

California adopts wildfire rules surrounding power lines

By Steve Timko, Reno Gazette-Journal

California adopted new rules Thursday aimed at preventing wildfires sparked by power lines.

In light of the Caughlin Fire blaze that destroyed 30 homes and forced 10,000 people to evacuate, Assemblyman Pat Hickey said laws like those adopted by the California Public Utilities Commission might have merit in Nevada.

“It will be worthwhile for Nevada lawmakers to look at what and why the California PUC came up with regarding new precautions to protect us from wildfires,” said Hickey, whose assembly district includes many of the homes destroyed or threatened by the Nov. 18 fire.

The Reno Fire Department is continuing its investigation into what caused the Caughlin Fire, city spokeswoman Michele Anderson said Thursday. Initial indications are that winds faster than 70 mph whipped power lines in the Caughlin Ranch area and sparked a fire. The fire department has not reached a conclusion yet.

A series of fires in 2007 that destroyed more than 1,500 homes and killed 17 people prompted the California changes. The PUC believes wind-blown power lines caused many of the fires.

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