

## **Survivors of different California wildfires give advice**

Chico Enterprise-Record

CHICO — People who lost their homes in wildfires drove several hours from Santa Rosa and Redwood Valley to share their lessons about dealing with insurance with Camp Fire survivors on Thursday night. The event was part of an ongoing series of in-person and online workshops put on by United Policyholders, a nonprofit advocacy and educational group for victims of wildfires with insurance claims first formed in 1991. The group has been providing resources to Camp Fire survivors since the fire.

"We've been doing this program for more than 27 years, and it takes different shapes depending on our resources, but for the Camp Fire, we're hopeful we're going to see this one all the way through," said Amy Bach, the executive director of United Policyholders.

Mike Musson, an accountant who lost his home and his mother's home in the October 2017 fires in Santa Rosa, made the trip to speak to Camp Fire survivors because he knows it feels better to hear hard lessons from people who've experienced similar devastation than from outsiders.

He finalized his mom's claim last week, nearly 20 months after starting the process. His might come this week. He said the key for him was having a good adjuster.

"It's a business thing, at the end of the day," he said. "You can't act like a victim."

Richard Lane, from Santa Rosa, recommended attending community meetings and staying in touch with neighbors. He pointed survivors to Neighbors Together, Strong & Resilient, a website with resources for those who want to set up a listserv or group to compare notes with other survivors with claims with the same insurance companies.

United Policyholders offers more survivors tips and sample letters online. Survivors can also tune in to regular webinars with staff member Sandy Watts. The next one is on July 23 at 6 p.m. and people can register online.

The next in-person workshop will likely be in September.