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**For Immediate Release**

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**Central Oregon Fire Chiefs Announce Seasonal Burning Closing at Sunset on May 31**

The Central Oregon Fire Chiefs Association (COFCA) announces the date of closing for residential and private lands open debris burning across the tri-county region in Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson Counties. Burning debris piles on private lands in much of central Oregon will not be allowed starting on June 1 this year as the area heads into the summer wildland fire season.

“In order to best serve our residents throughout central Oregon with fire and EMS protection, Central Oregon Fire Chiefs each year, jointly select a common closing date to avoid escaped residential debris burns on private lands”, said Matt Smith, Fire Chief, Crook County Fire & Rescue, and Chair of Central Oregon Fire Chiefs Association.

“Many areas in Central Oregon are drying out quickly and local, state and federal wildfire suppression resources can be quickly needed as the conditions continue to dry out,” Chief Smith said. “Even though specific areas in Central Oregon still may receive a bit of rain or even a spring snow shower before or after the closure, the region as a whole is quickly approaching fire season conditions that create unsafe conditions for residential outdoor debris burning,” adds Chief Smith.

The Central Oregon Fire Chief’s Association strongly urges homeowners to prepare their property for the upcoming fire season now before there is smoke on the horizon. Homeowners and residents who have yet to Firewise their properties for the upcoming fire season will have three options for forest debris removal until fall and burn season opens again: chip the debris; haul to a local transfer site; or pile and cover until fall.

Central Oregon Fire Chief’s federal partners (US Forest Service & Bureau of Land Management) could possibly be executing prescribed burns throughout the region in preparation of fire season even after burn season closes on private lands. These prescribed burns will be conducted under carefully planned conditions such as: with federal fire resources, professional fire managers and firefighters on scene, favorable weather conditions and carefully planned land plots. These prescribed burns improve forest health and reduce the forest fuels in order to lower the wildfire risk to our communities that is ever present later in the season when the conditions are even more extreme. Creating fire resilient landscapes with prescribed burns is a critical component to implementing the [National Wildland Fire Cohesive Strategy](#).

Residents are strongly encouraged to contact their local fire protection agencies for additional burning information and regulations. All Central Oregon fire departments and rural fire districts will continue to monitor weather and fuel moisture conditions in their district and may make modifications on a day-to-day basis. Please call your local outdoor burning information line for your current conditions. If conditions become dryer, individual agencies may choose to close local burning sooner. Fire agencies will monitor fuels and fire conditions throughout the summer and anticipate the opening of burn season again in late fall.

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