

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **American National applauds mitigation efforts in recent wildfires**

*Insurance company encourages homeowners to take fire mitigation efforts.*

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – (Aug. 28, 2013) As the effects of wildfires are being felt throughout the western United States, American National Insurance Company illustrated cases where mitigation efforts had made a difference in saving homes and property.

Wildfire mitigation includes the reduction of natural vegetation in the area immediately around the home to protect structures from an approaching wildfire. Homeowners who reside in areas at a high risk for sustaining wildfire damage are asked to follow their state forestry service’s guidelines for clearing a defensible space around their home.

“Requiring our clients to take fire mitigation efforts isn’t always popular. It takes time, money and effort. But it’s the right thing to do,” said James Gillette, senior vice president, actuarial services, for American National Property And Casualty Company. “Our agents have a history of working closely with homeowners to help them prepare for the worst. Clients have reported back to us instances where firefighters have told them that the only reason their house was still standing was because of their mitigation efforts. We encourage all homeowners to take mitigation measures for their homes.”

In Colorado, the program was put to the test as the Black Forest Fire raged through the state. Fire crews often must prioritize homes they will try to save based on the extent of mitigation on that property. By taking precautions and following Firewise\* guidelines, homes were saved that otherwise might have burned had it not been for homeowners taking fire mitigation actions.

Robert Edgin, an American National agent in Colorado, reported two different occasions where clients called him to let him know the fire department told them the only reason they still had a home was because of their fire mitigation work. “One client sent me a picture showing the scorched earth right up to their mitigation line. Even where the fire did burn on their property, the trees were all limbed up, which kept the fire on the ground and gave the fire crews the ability to fight the fire and save the home.”

It was also reported that firefighters were able to use two properties where mitigation had occurred as a base of operation and to build a fire line to protect their respective neighborhoods.

*\*Firewise is a project developed by the National Fire Protection Association. You can find a Firewise [toolkit](#) and other useful information on fire mitigation on its [website](#).*

American National is comprised of several distinct entities. The parent company, [American National Insurance Company](#), was chartered in Galveston, Texas in 1905. Since that time, they have evolved into one of the largest and strongest life insurance companies in the nation. In an effort to offer personal lines of insurance to its client base, American National Insurance Company established a dedicated property and casualty division in 1973. That company, [American National Property And Casualty Company](#) (ANPAC®), is headquartered in Springfield, Mo. In 2001, the American National Family of Companies decided it needed a vehicle to better serve the unique insurance needs of the agricultural market, which prompted the acquisition of Glenmont, N.Y.'s [Farm Family Insurance Company](#).

American National's exclusive, independent contractor agents offer life insurance; annuities; property and casualty insurance for personal lines (including [auto insurance coverage](#)), agribusiness and targeted commercial exposures; and other insurance services. American National agents serve individuals, families and business owners. Please visit [anpac.com](#) for more information.

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