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APRIL 2025 • VOL. 18 - NO. 2

REACHING MORE THAN 6,900 SOUTH DAKOTA FIREFIGHTERS EACH MONTH

This is one of the images of South Dakota Wildland Fire (SDWF) firefighters assisting with suppression of the Green Acres Fire in Fall River County about three miles southwest of Hot Springs in early March. See more photos inside.



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Veteran fuels module in Rapid City, SD sets a standard for community assistance

By REBECCA PATERSON, BLM Fire Public Affairs Specialist

Seated at the eastern edge of the Black Hills of South Dakota, the community of Rapid City and its adjacent neighborhoods are a prime example of the wildland-urban interface – areas where human settlement and development are interwoven with undeveloped wildlands and vegetation. The wildland-urban interface is of perpetually heightened concern to the wildland firefighting community, as there is often plenty of fuel to carry fire, and an abundance of potential risks to human property and even human lives.

With its mix of ponderosa pine forests and sprawling grasslands, Rapid City and its surrounding areas fall into the ninetieth percentile of nationally estimated fire potential (wildfirerisk.org). This is an example of a western community in which the question is not *if*, but *when* wildfire impacts will occur.

This makes the work of the Rapid City Fire Department's Wildfire Mitigation group, Veterans Wildland Fuels Module, especially crucial to the safety of these communities. Working in partnership with a multitude of neighboring cooperators, the module brings vital expertise and

professionalism to the unified effort to reduce wildfire-related risk and maintain fire-adapted communities.

The Veterans Wildland Fuels Module was established in 2013 utilizing grant funding from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Since then, the module has become a fixture in their community, built a large roster of partners, diversified their funding sources, and served as a standard of what community assistance programs, fully- or partially-funded by BLM, can accomplish. As a veteran crew, the module provides career avenues that help those that have served in their country's military to reintegrate into civilian life, while maintaining the priorities of service and belonging to a team that are so familiar to returning service members.

What does work look like for the module? As they are working closely around communities, most of their target vegetation is cut, chipped, and removed, after which it is made available to the local public as mulch through Rapid City's Solid Waste Division – another partnership that further serves community members. That said, the module also practices prescribed burning. In 2024, they assisted on 1,283 acres of prescribed fire projects



hosted by their neighbors, including the Montana/Dakotas Bureau of Land Management and Black Hills National Forest. These partnerships provide members of the module with exceptional opportunities for experience and career development.

The February 2025 edition of the module's newsletter listed their 2024 totals for fuels mitigation and more, including 166 acres treated, 18 properties on which defensible space was improved, and 117 structures protected.

Total property values protected by the module in 2024 totaled \$52,740,000, almost all from single family dwellings. The module also recorded nearly

1000 direct public contacts, not including social or news media, and expressed their hope to double this number in 2025.

The excellent work of this fuels module in Rapid City is an inspiring example of how fuels management in a very fire-prone area can convey a myriad of benefits to individuals as well as the broader community.

"This program establishes safer, healthier, more sustain-

able landscapes throughout the whole Rapid City area," said Eric O'Connor, Wildfire Mitigation Lieutenant for the Rapid City Fire Department. "The module continues to do great things in our community. The outstanding support we receive from the BLM, our city, neighboring agencies, and our neighbors is what makes us so successful. We're all in this together."



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If you haven't paid your dues, it's not too late!

SD House defeats bill requiring 'forever chemical' labels on firefighting gear

By MAKENZIE HUBER

Legislation that would have required protective firefighting equipment purchased by fire departments in South Dakota to be labeled with its "forever chemical" status failed Wednesday in the state House of Representatives.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been used in industry and consumer products since the 1940s and don't break down easily in the environment or in the human body. The chemicals can be found in everything from firefighting foam to thermal and water-resistant clothing to soil and water. Research indicates PFAS exposure may be

linked to negative developmental and reproductive effects, and an increased risk of some cancers.

The federal government finalized phased-in limits on some types of PFAS in drinking water earlier this year. PFAS has been found in preliminary testing of Mount Rushmore drinking water and in the Big Sioux River.

Senate Bill 163 would have required South Dakota fire departments' future purchases of coats, coveralls, footwear, gloves, helmets, hoods and trousers to have a permanent label from the manufacturer identifying whether the material includes PFAS.

Occupational cancer is the leading cause of line-of-duty

death in the fire service, and the International Association of Firefighters attributes 66% of firefighter deaths between 2002 and 2019 to cancer.

Rep. David Kull, R-Brandon, carried the bill on the House floor, saying that the legislation would send a message to companies to develop PFAS-free gear and protect South Dakota firefighters from increased cancer risks.

The National Fire Protection Association, a nonprofit organization that develops and publishes safety codes and standards, issued new standards in August 2024. The standards require manufacturer-suppliers of

firefighting safety gear to test their materials for some types of PFAS.

Lawmakers who spoke against the bill largely cited opposition from local fire chiefs, saying the legislation would amount to government overreach by the state. The state Department of Public Safety and the South Dakota Joint Fire Council opposed the legislation during its committee hearing.

"We're going to make them spend more money on things that they could buy cheaper because it doesn't have a label," said Rep. Kevin Van Diepen, R-Huron, "and we're going to force them to do this."

The House voted 57-13 to defeat the legislation.

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.

APR. 12, 2025: Central District School, Wessington Springs, SD.

APR. 26, 2025: Southeast District School, Vermillion Fire/EMS Training Center, 1530 S. Dakota St., Vermillion, SD.

JUNE 8-10, 2025: 2025 South Dakota Highway Patrol Association Fishing Tournament, Headquarters – Izaak Walton League, 1200 Izaak Walton Road, Pierre. Contact Rob Mayer 770-1940 or Austin Schmitz 830-6682 for details.

JUNE 12-14, 2025: South Dakota State Fire School, Watertown.

SEPT. 22-24, 2025: NVFC Fall Conference and Meeting, Rapid City.

OCT. 10-12, 2025: South Dakota Firefighters Association Fall Conference, Spearfish Convention Center, Spearfish.

NVFC Wildland Fire Assessment Program

Wildfires are not just in the forests and mountains. Farms and ranches, agricultural land, and

entire communities can be devastated and destroyed by a wildfire. Even here in South Dakota.



The Wildland Fire Assessment Program (WFAP) is a joint effort by the U.S. Forest Service and the NVFC to provide volunteer firefighters and non-operational personnel, such as private property owners and Home Owner Associations, with training on how to

properly conduct assessments for homes and farms located in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).

This is the first program targeted to volunteers that specifically prepares them to evaluate a home or property and provide residents with recommendations to protect their property from wildfires in order to make their property and community more fire adapted.

The WFAP offers online and in-person training and self-assessment tools.

An introduction to the WFAP program will be presented by

NVFC WFAP facilitator Charlie Kludt. The program, open to the general public, will be held at Central District Fire School in Wessington Springs on Saturday, April 12th, at 1 p.m. Check in at the WSFD station.

If your department or community is interested in hosting a WFAP training, contact the National Volunteer Fire Council, <https://www.nvfc.org/programs/wildland-fire-assessment-program/> to schedule a training opportunity for your area.

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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.

• **STEVE A. WEIKLE**, 70, Covington, VA, died Feb. 13, 2025. Steve was a volunteer firefighter with 49 years of service with the Boiling Springs Fire and Rescue, Inc. On Feb. 13, 2025, Firefighter Steve Weikle responded with the Boiling Springs Fire and Rescue to a report of a collapsed barn with a trapped animal. After freeing the animal and within 24 hours of this response, Firefighter Weikle was found outside of his home in cardiac arrest. Emergency medical services were called to the scene where Firefighter Weikle was pronounced deceased.

• **JEFFREY LAWSON**, 54, War, WV, died Feb. 17, 2025. Jeffrey was a volunteer firefighter and current deputy fire chief with the War Fire Department and had attained 40 years of service. On Monday, Feb. 17, 2025, Deputy Fire Chief Jeffrey Lawson was responding in an engine to a report of a structure fire when he became ill and told the driver that he needed medical attention. The driver of the engine met an ambulance which transferred him to the Welch Community Hospital. While in transit, Deputy Fire Chief Lawson became unconscious. Responders initiated CPR on Deputy Fire Chief Lawson who, despite the lifesaving efforts, was later pronounced deceased at the hospital. The cause of his death has yet to be determined.

• **TERRY WAYNE DYKES**, 58, Etta, MS, died Mar. 3, 2025. Terry was a volunteer firefighter with 26 years of service with the Pinedale Volunteer Fire Department. On Saturday, Mar. 1, 2025, Firefighter Terry Wayne Dykes was at the scene of a grass fire when he fell from the top of a brush truck and suffered major head trauma. He was immediately transported to the hospital where he passed away on Monday, Mar. 3, 2025, from the injuries he sustained in the fall.

• **CHRISTOPHER ROTHMEYER**, 27, New London, NC, died Mar. 5, 2025. Christopher was a volunteer firefighter with nine years of service with the New London Volunteer Fire Department. While responding to an emergency incident, Firefighter Christopher Rothmeyer crashed on NC Highway 8. Numerous responders administered life-saving measures to Firefighter Rothmeyer at the scene. Firefighter Rothmeyer was then transported to a nearby hospital where he passed away from the injuries he sustained in the crash.

• **MICHAEL WINDSAY**, 51, New Orleans, LA, died Mar. 3, 2025. Michael Windsay was a career firefighter and current Acting Chief of the New Orleans Fire Department with 30 years of service. While on duty at New Orleans Fire Department's Fifth District Headquarters, Acting Chief Michael Windsay was found unresponsive. He was transported to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced deceased. The cause of death has yet to be determined.

• **VERNON COLLETT**, 60, Warrensburg, MO, died Mar. 8, 2025. Vernon was a volunteer firefighter with 29 years of service with the Johnson County Fire Protection District with the current rank of captain. Captain Vernon Collett collapsed while fighting a natural cover fire. Despite nearly an hour of lifesaving efforts, Captain Collett was pronounced deceased at the scene.

• **DON "HEV" CAYLOR**, 66, Ridgeville, IN, died Mar. 9, 2025. Don was a volunteer firefighter and current Assistant Fire Chief of the Ridgeville Volunteer Fire Department with 35 years of service. While preparing to respond to a structure fire, Assistant Fire Chief Don Caylor collapsed on the station floor. Other Ridgeville Volunteer Fire Department firefighters found Assistant Fire Chief Caylor upon their return to the station after the fire and pronounced him deceased.

• **DONALD KAMMERICH**, 64, Pilot Grove, MO, died Mar. 10, 2025. Donald was Assistant Chief with the Pilot Grove Fire Protection District and had attained 35 years of volunteer service. At 2 p.m. on Mar. 10, 2025, Assistant Chief Donald Kammerich responded to a grass fire where he strenuously fought the fire for approximately 2 hours. After the emergency response, Assistant Chief Kammerich returned home.

Only a few hours later at 9 p.m., the Pilot Grove Fire Protection District received an emergency call to Assistant Chief Kammerich's home address. Upon their arrival, firefighters found Assistant Chief Kammerich in distress and began CPR. Despite the lifesaving efforts, Assistant Chief Kammerich was pronounced deceased at the scene.

SDFA OFFICER REPORTS

I am sure we are all familiar with the phrase: "Anything worth doing is worth doing well." Personally, to the contrary, I have adopted this as my motto: "Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly." Why would I do that? Because if we focus on doing everything "well," we will never try something we cannot be perfect at. Remember your "rookie" or probationary status as a firefighter. Everything was shiny and new and you felt inadequate. You made mistakes, fell down and didn't know a coupler from a Halligan? Did you quit? No, you persisted and gained skills and became at least an adequate firefighter! Are you perfect? Do you do everything well? Or are there times when you do the best you can with what you have and don't quit until the job is done? If so, you have mastered the motto of anything worth doing is worth doing poorly.

Another motto we often hear is this one: "Nothing worthwhile is easy." Good words right, until you are taught by a little girl with spina bifida. Her Daddy, (Roy Smalley, who is a firefighter/fitness trainer in Wisconsin) got this response from that little girl, when he told her that bit of Daddy advice: "Nothing worthwhile is easy." She replied: "Well, sitting is worthwhile, and that's pretty easy." That caught Roy off guard and maybe a few of us as well. After all we have grown up with the teaching like "No pain, no gain." "Nothing worthwhile is easy" and other what I would all "lofty platitudes" to encourage us to succeed and strive for excellence. Those things are found in the popular Successories posters you see in offices. Nice pictures and platitudes about success. However, (you knew that I would have something else) I am a fan of "Demotivators" (Yeah, it's real, look it up on the web). Again, beautiful pictures, without the lofty phrases of success. Just the opposite.

What is the point of all this banter this month. Smalley, who is a fitness trainer, when he joined the ranks of the professional firefighters, thought he could motivate his shift-mates by posting videos of his "over the top" workouts. What he found is that it had the opposite effect, the rest of the crew didn't think they could do what he was doing, and so they did nothing. Today, if you look for firefighter workouts, you get the high intensity, hours long sweat and grime, that seem to require thousands of dollars' worth of equipment none of us have available, so we give up. WE give up before we start, because we cannot meet that level of performance. What if, instead of trying for the "Firefighter Combat Challenge" work out, we settled for the "get out of the "Lazy Boy" and move a little challenge"?

This is what Smalley is driving at. He calls exercise "Internal PPE." What Smalley means is this, "[Exercise is] helping



Rodney Veldhuizen, Chaplain

"Another motto we often hear is this one: "Nothing worthwhile is easy." Good words right, until you are taught by a little girl with spina bifida. Her Daddy, (Roy Smalley, who is a firefighter/fitness trainer in Wisconsin) got this response from that little girl, when he told her that bit of Daddy advice: "Nothing worthwhile is easy." She replied: "Well, sitting is worthwhile, and that's pretty easy!"

you on the job while protecting you from job side effects like stress, back problems, and heart attacks." Ok, well and good, but what if I am not 20 anymore? The reality is that you are never too old to start. Personally, I was well past my 40th birthday when I finally got serious about exercise. While I tried to pretend, I could keep with the youngsters, I soon found that the only person I was fooling was myself. Once again, if anything is worth doing, it is worth doing poorly, where do you start?

Smalley suggests this: "A Little Exercise Goes a Long Way. Fortunately, it also says moderate-intensity strength training (about 12 to 15 reps) is as effective at building and maintaining muscle as heavier work, with far less risk of training injury—especially for those starting up at middle age." When I worked out in Yankton, I used the City/School weight room. I always teased the football players that they should not let me use their weights! There were "old guy" weights and teenager weights and never should the two meet. But with the moderate intensity workout, you can not only lose weight, but build endurance as well. But don't just think pumping iron is enough, you also need some cardio. Again, here is Smalley's advice: "To build conditioning, any moderate-intensity cardio is beneficial. Aim for about 70% effort (sweating

and breathing harder) for 20 to 30 minutes, several days per week." How do you know you have hit that 70%? Personally, I have a heart rate monitor that tells me that, and if you have a "smart watch" you already have that tool. Remember this, cardio starts to lose its benefit beyond that 70% mark.

At the end of the day the goal is not become the next Charles Atlas (Ok, I know I am an old guy) but the fitness focus for us aging athletes should be on lengthening our lives and time in the fire service by preserving muscle, preventing disease, and avoiding injury. I would also say, it is not too late for anyone to begin a fitness program. At the very least go for a walk, moderate exercise of 30 minutes a day. Remember, walking qualifies as moderate exercise, will get you started on a healthier lifestyle and will probably enable you to enjoy life long after you hang up your bunker gear.

One last comment from our fitness guru, Roy Smalley, "Building strength and conditioning isn't as easy as sitting, but it will help you endure through middle age and beyond."

Here is wishing each of you a Blessed Easter and safe return from each and every call.

CHAPLAIN RODNEY V

Several factors may be contributing to recent rash of wildfires in Black Hills area

By BRYAN SAVIC

With a rash of wildland fires in the Black Hills since last week, including the Green Acres fire, South Dakota Wildland Fire believes there are various factors that may be contributing to the fires starting.

The organization's chief of operations, Jason Rodriguez, said the area has experienced a dry winter this year and has not received a good amount of moisture.

He also believes the drastic temperature change, going from below zero temperatures to 50 to 60-degree weather in the last several weeks played a factor.

"How dry our fuels are, that plays a huge factor in it," Rodriguez said. "If we have wind events come in; what else plays a factor is like, you know, we've been in a drought. Last year, we were in a drought, this year, we're still in a drought."

Rodriguez added that on days with high winds, there is concern for fires to move faster than they normally would.

Rodriguez also wants to remind people who have lit piles in the past month to keep checking their piles in case they're still hot.

Turner County resident witness to history

Feist hand selected as Executive Driver for 60th Presidential Inauguration

By **RENAE HANSEN**, Editor, Turner County New Era

A Turner County man had the rare opportunity to witness history in the making as the nation observed the 60th Presidential Inauguration on Jan. 20 of this year. Mathew Feist, a Reservist with the U.S. Navy, was hand selected to serve as an Executive Driver for the inauguration of President Donald Trump, which included driving members of the first family and vice president's family, as well as cabinet members, members of Congress, and other important guests attending the events.

Feist first received an interest card last summer and wasn't interested at first but submitted the card anyhow. They got back to him immediately, and he had to send in photos of him in uniform as well as personal information so that he could be vetted by the Secret Service. After going through all of that, he received word that the plans had changed and they were going to scratch the roster. When Donald Trump was elected President, Feist, who not only belongs to the Navy Reserves but also serves on the Parker Ambulance, the Chancellor Fire Department and as a life-guard in addition to his full-time job working for the City of Sioux

Falls, decided to submit his info again as he was contacted again by the committee. He was then hand selected from a pool of applicants, based on his skills and abilities.

Feist was in Washington DC for approximately two and a half weeks in January while on the assignment. The drivers were assigned a military officer that was their escort, and they worked alongside the Secret Service, Capitol Police, and Homeland Security. They had to be vetted in order to get through all of the barricades and closed roads as they drove the guests to and from the different venues and events throughout the week of the inauguration. Feist, who said that they all had a hand in the security of the events, says that he was amazed at the amount of security that he encountered while there. "I can't describe to you the morning of inauguration, I had to go and drop some people off at St. John's chapel by the White House," he tells us, adding that he couldn't believe how many checkpoints from the Secret Service he had to go through to get there." Getting our vehicles sniffed by canines at every single checkpoint, every single time. It was just wild, Capitol Police, Secret Service, and Homeland Security Police, they were

everywhere."

Feist tells us, "I was driving down Independence that morning that goes near the White House, and it was so eerie because it was quiet, dark and chilly, there was no traffic, the only people on the roads were the police and people like us dropping VIP's and executives off. It was just wild, the feeling was surreal, and the no-scale fencing barriers added to the feeling."

He tells us that he did get lost once because of the barricades and was right next to the Blair House when the Trump family was there. "I was like 'I don't think this is where we're supposed to be,'" he says with a laugh. When asked if he ever actually got close to the president though, his response was "I did not get to meet the president but I could smell his cologne."

"The next morning they had the church service at the National Cathedral in Georgetown, and that was the same thing," Feist says. "Once I had some people loaded up in my vehicle and I was driving out there and all of a sudden you could just kind of feel 'Secret Service', you knew they were there, and we got closer and closer and sure enough there was the barricades and the cordons". The Secret Service would come up to the vehicle and check all of the ID'S, and the canines would sniff the vehicle, and this would happen at one check point after another. "They utilized what I assumed was local construction trucks to block off roads and one entrance they had them formed into a serpentine pathway, and as you drove into it, Secret Service vehicles would come out of nowhere, stop you, and the checks would happen again," Feist says.

Feist tells us that the hardest part of being there was driving in Washington DC, saying, "Their traffic is absolutely insane". He's used to driving in larger cities, including Los Angeles where his navy base is, and it wasn't his first trip to DC, but he said that is nothing



Mathew Feist of Parker was hand selected as a driver for the 60th Presidential Inauguration of President Donald Trump.

compared to the backed up and slow traffic in Washington.

Not only was he selected for the Executive Driver detail, but was also part of a five to six man team that shuttled and drove the team of drivers to and from locations. They were assigned about 50 blacked out SUVs from the Secret Service for the transportation to events. "We had them parked at a local army base and had to get drivers to and from every day. That was around the clock work!"

His Midwestern background did come in handy though. Out of the approximately 50 drivers, a lot of them were from the southern states such as Florida, Texas, California and Arizona, and very few had experience with winter driving. "They were first of all complaining about the cold, being 30 degrees was too cold for them, and two, most of them had never driven on ice and snow or very little, and DC actually got a little snow and ice while we were there," Feist says. They were able to complete the entire week and a half long mission with zero accidents or mishaps reported, and "that was a

big ticket item right there."

Feist tells us, "We also encountered a few protests on Pennsylvania Avenue, and a few other major roadways. The Secret Service sent out notices of protests and that added to our traffic congestion."

Feist says that, "At the end of the day, the experience was just awesome. I try to explain it to people and I'm like you had to be there, I can't describe this. It was just a huge event in America's history right there and history was made right in front of me and it was crazy, and it was very fluid, changes would come by the hour". Not only was the 60th Presidential Inauguration taking place, some of those on the assignment were present for President Carter's funeral, cabinet member selection at the Capitol, and several other events were taking place while their team was there as well.

Feist concludes with, "Whether or not you agree or disagree with the president or party...it was just incredible to be there, it was a huge step in history, and an honor as a member of the Armed Forces."



Feist encountered extremely tight security while navigating the streets of Washington DC while on his assignment.

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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.

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Charlie Kludt, President

"We finalized Fire School registration, started preparing the 2026 budget, Retired Firefighter license plates, discussed legislative session from 2025 session and possible 2026 issues, OSHA-NFPA status, Federal grant funds status, State Grant status, hosting NVFC Fall Conference at Rapid City, and the SD Fall Fire Conference at Spearfish in September, and general membership topics for the June Membership meeting."

March is over... Thank Goodness

Even groundhogs don't want to try to predict weather in South Dakota.

We should be done with blizzards. Now it should just be wind, rain, thunderstorms, and tornadoes from now until Thanksgiving... maybe.

SDFA board met in March for spring meeting. I use the term spring lightly.

We finalized Fire School registration, started preparing the 2026 budget, Retired Firefighter license plates, discussed legislative session from 2025 session and possible 2026 issues, OSHA-NFPA

status, Federal grant funds status, State Grant status, hosting NVFC Fall Conference at Rapid City, and the SD Fall Fire Conference at Spearfish in September, and general membership topics for the June Membership meeting.

Other items coming of interest include the changeover of incident reporting systems to the NERIS (National Emergency Response Information System). FEMA will be starting national rollout of the system to departments starting in May. Each of the various FEMA Regions are designated a start month. South Dakota is slated for November 2025.

You can go to the NERIS website <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/>

Hello South Dakota Firefighters, the firefighter association met the weekend of March 15 to finalize the plans for State Fire School June 13-14, 2025 in Watertown, SD. We have a full slate of classes lined up and registration is open now, or will be soon, find it here at Home - South Dakota Firefighters Association.

Once again, I want to remind those departments that were awarded money during the South Dakota Volunteer Firefighter PPE Grant program from 2023 and have not signed the letter of acceptance or gotten their receipts turned in for reimbursement, that you have until May 31, 2025 or you will lose the money. There is a possibility of more grants like this but if we don't claim all the awarded money from the first round it is hard to justify getting more.

For those of you asking about retired firefighter vehicle license plates they are now available. You will need to get a form at Personalized & Specialty Plates | South Dakota Department of Revenue, fill it out and take it to where you get your license plates.

There have been dates added to the calendar for training with the MLFTU trailers, check them out if interested. Also, if you or an association you are a member of wants to request use of the trailer go to SDFA MLFTU Information - South Dakota Firefighters Association.

There are several District Fire Schools scheduled, go to Calendar - South Dakota Firefighters Association to see when and where. Remember you do not need to live in the district the school is in, everyone is welcome. Get out, meet new

Thoughts From the Treasurer

The Easter Bunny is almost here and that means spring is just around the corner. With the great weather in the past weeks, for the most part, it might be difficult to tell when spring actually arrives. Keep your fingers crossed.

As I write this month's article, the number of grass fires around the state has been unreal. Aberdeen area, Plankinton area, Cheyenne River Reservation, and who knows else. So far, I haven't heard of any injuries and that's the most welcome news. Maybe outbuildings but no homes or businesses. Once again, a testament to the fire departments, federal and state resources and the assistance of local farmers and ranchers. As I've said many times, we can't do it alone, it takes everyone. Job well done guys and gals.

The legislative session has just wrapped up and sometimes you

have to wait to see how some of the bills they passed will affect us. The bills to basically "freeze" taxable valuations were certainly not in our best interest. I'm assuming the Governors' bill, SB219, passed and we'll have to see its results. Once again it shows that the fire service needs to be proactive. We need to talk to all our legislators in the off season. They need to be aware if they are thinking about something, they should contact the fire service and see what it might do to them.

Taking on a little political part here, President Trump has been cutting and/or eliminating budgets or entire federal agencies. At this time, the National Fire Academy has been hit with no on-campus classes and employees fired. The US Forest Service, National Park Service, BLM have been cut. How will this change who responds to fires, we don't know yet. Where this will lead, no one knows at this time.

Fire school is only weeks away. Registration should be open now,

nfirs/neris/ for an introduction to the system and what your department can do to be ready.

The State has received some free XTL5000 mobile radios that are P25 capable. Contact state radio in Pierre for details on acquiring.

There are several District Fire schools taking place around the state. Check the SDFA website Events link to see where, when, and what there is to offer. I will have a session open to firefighters and the general public at Central District in Wessington Springs on April 12th. It is an introduction to the NVFC's Wildland Fire Assessment Program (WFAP). Wildfires aren't just in forests and mountains.

This program session will be geared toward farm and range-land and home property protection. What can owners do to help defend their property, or, their property to defend itself? With the size of some of the wildfires we've had across the state the past few months, we thought it would be a good introduction while it is fresh in people's minds.

Speaking of NVFC, check their website for the various free training, grants and giveaways. If you don't have anyone on your department as a member, I always recommend at least the officers.

Stay up-to date on Federal issues and what is happening around the country in the fire service.

The Lenten and Easter season is upon us. Growing up, I always enjoyed our family traditions. The seriousness of the Good Friday program. The inspiration of Easter Sunday morning church service. My mom was the church organist and played with a little more volume and got the congregation to sing extra loud. Or maybe it was to cover up my brothers' and me singing. Either way, it was enjoyable to me.

Gathering at a relative's house for noon dinner. (Yes, dinner is at noon; supper is evening) And making everyone a colored Easter egg with their name for each placemat at the table. Usually, a walk or something fun in the yard with cousins. Playing REAL lawn darts, or Frisbee and softball catch.

Whatever your Easter memories or traditions are, I hope you can continue to enjoy them, or start a next generation together. He has Risen, indeed.

Have an enjoyable Easter. Stay safe,

**CHARLIE KLUDT,
President**



Don Ward, Vice President

"I want to remind those departments that were awarded money during the South Dakota Volunteer Firefighter PPE Grant program from 2023 and have not signed the letter of acceptance or gotten their receipts turned in for reimbursement, that you have until May 31, 2025 or you will lose the money."

people and learn new techniques.

Lastest update on the new National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) for our state is they are set to roll it out in November 2025. More information can be found at National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS).

For those of us that need mois-

ture in your area, pray, do your rain dance or whatever you think could bring rain. Looking forward to seeing everyone in Watertown June 13-14 again this year. As always continue to train and be safe.

**DON WARD,
Vice President**



**Denny Gorton,
Treasurer/Past President**

"Is your district having a spring fire school? If so, what a terrific way to get training close to home. The Mobile Live Fire Training Trailers may just be there. The Board is working hard at getting them around and district fire schools will be a priority. Take advantage of the best training you will ever get."

or in the next few days. The Board offers several great discounts for EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION, and 100% DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION. Start getting your classes you want lined up and be ready to jump in early before your class fills up. You say your department does not have 100% Membership, not too late. Get those dues in right away to get all the discounts.

Is your district having a spring fire school? If so, what a terrific way

to get training close to home. The Mobile Live Fire Training Trailers may just be there. The Board is working hard at getting them around and district fire schools will be a priority. Take advantage of the best training you will ever get.

With all this, I'll close for the month and remember to stay safe and take care of your fellow firefighters.

DENNY GORTON



STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

State Fire School Registration To Open Soon!

Online registration for the 2025 South Dakota State Fire School will be available soon. Keep an eye on the SDFFA website and Facebook page for the latest up-

dates. We will announce when registration opens.

The SDFFA has been diligently preparing an exciting lineup of classes. The State Fire School offers an excellent chance to receive top-notch training right in your area. We encourage you to plan on attending this year's event.

The State Fire Marshal Staff

will be present throughout the weekend, so feel free to stop by and say hello. We look forward to seeing you there.

The State Fire School is scheduled for June 12-14 at Lake Area Technical College in Watertown.

PAUL MERRIMAN,
State Fire Marshal



Paul Merriman, State Fire Marshal
"The SDFFA has been diligently preparing an exciting lineup of classes. The State Fire School offers an excellent chance to receive top-notch training right in your area. We encourage you to plan on attending this year's event."

SDFA AUXILIARY REPORT

Happy Spring! We have sprung ahead with longer days and spring cleaning is probably on your minds. A few Fire Safety tips while you are spring cleaning.

1. Clean dryer vents
2. Check for water around electrical appliances and make sure the cords are not frayed.
3. Store flammable materials safely in a cool, dry place, and away from heat sources.
4. Clear out any clutter and

have an escape plan.

5. Remove dead leaves and other debris from around your home.

6. Check grills to make sure they are in working order before using them. Your grill should be at least 10 ft. away from your home.

7. Test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors and replace the batteries. If there is any corrosion from the batteries, it is a good idea to replace the

alarms and detectors.

Happy Cleaning!

Last month you were given a peek at some of the classes that will be happening for the auxiliary during State Fire School. By the time you are reading this article, the full registration should be out or will follow shortly after. So, watch for the registration and get signed up for classes, and pay your dues if you have not paid them. We look forward to a great time of learning and fellowship at

Cheryl Anderson, Auxiliary Treasurer

"So, watch for the registration and get signed up for classes, and pay your dues if you have not paid them. We look forward to a great time of learning and fellowship at State Fire School."

State Fire School.

CHERYL ANDERSON,
State Auxiliary Treasurer

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SDFA OFFICER REPORTS

Spring is in the air, geese are flying overhead, grass is doing its best to green up and red flag warnings seem to be an everyday event. Conditions are dry for most of us and some of you have been running your tails off. Seems there have been several large wildfires across the state. The great thing about this thing we call the fire service is the number of you that are willing to drop everything and spring into action to solve an emergency. All of this comes from your dedication and training. Imagine what society would be like if people like you didn't step up to serve.

2025 has been a great year so far for training. We started out with a fantastic instructor's conference in Mitchell followed by the Rush-

more Conference in Rapid City. In February the Les Lukert Conference in Kearney, NE never disappoints. On a training note, spring district schools are in full swing with quality events happening around the state. Be sure to check the SDFA website for all district schools and other training events. In case you have not heard, there is a new Watertown based training cadre called Firefighter Skill Mastery. This group has sponsored several Tactics on Tap events in Watertown and are sharing their talents and knowledge with everyone. It is refreshing to see young, enthusiastic firefighters coming up with new ideas and classes. It says a lot about the future of our fire service. These Tactics on Tap events are taking the country by



Rick George,
Central District Director

"One more great thing that has happened in our state, Rapid City Fire Department member Zach Auer has become the first firefighter from South Dakota to complete the Georgia Smoke Divers program."

storm and provide a unique training atmosphere in a casual setting. I'm looking forward to attending some in our state.

One more great thing that has happened in our state, Rapid City Fire Department member Zach Auer has become the first

firefighter from South Dakota to complete the Georgia Smoke Divers program. The mental and physical toughness it takes to complete this program is a testament to Zach's commitment to being his best. Congratulations Zach! You make us all proud!

Stay hungry brothers and sisters! Hungry for knowledge, hungry for improvement and hungry for the opportunity to serve in the greatest job on the planet!

RICK GEORGE,
Central District Director

Beresford Fire and Rescue saves the day

Beresford Fire and Rescue still does cat rescues. Submitted by Tarz Mullinix.



What's an inch tall & can move a fire truck?



A classified ad in the South Dakota Firefighter!

To get your truck moving fast email

jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com!

Apply Now for New Turnout Gear and Helmets Through MSA and DuPont's 2025 Globe Gear Giveaway

13 departments will each receive four new sets of turnouts and four helmets

MSA Safety, DuPont Personal Protection, and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) are teaming up once again to provide personal protective equipment to volunteer fire departments in need through MSA and DuPont's Globe Gear Giveaway. Proper gear is essential to the safety, health, and effectiveness of firefighters, yet many volunteer fire departments struggle to find the funding for up-to-date turnout gear.

In 2025, the program will provide 13 volunteer fire departments across the U.S. and Canada with four sets of Globe® turnout gear and four MSA Cairns® helmets each, for a to-

tal of 52 jackets, 52 pants, and 52 helmets distributed to help protect first responders. In addition, the first 500 applicants will receive a complimentary NVFC membership, courtesy of MSA Safety.

"Volunteer fire departments are the backbone of their communities, but many face financial barriers when it comes to obtaining needed PPE," said NVFC Chair Steve Hirsch. "Through this partnership with MSA and DuPont, we're able to help equip firefighters with the gear they need to do their jobs more safely and effectively. We're proud to have collaborated on this program for over a decade."

The application period is now open. To apply, departments must meet the following criteria:

- Be over 50% volunteer
- Serve a population of 25,000 or less
- Be located in the U.S. or

Canada

- Be an NVFC member (MSA will provide complimentary memberships to the first 500 applicants)
- Demonstrate a need for new gear

View the full criteria and submit your application by June 1 at www.nvfc.org/gear.

Winners will be announced monthly between July and December. Stay tuned to the NVFC web site, *Dispatch* newsletter, and Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and Instagram pages, as well as the Globe Facebook page, for details.

ABOUT GLOBE MANUFACTURING COMPANY AND MSA SAFETY

Globe Manufacturing Company, a leader in fire service protective clothing, is a subsidiary of MSA Safety Incorporated. MSA Safety Incorporated (NYSE: MSA) is the global leader in advanced safety products, technologies and solutions. Driven by its singular mission of safety, the Company has been at the forefront of safety innovation since 1914, protecting workers and facility infra-

structure around the world across a broad range of diverse end markets while creating sustainable value for shareholders. With 2023 revenues of \$1.8 billion, MSA Safety is headquartered in Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania and employs a team of over 5,000 associates across its more than 40 international locations. For more information, please visit www.MSAsafety.com.

ABOUT DUPONT PERSONAL PROTECTION

From first responders to industrial workers, DuPont provides a wide range of personal protection solutions, including some of the most trusted and innovative brands in the industry, such as Kevlar®, Nomex®, Tyvek® and Tychem® to meet your safety needs. More information can be found at personalprotection.dupont.com.

ABOUT DUPONT

DuPont (NYSE: DD) is a global innovation leader with technology-based materials and solutions that help transform industries and everyday life. Our employees apply diverse science and expertise

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ABOUT THE NVFC

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides critical resources, programs, education, and advocacy for first responders across the nation. Learn more at www.nvfc.org.

ACTION FIRE PHOTOS NEEDED!
Please send them to jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com along with information to explain the photo.



Beresford semi-tractor trailer fire

On Monday, March 17, on I-29 at mile marker 47 a semi-tractor trailer was fully involved in fire. The fire was so intense that burning tires were exploding and flying off the rims. This was a major concern for the firefighters and to the safety of the traffic moving by the scene. Northbound traffic was stopped while the firefighters gained control of the event. Once the danger was under control the traffic was permitted to flow past the scene again. The emergency responders are totally focused with the event and the public's safety as well as their own. This call reflects the critical need for the awareness of the driver / operators (traffic) to slow down and show their concern for the emergency responder's safety while protecting others. The fire had to be attacked from the traffic side. Fire trucks were used for crash barriers protecting the attack crews until the traffic could be stopped and later directed past the scene. A secondary grass fire was stopped just short of getting into town. (Tarz Mullinix ISO, Beresford Fire Department).



Parker Fire rescue call

Parker Fire was dispatched the morning of Feb. 4 to a rescue call at the courthouse demolition site, with a report of a tipped excavator with the operator trapped inside. Upon dispatch they also asked for the Sioux Falls Fire Rescue heavy rescue team, along with the tower truck from the Lennox Fire Department. The operator was safely removed by Parker Fire units prior to the arrival of the SFFD rescue team. The operator was reached by cutting through a window in the excavator. No injuries occurred to contractors or firefighters. Thank you to Sioux Falls Fire Rescue and Lennox Fire for their quick response. Parker Fire would also like to thank the contractors on scene for working closely with us. They had assistance from the Turner County Sheriff's Department, Turner County Emergency Management, and the Parker Ambulance. A special thank you to the dispatchers with Lincoln County Communications in Canton for their assistance with the request for extra crews. All teams worked well together. Submitted by Max Masters, Chief, Parker Volunteer Fire Department.



BATTERIES GO BOOM!

By JERRY KNAPP

What does a spring, stick of dynamite, a propane tank, gasoline and a lithium ion battery have in common? They all are ESS ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS. You may find an energy storage system (like a Tesla Powerwall in a garage or basement) in a home that has solar power. Following are a few details from the NFPA report from the Surprise AZ battery explosion that nearly killed the hazmat team that may save your life at one of these incidents. See the full report at: UL-FIRESAFETY.COM

SURPRISE AZ 2019

After being on scene several hours the hazmat team opened the door of the battery container. Those outside described a jet of flame that extended at least 75 feet out and 20 feet vertically. One member was blown 70 feet thru the chain link fence, the other 30 feet from the door, 2 nearby team members were unconscious, helmets and scba ripped off.

FACTS

1. Tremendous lack of knowl-

edge about ESS fire suppression.

2. The extinguishing system in the container does not put the fire out.

3. Company reps on scene were unable to advise the FD on tactics; said the smoke was halon.

4. Thermal runaway can start spontaneously and spread to other batteries.

5. Even a few cells involved produce massive volumes of flammable/explosive and toxic gasses: hydrogen, ethylene, methane and CO.

6. Thermal imagers and hazmat air monitoring instruments are not effective. TICS cannot locate the source of the fire and air monitors clog quickly due to soot.

7. Water may cool/slow down thermal runaway..... who wants the nozzle at an electrical fire?

8. When cooling water stops the runaway resumes possibly for days or weeks.

9. There may be stranded electrical energy in the damaged battery cells.

BOTTOM LINE: Our job is life safety. Get people out of danger. Do not put firefighters in danger. Let it burn, just my hum-

ble opinion of course!

Jerry Knapp is the Chief of the Rockland County, NY Hazmat Team, and is a 49 year veteran Firefighter/EMT with the West Haverstraw NY Fire Department. He served on the technical panel for the UL residential fire attack study. Knapp is the co-author of two books: House Fires and Tactical Response to Explosive Gas Emergencies published by Fire Engineering He is the owner of Suburban Tactical Inc specializing in fire officer and firefighter training.

Retired Firefighter License Plates Available

The South Dakota Department of Revenue Motor Vehicle Division has the new license plates available for Retired Firefighters.

The license plate application form is located in the DOR website for motor vehicles, <https://my605drive.sd.gov/>, found in the Personalized and Specialty plates menu. Complete and print the form to submit at your county treasurer's office.



You will need the signature of the department chief on the form to acknowledge you are a retired firefighter with at least 10 years of fire service.



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Southeast District Spring Fire School

SATURDAY APRIL 26TH, 2025
 VERMILLION FIRE/EMS TRAINING CENTER
 1530 S. DAKOTA ST.,
 VERMILLION, SD 57069

Schedule of Events

REGISTRATION: 0700 – 0800
DISTRICT MEETING: 0800 – 0815
CLASSES: 0830 – 1200
LUNCH (PROVIDED): 1200 – 1230
DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP MEETING: 1230 – 1300
CLASSES: 1315 – 1630

• **Class 1A: Firefighter I & II Final Practical's** – Morning - Class Description: This class will be for those that need to take and pass their final practical examination to receive the State of South Dakota Certification. Candidates should bring their green cards and practical paperwork to sign off on.

• **Class 1B: Live Burn** - Afternoon Class - Description: This class will satisfy the requirements for the live burn portion of the state certification process. This will consist of fire behavior, thermal layering, nozzle advancement, and water application in different fire environments.

Equipment Requirements: Structural PPE and SCBA, Spare Cylinder

Instructor: Layne Stewart, South Dakota Instructor Lead Evaluator along with Vermillion Fire EMS Instructor Cadre

• **Class 2: Auto Extrication** – All Day - Class Description: This class will begin with an overview of vehicle structure and supports. Class will progress into cribbing and making entries using a multitude of different tools. As the day progresses the class will begin to increase in complexity until time runs out.

Equipment Requirements: Suitable Rescue or Structural PPE

Instructor: Chris Bornitz, Heiman Fire Equipment Sales Representative, Brent Soland, Genesis Rescue Tools

• **Class 3: Coordinated Fireground** - Class Description: This 6-hour live fire class on coordinating truck and engine company function on the fireground. The morning session will be made up of two separate classes. Truck Company Function and Engine Company Functions. During the afternoon session the two courses will combine to participate in coordinated live fire training.

Truck Company Functions: This class will give the student the basic knowledge and ability to be able to perform several Truck Company Tasks on the fireground. Skills included will be Forcible Entry, Search, Ventilation, and VES.

Engine Company Functions: This class will cover engine company functions, particularly aggressively advancing handlines and flowing appropriate GPM to extinguish the fire. The student will develop the knowledge and skills to operate in any position in an engine company.

Equipment Requirements: Structural PPE, SCBA, Spare Cylinder, Certified South Dakota Firefighter.

Instructors: Scott Reiland & Tanner Sittig, Pheasant Country Fools

2025 South Dakota Highway Patrol Association Fishing Tournament

JUNE 8 - 10, 2025
QUESTIONS? CALL...
ROB MAYER - 770-1940
AUSTIN SCHMITZ - 830-6682

WELCOME

This event is for fun, fellowship, and bragging rights. We hope you have a great time! Sunday, June 8, there will be a social, meal, and final registration from 4-6 p.m. at the Izaak Walton League, in Pierre. There will be a mandatory, rules meeting at 6 p.m. Participants *must* be at the rules meeting. This tournament is extremely popular and will be limited to the first 50 teams *paid* in full. Registration must be no later than two weeks before the event, for us to obtain a correct count for meals.

ELIGIBILITY

The event is open to retired and active law enforcement officers and those working in related fields—judges, court services, state's attorneys, jailers, motor carrier, homeland security, ambulance, fire, etc.—and their appropriate guests.

LOCATION

The tournament headquarters will be at the Izaak Walton League, 1200 Izaak Walton Road, Pierre SD. The Izaak Walton League will have full bar service available on site. Tournament check-in times will be discussed at the Sunday rules meeting and after Monday's supper. Boundaries are South Dakota waters connecting with Lake Oahe and Lake Sharpe. *Teams must be present and checked in at the tournament headquarters for weigh-in, by the specified time for each day. No exceptions!*

FISH

Only walleye and sauger will be counted in the tournament. All GFP rules must be followed. Only eight fish will be weighed per team. The minimum size is 15 inches with two fish allowed over 20 inches. Only one team allowed per boat. Teams may fish up to four people per boat. Teams may catch a full limit, with exception to the four-man teams who are only allowed to catch a three-man limit. *Only eight fish may be brought to the weigh table on ice. No exceptions!* No fishing is allowed after the rules meeting until the tournament.

ENTRY FEE

Cost is \$75 per person which includes tournament entry fee and two free meals. Only tournament entrants are entitled to the free meals.

OPTION POTS

There will be biggest walleye and biggest other fish option pots. Also, all registered teams have the option to buy themselves in three different option pots- \$25, \$50, and \$100.

The option pots are 90% payout. Shortly after the rules meeting concludes, teams will have the opportunity to buy other teams who did not purchase themselves in the option pots. If

you have questions on how the option pots work, contact one of us or ask at the rules meeting Sunday night.

SOCIAL

There will be a raffle drawing following the meal on Monday night. If you know of a sponsor who would like to donate a prize, food, or money, please let us know. We also encourage you to stick around for the awards ceremony immediately following the weigh-ins on Tuesday.

LODGING

There are several options for camping and cabins a short distance from the tournament headquarters. You can contact them for availability. Farm Island and Oahe Downstream Rec areas are nearby. Reservations can be made 90 days in advance at South Dakota State Park reservations (1-800-710-2267). There are various hotels available in the Pierre-Ft. Pierre area as well. Please make your own reservations, as soon as possible, at the lodging of your choice. List Team Captain's Phone and E-mail

Checks can be made payable to: SDHP Fishing Tournament

Mail entry forms to: South Dakota Highway Patrol, Attn: Robert Mayer, 5316 W. 60th ST N., Sioux Falls, SD 57107



Plankinton controlled burn

Plankinton Volunteer Fire Department conducted a controlled burn on the evening of March 11. Photos from the Plankinton Volunteer Fire Department Facebook page.

Recent wildfires in Black Hills serves as reminder Rapid City, Pennington County have plans in place

Rapid City and Pennington County have plans in place to deal with wildfire emergencies.

By BRYAN SAVIC

With several wildfires in recent weeks here in KOTA Territory, Rapid City and Pennington County SD, have plans in place to deal with wildfire emergencies.

“There’s an entire hazardous fuels reduction program and wildland urban interface plan, in addition to some of the larger community and countywide plans that we have,” the director of emergency management for Rapid City and Pennington County, Dustin Willett, said.

The hazardous fuels mitigation program helps decrease the potential of wildfires by reducing the buildup of fuels. It includes slashing and burning and even meeting with homeowners to talk about what to get rid of to prevent their house from going down in flames.

“This is a great time of year to be getting the pine needles out of your gutters, mowing the taller grass back away from your home and other structures,” Wildfire Mitigation Lieutenant for the Rapid City Fire Department, Eric

O’Connor, said.

Willett said there are a lot of ways people can make their homes fire-resistant.

“We don’t want wood piles stored right up against the house,” Willett said. “The types of materials people choose to build with - do you have fire-resistant building materials, or do you have, you know, wooden decks that are dried and tinder ready?”

O’Connor said wildland urban interface is any area that has a

transition of wildlands intersecting with homes, which poses challenges when dealing with wildfires.

“It drastically changes our tactics and our strategies to not only extinguish the fire but, we’re also tasked with protecting property and lives,” O’Connor explained.

Willett believes the biggest misconception with wildland urban fires is that they’re only a summer problem.

“I think the biggest misconception is people for years got

accustomed to the idea of there being a fire season,” Willett said. “And what we’ve seen anymore is that the climate, the fuels, the conditions are such that we can have damaging fires pretty much any month of the year.”

With the wildfires that devastated communities in Southern California several months ago, Willett believes it would be more of a matter of saving lives than trying to stop a wildfire of such force, if one of that magnitude were to break out in Rapid City.

“At some point, wildfire is an unstoppable force of nature,” Willett said. “So, when you look at those types of extreme conditions, there really isn’t, ‘Hey we can deal with this;’ At that point, it’s a matter of how fast can we get out of the way and can we protect life. Because, once conditions get that severe, once you have that much fire being driven by those kinds of winds and those kinds of fuels, it’s not a matter of, ‘Did you move the wood pile away from your house.’”



FIRE CONSUMES CAR IN EARLY MORNING WATERTOWN FIRE

In the early morning of Wednesday, Watertown Fire Rescue put out a large car fire.

At about 3 a.m., Feb. 19, Watertown Fire Rescue was dispatched to the 900 block of 39th Street Southwest for a report of a car fire, according to the release. Upon arrival, crews found a fully-involved engine compartment fire in a full-size car, the release stated. The car was located about 10 feet from a residence.

Watertown Fire Rescue quickly extinguished the fire, which was contained to the vehicle. Four personnel responded on Engine 4. As of this time, the cause of the fire is undetermined, and the vehicle is considered a total loss, according to the release.

(Watertown Public Opinion, Watertown, Feb. 21, 2025)

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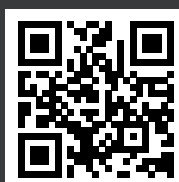
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CARROLL | 113 N. Griffith Rd. · Carroll, IA 51401 · P712-792-3143

PROPOSED 2025 STATE FIRE SCHOOL CLASS LIST

1. Pump Operations
2. Kids Fire Safety
3. Volunteer Fire Department Need to Know
4. Natural Gas Explosions
5. NERGIS/Incident Reporting
6. Flashover Burn Trailer
7. SCBA Confidence
8. Truckless Truckie
9. Grain Entrapment
10. Auto Extrication Basic
11. Auto Extrication Advanced
12. SDFA MLFTU Train The Trainer
13. Rural Fire Tactics
14. Building The Fire Officer
15. Rope Rescue Basic
16. Rope Rescue Technical
17. Tactical Medicine For First Responders
18. EVOC
19. Chaplain Training
20. Wildland Urban Interface
21. Grant Writing
22. Reading Smoke
23. Traffic Incident Management
24. Public Information Officer
25. Building Construction
26. Fire Department Leadership
27. Winning With The Engine You Have
28. Certified FF Tasks and Practical Skills Testing
29. Water Supply Officer
30. Fire Strategies/Tactics For Modern House Fires
31. No Gimmick Handline Management

Nutella® and National Volunteer Fire Council Partner to Support Local Fire Departments through Nutella Stacks for Giving Back

\$25,000 in fire department grants and 150 pancake breakfast fundraiser kits will be awarded

As a brand that aspires to spread smiles for over 60 years, Nutella® is seeking to shine a light on those who spread positivity in their local communities through “Stacks for Giving Back.” In the second year of the program, Nutella has once again partnered with the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) to award \$25,000 in fire department grants. Consumers can also nominate fire departments to receive a kit to help pull off their next pancake fundraiser.

Volunteer fire departments often struggle to find adequate funding to purchase needed equipment, recruit and retain firefighters, and keep up with high pressure demands due to increasing call volume, new training requirements, and much more. To help departments secure the necessities they need to best serve their communities, Nutella has partnered with the NVFC to award \$5,000 grants to five deserving departments. To be eligible to apply, departments must be over 50% volunteer, serve a population of 25,000 or less, be located in the U.S., and the individual applying or department chief must be a member of the NVFC. Applications are due April 30.

In addition, many fire departments rely on donations received through fundraising activities such as pancake breakfasts. Nutella hopes to honor and celebrate all that firefighters do by providing them the materials and tasty products they need to hold a fundraising pancake breakfast. Now through April 30, consumers can nominate their local fire departments for a chance to receive a Nutella Pancake Breakfast Kit that contains the neces-

sary supplies and ingredients to host their next delicious fundraiser.

“Volunteer firefighters are neighbors helping neighbors in their time of need, yet often departments must make do on tight budgets that make it difficult to obtain critical equipment, gear, training, and other necessities,” said NVFC Chair Steve Hirsch. “We are proud to partner with Nutella for the second year to honor the volunteer fire service and provide much-needed funding to help firefighters do their jobs safely and effectively.”

“There’s no better way to unite communities than by enjoying a delicious pancake breakfast while giving back to those who keep us safe,” said Noah Szporn, senior vice president of spreads, Ferrero North America. “Our firefighters bring such dedication to their work, and Nutella is delighted to show our appreciation through Stacks for Giving Back.”

Learn more and apply for the chance to receive a grant at www.nvfc.org/nutellastacksforgivingback.

Nominate a local department for the chance to win one of 150 Nutella Pancake Breakfast Kits at <https://nutellastacksforgivingback.com/nvfc>.

In addition, proceeds from the Stacks for Giving Back special through March 31 at the Nutella Café in Chicago will be donated to NVFC’s Volunteer Firefighter Support Fund.

This pancake season don’t forget to share your Nutella pancake breakfast creation and spread the love for your local firehouse on X, Facebook, and Instagram by using the hashtags #NutellaPancakeBreakfast and #StacksForGivingBack.

ABOUT NUTELLA®

Nutella was born in 1964. The unique hazelnut spread that millions of people around the world love is made with a meticulous selection of high-quality ingredients and an exacting, artisan-

inspired production. Today, the popular hazelnut spread is available in around 160 countries worldwide and has expanded to offer delicious snacks filled with creamy Nutella, including Nutella Biscuits, Nutella B-ready, and Nutella & Go.

ABOUT FERRERO®

Ferrero began its journey in the small town of Alba in Piedmont, Italy, in 1946. Today, it is one of the world’s largest sweet-packaged food companies, with over 35 iconic brands sold in more than 170 countries. The Ferrero Group brings joy to people around the world with much-loved treats and snacks including Nutella®, Kinder®, Tic Tac®, and Ferrero Rocher®. More than 38,000 employees are passionate about helping people celebrate life’s special moments. The Ferrero Group’s family culture, now in its third generation, is based on dedication to quality and excellence, heritage and a commitment to the planet and communities in which we operate.

Ferrero entered the North American market in 1969 and has grown to more than 5,100 employees in 15 plants and warehouses, and eight offices in North America across the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. It has expanded its presence and portfolio with the addition of iconic brands such as Butterfinger®, CRUNCH®, Keebler®, Famous Amos®, Mother’s Cookies®, and other distinctive cookie and chocolate brands.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL (NVFC)

The NVFC is the leading non-profit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides critical resources, programs, education, and advocacy for first responders across the nation.



Rapid City cat rescue

Rapid City Fire Department firefighters, and South Dakota Game Fish & Parks crews arrived at the intersection of Minnesota and Fifth Streets in Rapid City, after receiving reports of a young mountain lion in a tree Sunday morning, March 16. Multiple people posted images to social media showing the large cat lounging in the tree. Crews reportedly shot the mountain lion with a tranquilizer dart. When he fell asleep, the cougar fell from the tree and firefighters caught him. No one - human or animal - was reportedly harmed in the incident.

HOT SPRINGS FIREFIGHTERS RESPOND TO SEMI TRACTOR FIRE INSIDE OLD ARMORY BUILDING

A possible electrical fire inside a semi tractor parked inside the former Armory building east of Butler Park prompted first responders to be dispatched to the area at 2:52 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 23. The original 911 call reporting the fire was made by a neighbor of the building, located at 665 S 11th Street.

Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department and the Hot Springs VA Fire Department were called to what is known as the old Armory building, owned by Rich-

ard Olstad, which had smoke rolling out of the windows and roof at the time of their arrival.

The Hot Springs Ambulance and Police Department as well as the Fall River County Sheriff’s Office also responded to the fire.

The structure itself, a one story 52-foot x 110-foot building which was being used for storage, was not on fire. However, a 1997 Peterbilt Semi tractor, which was the source of the fire inside the building, was a com-

plete loss.

There were no occupants in the building and there were no reported injuries. The semi was the only major loss inside the building, which reportedly also had other things stored including other vehicles, a boat, a camper and a hot air balloon.

Firefighters extinguished the fire and the scene was released at 5:12 p.m. Fire Investigation is ongoing.

(Fall River County Herald, Edgemont, Jan. 2, 2025)

Firefighter Skill Mastery

****ABOUT FSM:****

Firefighter Skill Mastery (FSM) was established in late 2024 as an initiative to provide support to fire departments in their training endeavors by hosting specialized training events at no cost to attendees. This initiative has evolved from a simple concept into a multifaceted organization and has now achieved status as an established nonprofit entity. The funds generated during our events, such as Tactics on Taps (ToT), are strategically allocated to facilitate hands-on training opportunities.

****OUR MISSION STATEMENT:****

The mission of FSM is to empower fire departments by offering training and resources of the highest standard essential for the protection of their communities. We are dedicated to enhancing firefighter skills, safety, and preparedness through the provision of free or low-cost training programs and hands-on workshops. Additionally, we are committed to promoting excellence within the fire service while fostering opportunities for networking and collaboration among professionals in the field.

****GOALS:****

A primary objective of FSM is to conduct events such as Tactics on Taps (ToT) four times annually, provide hands-on training at fire departments, and organize a significant event, such as a H.O.T. (Hands-on Training) class, during the late summer or early fall. We perceive FSM as a collaborative effort for the region and actively seek input from individuals engaged in the fire service.

Another crucial objective is to recognize the outstanding instructors within our region, ensuring they receive the acknowledgment they merit. It is our belief that our region is home to passionate and dedicated fire instructors. We strive to cultivate the understanding that while the enhancement of knowledge and skills in the fire service is immensely beneficial, the process is

often challenging. By promoting networking and camaraderie, we aim to elevate the skills and expertise of all individuals within our region.

****ABOUT EVENTS:****

Our first event emerged from casual conversations around the fire station. In the wake of the pandemic, there has been a marked shift towards online training events. However, the fire service is inherently a blue-collar profession that necessitates in-person events and hands-on training to enhance the overall efficacy of the service. In pursuit of meaningful change, the group opted to host events designed to generate donations, which would subsequently fund a Hands-On Training (H.O.T.) class in the late summer. This initiative evolved into "Tactics on Tap" (ToT), envisioned as a platform for regional instructors to engage in discussions concerning topics of significance.

The inaugural class, entitled "First Due Company Training," was led by Tanner Sittig. This course concentrated on three structure fires, utilizing fire simulation software to facilitate in-depth discussions. Our objective was to create an inviting atmosphere conducive to meaningful dialogue around these crucial topics.

To provide context regarding Tanner, he has been a dedicated member of Watertown Fire Rescue since 2012 and has distinguished himself as an exemplary firefighter and paramedic, earning numerous accolades for his exceptional performance. A member of IAFF Local 1724 since 2013, Tanner served with distinction as union president for two years. He is also an active participant in the Watertown Fire Rescue Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team and South Dakota Task Force 1, where he has received advanced training in specialized operations. Furthermore, Tanner contributes his expertise as the training officer for the Pheasant Country FOOLS. We extend our sincere gratitude to Tanner Sittig for serving as the



inaugural instructor of ToT.

We would also like to acknowledge the companies that graciously donated their time, resources, and products for giveaways at the event. Our special appreciation goes to Watertown Brewing Company, Norse Fire Equipment, and Dinges Fire Company.

The second Tactics on Tap was held on March 23, 2025, at Watertown Brewing Company. The featured class of the event was "First5 Last5," instructed by Andrew Sebek. This class is designed to cultivate a proactive mindset among Engineers. The initial five minutes of any incident establishes the tone for the entire response, while the concluding five minutes are vital for facilitating team member development. It is essential to set a strong tone at every level. The Engineer, in collaboration with an Officer, must be equipped to manage a range of scenarios, including fires, motor vehicle accidents, rope rescues, EMS calls, and hazardous materials incidents. Proactivity and possessing the requisite skills and knowledge at the scene are imperative for the Engineer. This class was focused on fostering a mindset that supports a robust foundation for teams and enhances the operational effectiveness of the fire department.

Regarding Andrew Sebek, he has devoted 12 years of service to Watertown Fire Rescue, where he serves as a Firefighter/Paramedic and has recently advanced to the position of Fire Apparatus Operator (FAO). In addition to his operational roles, Andrew has been an instructor in the Med/Fire Rescue program at Lake Area Technical College for the past six years. His strong work

ethic has garnered him commendations from Watertown Fire Rescue, highlighting his commitment to exceeding the expectations associated with his responsibilities. Additionally, Andrew is a member of the Watertown Fire Rescue Urban Search and Rescue team and participates in South Dakota Task Force 1.

****Hands-on Training Events:****

Firefighter Skill Mastery has been traveling to various departments to conduct two-hour training classes that can be easily replicated for your department on a training night. We provide all necessary materials, including PowerPoint presentations, PDFs, and cited sources, to the departments we visit. Currently, our focus is on teaching the skill of removing gear from a downed firefighter. We have recently conducted training sessions in De Smet and Sisseton.

We do not charge for the class sessions, and all personnel from Firefighter Skill Mastery who assist with the classes do so on a volunteer basis. Our team is dedicated to hands-on instruction and is passionate about firefighting. In exchange for this training, we kindly request some food and refreshments, which will allow us to sit down and discuss firefighting while strengthening our relationships within the fire service.

If your department is interested in supporting Firefighter Skill Mastery, we would greatly appreciate any voluntary donations. We understand that not all departments may have the ability to contribute. These donations will help fund the large-scale Hands-on Training (H.O.T.) class we are developing.

****PODCAST:****



Firefighter Skill Mastery has launched a podcast called "Under the Helmet." This podcast features discussions about our events and the topics covered during those sessions. It serves as a supplement to our training events, providing a behind-the-scenes look at our instructors' thought processes. During state fire school, we plan to record several podcasts with different groups and would love to hear your guest suggestions.

****Contact Information and Region:****

You can reach Firefighter Skill Mastery through the following means:

- Message us on Facebook Messenger or Instagram
- Call or text us at: 605-949-1989
- Email us at: firefighterskillmastery@gmail.com

Initially focused on supporting northeastern South Dakota, we are now expanding our reach to include a broader area that spans southern North Dakota, eastern Minnesota, northwest Iowa, and northeast Nebraska.





Green Acres Fire, Fall River County

These are images of South Dakota Wildland Fire (SDWF) firefighters assisting with suppression of the Green Acres Fire in Fall River County about three miles southwest of Hot Springs in early March. The fire was reported just after noon on Saturday, March 1. SDWF had a dozer, hand crews, engines and other staff actively engaged in the effort. SDWF was one of multiple agencies (state, federal, and local) assisting USFS. The fire was controlled after several days at 340 acres. Submitted by Steve Long, Public Information Officer, South Dakota Department of Public Safety.



Rapid City's Fire Station One nears completion

Busiest fire station in Rapid City gets much needed upgrade

By **JERRY STEINLEY,**
News Center One

After several years and several million dollars, the Rapid City Fire Department finally has the chance to take advantage of a brand new downtown facility.

In December, fire personnel moved into the new facility that doubled the size of the original station from 20,000 to 40,000 square feet.

"We had significant demands and needs that we needed to expand and make this larger," Rapid City Fire Chief Jason Culberson said. "We have many of our divisions and pieces that are outside at different locations, working that need to be downtown here."

So, we moved into the new additions, and now they're working on remodeling the existing station."

Fire and life safety, training staff, mobile medics, and community health care workers will move to the new location when it's completed in June.

Culberson said there are more

needs for administrative and other space than when the original fire department was built in 1975.

"More functions happening today on the administrative side, the operational side, it stays about the same, other than we're adding a couple of peak load ambulances back down into this district, and then our mobile medics and our community healthcare workers will be down here too," he said.

The newly remodeled fire station one will be designed to better serve the growing community.

"More efficient for the community," Culberson said. "We're going to have all of those pieces for the administration in one place so we can work collaboratively, better together. It also gives a great space for our operational folks to be able to operate out of."

There are eight fire stations in Rapid City. Fire station one is the administrative hub and busiest station of the eight answering about 8,000 calls a year.

An open house for the public to see the 20,000 square foot addition and remodeled existing station will be held in June.

Central District Spring Fire School

April 12, 2025

Wessington Springs Fire Station

• **AG RESCUE: BEYOND THE GRAIN BIN - Full day.** The agriculture industry is unique! As a Firefighter are you ready to respond to an incident on a farm? **Course Description:** This Ag rescue course is designed to be a one-day class to assist Individual rescuers in honing their skills in unique area of the modern farm. This course will be fast paced and hands on. Only a short time will be spent in the classroom, the bulk will be in skills rotations. The students need to arrive with an attitude of learning. **Requirements:** Students must bring proper PPE to include wildland gear, steel-toed boots, hard hats, gloves and safety glasses. **Main Topics Covered:** Farm accident case studies • Grain Bin entrapment • Entanglement • Tractor Rollover Entrapment • Ag Haz Mat • New Technology • Instructors-Rural Fire Training Services

• **PUMP OPERATOR TRAINING - Half day class offered both AM and PM** First Line Apparatus Training will be bringing their pump simulator to Wessington Springs on April 12th! This pump class is ideal for the first-time pump operator or someone looking to improve their skills. This class is 4 hours and will be offered both AM and PM. These classes fill up quickly at state fire school so don't miss this chance! Spots are limited on this one so get signed up early. Instructor: Chris Noeldner

• **WILDLAND FIRE ASSESMENT PROGRAM - Half day PM only.** Is your community safe from wildfires? This class will walk you through the steps you can take to protect your home and property from wildfire. This information is brought to you by the South Dakota Firefighters Associate, National Volunteer Fire Council and US Forest Service. The class will be open to everyone interested and will be offered in the afternoon only. Instructor: Charlie Kludt, President, S DFA

• **FIREFIGHTER REHAB: TAKING CARE OF OUR OWN - AM class only.** Firefighting is hard work, and our risk of injury or death increases substantially as we become fatigued. So, what are you doing to reduce the chances of firefighter death or injury? In this class Jerauld County Ambulance officials will discuss their rehab program, what to look for and how/why you should implement a rehabilitation program. This class is a good fit for all firefighters and EMS personnel. Instructor: Deb Fastnacht

• **RURAL WATER SUPPLY - AM Class only.** The class will discuss sources of water including conventional and non-conventional for wildland and structure fires. The class will also discuss 1. Rural water supply in non and limited hydrant areas 2. Typical and non-typical fill and dump site operation 3. Some examples of participant water supply methods and techniques 4. Drafting, relay pumping and dry hydrant operations

The class will look at some typical water supply vehicles and equipment. Instructor: Kenny Marks, Pierre Fire Department

COST: \$15.00 REGISTRATION INCLUDES LUNCH AND BUSINESS MEETING

SCHEDULE

7:30-8:30 AM - Registration/Opening Statements

8:45 AM-12:00 PM - Classes

12-1:30 PM - Lunch and Business Meeting

1:30-4:30 PM - Classes

WESSINGTON SPRINGS

FIRE HOUSE

210 DAKOTA AVE.

WESSINGTON SPRINGS, SD 57382

For additional information contact Roger Roberts 605-730-2164, Rick George 605-461-9190.

SAVE THE DATE!

2025 FIRE SCHOOL

June 12- 14 • Watertown

NEED NEW GEAR FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT?

Every year Fire and Iron MC Station 49 holds a ride for responders event. A portion of the proceeds will go to a randomly drawn volunteer fire department in eastern South Dakota as a cash donation.

The money can be used for gear, equipment, training, updates or whatever your department chooses.

Go to https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf_z7l-zB6PNiq9k4xABE7oHTHml0-QDmsAkciLrFvFFgwihL6Q/viewform?fbclid=IwY2xjawJBWT9leHRuA2F1bQIxMAABHc259stmY_EG7JVQ-v-2RH47Ir6PGO3EG6Z6DeKvH-h8o6IKOR2tDFaHGRA_aem_vlxw05DdTKthf30L0xq_zQ

Answer four simple questions and you will be entered to be drawn. All applications must be turned in by June 1, 2025.

NEED NEW GEAR FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT?

EVERY YEAR FIRE AND IRON MC. STATION 49 HOLDS A RIDE FOR RESPONDERS EVENT. A PORTION OF THE PROCEEDS WILL GO TO A RANDOMLY DRAWN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT IN EASTERN SOUTH DAKOTA AS A CASH DONATION.

USE THE MONEY FOR GEAR, EQUIPMENT, TRAINING, UPDATES OR WHATEVER YOUR DEPARTMENT CHOOSES.

HOW DO YOU APPLY? SIMPLY CLICK ON THE LINK POSTED WITH THIS FLYER. ANSWER 4 SIMPLE QUESTIONS AND YOU WILL BE ENTERED TO BE DRAWN. ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE TURNED IN BY JUNE 1, 2025.

Only one application per department please.

REVILLO FIRE DEPT



RECENTLY DELIVERED:



REVILLO FIRE DEPT

HEIMAN FIRE PHOENIX QUICK ATTACK

- WATERAX BB-4 Pump
- 400 gallon G3 Fire Copoly Tank
- Scotty Firefighter Foam System
- TFT Front Bumper Monitor
- Code 3 Lighting Package
- Thunderstruck Bumper
- WARN Winch
- Extensive Storage!

Contact your Heiman Fire Partner for more info!



WHEN PROTECTION MEANS EVERYTHING.



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