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NOVEMBER 2024 • VOL. 17 - NO. 10 - USPS NO. 024-718

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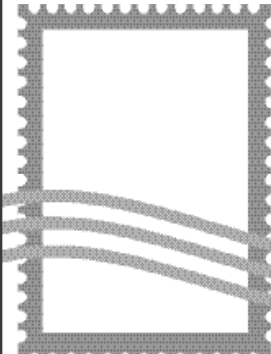




High winds keep Beresford busy

The high winds on Monday, September 30, kept the Beresford Fire Department busy. The wind may have rekindled a couple of fires from the week before. They assisted Alcester Fire with a bale fire in the morning. They responded to a semi-truck loaded with corn that rolled over around 2 p.m. and were called to an outbuilding fire around 5 p.m. later that day. Submitted by Chief Tarz Mullinix.





FOR YOUR NEWSPAPER LABEL

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 1017 S. Cleveland Ave,
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- Purchase up to \$250,000 additional AD&D
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If you haven't paid your dues, it's not too late!

Worthing FD Adds New Tools

The Worthing Community Fire Department was awarded a grant from the Lennox Community Fund to purchase two electric vehicle plugs earlier this fall. These tools are essential with the rise in popularity of electric vehicles and Worthing FD's large coverage of South Dakota Interstate 29.

Electric vehicle plugs are used to disable the car from movement by plugging into the charging port as electric vehicles can't move when they are being charged. In this case, the EV will "think" it is being charged, therefore disabling movement.

Worthing FD's addition of these two EV Plugs will allow them to disable EVs from moving when they are involved in car accidents. This safety measure will not only help protect patients but also first

responders on the scene such as law enforcement, ambulance staff and firefighters.

This summer, two firefighters, Justin Appel (Fire Chief) and Abby Jensen attended a course offered at SD State Fire School to learn best firefighting tactics when EVs are involved in accidents. After attending the course, they agreed EV plugs were a pertinent safety measure WCFD needed.

"It is a tool we hope to never have to use...but with the growing presence of EVs on the interstate it is only a matter of time," stated WCFD Chief Justin Appel at a fire meeting. The Worthing Community Fire Department is very grateful to be awarded the grant funding to make this purchase possible from the Lennox Community Fund.



Worthing firefighters pictured from left to right in the front row: Chief Justin Appel, Nick Abbas, Andy Hinrickson and Amy Fischer. Back row: Tiffani Fogelman, Nick Weisenbach, Jeremy Jacobson, Abby Jensen and Jake Gundvaldson.



Two Electric Vehicle (EV) Plugs funded via a grant from the Lennox Community Fund to the Worthing Community Fire Department.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Email your Upcoming Event by the 10th of the previous month (ex. Aug. 10 for the September issue) to jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com. There is no charge.

- Nov. 16-17, 2024: Five Alarm Leadership Conference, fireground in Vermillion.
- Dec. 6-8, 2024: South Dakota Fire Chiefs Annual Leadership Conference, Deadwood.
- Jan. 10-12, 2025: Rushmore Fire Conference, Box Elder.
- Feb. 7-9, 2025: Les Lukert Conference, Kearney, NE.
- June 12-14, 2025: South Dakota State Fire School, Watertown.
- Sept. 21-25, 2025: NVFC Fall Board meeting, Rapid City.

SOUTH DAKOTA WILDLAND FIRE

Where to find us online

We are often asked where to find South Dakota Wildland Fire posts and pictures online. We appreciate the interest and offer the links below. Thank you for your support.

South Dakota Wildland Fire (SDWF)

- SDWF Website: <https://wildlandfire.sd.gov/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/southdakotawildlandfire/>
- SDWF X (formerly Twitter): <https://twitter.com/SDWildlandFire>
- SDWF YouTube: www.youtube.com/@southdakotawildlandfire

SDWF on Department of Public Safety

- DPS Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SDPublicSafety>
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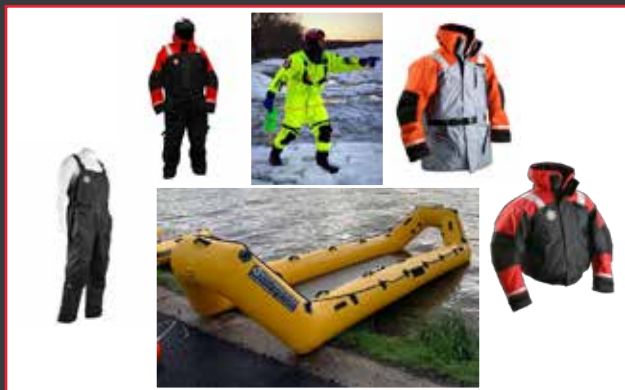
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SDFA OFFICER REPORTS

I wonder, when we were piking up customs and habits from other cultures why we did not pursue the idea of a siesta? Think about this, during the hottest part of the day, you take time off for a nice meal and little snooze and then return to work. In those Latin countries and some Southern European nations, this is the model of the day. Then you return at the end of the day to a nice leisurely meal, nothing hurriedly gulped down. There is an element of pacing to the day. Then there is the firefighter culture, and the motto: "I'll sleep when I'm dead." This is not just the professional firefighter culture; it extends to the volunteer side. We answer call in the middle of the night, return in the wee hours

of the morning, then jump out of bed when the alarm goes off to rush to work for our normal shift. Then rush home for a quick bit to eat because we have to go to a school function, church meeting or maybe even training! Then we fall into bed exhausted with a promise I will catch up on sleep on the weekend. Now I hate to be the bearer of bad news once again, but the culture of "I'll sleep when I am dead" could mean you will die before your time! (If you wish you can try and cancel my subscriptions to publications like Fire Engineering, but it won't change the realities that are out there.) The reality is that sleep deprivation is adding to the suicide rate among first responders! (Now, aren't

you glad you opened up this month's newspaper?)

What is going on here? Jacqueline Toomey, who with her firefighter husband, Sean co-created the First Responder Sleep Recovery Program, decided to pass along her insights into what is taking place and why they developed this program in the first place. The Toomey's did not pursue this out of academic interest (although Jacqueline is immimently qualified to pursue this); they started learning about sleep deprivation following the death of one of Sean's fellow firefighters, due to suicide! It was in light of this loss that she makes this statement: "The burgeoning discussion within the fire service regarding mental health and wellness needs to stop making claims about causes behind mental health problems and wake up to the dark, concrete truth beneath it: sleep loss is taking firefighter lives." (Toomey, Fire Engineering). Talk about hitting us in the head with a baseball bat! Jacqueline and Sean are not going to sit idly by and watch other firefighters die by suicide if they can do anything about it, and neither should we! It is time to literally wake up and listen to what is being said.

Sadly, suicide as a line of duty death is not recognized, as line of duty death. No one wants to talk about losing a friend, co-worker to suicide, it often seen as less than manly, we say, they just couldn't take the stress, and other self-serving comments. Not to mourn our friend's death, but to protect ourselves from the reality that this could be us! The time has come to deal with a new reality. That reality is that research is showing that for at least some, it is not about mental or physical weakness, rather it is a complex physiological process resulting from the impact of chronic sleep disruption over a career. Stop for a minute, as I am regularly asked why do people suicide?

I have my stock answers about mental illness and depression, and that gets me by. However, now that dig a little deeper, I begin to wonder about other physical losses, or impacts that could have led to a suicide! Toomey doesn't just wave the "it has been researched", she tells us who did the work. "Researchers from the Stanford University School of Medicine published a 10-year study that found a relationship between suicide in adults and sleep disruption. Of 420 participants, 20 individuals with chronic sleep disturbances committed suicide during the study." (I am sure Google will help you find this published study.) If this was a general population study, can you imagine if this was professional or even volunteer firefighters. You see, as a professional firefighter, there are days when you are not on call, while those of us on the volunteer side, when are we not on call?

What is going on here? Toomey lists three major reasons that sleep deprivation leads to increased risk of suicide. Looking at my paper, I am thinking this is going to be a two-part article, as



Rodney Veldhuizen, Chaplain

"...we fall into bed exhausted with a promise I will catch up on sleep on the weekend. Now I hate to be the bearer of bad news once again, but the culture of "I'll sleep when I am dead" could mean you will die before your time! ...The reality is that sleep deprivation is adding to the suicide rate among first responders!"

this is too important to risk giving you the wrong impression, so be sure and come back for part two!

First of all, you have probably heard of "brain" chemical called Serotonin. (This is the good brain chemical.) When people are depressed, we use medications that either increase your Serotonin or slow the absorption of Serotonin. (To be honest I thought this was produced in our brains, as this is where that chemical works its magic.) The reality is that serotonin is produced in our guts! You know, the stomach, small intestine and large intestine. Those organs we pay little attention too unless we eat food that is too spicy, or the flu keep us close to the porcelain.

Then there is another connection we need to pay attention to, and that is the brain-gut connection. You might be saying, hold on, what do you mean by that. I have taught a process called Heart Math for several years, and the principle behind that is that our hearts and our brains are more connected than we think. This process is based on the premise that our heart has a "brain" and the heart-brain connection controls a lot of our emotional responses. The tool I teach helps you get your heart back in sync with your brain to help you think more logically. When I read Toomey saying that serotonin is produced in the gut, it began to make a lot of sense to me. (By now you are wondering if I have really lost my mind...) However, this is where the sleep issue comes in.

Once again back to the research, "Researchers at the Department of Molecular Neurobiology at the University of Groningen, Netherlands, found that chronic sleep restriction leads to a gradual and persistent desensitization of serotonin receptors, lowering its ability to boost our mood, resulting in depression." (Toomey). If that were not enough bad news, this neurotransmitter is 80-90 percent produced the gastrointestinal tract and when the body experiences the stress of sleep disruption, the sympathetic (nervous system, the normal way we process life) response halts activity in the gut, impairing the production of this chemical that makes

us feel positive. Extremely low levels of serotonin are found in the brains and cerebral spinal fluid in the bodies of people who have committed suicide. A little side note, it is during sleep that the para-sympathetic nervous system, (the system that controls our breathing, heart rate, digestion, all those things we never think about), is what produces the serotonin and its accompanying neurotransmitters.

But like that late night commercial there is more! While we should have learned about serotonin, there is another brain chemical that we need to function, and it is called dopamine. Dopamine, is a brain chemical that influences how we experience pleasure and pain. "But dopamine is only functional if it has substantive receptor sites. Research suggests that lack of sleep may reduce the number of dopamine receptors.

According to the Journal of Neuroscience, this chemical effect explains changes in behavior that occur alongside sleep deprivation. These changes include increases in risk-taking behavior, irrational thoughts, impulsive choices, and drug relapse. This type of behavior increases in relation to how sleep deprived an individual is, giving us a glimpse into why people may complete the act of suicide.

When dopamine levels are low, one may experience complete lack of motivation, apathy, debilitating fatigue, foggy brain, addictive behavior, shifty moods, and memory impairment. Dopamine function plays an important role in how you feel, levels of motivation, and how interpersonal relationships play out. (Toomey.)

If that is not enough to make you grab a pillow and head for some shut-eye, then maybe you have not paid attention. The reality is, this is just one third of the problems we encounter with a lack of sleep or sleep deprivation.

Enough for this month. I don't know about you, but it is "siesta time", so you will have to come back next month for the wrap up and what to do about this problem.

CHAPLAIN RODNEY V.

DEPARTED FIREFIGHTERS

U.S. Fire Administration Firefighter Fatality Notification

The following are U.S. Fire Administration Firefighter Fatality Notifications of firefighters who have died from across the United States. The South Dakota Fire Service extends its thoughts to the family and friends of these firefighters.

- **KYLE BRINKER**, 33, Kansas City, MO, died Sept. 17, 2024. Kyle was a career firefighter/paramedic with the Kansas City Fire Department and had attained 11 years of service. On Tuesday, Sept. 17, 2024, Firefighter/Paramedic Kyle Brinker suffered a medical emergency during a fire department training exercise. He was immediately transported to the North Kansas City Hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.

- **TIMOTHY HALL**, 59, West Sacramento, CA, died Sept. 23, 2024. Timothy was a career firefighter with 18 years of service with the West Sacramento Fire Department and currently a fire engineer. On Monday, Sept. 23, 2024, Fire Engineer Timothy Hall suffered a medical emergency during a fire department training exercise. He was immediately transported to the hospital where he was pronounced deceased. Fire Engineer Hall was also a volunteer member of the Clarksburg Fire Protection District.

- **LEON DAVIS**, 69, Blackshear, GA, died Sept. 27, 2024. Leon was a part-time (paid) firefighter with 32 years of service and the current assistant chief with the Blackshear Fire Department. On Friday, Sept. 27, 2024, Assistant Chief Leon Davis responded to the scene of a downed powerline that was on fire. When he was leaving the incident a tree fell on the cab of his fire department pickup truck, killing him instantly.

- **CALE BODIE**, 18, Saluda, SC, died Sept. 27, 2024. Cale was a probationary volunteer firefighter with less than one year of service with the Saluda County Fire Service. On Friday, Sept. 27, 2024, Chief Chad Satcher and Probationary Firefighter Cale Bodie were responding to a structure fire during Hurricane Helene when a tree fell on the cab of their fire apparatus. Both were pronounced deceased at the scene.

- **CHAD SATCHER**, 53, Saluda, SC, died Sept. 27, 2024. Chad was a volunteer firefighter with 35 years of service with the Saluda County Fire Service and the current fire chief. On Friday, Sept. 27, 2024, Chief Chad Satcher and Probationary Firefighter Cale Bodie were responding to a structure fire during Hurricane Helene when a tree fell on the cab of their fire apparatus. Both were pronounced deceased at the scene.

- **JASON GOULD**, 46, Brockton, MA, died Sept. 8, 2024. Jason was a career firefighter with 12 years of service with the Brockton Fire Department. On Sunday, June 19, 2016, Firefighter Jason Gould was rescuing a woman from an apartment fire when his mask was knocked off. When his mask became dislodged, he took in a large amount of smoke and suffered lung damage. After his retirement in 2023, Firefighter Gould received two lung transplants. On Sunday, Sept. 8, 2024, he passed away due to complications from another lung procedure, directly related to the incident that occurred in June of 2016.



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A classified ad in the South Dakota Firefighter!

Email jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com to get your truck moving fast!

DEPARTED FIREFIGHTERS

Merlyn Dean Melcher 1936 - 2024

Merlyn Dean Melcher, youngest child of Gladys (Barkhuff) and Arthur Melcher, was born Jan. 23, 1936 at Gary, SD. He was brought up at Porter, MN and received his formal education at Canby, MN, graduating with the CHS Class of 1954. He then worked in a service station and a grain elevator. Merlyn married Lucille Lozinski on Dec. 13, 1958 at Canby. In 1959, they relocated to Brandon, MN where he continued in the grain elevator business. In July 1963, Merlyn began a 34-year span of managing elevators, first at the Raymond Co-op elevator in Raymond, SD. In March 1965, he, Lucille, and their three children moved to Java, SD. This is where Merlyn lived the rest of his life.

Merlyn retired from management in 1997. Grain Elevator management became the family business as his son, Mark, managed the elevator in Java, then McLaughlin, and currently Pollock and Merlyn helped him seasonally for several years. Merlyn was a member of St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Selby where he served many years on the council and was a Eucharistic Minister.



He was a lifetime Moose Lodge member and was active in the Java community, having been a volunteer fireman for 27 years, was a town board member, and helped with maintenance such as snow removal and garbage pick-up. A favorite pastime of Merlyn's was tinkering on cars. He especially cherished time he spent with his grandchildren.

Merlyn died Monday morning, Oct. 7, 2024 at St. Alexius Medical Center in Bismarck, ND, having attained the age of 88 years, eight months, and 15 days. Funeral services were held Monday, Oct. 14, 2024 at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Selby, SD.

Merlyn is survived by Lucille, his wife of 65 years; one son, Mark (Cindy) Melcher of Pollock; two daughters - Lore Ann (Pat) Wolff of Rapid City and Susan Marie (Dean) Dills of Andover, MN; eight grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his father, Arthur, on April 18, 1950; his mother, Gladys, on Oct. 25, 1969; twin infant sons; five brothers; two sisters; and several brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

Ronald "Ronnie" Dean Racicky 1947 - 2024

Final Alarm

Chief Ronald "Ronnie" Dean Racicky (ret'd) 3/3/1947—9/30/2024
New Underwood Volunteer Fire Department

Retired New Underwood Chief Ronald "Ronnie" Racicky, of the New Underwood Volunteer Fire Department answered his final alarm on Monday, Sept. 30, 2024.

Chief Ronald "Ronnie" Dean Racicky (ret'd), was born on March 3, 1947 to Edward "Whitey" and Marcil "Tootie" Racicky in Central City, NE. In Ronnie's early years, Whitey's construction job led the family to New Underwood. When the job called for another move, Ronnie at the age of 12 and with approval from his family decided to remain here with Gene and Zella Swanson. In high school Ronnie was a member of the New Underwood basketball and football teams. He also rodeoed, riding bare backs and bulls and was a steer wrestling state high school national qualifier.

After graduating high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and volunteered for submarine duty from 1968-1970 aboard "The Benjamin Franklin" where Ronnie's nickname was "The Bull".

He would be under 3 months and above for 3 months patrolling between Pearl Harbor and Guam. He was very proud of being a part of the silent service as his tattoo read "Run Silent Run Deep". After his service he had a combine and did custom work.

In 1972 he started Racicky Plumbing and Ditching. In 1990, Ronnie and Joan bought the historic lumber yard from Earl Burnham, operating it for

ten years. Ronnie's hands reflected the hard work over the years. After 50 years, he proudly watched his grandson Jesse continue with the Racicky Ditching business.

During his time in New Underwood, he met the love of his life Joan Tines Reichert and they spent 40 years of their lives together. Ronnie welcomed Joan's children DeLynn and Monte with open arms. From this, a beautiful family was created with grandkids and great grandkids. Ronnie was one of the hardest working men but never missed an opportunity to spend time with his family.

Community was a big part of Ronnie's life with him serving 50 years with the New Underwood Volunteer Fire Department with 38 of those years as Fire Chief. He was a member of the American Legion, United States Submarine Veterans, Western South Dakota Buckaroos, Saddle Tramp Association, Boy Scout Troop #29 Leader, New Underwood Labor Day Committee, Hunter Safety Course Instructor, and girls' softball coach. His hobbies included hunting, fishing, scuba diving, Captain of the Bottom Scratcher Pontoon, and come branding season you could always find him with a sharp knife in his hand.

Ronnie was the recipient of the 2019 American Red Cross Gold Award, Good Neighbor Award, and the Jefferson Award from the American Institute for Public Service. In 2019, Chief Racicky was recognized for his commitment to the Fire Service by the Central States Fair, Range Days Rodeo.

Ronnie was survived by his wife Joan, children DeLynn Willis (Jim Stratman) Monte Reichert (Loni), grandkids Marissa Duprel (Jake), Lacey Dickschat (Emmit), Radley Reichert, Jesse Willis (Bella), Sadie Tisdale (Jackson), Jordan Siefers (Kyle), Cassidy Wientjes (Reese), Great Grandchildren Abby, Taylee and Kaydee Duprel, Addie and Hayes Dickschat, Carter and Noah Tisdale, and Wilder Wientjes, Sisters Ann Vaughn (Fred), Ruby Whittitt (Steve), Joanie Jacobs (Jake), Brother-in-law Lowell Fairchild, several nieces and nephews, and special family members Marlene Swanson and Steve Swanson (Laurie). He will always be remembered for his handshakes, hugs and being the best Grandpa and Great Grandpa ever!



He was preceded in death by his parents, Whitey and Tootie and his sister Carolyn Fairchild.

A memorial service was held on Oct. 4, 2024 at the New Underwood School, 300 E Ash St, New Underwood, SD 57761 with full fire service and military honors, to include a emergency services vehicle line up followed by Interment at the New Underwood Cemetery, New Underwood, SD 57761 Highway 1416.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Whitey and Tootie and his sister Carolyn Fairchild.

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Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service



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SDFA OFFICER REPORTS



Charlie Kludt, President

“The question was asked, “Is it hard to become a firefighter?” And, “How much training do we have to do to become a firefighter? I said how many hours it is and compared it to days of school. I explained that one of the basic things we have to do is get all our gear on in 60 seconds. I was not anticipating what happened next.”

November What Happened?

A few weeks ago, a couple of fellow firefighters and I were doing a public service project for several groups of kids varying in ages from 8-15. We dressed several of them in different pieces of our structural gear and explained how it protects us. Then told them how much it costs. “WOW...”

The question was asked, “Is it hard to become a firefighter?” And, “How much training do we have to do to become a firefighter?”

I said how many hours it is and compared it to days of school. I explained that one of the basic things we have to do is get all our gear on in 60 seconds.

I was not anticipating what happened next.

As if it was planned, in unison, several of them said, “Can you do it!?”

Of course, my fellow firefighters laughed and joined in, “Yeah, Charlie! Can you do

it!?”

I have more grey hairs than years since I was timed doing this. But, of course, I had to accept the challenge. Magically, someone had a stopwatch available on their phone.

I placed my gear on the ground in front of me. They agreed to let me take my shoes off. And with a loud “GO!” from the kids, I was off!

Slipped my hood on; stepped into my boots (I almost tipped over); pants up; suspenders over the shoulders; waistline secured (belly slightly in the way); swung my coat around and slid my arms in; buckled up; left glove on; right glove on; helmet on, clipped and snugged; Done!

They all looked at the timer...:46 seconds!

The kids cheered, the adults laughed, and I didn’t bring it up again with the other groups. I was just glad it was less than my age.

Now, this was all in fun. But it was a good reminder of getting back to the basics and what is needed for your department.

There are plenty of tasks and duties at an incident.

Not everyone needs to be on a handline and nozzle. Not everyone needs to climb ladders and put on SCBA. Not everyone needs to carry extrication tools and cut apart a vehicle.

You do need a safe driver and good pump operator. You need traffic control. You need someone to keep watch over the incident to make sure it is as safe as can be.

You also need to document what went on during the call. The importance of incident reports.

We’ve all heard, “If it isn’t documented, it didn’t happen.”

Dispatch will have the initial incident as it was called into them and times. But do you have a local report with more information and details while responding and on scene?

Did you notice anything while responding? Cars or people in the area?

What did you notice when you arrived? Smoke color? Did conditions change? Was there evidence or something suspicious? Where did that grass fire seem to start?

Weather conditions? Were there skid marks? Did you unhook a seatbelt?

You may have to have everyone write down what they did and what they saw. After you calm down, you may remember more details. Gather that information and tabulate it.

If an investigation takes place, you may need to provide more information. Your incident report might have clues. Perhaps

an investigator will point out something and have questions for your crew.

Insurance companies may request information on how many responders were on scene, equipment used, and time on scene to provide payment to a department.

If you had to go to court, would your report have enough information to help your department or an investigation? As mentioned, some incidents may require more detail.

The 2025 SDFA Membership dues letter will be coming out soon. Keep a watch for it in your department mail and email. We will be having a few changes and updated information you will want to keep on hand coming out.

I like to think of Thanksgiving as a time to review the year. To give thanks for what we were given, enjoyed, and endured. For the moments and memories of who we have, and of those we had.

Although, I thank God on a more frequent basis than once a year for keeping me safe, healthy, and fulfilled with what I need, I always enjoy getting together with family and the beauty of this time of year. Then end my thoughts with a smile and an Amen.

I hope you can do this, as well. Have a safe and Happy Thanksgiving.

CHARLIE KLUDT, President

Thoughts from An Older Firefighter

What month is this? It’s November and that means that winter is truly just around the corner. I’m not ready for snow and cold, but after watching what so many residents of Florida, Carolina’s, have gone through the past couple of months, I’m not complaining. Our thoughts and prayers are with so many fellow firefighters and their families.

On a sad note, Father Dan Juelfs passed away in September. I realize most of you did not know Father Dan. Father Dan was what I would like to say was the first real fire chaplain we had in Pennington County. Father Dan was there on so many fires, to see if the families needed something or did the firefighters need a friendly smile. Father Dan had his own pager, helmet and even his own pager tones. He was an important part of many lives. Rest in peace Father Dan, your legacy still lives.

If you were one of the lucky ones who attended the SD Firefighters Assn. fall conference in Fort Pierre the last weekend of September it was great wasn’t it! Great presentations by LJay Geist and Dennis Reilly. The Fall Conference is a little less structured, terrific opportunity to visit with other firefighters, talk to some vendors, enjoy an adult

beverage and just relax. The Dear Old Timers is always a hoot to see how so many of us look just like we did 30 years ago.

Of course, on Saturday afternoon we held the annual Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service. Forty firefighters have died in the line of duty in South Dakota. Forty firefighters who never went home to their families, loved ones, work or the fire department. Forty firefighters, where hundreds said, “we won’t forget you Brother.” Sadly, many of those Forty firefighters have been forgotten. We say their name, we honor them, we place a rose in their memory, the bagpiper and honor guard remember them, firefighters stand at attention, flags fly from aerial trucks. They all honor and remember. However, too many don’t.

When I visit with other firefighters around the state, the talk seems to end up discussing how the number of firefighters responding to calls has changed. I remember in years past departments could provide a crew for a truck on the many wildland and forest fires for sometimes days on end. Nowadays departments struggle sometimes to get enough responders to cover their own calls, let alone mutual aid for days. As one of those firefighters who has been around for a little bit I wonder if we are setting the right stage for these newer, younger, and eager



Denny Gorton, Treasurer/Past President

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firefighters. If I don’t respond, are they saying to themselves, “why should I respond?” Just a thought.

The 2025 SDFA Membership dues letters and information will be coming to you very soon. Take a look at your roster, please update it, PLEASE add all the emails for your members that have email. The monthly newspaper will be going out digitally starting in January and we must have their email. Also, there will be a

change in the address you mail your membership dues to. I am stepping down as the treasurer and so the PO BOX 1884 will be replaced. Check your computer program and update it to reflect this new address, which will be noted in a mailing.

With that I’ve rambled way too long. Be safe, take care of yourself and those most important to you.

DENNIS GORTON

CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED ADS FOR THE SOUTH DAKOTA FIREFIGHTER NEWSPAPER

Classified ads run \$10 for the first 10 words, and 25 cents a word after that. A photo is \$10 additional. Rates are the same in each state (Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas). Email the ad to jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com to place your personal or departmental ads.

SDFA OFFICER REPORTS

The 2024 Fall Conference is in the books. I would like to thank everyone that took part in the events. After the conference, the board discussed fire school classes. Instructor contracts will be sent out shortly and it's looking like a great lineup for 2025 State Fire School in Watertown (June 12-14).

A common question I hear is how we choose classes for fire school. The day after fire school has ended, the board meets to discuss the following year. We go through the list of classes and class attendance. We try to bring back classes that are popular. This is why you see the same classes

year after year - if it fills up, there is an obvious interest and need for it. We try to schedule some classes multiple years in a row so everyone gets a chance to take them. We also talk to instructors to see if they can tweak a class to freshen it up and/or make it more relevant. With the new online class evaluations, we can easily read the comments and scores and helps us determine if we bring a class back. We thank everyone that filled out the evaluations and yes, we do read them.

Last summer we started advertising on social media for instructors. This has been

successful with interest from not only South Dakota instructors but from instructors across the country. We will be integrating some of these classes in the 2025 State Fire School. Keep in mind we try to have classes for all levels of firefighter, from the newest to the seasoned veterans.

The board attempts to have all classes finalized by our January meeting. This gives us time to determine the schedule, develop the booklets, create the registration form, and manage last minute changes. The March board meeting is the time for finishing touches to the schedule as well as a trip to Lake Area Tech shortly before the school to



Rick George,
Central District Director

"The board discussed fire school classes. Instructor contracts will be sent out shortly and it's looking like a great lineup for 2025 State Fire School in Watertown (June 12-14)."

assign rooms and meet with our Watertown partners. This entire process takes board members many hours, emails, and phone calls. I need to mention that Mike Jones from the fire marshal's office works closely with the board and is a huge help coordinating and communicating with the instructors.

There is so much more that

goes into putting on the fire school but in the end, it is worth it. If you have an idea for a class that you would like to see, feel free to contact me or be sure to list it on your survey. But remember, the process starts early.

RICK GEORGE,
Central District Director

SDFA AUXILIARY REPORT

The Auxiliary Board was hard at work during the Fall Fire Conference. We are starting to think

about next year for both memberships and State Fire School. I think we will have an exciting schedule put together for the wives who attend fire school. Also, keep an eye out for an email to renew your Auxiliary membership. Memberships can be completed either through the mail, or online at sdffirefighters.org.

Whenever different auxiliaries get together it is always interesting to see the differences between the departments and what each group accomplishes. While it is nice to use other auxiliaries as a way to brainstorm new ideas, it is important to remember that not all auxiliaries can, or should, be the same. At one time, members of the State Board put together a list of suggestions for starting an Auxiliary, which are helpful both from starting or revitalizing an Auxiliary.

1) Talk with the department Chief to find out if the depart-

ment wants an auxiliary, and if so what the department's expectations of the auxiliary would be.

- 2) Consider what criteria you will have for members, and then reach out to potential members.
- 3) Discuss and define the purpose of the auxiliary: Is it fire education and awareness, to help local firefighters, or another purpose?
- 4) Set up the formalities: You will need to elect officers, and set up a Constitution and By Laws.
- 5) Funds: How will the auxiliary raise funds, and what will they be used for?
- 6) State Auxiliary Membership: Will it be mandatory or encouraged within your auxiliary?

Jessica Carmichael, Auxiliary

"Keep an eye out for an email to renew your Auxiliary membership. Memberships can be completed either through the mail, or online at sdffirefighters.org."

Remember, the State Auxiliary Board is happy to help discuss any of these points further with you if you are working on developing your auxiliary. We have plenty of ideas for fundraising, different methods of involvement both with the department and community, meals, and much more.

Also, just a helpful reminder of some important upcoming dates:
NOV 3, 2024 Fall Back - set clocks back an hour and change the batteries in your smoke alarm
NOV 16-17, 2024 FIVE

ALARM LEADERSHIP-From the Firehouse to the Fireground in Vermillion

DEC 6-8, 2024 SD Fire Chiefs Annual Leadership Conference in Deadwood

JAN 10-12, 2025 Rushmore Fire Conference in Box Elder

JUN 12-14, 2025 State Fire School in Watertown

SEPT 21-25, 2025 NVFC Fall Board Meeting in Rapid City

JESSICA CARMICHAEL,
SDFA Auxiliary

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HAY BALE STACK CATCHES FIRE SOUTH OF WEBSTER

An all-fleet response by the Webster Fire Department was required Oct. 4 when a hay bale fire was reported south of Webster.

Wes Hoven, assistant fire chief with the Webster Fire Department, said all six trucks were taken to the fire which was called in about 4:50 p.m. About a dozen firemen also attended. Hoven said the windy day was of utmost concern when the fire report came in but he said the situation unfolded in a draw where the area was more protected from the wind.

Fewer than a dozen large round hay bales were lost in the ordeal, according to Hoven, who said the bales had been put up about a month prior. He said the property owner was moving the bales when they noticed smoke coming from the stack. By the time the department arrived on scene, the owner had removed several bales and covered them

with silage to prevent the flames from spreading.

Hoven said crews continued separating the stack to ensure there were no more hot spots and even unrolled a few bales which developed into flames as they were being removed from the stack to put out the fire. Firemen were on the scene approximately two hours. The incident took place at a farm along 428A Avenue, 13 miles southwest of Webster.

Also over the weekend, firemen in Webster responded to two false alarms caused by a water outage in town. The department was dispatched to Heritage Village and Bethesda Home first, then later to Mereen-Johnson Oct. 5. At each location, the alarm system had been triggered by the low water pressure.

(Webster Reporter and Farmer; Webster, Oct. 14, 2024; written by Amanda Dulitz, staff writer.)

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FROM THE DOT...

Photos from the Dear Old Timers and Fall Conference Social. The Dear Old Timers (DOTs) get together as a social group to reminisce and enjoy an evening of socializing. DOT members donate annual dues to the SDFA Scholarship fund. Each year they take group photos in accordance to the number of years they have been in the fire service, couples, and families. And the "Fire School Brats" that have been coming to fire events since they were kids.



Belle couples



20 to 25 years



15 to 20 years



The Hartmanns



35 to 40 years



25 to 30 years



10 to 15 years



40 to 45 years



30 to 34 years



The Cronins



Whitewood students visit the station

Whitewood Volunteer Fire Department enjoyed the Whitewood Elementary students. Grades kindergarten through second grade came to the fire department and learned about fire prevention, got goodie bags and even got to be on the fire hose and spray water. Submitted by Holly Bauer.



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POWER DAM ROAD FIRE SCORCHES 15,000+ ACRES

On Thursday, Sept. 12, a fire started a couple miles northwest of White River, S.D. The fire rapidly spread north encouraged by high winds gusting to 50 mph from the south. The grassfire took down power poles in Mellette County and blazed through livestock operations prompting evacuations and ranchers hauling their cattle to safety.

By Friday a Facebook post from Jones County Emergency Management stated, "Please keep your eyes peeled at the fire south of town, it is moving quickly and will probably be in our county soon. Be prepared."

Volunteer firefighting departments came from surrounding communities to help battle the fire; Mellette, Jones, Lyman, Tripp, Mission, Parmelee, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, and BIA Forestry & Wildland Fire Management - Rosebud Agency. As the fire blazed on south of the Big White River, the town of Okaton and several ranches south of the White River were evacuated. Belvidere, Murdo, and residents along Interstate 90 were informed to be prepared to evacuate.

Facebook and other social media outlets were alight with offers of help for those in or near the path of the fire. Many individuals and businesses volunteered to help move livestock or take in pets. Both White River and Murdo quickly started a base station where residents and businesses could donate or make food and drop off water/drinks to sustain the crew of firefighters and others battling the blaze. Surrounding communities, Kadoka, Presho, Winner, and others, also donated food, gas, and drink.

Crews began to get control of the fire on Friday. By Monday the fire was out and firefighters were monitoring hotspots. The fire flared through a little over 15,000 acres. The cause was still under investigation at the time of newspaper print.

(Murdo Coyote, Murdo, Sept. 19, 2024; written by Krisanna Thomas, staff writer.)

Black Hills National Forest Enters Stage II Fire Restrictions

Black Hills National Forest Supervisor Shawn Cochran has signed a Stage 2 Fire & Smoking Restrictions Special Order for the Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota & Wyoming, effective Friday Oct. 4, 2024, through Dec. 25, 2024, unless rescinded.

The purpose of this Order is to protect public health, safety, and natural resources by preventing wildfires during a period of extreme fire danger. Stage 2 fire restrictions prohibit the ignition of any fire, campfire, charcoal barbecue, or grill, unless the device is solely fueled by liquid gas that can be turned on and off.

Western SD and eastern WY are in a period of drought forecasted to increase in intensity. Fuels are extremely dry and susceptible to wildfire outbreak. Implementing Stage 2 Fire restrictions allows the public to recreate in the Black Hills National Forest while still enacting preventative measures to reduce the risk of human caused wildfires.

“Persistent long-term drought conditions, combined with the lack of moisture, have dramatically increased the fire danger,” said Scott Jacobson, Black Hills National Forest Public Affairs Officer. “Conditions are ripe for large fire potential, so people need to be extremely careful in

the Forest.”

**SPECIAL ORDER 118
PROHIBITIONS INCLUDE:**

1. Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire, campfire, charcoal barbecue, or grill, unless the device is solely fueled by liquid gas that can be turned on and off (this includes in developed Forest Service campgrounds and picnic areas).
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building.
3. Operating or using any internal or external combustion engine (e.g. chainsaw, generator, ATV) without a spark arresting device properly installed, maintained and in effective working order.
4. Welding or operating an acetylene or other torch with an open flame.
5. Using an explosive. This includes but is not limited to fuses, blasting caps, fireworks, rockets, exploding targets, tracers, and incendiary ammunition.
6. Possessing or using a motor vehicle off National Forest Service roads, except when parking in an area devoid of vegetation within 10 feet of the motor vehicle.
7. Violating South Dakota Codified Laws (SDCL) §

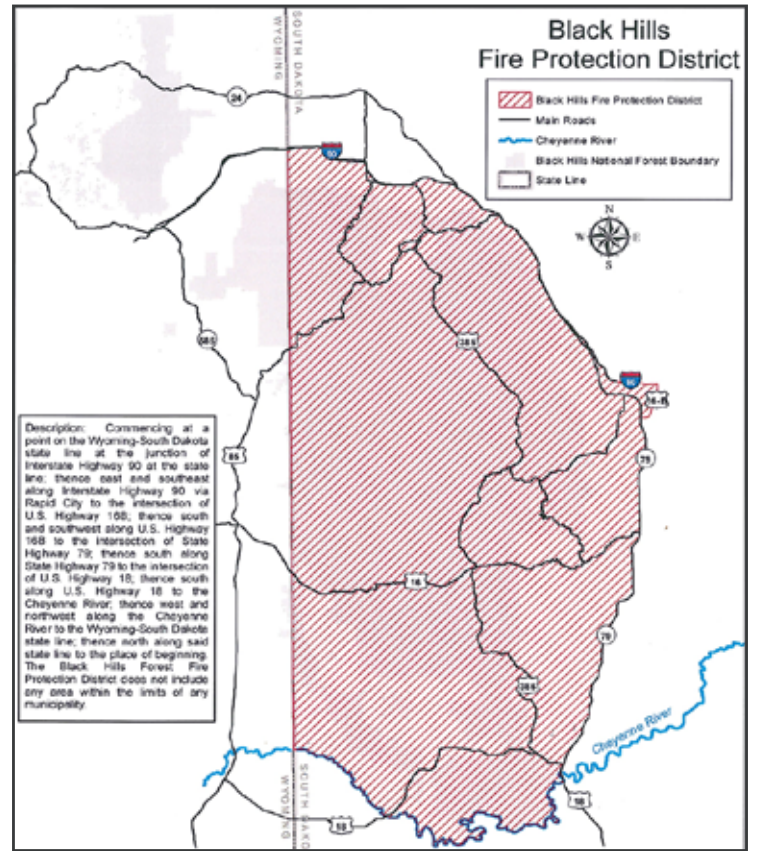
34-35-15 (Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District:) <https://sdlegislature.gov/Statutes/34-35-15> and/or Wyoming Statute 35-9-301 concerning burning, fires or which is for the purpose of preventing, or restricting the spread of fires.

EXEMPTIONS INCLUDE:

1. Persons with Forest Service Permit No. FS-7700-48 (Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order), specifically exempting them from this Order or a written determination by a Forest Service authorized officer that a permit is not required.
2. Any Federal, State, or Local Officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting resource in the performance of an official duty.

For a digital version of this Order and map, go to <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/blackhills/ces/?cid=STELPRDB5117120>.

For more information on the Black Hills National Forest, visit <http://www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills>, follow the Forest on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/blackhillsnf> or Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BlackHillsNF>.



MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS RESPOND TO GRASS FIRE NORTH OF GLAD VALLEY

Fire departments from nearly a dozen area communities turned out to fight a grass fire north of Glad Valley on Saturday evening, Oct. 5, that was fueled by high winds.

Crews from Glad Valley, Lem-

mon, Bison, Grand River, Keldron, Morrystown, Isabel, Timber Lake, Dupree, Eagle Butte, and the BIA battled the blaze, which burned about 300 acres.

The fire occurred just prior to the Glad Valley Fire Depart-

ment’s annual Appreciation Supper. The meal went on as planned; however, raffle prize drawings were postponed until a date to be determined.

(*Timber Lake Topic, Timber Lake, Oct. 10, 2024*)



Fedora FD receives grant

Fire and Iron Station 49 of Mitchell presented a check to the Fedora Fire Department for \$3,500. They applied for a cash grant and were selected as a winner. They were able to purchase safety gear. Every year, Fire and Iron raise money at their Ride for Responders event and a portion of that money goes to a fire department in Eastern South Dakota. Keep an eye out for next year’s application so your department can have a chance to receive some money.



Deadwood residential fire

Firefighters spent more than six hours fighting a blaze at 476 Williams St. in the early hours of the morning, Friday, Sept. 27. A smoke alarm alerted occupants of the house in time for them to escape the blaze with no injuries. One firefighter received minor injuries. The fire was reported at about 2:17 a.m. and the cause of the fire is under investigation. The Lead-Deadwood School District cancelled classes at the elementary school early Friday morning, out of concern about the air quality from the fire. The house fire was located directly behind Lead-Deadwood Elementary School. The Deadwood Volunteer Fire Department was assisted by the Lead Volunteer Fire Department, Spearfish Fire Department, Whitewood Volunteer Fire Department, Deadwood Police Department, Deadwood Public Works, Lawrence County Dispatch Center, Lawrence County Emergency Management, Black Hills Energy, Montana Dakota Utilities, and the Lead-Deadwood Monument Health Ambulance. Story and photo by Wendy Pitlick, Black Hills Pioneer.

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