

Oceanside Home Survives Adjacent Residential Fire

“The fire was so hot, it melted the buttons off my microwave sitting about 6 feet inside the exterior wall but, my home was saved, and I’m thrilled,” said homeowner Robert Wueste.



Fire destroys adjacent home while Saferwood fire retardant shakes are scorched but do not catch fire. They enhance safety and contribute to survivability.

As Spring approaches, attention in the west turns in part to the danger of wildfires and the threat they pose to homes. This is particularly true for those living near grasslands and forests. Unfortunately, many living in urbanized areas ignore words of caution, with catastrophic results. The National Fire Protection Agency’s Firewise Program (www.firewise.com) details steps homeowners can take to prevent a wildfire from spreading to their home. Creating a defensible space around a dwelling in rural areas focuses on landscaping and fire-retardant roofing material. Creating defensible space is also important in more compact urban areas. Urban residences are often threatened from burning embers from a neighbor’s home, or neighborhood kids shooting fireworks into the sky that make their way to the roof. Robert Wueste of Oceanside, Calif., proved that prudent fire-safety steps can save urban homes from the spread of fire from an adjacent home. In the early morning hours of Dec. 28, 2001, Mr. Wueste

awoke to horror of his neighbor’s home engulfed in flames. He moved his family to safety and then watched as flames and burning embers landed on the side and roof of his waterfront home. With only a 6-foot easement between the homes, he thought his home was destined for destruction.

Wueste’s home, however, survived the intense inferno burning only a few feet away. A few years earlier he had re-roofed his home with SaferWood-Treated fire-resistant cedar shakes and built a 5-foot retaining wall between the homes. That combination helped save the day in this situation.

Exterior wood, including sections of the roof, was scorched but it did not catch fire and did not burn. His home was saved. His family was safe. And his irreplaceable personal possessions were saved. Creating a defensible fire-safe urban space, including SaferWood-Treated fire retardant wood products, made all the difference to the Wueste family.