In early October, a series of massive wildfires struck a half-dozen Northern California counties, burning more than 200,000 acres and creating devastating urban firestorms in several communities that forced some 90,000 residents to evacuate and ultimately destroyed 5,000 homes and nearly 1,000 businesses.

Since then, economic and social recovery from this disaster has been front-and-center for the region’s public servants, businesses and residents in one of the most naturally beautiful spots in the world. This special session will provide an overview of recovery efforts in the City of Santa Rosa and Sonoma County, and offer perspectives on the region’s future, especially the creation of new housing.

Santa Rosa Mayor Chris Coursey and Tennis “JT” Wick, Sonoma County’s Permit and Resource Management Director, will describe post-fire activities and how those responses fit within the broader pre-fire, housing-affordability crisis in the area. Laurie Johnson, Principal of Laurie Johnson Consulting and an international expert on disaster reconstruction and the economics of catastrophes, will provide additional context to these disaster-recovery efforts by looking at the massive loss of housing stock that occurred after other major disasters.