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To: [HWREC Exhibits](#)
Subject: My Fire Story
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Hello, thank you for your investigation into how the fire unrolled for people.

I was at Ace Hardware in Ashland on my way home to Talent from the farmer's market in Ashland when I saw smoke billowing around the dog park in Ashland. I let the folks in Ace know but there hadn't been any alert on my phone and they didn't know what was going on. I didn't have the Pulse Point app at that time. I work in Ashland but needed to take my dog home to Talent so I tried to get to Hwy 99 around 12:30 but so much traffic had built up on N Main, I knew I'd never make it. I waited for a while, long enough to see there was another fire in the fields off of N Main that looked under control with a helicopter dumping water onto it. I made it to Valley View and had a strong intuition to turn around back to Ashland and take my dog with me to work that day, so I did. Best move I made because if I had taken her home, she would've burned in the fire since there was no getting back to the house and my neighbor wasn't available.

At work, now 1:30, my client mentioned that the fire was heading toward Talent which left me incredulous because at 12:30, it was contained to the N. Main field. I tried calling my neighbor but couldn't get through to her. When my client left at 3:30, I tried my neighbor again and she answered but couldn't talk because they were getting ready to evacuate but were waiting for the sheriff's go-ahead. Still no alert. She was relying on the authorities who had just told them to stay put for the time being. I found out later that they left anyway because they could see the flames approaching. They were stuck in traffic and made it out at the last minute.

I avoided the evacuation mayhem but traded that for not being able to grab anything from my home. My neighbor was so panicked that I didn't even think to ask her to grab my fire box (which melted to high heaven in the fire.)

By that time, I was too nervous to work, so I canceled the rest of my day and spent the night at my office waiting to see if I would have a house in the morning. No official updates. I found out that my home was indeed gone from a facebook video a Talent resident had filmed at midnight showing my block in flames. I was on Talent Ave, near the ex-coffee shop. I rented my house from a landlord-friend whose house also burned. I was able to get FEMA assistance because I didn't have insurance, and luckily my friends organized a gofundme. I treated grant applications like a job and got at least partial grants for almost every one I applied for.

FEMA tracked my housing for a while but then stopped. I'm still in temp housing and can luckily stay here until I find the right spot, which may be a rebuilt rental at the address that burned. There aren't a lot of rental options available. The temp place where I am doesn't have a full kitchen, laundry, or closet, but I'm comfortable here because it's on beautiful property and gives me some stability which is helping me heal from the trauma. It's up and down. Right after the fire, there seemed to be a lot of mental health ops offered but most of us were too freaked about survival to take advantage. Now, at the 6 month mark would be a better time to have all those options. I have a regular counselor, but it's not enough and he's never experienced a loss like this so can't offer much assistance other than general compassion and support.

Compared to some, I feel I landed well, but my nervous system is still revved despite all my efforts to feel things and get calm. I still don't sleep well and only work part time. I made an effort to get the available financial support but there were grants that I missed out on because they weren't advertised well. It was haphazard and chaotic at the beginning. The biggest hole was that there was no warning about the fire. It was a wild and windy day that got away from everyone, but where was any emergency alert? If not for word of mouth or facebook, I wouldn't have known a thing.

The fire meals from Rogue Food Unites have been priceless - they help logistically and they boost morale. Since I'm in south Ashland right now, I drive to Talent almost every night and pick one up from The Grotto. The folks there couldn't be more kind and gracious. I hope that the city or state will consider extending the grants because this is not over, inside nor out, and we will be coping for a long time.

Not sure what other info would be helpful. Please contact me if you have specific questions.

Thank you and sincerely,
Eden

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