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April 17, 2018

Assignment: Rhetorical Appeals



This advert was found in the window of the North Fork information center. It is applicable to locals but even more to visitors to the area that are not use to the summer dry season and the ease with which fires start that time of year. It is applicable to any vehicle operator, and anyone towing a trailer. Persons who this would be most relevant to include tourists with vacation trailers or contractors towing work equipment. Thus it would be relevant to both working class people and those wealthy enough to take extended holidays or to tow around toys. As for objects dragging under poorly maintained cars or tires running flat, that could affect even the poorest.

The add appeals to emotion (pathos) by saying that “only you can prevent wildfires”. It appeals to your personal responsibility and custodianship of nature. Further it appeals to the emotion of loss that you might cause others or endanger their lives and property. Would you want to be responsible for that?

It appeals to logic (logos) in describing the three ways that automobiles often start wildfires. Sparks from chains, sparks from dragging bodywork or rims from flat tires contacting the road. It makes a logical link between the motorists, trailers, cars, and wildfires. At the same time it refers to the owners responsibility to check tire pressure, check chains, maintain vehicles, and not tow with equipment not intended for that purpose. It has the logical catch phrase “One less spark, one less fire.”. This link seems very logical.

The ethos of the avert comes from the endorsement by the forest service and the familiar character of Smokey the Bear who has become a national symbol for fire safety. Such endorsements give legitimacy and credibility to prevention campaigns. The clean simple design of the poster helps lend credibility.

Lastly looking at the timing of the advert (Kairos), even though the advert shows sun fading from many seasons it remains relevant to the upcoming summer. Last year saw some of the most devastating fires in Californian history making the mission of spreading awareness on the mechanisms by which wildfires start even more critical than ever. Despite all the campaigns and the actions of highway patrol pulling over vehicles that are posing a risk there are still many incidents of persons being unaware of the severe consequences of dragging a part of their vehicle or safety chains. Fires are still started every season by this.

For my own advert I would like to focus on the dangers of driving under the influence. There are three main substances that contribute most to this problem in California. The first being Alcohol, second prescription and legal drugs, and thirdly the new challenge of Legal recreational marijuana. I would appeal to the emotional aspects of endangering the lives of yourself, passengers and other road users. Focusing also on the emotion associated with the loss of life. I will appeal to the logic that it is hard to achieve even the simplest tasks under the influence never even mind operating a motor vehicle. By referring to studies and road accident studies I would give credibility to my advert.