

FIRESERVICE

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And they work with your insurance company as well, Frith said—although he adds that Fireservice endorses few insurance companies. Most of them (though not all of them), he said, just try to get your disaster fixed the cheapest way they can.

“We live here,” Frith said. “We go to church here. We’ve been here in business thirty years and we’ll take care of you. We don’t hang people out to dry. We care about our reputation.”

“In insurance, you really get what you pay for,” he added.

In the big warehouse Fireservice has in back, everything needed to handle a messy disaster is ready. Rows of fans

and dehumidifiers wait to be taken to the scene of, say, a washing machine that flooded a house.

“Change your washer hoses!” Frith insists. “Go to Home Depot and spend 15 dollars on the braided washer hoses.”

In one corner of the warehouse, boxes filled with biohazardous waste from a recent cleanup, are stacked. Frith walked up to them, checking out a red bag that sat on top.

“Oh, that’s a rug with blood on it,” he said. “We have to cut everything out that has blood on it.”

Frith said the company handles 3 to 4 death claims every month, and come “season,” when the “snowbirds” arrive, that number goes up to 7 or 8.

“People come to Florida to do a couple of things,” he joked—sort of. “Fish, golf, and die...You know how many (recliners) I’ve had to haul away? People die in their (recliners) all the time.”

Frith said there are always 2 guys on

call at night, and when people call in with an emergency, they will always talk to a live employee.

“We pride ourselves on getting there quickly,” he stressed. “There’s a fine line between being a hero and a zero, and you have only one chance to be the hero.”

Here are some tips Frith shared, to keep your home free of some of the damage Fireservice cleans up:

- Have someone check your home at least a few times a week if you go on vacation or head North for the summers.

- Don’t let water sit on the floor in your home. “You need to dry it,” he said. “The longer it sits the worse it gets.”

- Know where to go to shut off the water in your house. “It’s usually a valve outside, where the meter is read,” Frith said. “Newer houses also have a shut off valve off to the side of the house.”

- Keep all important papers in a fire

proof, water proof safe. Frith recommends the ones at Wal-Mart, which cost about \$50 dollars. “Floor safes are not waterproof!” he said.

- A statistic: The average person forgets 20 percent of their belongings after a fire. “So know what you own,” Frith said. “Take a video camera, walk around your house, and video tape your belongings. If you can’t prove to the insurance companies that you own it, and if you can’t document it, they won’t pay for it.”

- Know who you’re insured by (you’d be surprised how many don’t, Frith said) and know who you would call for help in a disaster, beforehand. Keep that information handy, in your purse, or on a magnet on the refrigerator.

“A little common sense goes a long way,” Frith said.

And if you still need Fireservice they can be reached at: 936-1033. ■



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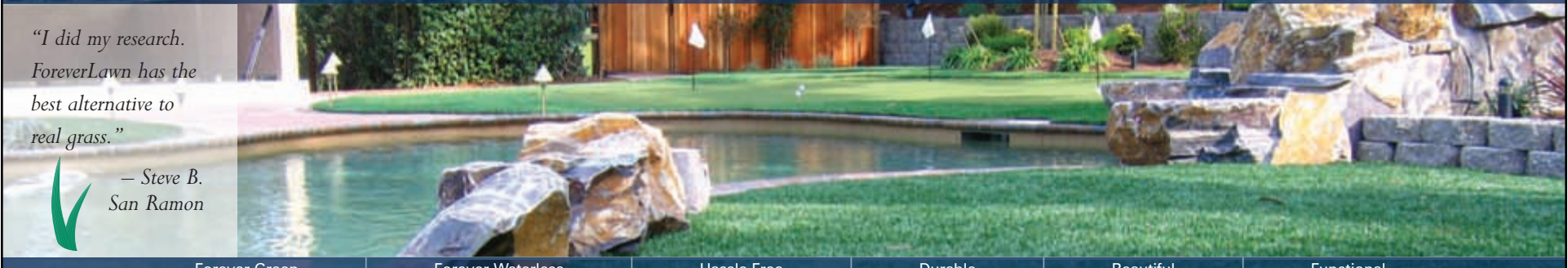
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