## Promote biomass program to

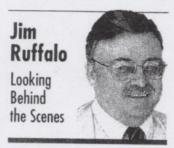
## reduce wildfire fuel

Lighting the fuse on the notebook while thanking all of those troops — past and present — who made this day possible. ...

Another set of heartfelt thanks goes out to the fire-fighters, most of whom have already spent more time than they should have in battling mostly man-made blazes throughout the foothills. Foremost among those fires was the Angora blaze that will be polluting Lake Tahoe for years.

Funny thing is, that fire may have been touched off by an idiot who unthinkingly started a campfire in that area, then compounded his stupidity by leaving it unattended. But add to that clown's sins, those collectively gathered by the stupidos who decided that pine needles and other forest-floor debris were a necessary - and legally protected - part of the landscape and couldn't be eradicated without special dispensation from envioros who really should have known bet-

Makes one wonder just how many more homes need



to be reduced to cinders before the biomass program becomes a reality.

For the uninitiated, contact Rocklin City Councilman Brett Storey, who also doubles as the county's honcho for the Wildfire Protection/Biomass Program.

A few weeks ago, Storey and 5th District Supervisor Bruce Kranz visited the Meddlers and — as tactfully as possible — described the bureaucratic bungling and governmental jigsaw puzzle they experienced in trying to get a biomass program up and running.

To put it simply, biomass seeks to reduce the lower rungs of the insidious fuel ladders that not only keep wild lands fires going, but actually increase the chances of experiencing such conflagrations at a nearly regular rate.

And as an added bonus with biomass, those fuels are then utilized to produce power.

My description obviously is much more simplistic than the presentation Storey makes to various service clubs and the like, but the concept is correct.

Kranz and Storey have spent more than a year officially — and much longer than that in unofficial capacities — trying to make our movers and shakers understand the idea. However, there are still those in power in the foothills who equate anything that improves forest health and fire safety with some sort of invitation for growth.

Even if that canard was true, it should be meaningless. On the other hand, there's no doubt in this humble scribe's mind that just as soon as a couple of firefighters get killed in a foothills wild lands blaze, those elected and appointed leaders will waste absolutely no time in running to the front of the biomass parade in order to provide an

image of leadership. ...

Add Kranz: Speaking of Kranz, as we just were, he raised some interesting points in a recent interview he had with the Journal's Gus Thomson. The supe told Gus of the trials and tribulations he plans on going through in finding a replacement for the sacked Planning Commissioner Michelle Ollar-Burris.

Kranz expanded those points after a recent Board of Supervisors meeting, saying that he'll not accept any applications from current real estate brokers, developers or title company folks. And, yes, he's fully aware of the downside of that fiat.

"One problem is that landuse matters have become increasingly sophisticated, what with policies, rules and regulations being added or changed regularly," he said, adding that in order to get somebody with some necessary expertise to match the need to keep pace, the tendency in the past was to get people who worked with developers, in real estate or with title

companies to become commissioners.

"But in light of recent developments, it just doesn't look right to keep doing it that way," he said.

Kranz said he's already received applications from "highly-qualified" people in those areas, but will not consider them.

However, he will consider "people with municipal advisory commission backgrounds, or from chambers of commerce, and will also look at people retired from the real estate or title company world, although in no way will I consider an application from somebody who has current business in front of the Planning Commission." ...

School daze: If the Auburn School District is serious about closing down a school because of shrinking enrollment numbers, why not forget about targeting Rock Creek or any of the other elementary sites?

Instead, take that dramatic and farsighted approach and shut down E.V. Cain.

Granted it's the only middle school in the village, but it's also on some land that could be sold for enough bucks to only keep the district's budget in the black for years, while also providing the needed wherewithal to construct satellite middle school sites on all of the elementary campuses.

And with Internet schooling just a click away, there's no need to have those seventh- and eighth-graders on campus each and every day. Instead, put together a program that requires them to be in a brick-and-mortar building about once a week, perhaps 20 percent of them per school day.

That way you would require fewer teachers (which means the unions are already at work shooting down this idea), the kids would be better educated and we'd have four-fifths of our parents not having to be on the road daily burning precious and increasingly expensive gasoline.

Think about it!