

**FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES** with wildland/urban interface areas, Bismarck City Forester Paul Blumhardt and Assistant Bismarck Fire Chief Kermit Schaefer offered these suggestions to be better prepared for wildfires:

- ✓ **Review past wildland fire incidents** from an operational standpoint. Were there issues with access, firefighter safety or inadequate equipment? Talk to the front-line firefighters (post-incident analysis) to get their perspective on what worked, what didn't and what would make a similar incident go better in the future.
- ✓ **Build a resource team** from among other city departments or agencies. Meet regularly to share issues, ideas and to establish working relationships before you need them. There's strength—and solutions—in numbers. If needed, tap into the expertise available from county, state and federal agencies.
- ✓ **Do a risk assessment.** Are there sizeable woodland or grassland areas in and around the city? (Wildfires aren't confined to

just mountainous forests.) If there were a fire in one of those areas, could it pose a problem to people and property? Include your city's worst-case wildfire scenarios in the assessment process. For cities without a local forester, tap into state and federal forestry agencies for advice on risks and solutions.

- ✓ **Be open to creative solutions.** Let the sky be the limit when you look at ways to solve the problem. Think beyond what you know and imagine what is possible.
- ✓ **Explore funding sources,** both from other government agencies and the private sector. Don't let a lack of money stand in the way of implementing a solution.
- ✓ **Communicate and educate.** Let others know what you're doing, why the project is needed and what they can do to be part of the solution. Target audiences should include internal staff, other city departments, local officials and the general public. Consider post-project updates to show how the solution is working or if more still needs to be done. ■

