 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

[More Metro news](#)

## Fire chiefs issue commitment to educate public on wildfires

**By Mark Sauer**

UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

**4:20 p.m. December 19, 2007**

SAN DIEGO – A commitment to educating the public about how we can protect ourselves individually and collectively against wildfires was the theme of a “report card” issued Wednesday by chiefs representing the 65 fire agencies in San Diego County.

La Mesa Fire Chief Dave Burk said many lessons learned in 2003's Cedar Fire were tested in October's fires with solidly positive results. They included: How to be more efficient with communication among firefighters and the public and how to better conduct massive evacuations.

Enlisting more local air support and, on the second and third days of the October fires, more military air support were also a big improvement this time around, said Burk, president of the San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association.

August Ghio, chief of the San Miguel Fire District, said three things are needed to successfully battle wildfires: “Leadership, action and funding.”

“We can provide two of the three, but adequate funding is the part that is missing and we have to find ways to fix that,” Ghio said.

A well-informed populace on issues like fire breaks around homes and the use of fire-resistant roofing and other building materials is essential, Ghio said. “The better informed the public is, the better off we all will be in suppressing these wildfires,” he added.

Money for additional fire engines, high-tech resources, other equipment and personnel, may come from private grants, federal Homeland Security funds, increased revenue from local and state tax funds or other sources, Ghio said. The additional funds could also pay for brush clearing and other fire-protection efforts.

“This will take a sustained effort on the part of everyone,” said Ghio.


He added that a main goal of area fire chiefs is to consolidate all county firefighting agencies into one in order to create greater efficiency and cooperation.

---

■ Mark Sauer: (619) 293-2227; [mark.sauer@uniontrib.com](mailto:mark.sauer@uniontrib.com)

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/metro/wildfires/20071219-1620-bn19fire.html>

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© Copyright 2007 Union-Tribune Publishing Co. ? A Copley Newspaper Site