

some of the Bureau of Land Management land. We have to take a look to see what we should be doing about that.

Should we leave that independent kind of situation waiting around for a fire of this magnitude or should we begin some orderly process of doing some things that will clean it up a bit and make it a little more safe? I opt for the latter.

I hope there will be some detailed hearings about that because I believe something should be done.

I understand the Senate is going into recess for the Republican and Democratic lunches. But I am not in charge of that time, unless leadership wants me to do something in that regard.

I yield the floor and thank the Senate.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, is there a unanimous consent agreement?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is a unanimous consent agreement that we recess for the caucus meetings.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, starting at what time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. At 12:30.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to extend that for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Chair recognizes the Senator from Idaho for 1 minute.

FIRES IN NEW MEXICO

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I wanted to respond to the senior Senator from New Mexico and his colleagues who have just spoken. All of us have watched with great concern as this fire has caused such devastation in the mountains of New Mexico and around Los Alamos.

I chair the Subcommittee on Forestry and Public Lands. For the last decade we have known as a country that our forests are rapidly growing unhealthy, largely because we have not managed them as skillfully as we should. In areas that are natural and left to be natural, we understand not touching them. But where we have forests in what we call urban interface today, where houses are built amongst the trees, there ought to be an aggressive effort to keep fuel loading down and to disperse trees in such a way as to disallow these kinds of crises from developing. It is happening now in New Mexico because of a major error on the part of a Federal agency.

We literally have millions and millions of acres of forested public lands around this country in an unsatisfactory condition, as in the mountains of the great State of New Mexico, and one spark, one lightning strike, or one

human match could cost millions of dollars, lose thousands of homes, and the land that it touches, it destroys for a generation.

Oftentimes much greater environmental damage is done trying to put out these fires than an organized manner of managing the land, to control fuel loading, and those types of things that are now evident in New Mexico.

We will work with the Senators from New Mexico. Those hearings will be timely. There should be a report out by this Thursday that will give us some indication of cause.

The Senator from New Mexico is absolutely right: There should be extensive hearings on how and why it happened. Are there other areas where this could happen across these United States?

I thank the Senator for his comments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I have an article from the Albuquerque Journal that talks about a marvelous man, Alton J. Posey, 68 years old. Essentially, this 68-year-old retired man knew a lot about forests and mountains. That was his job. He went out to save his mountain house, which was his dream—a two-story log cabin in the mountains. He doused himself with water, took his water hose, and stayed there and kept that house from burning while things burned all around him.

I ask unanimous consent that the story explaining his life and what he did be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See Exhibit 1.)

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, there is a little town named Weed, NM, which was hit by this fire. Terrible damage was done. It is on the other side of the State in the southern section.

There is a detailed Associated Press account by Chaka Ferguson that explains the details about that small town and what happened.

I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See Exhibit 2)

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I thank the Senate in advance for the generosity that it is going to show, as it always does for those who suffer a disaster in this country.

I want to say to New Mexicans that the Senate won't let you down this time either. We are going to do what we have to do to organize it properly, put it in the right hands, and make all of you out there in New Mexico whole, rebuild that lab where it needs to be built, and make it safer where it ought to be safe so it can continue its marvelous work in behalf of peace and freedom as it has done for so many decades.

I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

EX-FIREMAN SAVES HOME FROM SCOTT ABLE BLAZE

RETIREE PREVAILS OVER FIRE—ONE-MAN BATTLE SAVES WEED HOME

(By Rene Romo)

WEED.—The Scott Able Fire was raging on Agua Chiquita Road west of this tiny village, but 68-year-old Alton J. Posey was determined to protect his house, a two-story log cabin he built for his retirement.

With an old firefighter's helmet perched on his head and his pants drenched with water, Posey used a garden hose to battle flare-ups.

He managed to save his dream house, but at least 15 other houses and structures burned to the ground a few hundred yards away in nearby Wayland Canyon and along Agua Chiquita on Thursday night.

"Everything at the end of the rainbow for me was at the bottom of his hill," Posey said Saturday of his 11-acre property, a preserve surrounded by blackened trees and incinerated homes. "At 68 years old, you're too old to start again. And if a guy is determined and he knows he's right, you can't whip him."

Firefighters on Sunday had the 20,717-acre blaze, which cut a swath about 20 miles wide from Scott Able Canyon east to the Sacramento and Weed area, about 50 percent contained, fire information officer Kris Fister said.

The fire was believed to have been sparked by a downed power line in a 4-H camp about 16 miles south of Cloudcroft.

Fed by wind gusts, the fire churned across the Sacramento Mountains in the Lincoln National Forest, covering nearly 20 miles Thursday night and Friday morning.

Along Agua Chiquita, the fire left charred refrigerators and well pumps standing amid aluminum siding twisted like noodles. At some homes, trucks sat on their wheel rims because the tires were roasted away.

Milder winds Saturday and Sunday limited the blaze mainly to ground fires and gave more than 300 firefighters from around the West a chance to build a perimeter and douse hot spots with five helicopters and six air tankers.

According to a preliminary estimate, the Scott Able Fire destroyed 20 residences, 16 structures such as garages and sheds, and six automobiles.

Among those who lost houses in Wayland Canyon were two of Posey's neighbors, Maggie Bailey and Weed postmaster Francis Visser. Posey allowed them to stay in his home while they figure out what to do next.

Bailey moved to the area from Wisconsin two years ago with her truck-driver husband, who was on the road during the blaze. Bailey said she lost a motorhome, a small cabin and a motorboat. She managed to save two cars and her pets—a dog and two cats.

"I think I want to go back where there's more moisture," a dazed Bailey said Saturday evening. "What can you do? You just . . . do."

Otero County sheriff's deputy Sgt. Jeff Farmer also lost his home.

"It's the little things you miss," said Farmer, who was working a roadblock leading into Weed off N.M. 24 on Saturday. He had been working almost nonstop since the fire erupted Thursday evening. "Yesterday morning, I didn't own anything."

Posey said "it sounded like 10 trains" when the blaze roared down the mountain-side behind his house, consuming 80-foot-tall pine trees.

The former Artesia firefighter thoroughly drenched his log cabin with a garden hose as the fire advanced Thursday. Later that

evening, heat all around the house caused the building to issue a cloud of steam.

From about 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., Posey, working frantically and alone, scrambled about his property dousing thumb-sized embers with a bucket.

Flames burned a hole in the wall of a barn about 50 feet from his home before Posey extinguished the flare-up.

Several times during the night, he said, he had to drop to the ground to gulp air. And once during the evening, a wild-eyed doe charged out of the burning forest and crashed into him.

Posey said he refused three requests by local authorities to evacuate but sent his wife and two neighbors off Thursday evening. The goodbye became emotional when Posey told his wife of 47 years, Carol, to take his dog, a blue heeler named Ugly, with her.

"I was just just wondering if I would ever see him alive again," Carol Posey said Sunday, noting that she left her home with nothing but medicine and her pets. "It was a scary time, I tell you what. You didn't have time to think. You didn't have time to do anything."

Alton Posey recounted their goodbye: "I said, 'Don't you fret. This is the kind of hand I can play. I had a good supply of water, a good pressure pump, and my old coat.'"

Meanwhile, the 8,650-acre Cree Fire east of Ruidoso was 94 percent contained as of early Sunday, and a single helicopter doused hot spots. The fire is expected to be under control by Wednesday.

EXHIBIT 2

TOWN FULL OF STORIES AFTER FIRE (By Chaka Ferguson)

WEED, N.M.—Under a blue sky, with a row of apple trees serving as an outdoor wedding chapel, newlyweds Chris Mydock and Kendra Goss-Mydock proved why this mountain community, population 20, is known to some of its residents as a town of 100 stories.

Two days earlier, a raging wild-fire ripped through the Sacramento Mountains, burning at least two dozen buildings about a mile from where the Mydocks consecrated their wedding Saturday. When they took their vows, an evacuation order was still in effect.

In the background, wisps of white smoke rose from the hills. A helicopter hovered above, prepared to drop water on remaining hot spots. Firefighters milled around, awaiting orders.

But like life in this resilient community, the wedding went on.

"The pastor called us yesterday and asked us if we're still on, and we said, 'Yep, we're still on,'" said Goss-Mydock, 31, a lifelong resident of Weed, as she posed for pictures with her new husband before a sign that read "Weed: pop, 20".

The communities that dot the Southern New Mexico mountains have pulled together since a wild-fire erupted in a nearby canyon Thursday and spread to more than 20,000 acres, rivaling the bigger blaze in the north that scorched Los Alamos.

The Mydocks wanted to share their wedding with the community to help heal some of the pain caused by the fire's destruction.

"The people are really close to each other; it's like one big family here. Everybody cares about everybody else," Goss-Mydock said.

The preacher and his wife, who served as the witness, attended the wedding. The Mydocks then had their reception down a dirt road that bisects the community with patrons of the Weed Cafe, a gathering place for residents seeking news on the fire.

The family-run restaurant which also houses the community's post office, stayed open during the tense days and nights of the fire and the following evacuation, donating food and other provisions to firefighters and

evacuees. Some residents ignored the evacuation and stayed put, others took up residence with friends or relatives.

"I stayed open to supply hot coffee to the people and provide telephones," said Gary Stone, 45, who lives several miles down the road in Miller Flats. "I was making sure the coffee was on and the doors were open."

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will stand in recess until the hour of 2:16 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:37 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. INHOFE).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001—Continued

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, this weekend an estimated 750,000 mothers, fathers, and children united for the Million Mom March here in the District. These women and men took the first step toward ending the epidemic of gun violence in our country.

Certainly, Congress needs to take the next step. It is intolerable that commonsense gun safety legislation is stalled in a conference committee that has not met since August 5 of 1999. Twelve kids die a day from gun violence and we do nothing. We have more safety regulations for toy guns than for real guns, and we do nothing. We have watched children shot in schools and day-care centers, but still we do nothing.

Yesterday, the Democratic Policy Committee held a hearing with mothers from the Million Mom March. At the hearing, I heard stories that I must say will haunt me for a long time. I listened to a kindergarten schoolteacher talk about her horror when one of her seemingly innocent students, a kindergartner, brought a gun to school to kill a classmate. She remains afraid to teach and afraid for her students.

I listened to the mother of an aspiring high school graduate who was gunned down in front of his girlfriend's home while unloading groceries. As she talked about her loss, and demanded Congress act, she said simply:

I don't want this to happen to any other mother, father, sister or brother. I don't want anyone else to suffer like this.

I listened to a mother whose oldest son was shot and killed by a neighbor in a sleepy town in California. She told us:

I came to the District to protect my son, Brandon, from gun violence because he is the only child that I have left.

I ask my colleagues, what else will it take for us to act to stem this domestic war of violence that is infecting every city and county in our beloved country? We cannot wait any longer for the juvenile justice conference to meet and act.

I was disappointed by comments made by the National Rifle Association when asked whether all of this effort, 750,000 people coming to Washington as peacefully as any group I have ever seen come, organized in a respectful way, telling their stories, as tragic as they are, with the courage that I don't think I personally could muster, the personal stories of lost sons and daughters, mothers and fathers—the NRA was asked the question, Will this translate to political power? Their answer:

It's one thing to say it. It's another thing to do it.

They understand political power. They have it. But I do think that is changing. The landscape is changing, and it is changing dramatically. As a South Dakotan who has been raised with guns all my life, who is proud to be a hunter—I have many guns myself—I will say without equivocation that it, too, is even changing in my home State.

Given the fact it has now been more than a year, given the fact that we have not yet acted, given the fact that we ought to respond to all those people who came to Washington with their courage and with what few pennies they had to pay for their trips, I ask unanimous consent that no rule XVI point of order lie against any gun-related amendment to the military construction appropriations. This would apply to Republican or Democratic amendments.

Mr. BURNS. Objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

AMENDMENT NO. 3148

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I, therefore, send an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. DASCHLE] proposes an amendment numbered 3148.

At the appropriate place add the following:

Since Mother's Day, May 14, 2000, an estimated 750,000 mothers, fathers, and children united for the Million Mom March on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. and were joined by tens of thousands of others, in 70 cities across America, in a call for meaningful, common-sense gun policy;

Since 4,223 young people ages 19 and under were killed by gunfire—one every two hours, nearly 12 young people every day—in the United States in 1977;

Since American children under the age of 15 are 12 times more likely to die from gunfire than children in 25 other industrialized countries combined;