

## **The First Network Conference A Success**

Eighty Nevadans from ten counties met in Reno on October 24 to discuss the new organization - The Nevada Network of Fire Adapted Communities or "The Network." The attendees included representatives from Nevada communities; local, state and federal firefighting agencies; wildfire fuel management companies; landscape industry leaders and others. Northern Nevada Fire Chiefs Association President Stacey Giomi served as moderator and Dr. Elwood Miller was introduced as The Network's coordinator and conference keynote speaker.

Elwood's keynote presentation put a different spin on the Fire Adapted Community concept. Instead of the traditional view of a fire adapted community consisting of physical attributes such as fuelbreaks, Class "A" roofs, defensible space, etc., Elwood defined it as a culture that is embraced by the residents of a wildfire prone area. In his view, a fire adapted community is one where wildfire threat concerns and pre-fire activities are part of everyday life and society.

Participants also heard about how The Network came to be, real world examples of what Nevada communities have done to reduce the wildfire threat, fire adapted community efforts in other states and grant writing tips. A highlight of the event was Living With Fire's very own Sonya Sistare as Alexis Trebek, hosting "Fire Adapted Community Jeopardy". Eureka's Jessica Santoyo and Reno's Jenny Herz tied for first place winners of the contest. At the end of the day, conference attendees nominated and selected the first Advisory Board of The Network. Learn more about the Advisory Board in our December issue. "This is an excellent and diverse Advisory Board that is very capable of providing the Network the startup direction and advice it needs. I'm very excited to work with these individuals." commented Elwood.

The post-conference evaluations were very positive and supportive of The Network, the conference itself and future efforts. Overall, participants overwhelmingly thought the conference was worth attending. Ninety-one percent of the evaluation respondents indicated that they would take some sort of action towards becoming a Fire Adapted Community when they return home as a result of attending the conference. Living With Fire Program co-coordinator, Ed Smith stated "This was an excellent start to The Network. We're looking forward to working with all these great Nevadans on reducing the wildfire threat to our communities."