

SAFETY SENSE

Preventing Wildfires

(NAPSA)—Americans are serious about snuffing out wildfires, as a growing number of people have learned to take fire prevention steps when they spend time outdoors.

Still, wildfires burned an average of 6.5 million acres in the U.S. annually over the last 10 years.

Research shows that many Americans believe that lightning starts most wildfires. In fact, more than 88 percent of wildfires nationwide are started by humans and the majority of these are accidental. The principal causes are campfires left unattended, trash burning on windy days, careless discarding of smoking materials and BBQ coals, and operating equipment without spark arrestors.

Fortunately, a new series of public service advertisements (PSAs) may help reverse some of these trends. Created by The Advertising Council, in partnership with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, they feature the iconic Smokey Bear and are designed to educate even more Americans about their role in wildfire prevention.

Reaching New Audiences

Since his introduction on August 9, 1944, Smokey Bear's message about wildfire prevention has helped to significantly reduce the number of acres burned annually.

The new round of PSAs continues to remind Americans about the importance of wildfire prevention, but, for the first time, the campaign includes a message urging young adults to practice fire safety habits and to step in when others act carelessly. It will be bolstered



Smokey Bear encourages young adults to practice fire safety habits and to step in when others act carelessly.

by a second series of wildfire-prevention PSAs that features characters from Walt Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* and is meant to reach parents and children.

Smart Tips

The PSAs direct audiences to the redesigned website, www.smokeybear.com, for information about wildfire prevention. The site encourages visitors to take the "Get Your Smokey On" pledge to practice fire safety and features tips, including:

- To put out a campfire, pour water on embers, stir ashes with a shovel and repeat until cool.
- Never use stoves, lanterns and heaters inside a tent.
- Never take burning sticks out of a fire.

A Familiar Face

According to a recent Ad Council survey, Smokey Bear and his famous words of wisdom—"Only You Can Prevent Wildfires"—are recalled by 3 out of 4 adults without prompting. In addition to the PSAs and website, Smokey Bear has his own ZIP code, school lesson plan and even U.S. postage stamp.

For more information, visit www.smokeybear.com.