

Office of Emergency Management



March 19, 2024

RE: 4th Annual La Plata County April Exercise

Deer Valley Estates Residents,

Thank you for participating in the La Plata County Office of Emergency Management (LPCOEM) annual Wildfire Evacuation Exercise. We applaud your fire mitigation efforts thus far and we hope that this exercise will take your emergency preparedness to the next level!

Each year, we run wildfire simulations to exercise and test our procedures at the Emergency Operations Center. One of our primary duties is to send out Alert and Warning messages to affected communities about fire activity in the area and potential evacuations. This also allows us to provide you with a training opportunity to test your own evacuation procedures. If you only have minutes to evacuate due to a fast moving wildfire, are you ready?

The first step is timely notification. We use **Code RED** to send out emergency messages, and you need to “opt-in” to receive them. Earlier this month, we sent out a test message with **Code RED**, and if you didn’t receive it, we encourage you enroll or update your information if you’ve already signed up. We have helpful information at:

https://www.co.laplata.co.us/departments/emergency_management/index.php

The next step is having a plan in place to get out quickly, with all the important things you’ll need to assist in your recovery if your house does not survive the fire. We encourage all residents to (1) have a checklist and (2) practice gathering those items, loading up and getting out. We have resources to help here:

https://www.co.laplata.co.us/departments/emergency_management/fire_restrictions.php

We encourage you to use this exercise to practice your plan: When you get the alert on **Thursday, April 25th around 1:00pm**, follow the evacuation instructions and time yourself – how quickly can you get your family important items out? Meet at the Rally Point – your front gate entrance. We’ll issue “Rapid Tags” that would get you back in to your neighborhood in the event of a real incident. We’ll answer questions, have additional resources and a BBQ lunch.

Lastly, we’re looking for some volunteers to let the firefighters do some drills around your home (pulling hose and planning what actions they would take). We also need a few volunteers for a Wildfire Site Assessment – a review of your property to explain what can be done to improve the survivability of your home. If you would like to volunteer for either of these opportunities, please contact us at the numbers or email below.

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