Supes look at wildfire protection

By Gus Thomson Journal Staff Writer

Meeting today in Kings Beach, Placer County supervisors will be tackling several fire-related initiatives for a county where nearly half of its near-million acres of land is forested.

The Board of Supervisors will be considering a five-year wildfire protection and biomass utilization strategy that could result in turning inflammable forest waste into a fuel source.

Brett Storey, senior management analyst, said goals of the program include reducing

catastrophic wildfires in t h e county while finding beneficial uses for excess brush

Placer County Board of Supervisors

When: 9 a.m. today Where: North Tahoe Conference Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach

and trees and improving air

"Establishment of one or more economically sustainable facilities that convert biomass into power, fuel or another valued commodity appears to be the county's best option for managing excess biomass and reducing the severity of wildfires," Storey said.

The board will also be asked to provide \$410,000 from its share of federal timber-tax funds for wildfire protection and biomass utilization activities. A total of \$125,000 is earmarked for the county's brush and wood chipping program while another \$75,000 is for a fire mitigation-biomass coordinator.

Over the past nine years, the chipper program has responded to more than 10,000 requests from residents for the free service and processed more than 25,000 tons of material

At the same time, Placer County will be working with private business and the California Forestry Association to promote removal of biomass from the central Sierra's national forests for energy generation.

Starting with as much as \$1 million from Sierra Pacific Industries, the effort would be in conjunction with the county's work.

"Harvesting this material and using it for energy production rather than having it burn in the open by intentional or unintentional ignition significantly lessens air pollution impacts and yields a number of other overall environmental and public benefits," said Thomas Christofk, county Air Pollution Control District offi-

The group, which also includes the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the U.S. Forest Service and state Sen. Dave Cox's office, has already met and has scheduled additional meetings.

The Journal's Gus Thomson can be reached at gust@goldcountrymedia.com, or post a comment auburnjournal.com.

Supervisors need to make decision on school, sewer

Time is past due for the city of Auburn to face up and disclose to the public their intentions. The latest issue Auburn Union School District should ask is whether to close Rock Creek School or Alta Vista. This needs careful consideration.

Rock Creek School is directly under the Auburn Airport flight path, also is located very close to dangerous Highway 49.

Alta Vista, on the other hand, is not near airports or dangerous highways. In fact it is located in an old, quiet neighborhood.

Recently the Placer County supervisors approved 5 to 0, "including our trusted supervisor," a school in the airport's flight path.

Placer County's land-use record deserves an "F" grade. Some time back they approved a hospital directly at the end of Runway 25. What were they thinking?

Other issues need to surface such as the uncalled for, extremely high sewer assessments tax. Also, look around you, Rocklin, Roseville, Lincoln, Folsom, Placer County have, unlike Auburn, which has concentrated on many houses and office buildings, they have produced shopping centers and commercial industry.

These commercial endeavors have provided their people convenient shopping and greatly expanded their general fund. More money enables better benefits for the city employees and far less burden on the backs of the people. With a larger general fund, the administration would not have to tax the people unfairly.

In regards to the regional sewer plant in Lincoln, Placer County and Lincoln would benefit, not Auburn. Our present interim public works director retired from Placer County as their public works director. He was in favor of the regional plant.

Question: Why has Auburn not got

on the ball?

O.C. Taylor Auburn