

M a n u f a c t s

SPECIAL BULLETIN 2011-13 FIRE SPRINKLER ORDINANCE TEHAMA COUNTY

September 1, 2011

TO: CMHI Retailers
Manufacturers
Community Owners/Developers

FROM: Jess Maxcy

Tehama County is in the process of developing an ordinance that will require fire sprinkler systems in manufactured homes (See attached article).

If the County decides to move forward with a manufactured housing fire sprinkler ordinance, local CMHI members are encouraged to get involved in the process in support of:

The effective date of the ordinance should be based on the date of manufacture of the home to be installed and not the date of installation.

An effective date based upon the date of manufacture will protect retail inventory and consumers in the process of purchasing a home from expensive retrofits.



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Tehama County supervisors look at sprinkler ordinance

By Janet O'Neill

Wednesday, August 31, 2011

RED BLUFF — Tehama County supervisors decided this week they'll consider an ordinance that requires fire sprinklers for some manufactured homes.

Following a more than two-hour study session, the board voted 4-0 Tuesday to direct Assistant County Counsel Arthur Wylene to draft the document. According to the board's direction, the proposed rules would apply to newly installed dwellings manufactured after a yet-to-be determined date in the future, perhaps early next year.

Before the vote, the board heard a lengthy presentation by Jeff Schori, chief of the Tehama-Glenn unit of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Tehama County Fire Department.

Putting out fires in rural Tehama County already is made more difficult by long response times, a shortage of personnel and a shortage of water.

"We're just spread pretty thin," Schori told the board. Quoting extensively from studies and citing a host of statistics, he touted the use of sprinklers as "a lifesaving device." He put cost of installation at roughly \$6,000.

State law effective Jan. 1 mandates residential sprinklers for all new conventional homes, but does not apply to manufactured ones, according to a county staff report to the board.

But before Aug. 2, the Fire Department, under county code, traditionally applied the same standards to both newly installed manufactured homes and conventional homes, which included the option of either 200-gallon-per-minute fire flows or sprinklers.

On that date, supervisors asked the fire chief to lower fire-flow requirements for manufactured homes, without requiring sprinklers, until the county could develop permanent regulations.

Wylene spelled out three potential avenues for the board to consider: Require newly installed manufactured homes to meet the same standard as conventional ones; require either sprinklers or a 200-gallon-per-minute fire flow, favored by the Fire Department; or require neither for mobile homes.

He also offered options regarding the application of the new requirements: Apply to all newly installed manufactured homes regardless of age, which the Fire Department favored; apply to homes manufactured after a given date, allowing older units to avoid retrofitting; or apply only to newly manufactured homes that have never been installed, allowing buyers to order sprinklers during manufacture.

Ben Rapley, a Red Bluff contractor and mobile home dealer, didn't argue with the safety issue.

"Sprinklers save lives," he said. "That's a given."

But prices to install a system can vary, depending on the home, the type of roof, trenching and other factors. Telling a potential buyer he or she will have to pay significantly more to add sprinklers can be "a deal blower," he said.

Supervisors were skeptical of a retrofitting requirement, concerned about the potential cost to someone who could hardly afford the home in the first place. While Supervisor Bob Williams agreed sprinklers are a good idea and voted to consider the ordinance, he asked: "My question is, 'Why do we have to make them mandatory?'"

No date was set for Wylene to present the draft ordinance to the board. Board Chairman Gregg Avilla did not attend Tuesday's session because he is considering moving a manufactured structure onto property he owns, Williams said after the meeting.



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