Fire Safe Council finally completed its building and invited residents to an open house on Wednesday where members of the community could come meet the staff and get some useful information on fire safety as well as creative solutions to dealing with fire fuels.

Taylor Nilsson, the Fire Safe Council's executive director, said his team technically moved into the building four months before the open house.

"The key part is making sure the community has access to learn about our programs and projects and how we can help them be fire safe," Nilsson said. "We want to make sure that they know how to talk to us and learn about what we have going on and understand how we can help them."

In front of the new building, located at 6569 Clark Road in Paradise, a small circle of fencing was set up for a young goat to greet people as they entered. This was no coincidence, as one of the more creative ways to create defensive space that the council has encouraged is goat ownership and renting goats.

"This month, we have a goat ownership workshop in Cohasset, and so that's where we're hosting it for community members to come learn from experts who own goats, know about goats and know how goats can be effective for wildfire safety on their property," Nilsson said. "And then, you know, the challenges that you might face with owning goats but also the opportunities and ways that you can be successful."

Each room of the new building contained residents, council employees and volunteers discussing fires and fire safety, including a board room at the back of the office where maps of the county were laid out and a large monitor showed the burn scars of fires within the past 10 years. Council members clicked through the overhead map showing areas where fire fuels tend to grow over a 10-year time period.

Beyond words

Fire Safe Council board member Jim Broshears could be found conversing with guests and recalling how previous fires affected the ridge. A former Paradise fire chief, Broshears said the council has been a part of the community for more than 20 years.

"It's beyond words what we've become to the community," Broshears said. "We have always been able to put projects on the ground and work with our community members but since the (Camp Fire), we have really hit our stride in being able to be that friendly face for people who have problems that need solving at the ground level."

For new Paradise resident Ken Rankin, the event provided a positive outlook. Rankin had purchased a house in Paradise where he planned to move after retiring, but the home was destroyed in the Camp Fire. After rebuilding a new home, Rankin was able to officially move in on Friday.

"I feel great," Rankin said. "It's nice to see the coordination between the different agencies and it's nice to know there are projects in the works."

Nilsson said he's looking forward to the office being a resource for the community.

"The big benefit is that community members are coming together and working together on how they can be wildfire safe through helping each other with defensible space and clearance," Nilsson said.

More information can be found about the Fire Safe Council and its programs and events can be found at buttefiresafe.net.



Executive Director Taylor Nilsson talks about how the Butte County Fire Safe Council came to its new location during an open house Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024 in Paradise, California. (Dan Reidel/Enterprise-Record)



Eric Kielhorn, left, project manager for hazard tree removal in Paradise, speaks to Butte County Fire Safe Council executive board member Jim Broshears, right, as assistant director of forest health Trevor Sherman listens and works at the Butte County Fire Safe Council's open house Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024 in Paradise, California. (Dan Reidel/Enterprise-Record)



Ready Raccoon gives two thumbs up at the Butte County Fire Safe Council's open house Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024 in Paradise, California. (Dan Reidel/Enterprise-Record)