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Fire Fighting Agencies Unite on Wildland Engine Tactics

Salt Lake City, Utah -- As the number of homes continues to escalate in wild land fire areas, the need for trained fire engine personnel is also growing. The State of Utah is launching a statewide training program for firefighters to work on engines in wild land fire situations. This is the first year that training for wild land engine operations is being offered to all fire departments in Utah. The classes will take place this spring, beginning this weekend, at four locations from St. George to Coalville.

Engines play a central role in efforts to protect homes and early suppression. The training focuses on tactics that maximize the usefulness of the engines. "The tactics and equipment used for fighting wildfires from an engine have evolved into some technical concepts over the past several years," says Tracy Dunford, the state's fire management officer. "The demand for wildland engines has really been driven up lately by housing growth in the foothills and cabin communities," he continues.

Due to the explosive growth in housing along benches and other Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas, the role of engines in wildland fire settings has greatly increased nationwide and Utah is no exception. In the past 3 years, wildfires in California, Colorado and Australia have shown that more tactical expertise can make a dramatic difference in keeping firefighters safe and defending homes. The funding used to conduct the training comes from a federal program entitled "Ready Reserve." Ready Reserve is a U.S. Department of Interior program designed to train rural fire departments in wildland fire suppression and management.

Some B-roll video and still photography of the trainings will be available upon request.

LOCATIONS:

St. George / April 3-4, 2009

Price / April 24-25, 2009

Mt. Pleasant / May 8-9 2009

Coalville / June 12-13, 2009

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