

[Help during the rebuilding process](#)

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Grass is beginning to grow on the vacant sites where homes once stood four months after the fatal San Bruno explosion and fire, leading residents to consider restarting their lives but some may have questions about the details of construction.

The Sept. 9 blast completely killed eight people, destroyed 38 homes and created a large swath of damage to the Glenview neighborhood. Rebuilding, repairing or buying a new home is on the mind of many affected which brings up lots of questions. Insurance issues arise as do inquiries about finding the right contractor or inventorying what was lost. On Sunday, United Policyholders and Rebuilding Together Peninsula are joining together for “Dollars and Sense: Home Repairs, Insurance, Rebuilding and Recovery,” a workshop that aims to help answer those questions.

“Now that the holidays are over, residents are focusing on getting out of their temporary living quarters and back home. Insurance negotiations and contractor challenges are at the top of their 2011 ‘to do’ lists,” said Amy Bach, executive director of insurance consumer advocacy group United Policyholders.

Cari Pang Chen, program director for Rebuilding Together Peninsula, agreed. “We’re here to support them during construction, not manage it. We want people to have a good base of information about what to expect in the process,” Chen said.

The free four-hour workshop is broken into four one-hour conversations. At 1 p.m., experts will offer tips on listing personal property for insurance recovery. At 2 p.m., construction professionals will go over repair and rebuilding information. At 3 p.m., the

conversation will turn to resolving disputes over repair methods or costs. Lastly, the 4 o'clock hour will focus on the insurance, tax and real estate considerations when deciding between rebuilding or buying something new.

United Policyholders, a national nonprofit that works with disaster victims during recovery, and Rebuilding Together Peninsula, a Redwood City nonprofit that partners with businesses to rehabilitate community organization facilities or the homes of those in need, joined forces to bring in professionals with whom they've vetted to answer questions and offer advice.

Bach encouraged individuals to bring any documents that relate to an obstacle to Sunday's event. Having the document will help professionals advise those affected on how to proceed.

"We're a conduit of information," said Bach, noting the event will feature contractors, professional claim adjusters, Pacific Gas and Electric representatives and Realtors on hand to work with people and answer questions.

"There is such a range of damages. We're trying to offer a menu of help options," said Bach.

Many of the vendors on hand are ones with whom Rebuilding Together Peninsula has previously worked, said Chen.

Since the damages are so different, issues vary for each individual, said Chen, who added a woman she recently spoke with simply needed a landscape contractor. It wasn't that simple, however. With insurance involved, there needs to be someone who can work with property owners to learn what was there, maybe by looking at old photos.

"The first step is helping [those affected] tell their story about what they lost," said Chen.

The free workshop was funded through a grant from the Silicon Valley Foundation San Bruno Fire Fund, which collected over \$529,000 in donations since the Sept. 9 incident.

The "Dollars and Sense: Home Repairs, Insurance, Rebuilding and Recovery" workshops will be held from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 9 at Skyline College student activities center, 3300 College Drive, Building 6, San Bruno. The event is free. For more information contact Lily Abt,



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