

# Massive fire stops short; town still in danger

**WILDFIRE, from Page 1**

towns just west of Show Low. The other 70 were in Heber-Overgaard, 35 miles west of Show Low. Show Low was overrun by the Saturday. "Many homes up here have been built board by board," said 61-year-old Sue Aldrete, who was evacuated from

her Pinetop-Lakeside home Saturday. "We didn't just walk into a subdivision where a home was already built. We built from scratch. It was a labor of love." Favorable weather, including lighter, northeasterly wind at 10 to 15 mph and lower-than-expected temperatures, was expected to help firefighters today. Similar conditions on Sunday slow-

ed the advance of the fire. Crews fortified a firebreak that had been bulldozed just west of town to try to cut off an eastward route for the fire. Firefighters patrolled behind the line and in Show Low itself, looking for spot fires started by drifting embers. Paxson said firefighters faced two possibilities, depending on the wind: "One is if the fire builds a big plume-dominated head and a wall of flame

roars into Show Low. The other is the wind throws embers into town and those dry fuels ignite." Show Low, population 7,700, was mostly empty, but some evacuees held on to their optimism. "I think most of our businesses and homes are going to be saved," said Show Low resident Mari Corella. "You have to think that way otherwise you'll be in trouble."

The fire has overrun parts of the evacuated towns of Linden, Pinedale, Clay Springs and Heber-Overgaard. The larger of the fires that came together Sunday was thought to have been started Tuesday by human action. Although authorities didn't know whether it was an accident or arson. The other was started Thursday by a lost hiker signaling for help. Some relief could come over the

next few days, said Tom Wordell, a fire analyst at the National Interagency Fire Center. "We're going to see very hot conditions, but the winds should taper down. It shouldn't have the potential to grow as large as fast," he said. Across the West, 19 large fires were burning on nearly 770,000 acres in seven states today, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

# Group looks for new ideas, gaining community support

**DEVELOPMENT, from Page 1**

seek donations to raise \$20,000, then hire a full-time economic development specialist and set up an office. The group may ask the new grant writer seek money from the state Department of Commerce and Housing to develop a \$250,000 revolving fund to recruit new business. Schyler Goodwin suggested the group should consider creating a venture capital and grant committee to work with the grant writer. He also suggested the group have a mentoring committee which could work with the multi-county enterprise facilitation consortium to help both new and existing businesses. Reid said the group has received two

## Restaurant owners see need for better communication

Terry Crowdy and Lisa Stummeier, owners of Second Chance restaurant, told members of the new Economic Development Committee last week that they are having to close their restaurant because of problems with their building. "We like Goodland," Stummeier said at a public meeting at the Elks Hall, "but we are having to shut

down because of building repair costs. "We are not here to ask for help, but to let this group know that these problems exist and hope you find a way to help people in the future." Garcia said he was sorry to see they were leaving, and wished there had been something that could be done. "This is a good example of where we need to find a way to help," he said. "Maybe we need to develop a com-

mittee to facilitate better communications between operators and landlords." Others present suggested the group's full-time development specialist could handle some of these situations, and possibly help find solutions which would keep the city from losing another business. One suggestion was to have a real estate committee which would go to

those who have empty buildings and get a set price for the property which would be good for up to a year to allow the full-time director to have basic costs for any new business looking for a place to open. Thinking about the Second Chance situation, one person said it was the type of thing where you need somebody to go into action, and hoped the new director could do it.

Street," West said. There was a discussion of having a county wide tax to pay for the program and City Commissioner Curtis Hurd spoke in favor of this idea. Reid said the board and steering committee felt it was better not to do a property tax levy at this time, however. Another suggestion was to have a countywide sales tax of one-quarter of 1 percent to pay for it. David Daniels, board vice chair, said it was a tremendous help to have the city developing a real economic incentive package, aimed at cutting the cost of starting up a business here. "This is really taking steps to attract business," he said. The group agree it should meet quarterly, with the next session with a director.

# HOLDERS OF PEANUT QUOTAS PLAN TO CHALLENGE NEW FARM BILL

ALBANY, Ga. (AP)—A lawyer for peanut farmers says he plans to fight the new federal farm bill in court, arguing that the government is not offering enough money to people whose income depends on quotas abolished by the bill. Members of the Peanut Quota Holders Association voted overwhelmingly earlier this month to support a class-action suit challenging provisions of the law, which abolished the quota system. Under the system, peanut farmers could purchase or rent licenses, known as quotas, that guaranteed them a minimum price for peanuts, with the license establishing the number of pounds of peanuts eligible for that price. Farmers who did not have quotas had to settle for far lower prices. William S. Stone, an attorney for the association, said the farm bill clearly

defines the peanut quotas as an asset, and the Constitution prohibits the government from taking assets without adequate compensation. "The question is, what's adequate?" he asked. "Can Congress take property for public purposes, set an arbitrary price and pay inadequate compensation?" The government is offering 70,000 quota holders a rate of 55 cents per pound over five years at a cost to taxpayers of about \$1.2 billion. Some quota holders value the asset at between 75 cents and \$1.10 per pound. "The courts will decide whether 55 cents is just and adequate compensation," Stone said. Signed into law by President Bush last month, the legislation abolishes a Depression-era quota system that maintained lofty prices for American peanuts, recently more than double the

world market rate. The quota system is being replaced by a base system similar to that for cotton and several other crops, in which federal support payments are calculated from a "base" amount of crop that farmers have typically produced. But many quota holders are widows and retired farmers who have rented their quota to younger growers. Such rentals have had the blessings of agricultural officials for years. The rental fees provided retirement income and cash for property taxes, but since the landowners didn't grow peanuts themselves, they won't qualify for a base. In many cases, the base will be assigned to the renters. Stone said he will meet with representatives of the association in a few days to finalize plans for the lawsuit. About 170 of the association's 600 members met at the Albany Civic Cen-

ter on June 11 and agreed to challenge the law. "My husband and I worked 57 years for that — not to have it taken away," said Bonnie Tabb, a widow who has a 1,650-acre farm near Newton. "We bought the land, cleaned it up and put in all those irrigation systems and wells. We stayed in debt all those years. I paid off the last irrigation system four years after my husband's death in 1990. Now, I'm faced with nothing." Under the old system, quota holders were guaranteed \$610 per ton for peanuts produced for domestic consumption. Some farmers did not have quotas. If they wanted to grow the premium priced nuts, they had to rent quotas. Without holding a quota, farmers could grow peanuts for export or oil at a guaranteed price of only \$132 per ton. Coffee County farmer Ronald

Merritt, 59, said he stopped growing peanuts four years ago because of a heart attack and could lose his quota because he rented his land. "It's going to be disastrous ... to all the landowners who pay taxes," he said. "They're not going to have any money to pay their taxes." **Organic is alternative for farmers** DES MOINES, Iowa (AP)—Farmers who want to avoid chipping in to programs that promote crops and meat have a way out: organic. The new farm bill exempts organic farmers from paying mandatory fees, or checkoffs, as long as they don't grow conventional commodities. The checkoff programs are known for having some of the best-known advertising slogans, such as "Got Milk?," and "Pork. The Other White Meat." The exemption is a victory for farmers, organic food trade officials say. "This is a major victory for organic



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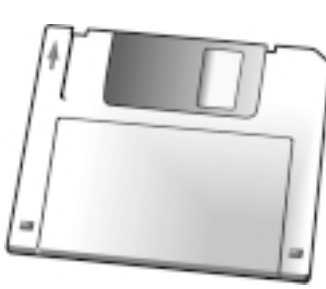
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