

How To Start a Successful

Neighborhood

Arson

Mobile Watch Patrol

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C O N T E N T S

1. Forward	1
2. Overview	2
3. Participants.....	3
4. Meeting Agenda.....	17

FORWARD

About 10 years back one of our franchisees had all his belongings lost in a fire in the Conejo Valley in CA. adjacent to the Santa Monica Mountains. He was not alone as whole neighborhoods and 10's of thousands of acres were destroyed in under two days.

The following year the fires were back bigger than ever before. This time half the city of 100,000 people were in danger with half of Malibu, CA over the hill isolated by the fires. Many lost their homes and few lost their lives unable to get out of the canyons in time. The fire moved so fast there was little time to escape. Some recent fires were believed to be arson related, although no one was ever caught. The fires of January 2003 in Malibu, CA threatened many homes and businesses.

That is when The Car Wash Guys, founded by Lance Winslow, decided that they would get involved. Although many of us live in very green areas, where fires have a tough time getting started, once they do get going they generate their own wind and heat and little stands in their way. The most important strategy is to catch them early. Of the nearly 20,000 brush fires annually in the Western States in the Forest Regions, few ever get out of control, but the ones that do we all remember. **By uniting the entire community and working together we can decrease the number of fires intentionally started and a better response to those that are started by negligence or by mother-nature (such as lightning).** We must work hard to preserve our area and make our community one of the best places in the World, a person could ever hope to live. We have a great community and we intend to guard it against the loss from fire. We want our community to be the greatest in our state and our citizens, friends and families to know that we are all looking out for them and they are looking out for us. No longer will the temptation exist for an unethical situation to occur from an arsonist. Arsonists will know that our town is a no fly zone and that it is not only a police car, fire department vehicle or the USDA Forestry Service truck that they need to be concerned about. They will be caught if they attempt anything by the first person who sees them. The flower delivery truck, the school bus driver, an electrician, a plumber, a real estate agent; anyone and everybody will be observing while driving around in their normal course of business. With this same group of people we too wish to interact with Mother Nature to keep the natural forest fires to a minimum. We intend to protect our families, homes and beautiful serene area from devastation that can be prevented or quickly contained.

- *Stephenie A. Glas*

- *Lance Winslow II*

O V E R V I E W

Mission Statement: *To help our local fire departments, USDA Forest Service and police department by becoming the eyes and ears of the community. To establish a power of presence and thus increasing the visibility of our prevention and enforcement services. To establish a zone for arsonists where the risk of being caught is too high for them to practice their profession. To unite the business community and Chamber of Commerce with the citizens and the local government. To be proactive in law enforcement. To empower people to remain in control of their communities. To reduce potential losses from fire and to keep property value high.*

People who have jobs, which require extensive travel through local communities (like delivery services, real estate agents, and utility companies) are often in positions where they may witness crimes in action or suspicious behavior. Sometimes, just by being in a particular area at just the right time, they may even unknowingly act as a deterrent for criminal activity. The Neighborhood Arson Mobile Watch program seeks to enhance a community's prevention and containment strategy by providing concerned citizens, whose professions require extensive driving, with proper training and signage materials to even further deter criminal acts and stop fire outbreaks quickly.

Learning how to recognize suspicious behavior and knowing which local authorities to contact is one of the key components of the training. Just knowing the correct phone number, rather than dialing 911, can greatly reduce the amount of time it takes for the proper authorities to respond, and keep 911 lines open for other emergencies. Another key component of the program is providing magnetic signs on business and service vehicles, and use static cling stickers on other vehicles which read: "We report suspicious behavior to our local authorities." This lets potential arsonists know right away that they should not risk any illegal activity; a trained and aware crime watcher is in the area.

Each participant in the program attends a 30-minute seminar at the local Chamber of Commerce with a Community Relations Officer from the Police Department, Fire Marshall or USDA Forestry Service Community Prevention Advisor. They will receive a certificate and then be issued two magnetic signs or a set of static cling stickers for their car(s). We will ask participation from Chamber Members to start and as things prove to be effective we will increase participation and education of the process. We will alert the media to this program and give credit to the participants for helping our city or town. The participants will need some sort of two-way communication, such as a cellular phone, two-way radio with a dispatcher or wireless Internet access

PARTICIPANTS

A wide variety of participants are needed to launch a successful Neighborhood Arson Mobile Watch program. In this section, necessary participants are listed, along with a description of the kind of support needed from each. As many of you know, implementing a community-based project requires the interest, cooperation, and support of many people. But it all is definitely worthwhile!

Increasing the safety of a neighborhood benefits everyone from children and parents, to local businesses. Not only does reducing arson activities in our area increase everyone's quality of life, but it can also help increase property values. We are aiming for zero tolerance for arsons and quicker response from natural fires.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The local Chamber of Commerce is the ideal organization to coordinate the program. They should be asked to help build interest in the program by announcing the program to its members at meetings, and running press releases in newsletters or membership mailings. (Be sure to check the press release section for samples). The Chamber of Commerce should also be requested to act as liaison between their members and the Local, State and Federal Agencies. They will need to schedule with the USDA Forestry Service, Fire Arson Criminology Department and Community Relations Officer of the Police Department a time to come and talk to their members, (more than one meeting may be necessary). Once the program is started, Chambers collect and keep track of participants and schedule training sessions, and issues certificates of completion to participants (a nice touch!). In addition to training, signage and print materials are needed. The Chamber can contract one of their members to make the magnetic signs and order the cling stickers with the imprinted logos, and print flyers. Other tasks that Chambers can perform to increase the success of the program are to create a list of target participants, send flyers to these targeted businesses and individuals, and alert media sources.

FIRE DEPARTMENTS

The Local Fire department will provide a Community Relations person to explain to participants the need to report arsonists and simple things you can do to minimize the potential exponential and aggressive natures of small containable fires until the fire department arrives with the proper tools to fight the fire. They will explain how to set up road blocks and secure easy access for fire vehicles to arrive. They can explain when to get out of there and which direction to go. They will also explain what the reality of your limits are based on the type of equipment in your vehicle.

USDA FORESTRY SERVICE

The USDAFS will explain what is being done, why the importance is, water tables, and this years potential exposure. They will provide hand outs and safety tips about what to do, where to go and where to tune in. They will discuss prevention, communication and nature. Every year

the USDAFS does extensive research in prevention and data collection. This is information everyone should know who lives near forested areas, parks and mountainous area. The can provide the education that may help save the lives of you and your family.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police department will provide a Community Relations person to explain to participants the need to report crimes and what is actually a crime. Arson is a crime, one of the worst possible crimes. The police can explain how to detect suspicious behavior from a potential arsonist. They will explain that if someone cuts you off on the Highway it is an unfortunate situation , but not a crime, and to limit phone calls to important things. Most importantly, they will explain that the participants are the eyes and ears of the Police, not vigilantes. The Police will also ask participants to have the police departments phone number programmed into their cellular phones and to only use the 911 feature for accidents involving arson activity, accident injuries and very serious things. The Police department will also give the certificates to participants once they have completed the seminar, which will be signed by police chief or local Community Relations Officer.

CITY HALL

City Council members will very likely endorse the project at a city council meeting and give a proclamation to the President of The Chamber of Commerce for the Chambers and local businesses service to community. Most cities or towns can allot at least \$2,500.00 towards the project for the signage. Donations for the remained can often be obtained large companies in the area. By announcing it at a city council meeting the program will receive the publicity it needs to get quality participants.

MEDIA SUPPORT

Local Radio stations are very supportive of the community. Request that they play public service announcements. Also, you will find that local newspaper will place flyers in the papers to announce the project, local cable stations will tape video of participants covering their jurisdiction, and interview seminar participants.

ORGANIZING CHAIRPERSON

This will be the person who provides the necessary phone calls and keeps all the different groups happy and coordinates the program. It is best to have a prominent volunteer type individual for this, someone who is already known for the community involvement; maybe even sits on a few non-profit boards and municipal committees. Someone everyone likes. The Chairperson will be in charge of making great quotes in the media, organizing participants and volunteers and scheduling meetings. Follow ups, thank you letters and personal invitations. Also keeping track of all the events and making agendas and cooperating with neighboring cities that follow this plan later. Other responsibilities include interfacing with non-profit groups to make sure they can participate, and contacting Board of Realtors, Rotary, Kiwanis, Optimist, Lions, Elks, clubs etc. In short, an ombudsman to council people, Mayor and City Manager.

TARGET COMPANIES TO PARTICIPATE

- Car Wash Guys Franchisee
- Air-Conditioning Companies
- Auto Parts Delivery Stores
- Beverage Companies
- Bread Companies
- Carpet Cleaning Companies
- Construction Companies
- Dominos Pizza Franchisee
- Flower Companies
- Garage Door Installers
- Landscapers
- Local Maid Services
- Merry Maids Franchisee
- Milk Man
- Mobile Dog Groomers
- Office Supply Companies
- Painting Companies
- Plumbing Companies
- Pool Services
- Realtors
- Screen Mobile Franchise
- Security Companies
- Signage Companies
- Snap on Tool Franchisee
- Snow Removal Companies
- Soil Testing Companies
- Title Companies
- Tow Companies
- Transportation Companies
- Window Washing Companies

QUASI-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND UTILITY COMPANIES TO PARTICIPATE

- Ambulance Company
- Bus Company
- Cable Company
- Electric Company
- Gas Company
- Telephone Company
- Trash and Refuse Company
- United State Post Office
- Utility Company



GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO ASK TO PARTICIPATE

- Animal Control
- Code Enforcement Officers
- College District
- Department of Transportation
- EPA Inspectors
- Fire Department
- Forestry Department
- Military Recruiters
- National Guard Armory
- Park and Recreation District
- Probation Department
- Public Works
- School District
- Storm Water Program
- Water Treatment Plant
- Weights and Measures

WHAT DO THESE BUSINESSES, UTILITY COMPANIES AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES BRING TO THE TABLE?



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