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NOVEMBER 2026 • VOL. 19 - NO. 9

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At 11:28 on Oct. 10, Edgemont Volunteer Fire Department was dispatched to a vehicle fire on Hwy 18. EVFD Chief was first on scene and called for second alarm due to spreading grass fire. The driver of what turned out to be a cargo truck was uninjured, but the truck was a total loss. Grass fire was controlled quickly also. EVFD units 23, 44, 41, 31 and 10, along with FRSO responded. All Edgemont units returned safely by 13:00.



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DID THAT BUILDING JUST LAND FROM MARS?

By JERRY KNAPP

That is what Frank Brannigan said to me at FDIC a few years ago after I asked him how the American Fire Service was going to tactically deal with trusses. This was after the recent Hackensack Ford Fire where 5 Firefighters were killed and trusses were the hot topic of the year.

He asked me if we have truss buildings in our first due area, “Yes of course.” Then why don’t you know about them? Frank’s next question: How long have these buildings been in your area? Even more meekly this time I responded, “40 years or more.” Frank was kind of boisterous, he responded, “Then why don’t you know before the fire?” Someone else asked this Fire God a question mercifully terminating my discussion.

I was invited to do a flashover survival class just outside St Louis Mo and met Chief John Kriska, local fire chief and retired US Marine. John ran a small department and preplanned every one of the commercial and industrial buildings in his first due. This was before computers and Google earth so it was painstaking work for him. One night his engine company was dispatched to a restaurant fire. His pre-plan that came one the dispatch printer with the verbal dispatch.... laid out the strategy....if there is heavy fire, exterior attack only...why? Unprotected steel bar joist truss roof assembly. His captain stopped the guys at the front door, just before the collapse

when the heavy HVAC unit fell from the roof to the floor which would likely have caused several LODDs. This was long before UL studies and Bill Gustin’s “*intelligent firefighting*” thoughts.... so *NOT being aggressive* when the building is against you and trying to kill your crew, was a bold, brave and unique strategy.

So here we are, 2026 with more computing power in our phone than on the lunar lander and we are still surprised by building construction when we pull up to the fire building in our very small first due area. Shame on us, all of us. Shame on our leadership at all levels. Why don’t we know? We know the hazards are there but seems like it is more fun to be surprised when the fire is blowing out the windows. FUN are the first three letters of FUNERAL as in LODD FUNeral, no fun there, just widows. Charity starts at home.

A day after I got home from FDIC, my department did a walk thru of an old service station as a pre-plan for a drill. It was a gas station I had gone to for 35 years in my first due area. Training plan was to do a roof cutting drill. I was shocked to look up and see the picture below. If I had cut that roof at a fire it is very likely myself and whomever was with me would have been killed or injured in the fall to the concrete floor below. The picture needs no explanation except to note the roof was 5/4 X 6” boards about 12’ on center steel I beams covered with plywood. Frank was right, “Why did I not



know?” Maybe it is time to modernize our brains and our fire suppression strategies to align more with successful elite teams. Navy SEALs conduct extensive intelligence operations before they take out bad guys like binLadin. They even have rehearsals on buildings built to simulate their target. We

hope we remember the hazards. Army Generals don’t just throw their regiments and battalions at an unknown enemy strength or unfamiliar terrain, they use pre-incident intelligence to their advantage to minimize loss of lives. All sports teams send out scouts to gain pre-game information to help ensure victory. For sports teams a loss means another mark in the loss column. For us, it is another LODD. Why don’t we know? When will we modernize our approach? When will we change to as Bill Gustin lectured us to “Intelligent Firefighting?”

For more information see: Fire Engineering Magazine Jan 2023 *Did that Building Just Land from Mars?* and Fire Engineering Feb 1998 Pre-Incident Planning (Kriska case history)

NEXT: MODERN STRATEGIC TACTICAL OPERATIONS PLAN...Success not Shame

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

NOV. 7, 2026: Battle of the Blades, Woonsocket.

DEC. 4-6, 2026: SD Fire Chiefs Annual Leadership Conference, Deadwood, SD.

MARCH 12-14, 2027: 39th annual Northwest Iowa Regional Fire School, Sergeant Bluff-Luton (IA) High School. nwiowafireschool.org

JUNE 10-12, 2027: South Dakota Fire School, Watertown, SD.



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NVFC Celebrates 50th Anniversary at Fall 2026 Conference

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Board of Directors held its annual fall conference in Owensboro, KY, on September 23-25, 2026. In total, 59 directors from 39 states attended, including Dan Hodge, North Haines VFD, Rapid City, and Charlie Kludt, Viborg VFD, Viborg from South Dakota. The board conducted business, heard from a lineup of speakers, received updates on critical matters impacting the volunteer emergency services, and celebrated the NVFC's 50th anniversary.

SPEAKERS

A series of speakers addressed the NVFC board on a range of issues, from electric vehicle fire response to grant programs that benefit the volunteer emergency services.

Mike Marusic, senior director, community affairs, Anheuser-Busch, provided an update on the Anheuser-Busch Emergency Drinking Water for Wildland Firefighters program.

Bret German, corporate responsibility analyst, State Farm, and **Lori Shirley**, senior program manager for NVFC, provided an update on the State Farm Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program.

Christian Vogt, research engineer for UL Research Institutes' Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), discussed FSRI's recent research findings and recommendations for electric vehicle fire incident response.

Charlie Mathewson presented to the board on Operation Lifesaver's Railroad Investigation/Incident Safety Course, which aims to keep first responders safe in a rail environment.

David Osborne, chair of the Airport-Sorgho Volunteer Fire Department in Kentucky, shared his story of resilience after being shot while on the job as a police officer.

Jeff Buchanan of FirstNet Built with AT&T and **John Olson** of FirstNet Authority spoke on the public-private partnership and the status of FirstNet.

Mitch Petterson of GM spoke about getting responders ready for vehicle automation.

Chief Al Yancey of the IAFC Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (VCOS) provided an update on VCOS initiatives including the Critical Thinking Academy.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

NVFC committees met in advance of the conference, but the full board heard report outs on key issues including the NVFC's strategic plan, the status of fire service legislation, FEMA grant criteria development, updates to the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program, recent research findings on the impact of training on recruitment and retention, cancer screenings, and more. In addition, the board created a Community Risk Reduction Committee and participated in a strategic discussion on recruitment and retention.

NVFC 50TH ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATION

Attendees celebrated the 50th anniversary of the NVFC at a dinner held at the Bluegrass Hall of Fame & Museum and hosted by the Green River Firefighters Association. The NVFC was incorporated in 1976 and continues to serve as the only national organization entirely dedicated to supporting and advocating for the volunteer fire, emergency medical, and rescue services. The dinner was followed by the annual NVFC auction, which raised \$8,000 for the NVFC Health & Safety Fund.

HOSTS AND SPONSORS

The NVFC extends our gratitude to the Kentucky Firefighter's Association, Green River Firefighters Association, and Indiana Volunteer Firefighters Association for hosting the meeting. We also appreciate the support of our sponsors Anheuser-Busch; Clarion Events Fire & Rescue Group; Columbia Southern University; ESIP; FirstNet, Built with AT&T;

General Motors/OnStar; National Fire Protection Association; National HeroPlus Program; Provident; Tesla; and Wendell's Mint.

NEXT CONFERENCE

The NVFC Spring 2027 Conference will take place May 14-16 in Alexandria, VA, with an Advocacy Day preceding the event on May 13.

ABOUT THE NVFC

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire and emergency medical services. The NVFC unites and supports volunteer and combination fire and EMS organizations through education, advocacy, leadership development, and collaboration. Guided by professionalism and innovation, we provide the tools and resources needed to protect communities, advance responder health and safety, and prepare leaders for the future. Learn more and join at www.nvfc.org.



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Department Name: _____ Total Number of Members: _____

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Fires Per year _____ # Rescue/Extrication Calls Per Year _____ Is Your Dept. Fire & EMS Combined? _____

Pumpers _____ # Tankers _____ # Rescue _____ # Ambulance _____ Other: _____

Names in picture: (on separate form please)

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Officer's Name: _____

Office: _____

U.S. Fire Administration Firefighter Fatality Notification

BRYCE KAUFMAN, 17, A.F. Dobler Hose and Ladder Company, Girard, PA, died on Sept. 21. On September 20, 2026, Junior Firefighter Bryce Kaufmann was injured in a vehicle collision while traveling by electric bicycle to the fire station in response to an emergency call. Junior Firefighter Kaufmann was transported to a hospital where he passed away on September 21, from his injuries.

RYAN CUTTER, 46, U.S. Forest Service, Payette National Forest, McCall, ID, died on Sept. 20. Pilot Ryan Cutter, along with Pilot Greg King, was conducting bucket drops over the Dome Fire in Yosemite National Park when the helicopter he was piloting crashed. Both pilots, who were the only people aboard the helicopter, were killed. The cause of the crash is under investigation.

RICHARD ALLAN "BUBBA" WRIGHT, 48, Eagle Rock (VA) Volunteer Fire and Rescue, passed away on Sept. 29. On June 23, 2016, Assistant Chief Richard Alan "Bubba" Wright was swept under fast-moving water while assisting with rescue efforts after the area experienced extreme flooding. When fellow firefighters got to Assistant Chief Wright, he was in cardiac arrest. CPR was initiated and he was resuscitated. Assistant Chief Wright was then transported to a hospital where it was determined he suffered a traumatic brain injury that impacted his ability to move and speak. Assistant Chief Wright passed away on September 29, 2026, from the injuries he sustained in the 2016 incident.

CHARLES J. JONES, 52, Council Bluffs (IA) Fire Department, died on Oct. 8. On October 5, 2026, at 4:25 a.m., Firefighter-Paramedic Charles "Chuck" Jones responded to a residential structure fire with the Council Bluffs Fire Department. While on scene, Firefighter-Paramedic Jones was involved with the extrication of a victim from the fire. After this, Firefighter-Paramedic Jones told fellow first responders that he could not reenter the building and went to on-scene rehabilitation. The scene was cleared and Firefighter-Paramedic Jones returned to the station with the fire department. On the same day, at approximately 6:30 a.m., Firefighter-Paramedic Jones responded to a medical call. Upon arrival, the patient was loaded into an ambulance. As Firefighter-Paramedic Jones was attempting to take the patient's blood pressure, he stopped and exited the ambulance. When fellow first responders got to Firefighter-Paramedic Jones, he was experiencing a stroke. Firefighter-Paramedic Jones was immediately transported to a hospital in a fire department engine. He was subsequently transported to a higher care facility the same day and remained there until he passed away on October 8, 2026.

ANDREW J. BROKES, 24, City of Durham (NC) Fire Department, died on Oct. 8. At 3:15 a.m. on October 8, Firefighter Andrew Brokes responded with the City of Durham Fire Department to a multi-story structure fire. At 3:31 a.m., while Firefighter Brokes was searching for victims inside the building, a portion of the roof collapsed, causing the second floor to collapse as well. Firefighter Brokes suffered fatal injuries in the collapse and was pronounced deceased at the scene. Two other firefighters were taken to a hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries.

RICK JOSEPH FUENTES, 26, Buckholts (TX) Volunteer Fire Department, passed away on Oct. 11. On Oct. 11, Firefighter Rick Joseph Fuentes was responding to a vehicle and grass fire as the driver of a fire department apparatus when it left the road and rolled over. Firefighter Fuentes suffered fatal injuries in the accident and was pronounced deceased at the scene. The accident remains under investigation.

Ride for a Piece of Deadwood VFD History

Deadwood Custom Cycles has designed, built, and generously donated a oneofakind custom bike, and one lucky ticket holder will take it home. Every ticket purchased helps bring another piece of our community's story back to life.

The funds raised will support the continued restoration and display of Engine 02, a 1947 Dodge Fire Truck with a long and winding history of service. Delivered to Deadwood in December 1948, Engine 02 protected this community for two decades before being passed along to the St. Onge Vol-

unteer Fire Department, then the Pine Haven, Wyoming Volunteer Fire Department. Eventually sold to a private owner, the truck ended up in a pasture near DeSmet, South Dakota — far from the town it once protected.

In 2018, the Deadwood Volunteer Fire Department purchased the truck for \$2,500 with the dream of returning it to parade duty. After four years of mechanical restoration, Engine 02 is once again streetlegal and proudly rolling through town. Now, we're ready for the next chapter: restoring the truck's appearance and preserving

SDFA OFFICER REPORTS

One day two little boys were playing, and one asked the other, "wouldn't you hate to wear glasses all the time?" The other little boy responded, "No-o-o, not if I had the kind Grandma wears. She sees how to fix a lot of things, and she sees lots of nice things to do on rainy days, and she sees when folks are tired and sorry, and what will make them feel better, and she always sees what you meant to do even if you haven't gotten things just right. I asked her one day how she could see that way all the time, and she said it was the way she had learned to look at things as she grew older. So, it must be her glasses." Why in the world would I tell you that story? After all we know it was not her glasses, it was her attitude. The point is to remind you, that it does not take "Grandma Glasses" to see the world differently, we need an attitude adjustment.

Firefighter, John Velez, in an article for Fire Fighter Nation, asked the question, "What is Filling your Cup?" Now he is not asking do you like Coke or Pepsi, or do you like your coffee black or with cream and sugar. He is wondering what it is that you are focusing on day after day. He notes that social media is packed with "information" about this or that important topic. Now you have to keep in mind that some of this "information" is actually generated, not by real people, but social media companies or people who want to sell you something! If you start to follow all this discussion about the problems in the fire service, it is easy to caught up in that chaos and forget that we should be looking for solutions, not more problems.

Early in this article Velez offers this observation: "What you focus on expands." A quote from Dr. John C. Maxwell. The quote is driven home by the old example of buying a new vehicle. Before you owned your vehicle, you probably never noticed any others that looked like yours. Once you purchase that vehicle and drive it off the lot, however, you begin seeing them at every intersection and store." I know that has happened to me, you start to see your

it as a historical display between parade appearances.

Your raffle ticket helps make that possible. It supports local history, honors generations of volunteer firefighters, and gives you a chance to win a custom bike built with craftsmanship and heart.

Tickets are \$100 each with only 500 to be sold.

To purchase a ticket you can click on this link: [DVFD Bike Raffle](https://dvfdbikeraffle.com) or email deadwoodfiredept@outlook.com.

Buy a ticket. Support the restoration. Keep Deadwood's legacy rolling.



Rodney Veldhuizen, Chaplain

"Might I challenge you to try the 30-Day Challenge? Read at least one verse or two each day for 30 days and see what happens to your attitude. If you really want to go big, add that verse to your phone or a Post-It-Note where you see it during the day and then see what happens."

car everywhere! That is a simple example of focus expanding and it is more than just a vehicle.

Velez is reminding us to pay attention with these words: "I challenge you, then: Where are you spending your time, money, and attention? If a change is necessary, take the appropriate steps to make a change." For years I complained about gaining weight. Did I do anything? Heaven's no! That is until my doc suggested if I wanted to see my grandchildren, I might want to do something different... Then change was investigated and changes made. Long story short, I dropped nearly 50 pounds and blood pressure dropped with exercise. Was it easy? No, getting to the gym at 6:00 AM is never simple, but life saving.

Velez is not talking about weight loss he is talking about something more basic and vital, it is our attitude. While you can make steps to change your weight, it also begins with changing your attitude. I like his insight here: "We are in control of taking the necessary steps to ensure we show up with a positive attitude every day of our lives. But our attitude follows our focus. When we focus on negativity, bad leadership, and incompetencies, we tend to see the bad things in everyone we come in contact with. When we focus on all the wrong things, we will never truly make any progress, see growth, or have a positive outcome."

How do you start to focus on the right things? How about looking at this list? 1) Stay away from negative postings on social media. Keep scrolling. 2) Recognize crew members (generally others around you) when they are doing something right. 3) Feed your mind with positive leadership books and podcasts. 4) Pray and read your Bible to center yourself spiritually. On this last one you might say but Chaplain I am not religious? Well, I am not "religious" either if it means I have to do something the way someone else tells me it has to be done because "We have always done this way!" But I am religious if you mean reading the Bible makes me a better man and helps change my attitude? You see something happens to us if we take the time to read a verse or two from the Bible regularly. Might I challenge you to try the 30-Day Challenge? (No this is not found in any self-help books, as a matter of fact this is my own creation today) Read at least one verse or two each day for 30 days and see

what happens to your attitude. If you really want to go big, add that verse to your phone or a Post-It-Note where you see it during the day and then see what happens.

I would suggest you think about something else to change your attitude. Velez and I share these things in common. Begin your day by going outside. I happen to live in the beauty of the Black Hills and so it has become my habit after I get out of bed, I start the coffee pot and step outside, year-round! According to Velez, this is some kind of mental/physical reset that starts the day off right.

Then what about inside? Let me borrow Velez's words: "The moment I turn my alarm off is typically the last time I will look at my phone for a while. This is where I can focus on what's going on with me on the inside. This may look different for everyone. For me these moments are typically spent in prayer thanking God for another day and responding with gratitude for the life I get to live. This is also where I will try to get my devotion done and any reading I would like to do for the day."

Finally, movement. This does not have to be a 3-hour gym session. It could be a 15-minute walk, or a run, or a morning workout. That activity is not important, it is vital however, that we get out and move. Don't ask me for a scientific data on this but movement seems to be a cure for many of our ills and if we would invest more in movement, it can alter our attitudes.

At the end of the day you don't need Grandma glasses, just pay attention to what you are focusing on or as Velez says as he closes out his article: "Every day, you get to choose what you pour into your cup. If you fill it with purpose, gratitude, and growth, it will overflow into the lives of everyone around you. What you focus on expands, so make sure you're expanding the right things."

At the end of the day, remember no one can make us feel anything, we have to choose, and as long as we choose to focus on purpose, gratitude and growth, you never know what will change around you. Once again, don't be afraid to crack that Bible, who knows what might change?

Blessings,

CHAPLAIN ROD

DEPARTED FIREFIGHTERS

Deputy Katherine Ann Frank

March 22, 2000 – October 12, 2026

Deputy Katherine Ann Frank, age 26, passed away Monday, October 12, 2026 at Sanford USD Medical Center in Sioux Falls, SD. The Funeral Service was held on October 19, 2026 at the Denny Sanford PREMIER Center in Sioux Falls. On Tuesday, October 20, 2026 a visitation was held in Dawson, MN at Grace Lutheran Church followed by a private family interment.

Katherine Ann Frank was born on March 22, 2000, in Fargo, North Dakota. She was adopted and later moved to Madison, Minnesota, before attending school in Dawson, Minnesota, where she graduated from Dawson-Boyd High School in 2018.

Throughout high school, Katherine worked as a lifeguard at Madison Pool and at Jubilee Foods in Madison, Minnesota. Following graduation, she moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, where she began her career in law enforcement at the University of Minnesota. Serving from 2018 to 2021, she rose to the rank of corporal. She then worked at Hy-Vee in Oakdale, Minnesota, from 2021 to 2022, before serving as a cor-

rectional officer at the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls from 2022 to 2024. In 2024, Katherine joined the Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office as a deputy sheriff, where she proudly served her community until her End of Watch on October 12, 2026.

Outside of her career, Katherine found joy in the everyday moments that made life meaningful. She loved trying new recipes, reading, playing video games, watching television shows and movies, enjoying musicals, quilting, shopping, and spending time with her family and boyfriend. Among her favorite dishes to prepare were beef stroganoff and orange chicken, although she was considerably less enthusiastic about cleaning up the kitchen afterward.

Katherine had a personality that was unmistakably her own. Her family describes her as witty, sarcastic, and awkwardly funny in the most endearing way. She was energetic, competitive, headstrong, and unapologetically herself. She had a way of bringing laughter into a room, often when people least expected it, and her quick

wit and distinctive sense of humor made her someone who was impossible to forget. Katherine embraced life in her own way, and those who knew her best loved her all the more for it.

Katherine was also deeply valued by her law enforcement family. She was a member of the Fraternal Order of Police and the Minnehaha County Deputies Association, both in Sioux Falls. Her colleagues remember her as dependable, hardworking, joyful, funny, and full of spirit. She was known for maintaining a positive attitude, rarely complaining, and finding humor even on difficult days. Her quick jokes and playful, spicy personality brought laughter to those around her, and she had a gift for connecting with people and helping de-escalate difficult situations.

Her colleagues will also remember one of Katherine's signature quirks: her insistence on wearing long sleeves, even when temperatures reached 90 degrees. When asked about it, she would confidently reply, "My A/C works in the car." It was a simple, unmistakably Katherine response—one



that captured her humor and left those around her smiling.

Grateful for having shared in her life are her biological siblings: Kristyne Hamberg-Frank of St. Paul, Minnesota; Thomas Frank of Marshall, Minnesota; Tyler Frank of Boyd, Minnesota; and Abby Frank of Richfield, Minnesota; her adoptive sibling, Wendy Frank of Vergas, Minnesota; her boyfriend Austin Hilgeman, Sioux Falls, SD;

her niece, Isabelle Frank of Boyd, Minnesota; her grandparents, Deborah and Daniel Schuler of Boyd, Minnesota; her uncles, Darren Schuler (Bayley) of Hutchinson, Minnesota, and Dale Schluter (Shany) of Eau Claire, Wisconsin; her aunt, Darcy Chaouch of Lakeville, Minnesota; and numerous cousins.

Montie Frederick Horn

June 28, 1936-September 17, 2026

Retired Minnehaha County Emergency Management Director, Montie F. Horn, 90, Sioux Falls, died Thursday, September 17, 2026, at Ava's House in Sioux Falls, after an extended battle with health issues.

Visitation with family present will be 5-7pm, Wednesday, September 23, 2026, at Westside Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls. Funeral Services will begin at 10am, Thursday, September 24, 2026, also at Westside Lutheran Church. A livestream link will be provided to watch remotely. Interment will follow at Hills of Rest Cemetery, Sioux Falls, with Full Military Honors. In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established in Montie's honor.

Montie was born on June 28, 1936, in Sioux Falls, SD to Vernon and Mary (Graham) Horn. After living in numerous locations in and around the Sioux Falls area, he graduated from Hills High School in Hills, MN in 1955. Montie was married to Josephine Ward from 1957 until 1980; they had three children – Jeffrey, Brian, and Nancy. In 1981, he married Karen Clauson, and they had one child, Matthew.

In 1954, while still in high school, Montie joined the SD Air National Guard, receiving an Honorable discharge in 1962. In 1960,

he started his first career at John Morrell where he worked for 13 years.

Montie discovered his true calling when he started volunteering with Minnehaha County Civil Defense in 1966. In 1973, when he was appointed to be the Deputy Coordinator, Montie started full-time employment with Civil Defense. After being named Director of Civil Defense in 1986, Montie assumed responsibility for disaster preparedness in Minnehaha County and oversight of the Rescue Squad, Dive Team, and Police Reserves.

He served in that position for 28 years, until his retirement in 2001.

During his time at Civil Defense (Emergency Management), Montie was instrumental in founding the South Dakota EMT Association and purchasing the first "Jaws of Life" in the state. His impacts on disaster preparedness and emergency medical services at the county and state levels are still evident today.

After his official retirement, Montie settled into another career working for the Renner Corner Locker, until 2019.

Accomplishments in Montie's life and career include obtaining an airplane pilot's license, serving as an EMT for Sioux Falls Ambulance, and acting as a bail bondsman.

In addition, he held terms as President of the following organizations: SECA Citizen Band Radio Club, South Dakota Emergency Management Assn, Southeast Emergency Services Assn, South Dakota Emergency Medical Technicians Assn, and Hills, MN, Future Farmers of America.

Montie was a Minnesota FFA State Farmer and a Lifetime Member of the following associations: South Dakota Emergency Medical Technicians, South Dakota Emergency Management, and Minnehaha County Fire Chiefs. Montie also served on the Minnehaha County American Red Cross Board and the Moose Lodge Board of Directors.

Notable events he played a major role in responding to include the 1968-69 blizzard and flood, United Flight 232 plane crash in Sioux City, 1993 floods, and the Spencer tornado.

The accomplishment Montie was most proud of was becoming a Blood Brother with the Sioux Indian Medicine Man, Papa Bear Whitmore, Grandfather of the

Bear Clan in August 1998. His Sioux name was Washta-Canta which means Good Heart.

Montie's good heart shone through in his relationships with people; conversations with friends and colleagues included great stories rich in detail, jokes, and bits of wisdom. Known for his dry sense of humor and his big laugh, Montie was considered by some to be the "Life of the Party."

Montie enjoyed spending time with his family, day trips to the casino, hunting, fishing, trips to the Black Hills, woodworking, tracking his family ancestry, dabbling in the art of Schnapps making, sunsets at Lake Madison, and a nightly cribbage game with Karen while enjoying a cocktail.

Grateful for having shared his life are his wife, Karen Horn, Sioux Falls, SD; four children, Jeffrey (Holly) Horn, Indianapolis, IN, Brian (Mary) Horn, Sioux Falls, SD, Nancy (David) Janak, Westminster, CO, and Matthew

(Christina) Horn, Hartford, SD; nine grandchildren, Kayree, Lindley, Shayla, Justin, Tasha, Kaitlyn, Ethan, Aubriana, and Stella; nine great-grandchildren; Karson, Kinsley, Lathan, Trace, Brynn, Bryson, Callen, Jack, and Nora; as well as many other relatives and friends.

Montie is preceded in death by his parents, Vernon and Mary Horn; five siblings; great grandchild, Hadley Horn; and mother-in-law, Esther Clauson.



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SDFA OFFICER REPORTS



Charlie Kludt, President

"NVFC Chairman Steve Hirsch, on behalf of the 700,000 volunteer firefighters in the United States, presented an NVFC fire helmet to President Trump. It was definitely an honor and humbling experience to be there. Thank you for all the kind sentiments after the notification came out. I never thought the volunteer fire service would take me to the White House."

Busy Month

First and foremost, on behalf of the SDFA Board or Directors, and the entire fire service of South Dakota, our sincerest condolences to the family and colleagues of fellow emergency responder, Minnehaha County Deputy Katherine Frank, who lost her life while responding at an incident.

Her service was held October 19th in Sioux Falls with final resting place in Dawson, MN. Her tragic and unfortunate line of duty death in October is a somber reminder of the unforeseen circumstances we can face on an incident. The SDFA Fall conference was held in early October at Pete Lien & Sons Shooting complex near Rapid City.

Speakers Calen Maningas, Shawn Fischer, and Tom Merrill had great sessions for us. Something for all levels of experience. We are planning to be in Aberdeen for the 2027 & 2028 Fall Conferences.

The following weekend in Pierre, we held the State Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service honoring those who lost their lives for the fire service in South Dakota. We honored the family of Nick Van Dam from Murdo as we added his name to the monument this year.

Dan Hodge and I attended the NVFC Fall Conference in Owensboro, KY in October. We have an overview article in this month's newsletter. The news and updates from grant sponsors, Anheuser-Busch, Ricochet gear, MSA Globe gear, and State Farm Insurance was good to hear. They are all planning to continue their grant programs for volunteer fire departments. Along with the updates for the free training opportunities that continue to be made available through the NVFC.

The Underwriter Laboratories Fire Research Institute had a report the testing they completed on hybrid and electric vehicle fires. I fully recommend reading the findings and seeing the videos of their

tests. A link can be found on the UL or NVFC.org website.

The State Fire Assistance grant funding letters were sent out to departments in October. Your department should have received the notice in mid-October. There was over \$14 million in requests for the \$5 million funds. Be sure to thank your local legislators for supporting and funding this grant opportunity. Send in an article and in-action photos of your purchases.

Along with Fire Prevention week, October was First Responder Appreciation Month. Thank you to all the Firefighters, EMS, and Law Enforcement personnel across our great state. Our continued dedication and collaboration of efforts for those in their most critical time of need often goes unnoticed. But the satisfaction of knowing we are giving our best efforts to help someone can be the best recognition.

As part of First Responder Appreciation Month, I had the unique opportunity and invitation to attend an appreciation luncheon at the White House Rose Garden.

The White House contacted the NVFC office for a list of volunteer firefighters to attend this appreciation event, along with career firefighters, EMS, and Law Enforcement personnel from local, state, and Federal agencies. The White House contacted and invited 20 volunteer firefighters from across the country to attend the event. There were volunteer firefighters from 17 different states at the luncheon. We were part of the 120 first responders in attendance.

NVFC Chairman Steve Hirsch, on behalf of the 700,000 volunteer firefighters in the United States, presented an NVFC fire helmet to President Trump.

It was definitely an honor and humbling experience to be there. Thank you for all the kind sentiments after the notification came out. I never thought the volunteer fire service would take me to the White House.



Harvest is moving along quickly. Fall sporting event playoffs are underway. Which means Thanksgiving is here in short order.

Let's all be thankful for the gifts and abilities we have in our life. We pray for safety and blessings

for each and every one of us.

I hope you have an enjoyable Thanksgiving.
Stay safe,

CHARLIE KLUDT
SDFA President

Volunteer Firefighters Present Trump With Helmet and a Prayer for God's Protection

The statement NVFC Chairman Steve Hirsch made during his presentation of a fire helmet to

President Trump on October 15th at the White House Rose Garden.

Steve Hirsch, chair of the National Volunteer Fire Council, stood at the White House and handed President Trump a firefighting helmet on behalf of America's volunteers. "Mr. President, on behalf of three quarters of a million volunteer firefighters across this nation, we want to present you with this helmet," Hirsch said. He described



SEE NVFC, PAGE 7

CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED ADS FOR THE NEBRASKA 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@nebraskafirefighter.com to place your personal or departmental ads.

SDFA OFFICER REPORTS

Hello South Dakota Firefighters,

What a fantastic South Dakota Firefighters Association Fall Conference. First, we had Calen Maningas from Rapid City. He talked about the differences between generations in the fire service, from how to effectively train to the different ways of handling stress. Saturday afternoon Shawn Fisher, widow of David Fisher who died in a LODD, recounted her experience with all things associated with the death of a loved one. One thing she emphasized was ensuring all of your beneficiary information is up to date and for

blended families, make sure things are in place for the proper placement of dependents. Then on day two, Tom Merrill from Buffalo, New York, presented a program called "Forged By Fire." He looks back at historical fires and other events that shaped our current fire service. A very good presentation about why some things in the fire service are the way they are.

October in South Dakota is the traditional start of several hunting seasons with many people going afield in pursuit of the wild game, good luck to all. This is also a time when many departments are host-

ing Firefighter 1 and 2 classes, good luck to all the new firefighters.

Finally, there are many celebrations happening in the next few months. Halloween just happened, Thanksgiving is about four weeks away, and the Christmas/New Years week is a month after that. For those travelling, check the weather and make sure your vehicle is up for the trip. Enjoy the time with your family and friends. Take the extra time needed to make all occasions safe.

DON WARD
VP SDFA



Don Ward, Vice President

"October in South Dakota is the traditional start of several hunting seasons with many people going afield in pursuit of the wild game, good luck to all."

Thoughts From the Tailboard

The month of November has started and that, for some, marks the official start of the holiday seasons. Thanksgiving is days away, hope you got that 25-pound turkey to feed all the family that's coming over. Christmas is now so close we are counting down the days. Wow. As I scribbled this month's scattered thoughts into my computer, the annual South Dakota Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service was a day ago. I try to be one of the firefighters who place a rose in the boot as that very special firefighter's name is called. I certainly didn't know many of these firefighters. Most all before my time or from across the State. However,

so many I do remember. As their name is said, I think to myself, yes, he died of a heart attack. He lost his life in a burn over on a wildland fire. He lost his life while training others. The names go on. I don't believe I can truthfully say I was friends or "buddies" with any. I don't recall drinking a beer, talking about old times or how their kids or grandkids are doing. I don't remember, but someone does. Tom Merrill says, "as long as you say their name, they are not forgotten." Again, every name was said and they were not forgotten. Rest easy.

The Fallen Firefighters Memorial was held in the Visitors Center at Capitol Lake. Seems that Mother Nature fooled all the weather forecasters. There was a lot of rain coming down. After the Service many of the over 100 attendees

went out to the Memorial. I was standing next to friends and family of Nick Van Dam. I had the extreme honor of explaining to them how the memorial came to be. How firefighter's hands were involved in every step of the process from design, to mining the marble, to casting the bronze to placing it and paid for with money from SD Firefighters. I admit I had tears coming down as I explained all this. The pride in the South Dakota Fire Service just overwhelmed me. Hopefully, it meant more afterwards to them also.

As I finish this November's article, the Fall Conference of the SD Firefighters Assn. was held last weekend. Once again what a tremendous program. They had Calen Maningas; *Bridging the Gap, Connecting, Training and*



Denny Gorton,
Retired Treasurer/Past President

"I had the extreme honor of explaining to them how the memorial came to be. How firefighter's hands were involved in every step of the process from design, to mining the marble, to casting the bronze to placing it and paid for with money from SD Firefighters. I admit I had tears coming down as I explained all this. The pride in the South Dakota Fire Service just overwhelmed me."

Leading Every Generation in the Fire Service; Shawn Fischer; Through the Smoke, A Family's Journey After Line of Duty Death and Tom Merrill; Forged by Fire. All three were just super. Next month's article I'll take a few minutes to expound on each and my take aways from each. There was

so much food for thought it was hard to digest it all. With all this babbling I better close for this month. Take care, be thankful this season for all we have. Remember to thank your firefighters for all they do.

DENNY GORTON

NVFC FROM PAGE 6

the people who leave their homes at night and their businesses by day to protect neighbors when they need help most, noting that his own wife stood with him because families carry the weight of that service. "So, while this helmet protects us in a fire or a wreck, we want it to protect you. We want God to wrap his protective arm around you, and use this helmet, remember that we want you to be protected by our Lord. Thank you, sir."

Trump accepted it and answered with the directness that has defined him since Butler. "You know, as he's talking I said, I could have used this in Butler. This would have been very helpful. I mean, I wish you gave it to me a little bit earlier. Anyway, thank you very much, Steve. That's beautiful. Appreciate it. Thank you very much." The exchange put a clear marker on the moment: first responders who answer the call for their communities offered both practical gear and a public invocation of divine protection to the president who survived an attempt on his life while speaking to them.



SDFA 2026 Fall Conference



Badlands District Fire School

This past Saturday, Sept. 19, the Winner Volunteer Fire Department was proud to host the Badlands District Fire School. A special thank you to the City of Winner for the use of their building, Sean Kelly with SDSU Extension, Mike Jones with the South Dakota Fire Marshal's Office, the Winner VFW for providing cookies, the Tripp County Ambulance Cadets for their assistance, the Winner Airport, and Statewide Ag for supplying tables and chairs. We would also like to thank all of the instructors who shared their knowledge and experience, as well as all of the students who attended and dedicated their time to training. Opportunities like these help strengthen our departments and ensure we are better prepared to serve our communities. Thank you to everyone who played a part in making this year's Badlands District Fire School a success! From the Winner Fire Department Facebook page.





Semi-tanker fire on I-29 at the Beresford exit (47)

On Friday morning, October 16, 2026, at 10:04, Beresford Fire and Rescue responded to a semi-tanker truck fully engulfed in flames at the Beresford exit on I-29. Investigation at the scene it was revealed the tanker was empty, with a low risk of explosion. Crews launched a direct attack on the burning rig. The fire was quickly knocked down and fully extinguished. Traffic kept moving during the incident because of a strong northern wind that blew smoke away from the travel lanes, allowing crews to work safely around the vehicle. Union County Sheriff's Department and SD Highway Patrol personnel assisted with the call.

TARZ MULLINIX, BFD

OPERATIONS:
After completing safety protocols, crews deployed two attack teams from two of the three responding

units and approached from the up-wind side. One line made a direct attack, while the second applied Class A foam to the 10 burning tires and leaking diesel fuel. The third unit, a tanker/pumper, relayed water to the main pumper. Combined on-scene water capacity was 4,250 gallons. Strong north winds intensified the fire but helped the streams cool the flames and carried smoke and by-products away from traffic lanes, allowing limited use of SCBA. Extreme heat penetrated the tanker trailer, melting seams and exposing burning insulation. The response went well, but one hazard remained beyond our control: **Stream of traffic.** Most motorists slowed down, but a few drove recklessly, with many watching the fire instead of the road.

Stay safe and alert!
BÉRESFORD FIRE & RESCUE



High-voltage demonstration held in Lake Preston

Thank you to Kingsbury Electric Cooperative and South Dakota Rural Electric Association for bringing their high-voltage demonstration trailer to the Lake Preston Fire Department. Members of Lake Preston Fire, Lake Preston Ambulance Service, Oldham Fire Department, Arlington Volunteer Fire Department, Arlington Ambulance, and DeSmet Volunteer Fire Department joined together to learn about how to safely respond to electrical emergencies and dangers of energized power lines.



Huron responds to vehicle fire

On Oct. 5, Huron Fire Department responded to an early morning vehicle accident followed by a car fire mid-morning.

ACTION FIRE PHOTOS NEEDED!

Please send them to jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com along with information to explain the photo.

LEL: Do You Really Understand What The Number Is Telling You?

By COLE KLEINWOLTERINK

You're dispatched to a commercial building for an odor of natural gas. Upon arrival, your crew grabs the four-gas meter and begins investigating. As you approach the building, the meter starts registering combustible gas. The reading climbs to 5% LEL, then 8%, and eventually 10%.

One firefighter looks at the screen and says, "It's only 10%. We're good." But are we?

Most firefighters have carried a four-gas meter at some point in their careers. We bump-test them, turn them on, and wait for the numbers to appear. We know that when the meter starts alarming, something isn't right. But how well do we actually understand what those numbers mean? More importantly, do we understand what the meter is, and isn't, telling us?

UNDERSTANDING LEL AND UEL

Before we can make sense of the numbers on our meter, we need to understand two terms: Lower Explosive Limit (LEL) and Upper Explosive Limit (UEL). The Lower Explosive Limit is the minimum concentration of a combustible gas or vapor in the air that can ignite when an ignition source is introduced. Below that concentration, the mixture is considered too lean to burn. The Upper Explosive Limit is the maximum concentration at which a gas-air mixture can sustain combustion. Above that concentration, the mixture is considered too rich to burn. The area between those two limits is what we call the flammable range.

Let's use methane, the primary component of natural gas, as our example. Methane has an LEL of approximately 5% and a UEL of approximately 15% by volume in air. That means when methane makes up between approximately 5% and 15% of the air, we have a mixture that can ignite if an ignition source is introduced. Pretty straightforward.

WHAT DOES 10% LEL ACTUALLY MEAN?

This is probably the most important part of this article, and something I think every firefighter should understand.

When your four-gas meter reads 10% LEL, it does NOT mean that 10% of the air around you is combustible gas. The percentage displayed on your meter represents a percentage of the gas's Lower Explosive Limit, not the actual percentage of gas in the air. That's assuming the meter is properly calibrated for that gas and operating correctly.

Let's go back to methane. We know methane has an LEL of ap-

proximately 5% by volume. So, if our meter is calibrated for methane and reads 10% LEL, the actual concentration of methane in the air is approximately 0.5%.

At 20% LEL, we're at approximately 1% methane by volume.

At 50% LEL, we're at approximately 2.5% methane by volume. And at 100% LEL, we're at approximately 5% methane by volume, which means we've reached the lower end of the flammable range.

Now think back to that initial scenario. Your meter is reading 10% LEL. Do you look at that number differently now?

Many meters have their first combustible gas alarm set at 10% LEL, with a second alarm at 20% LEL. Those settings can vary depending on the instrument and your department's configuration.

YOUR GAS METER ISN'T PERFECT

We put a tremendous amount of trust in our gas meters, but like any piece of equipment, they have limitations. Many traditional four-gas meters use catalytic-bead sensors to detect combustible gases. These sensors work by causing a small combustion reaction on a heated sensor element. The resulting change in temperature allows the instrument to estimate the amount of combustible gas present.

Here's the catch. These sensors need oxygen to work properly. If you're operating in an oxygen-deficient environment, your combustible gas sensor may not provide an accurate reading. In fact, it could significantly underestimate the amount of combustible gas present.

High gas concentrations can create problems as well. Depending on the meter, concentrations above its measurement range may trigger an over-range alarm or a protective sensor condition. That's why understanding your specific meter is so important. Different manufacturers and sensor technologies have different capabilities and limitations.

Another consideration is calibration. Most combustible gas sensors are calibrated using a specific gas, commonly methane or pentane. However, that doesn't mean the sensor responds the same way to every combustible gas it encounters. A meter calibrated for methane may respond differently when exposed to propane or another combustible gas. Manufacturers provide correction factors and guidance for these situations, but those factors depend on the specific instrument and sensor.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

First, know your equipment. What

type of combustible gas sensor does your department use? What gas is it calibrated for? What are your alarm settings? How does it respond to an over-range condition? If you don't know the answers, that's a great place to start with your next company drill.

Second, make sure we're actually checking these meters. A bump test verifies that the sensors respond to a known test gas and that the alarms function. It doesn't replace calibration, but it's an important part of making sure our equipment is ready when we need it.

Third, understand that gas concentrations can change throughout a building. Depending on the gas, it may collect near the ceiling, close to the floor, or in concealed spaces. Taking one reading at the front door doesn't tell us what's happening throughout the entire structure.

And finally, use the meter as part of your size-up, not as a replacement for it. We still need to consider the suspected gas, potential ignition sources, ventilation, isolation distances, and what the utility company can tell us.

Cole Kleinwolverink is a member of the Waukee Fire Department, Pleasant Hill Fire Department, Van Meter Volunteer Fire Department, and a Fire Science instructor at Des Moines Area Community College. Feel free to reach out to him at kleinwolverinkc@gmail.com with any questions, comments or inquiries. IFA training articles are archived at: bit.ly/iowaFirefighter



Benefits of being a 100% Department Member

When you pay your department dues, there are many advantages for your firefighters. Below is just one of the many.

INSURANCE 100% Membership provides the following:

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



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Aberdeen crews respond to house fire

On September 21, at approximately 3:56 p.m., Aberdeen Fire Rescue responded to the 100 block of N Kline St. for reports of smoke coming from a structure. An APD officer was driving by the residence and noticed smoke coming out of the roof vents and window openings. Fire crews arrived on scene of a single-family dwelling that had a working fire on the interior of the structure. The fire was quickly extinguished by fire crews. No one was in the structure during the event, and no one was injured. The cause of the fire is under investigation. Aberdeen Fire Rescue responding units- T1, R2, R3, M1, M3 and support apparatus. Other responding agencies- APD, Aberdeen Public Works, North Western Energy and the State Fire Marshalls Office.



Brookings area grass fire

On Oct. 7 at 3:16 p.m., the Brookings County Sheriff’s Office, Brookings Fire Department and Aurora Fire Department responded to a grass fire. It was reported the owner had been burning a pile of trees when the fire spread to a nearby tall grass where it quickly spread. The total area burned was less than an acre and damage is still being estimated.



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Rollover accident near Deadwood

On Saturday, September 19, Deadwood Fire & Rescue was paged to 385 near mile marker 121 just south of Deadwood for a vehicle rollover with possible entrapment. Upon arrival it was determined that a 2025 Mercedes Benz RV had overturned on a trail approximately 300 yards off of the highway, and bystanders were able to assist the patients in exiting the vehicle. Deadwood Rescue 3 and Brush 6 assisted with patient care, and traffic control while on scene. In addition, they assisted towing crews with removal. One patient was transported to Lead-Deadwood Monument Hospital for further treatment of injuries.



Fairburn Volunteer Fire Department Reflects on Demanding Year at Community Gathering

By REED LANGER,
KOTA Territory News

After months of hot, dry conditions across western South Dakota, a welcome rain cooldown set the backdrop as the Fairburn Volunteer Fire Department opened its fire hall doors to neighbors and supporters.

The gathering served as an opportunity for the community to come together and reflect on a challenging year that sent local crews far beyond Custer County lines.

Throughout the season, Fairburn firefighters joined mutual aid efforts across state lines, deploying resources to regional and national incidents.

"We started out this year in Texas for a couple months. We were down there with a truck, and then throughout the summer we've

been to Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, and multiple places here in South Dakota as well," department members noted. "So we've done a pretty good year of being able to send crews out and gain a vast amount of experience."

Crews brought those hard-earned skills back home to celebrate alongside the community with a dinner prepared by volunteer firefighter and local rancher Travis Hartshorn.

"I think it's important that we keep our local volunteer fire departments available for everybody outside and in our district, whether it's the fire or the emergency medical or anything like that," Hartshorn said.

"I feel it's important to volunteer back to your community."

For the agricultural community surrounding Fairburn, volunteer first responders provide an essen-

tial lifeline. The recent rainfall brought both wildfire relief and peace of mind to area producers and homeowners alike.

"This is a great community that we have. We're an agricultural-based community," department members shared. "This is a great night that we can actually show how much we appreciate the community and give the support back to them for what they do for us all year long."

Department leaders emphasized that Fairburn Volunteer Fire Department continues to expand its training programs in both wildfire suppression tactics and emergency medical services (EMS).

Anyone in the surrounding area interested in volunteering or supporting the department is encouraged to get involved.

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Harrisburg field fire

A bean field fire in Harrisburg forced severe traffic restrictions on Saturday, Oct. 10. The fire erupted near the intersection of 474th Avenue and 276th Street in Lincoln County and caused near-zero visibility in the area. South Dakota Highway Patrol and local sheriff's deputies helped to divert traffic from the area as teams worked to extinguish the blaze. All roads have since reopened. Authorities are investigating what caused the fire.



Multi Agency Effort Results in Successful Search and Rescue

Missing Meade County Man Located Safe

Daniel Carda, 83, was located safe on September 28th, 2026 following an extensive search involving more than 70 people. Carda had been missing from his residence near Meadow Retreat Rd since approximately 6:30 p.m. on September 27. He was transported to a hospital for evaluation.

Search teams worked on the ground throughout the night and continued their efforts today. Ground searchers ultimately located Carda. Their work was supported by a unified command and aerial resources, including Black Hills Life Flight helicopters, the SD Highway Patrol Aviation, Civil Air Patrol, and drones operated by multiple agencies.

"This is a testament to inter-agency cooperation and the talents of those working in the unified command," said Sheriff Pat West. "The way our agencies worked together to bring this critical incident to a successful resolution is a clear example of the professionals we have in our region. We are truly lucky to have this team!"

The Meade County Sheriff's Of-

fice thanks the following agencies for their assistance: Black Hawk Volunteer Fire Department, Black Hawk Fire Corp, Black Hills Fire Chaplains, Piedmont Volunteer

Fire Department, Piedmont Ambulance Service, Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department, Spearfish Volunteer Fire Department, Johnson Siding Volunteer Fire Department, Rapid Valley Volunteer Fire Department, Meade County Sheriff's Office, Meade County Emergency Management, Meade County Communications Center, North

Haines Volunteer Fire Department, Whitewood Volunteer Fire Department, Rapid City Fire Department, Pennington County Search and Rescue, Pennington County Sheriff's Office, Pennington County 911, Pennington County Fire Administration, Pennington County Emergency Management, Custer County Search and Rescue, Law-

rence County Search and Rescue, South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation, South Dakota Highway Patrol, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, South Dakota Wildland Fire, and Civil Air Patrol.

We also thank the residents who checked their properties and shared information during the search.



Pierre Rescue Squad training

The Pierre Rescue Squad worked through two hands-on training stations focused on technical rescue skills that could make a critical difference during an emergency.

Station 1 – Rope Rescue: Members practiced the ladder hinge method, an emergency rope rescue technique used by firefighters to safely lower a patient on a backboard from an elevated window, roof, or other elevated location to the ground.

Station 2 – Air Lifting: Members trained with pneumatic air-lifting bags, which are used to safely lift heavy loads such as collapsed debris, vehicles, or other equipment. For this scenario, the team simulated lifting a 1,500 lb. implement tire off of a victim!

These hands-on scenarios allow our members to build confidence, sharpen their technical rescue skills, and prepare for the unexpected! Submitted by Trevor Lightfield.

Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service

Thanks to everyone that attended the Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service on Sept. 27 in Pierre. Participants traveled from all corners of the state. Truly amazing show of support for our fallen firefighters and their families. Photos by SDFA board member Cherise Evans.





Northwest District Fire School

The Herreid Fire Department took part in the District Fire School held in Java on Sept. 20. Firefighters Tayden Feist and Curtis Shields took part in the Electrical and Wildland Fire classes, and Chief Mark Bates, Ryan Horner, Corey Graff, and Darren Gross took part in an Agricultural Rescue class. The HFD is extremely grateful to the Java Fire Department for hosting the District Fire School and all the instructors for volunteering their time to provide the valuable training! From the Herreid Fire Department Facebook page.



Emergency personnel sharpen skills during airport emergency training

By JERRY STEINLEY, the Rapid City Post

Preparing for an emergency they hope will never happen.

On Wednesday, dozens of emergency vehicles responded to mock crash victims as part of Federal Aviation Administration required full-scale triennial training exercises held at Rapid City Regional Airport.

During the training, 150 emergency personnel and volunteers acted out a real-life accident and response scenarios to review the implementation of Rapid City Regional Airport's emergency plan.

During the training, emergency personnel practiced response, medical triage services, and law enforcement responses.

"It's important to simulate the injuries and stress," Brian Bishop, Deputy Director, Rapid City Regional Airport said. "We want to make this as realistic as possible. That's why we bring so many people from different organizations together to practice and make this as real as possible."

Organizations represented at the training included Rapid City Regional Airport, Rapid City Fire and Police departments, State Fire Marshall, Pennington County Emergency Management, Pennington County Fire Administration, Ellsworth Air Force Base, the Salvation Army, Pennington County Sheriff's office, Rapid Valley Volunteer Fire Departments, Pennington County 911, Box Elder Volunteer Fire Department, Whispering Pines Volunteer Fire Department, Pennington County Search and Rescue, Monument Health, the airlines, and volunteers that serve as mock victims.

"The triennial itself is more about training not just the fire department but all of our surrounding agencies," said Neill Goodart, Rapid City Fire Department, Air-

craft Rescue Firefighting (ARFF) Battalion Chief.

Goodart said the responding agencies as well as the maintenance staff, the operations staff at the airport, and administrative staff, were all crucial during an emergency.

"The triennial gives us an opportunity to practice getting large amounts of resources on and off the airport," he said. "It gives us an opportunity to allow our medical staff to triage large groups of people and practice how well we can get those people transported into the hospital all while coordinating the safety of the airport."

The once every three-year training took place Wednesday evening, September 23rd, 2026 west of the main terminal.



BOX ELDER CAREER FAIR CONNECTS FIRST RESPONDERS WITH JOB SEEKERS

The City of Box Elder hosted its first First Responder Career Fair for people looking to join the first responder community. The event at the Box Elder Events Center included 12 other agencies, including South Dakota Wildland Fire, the Box Elder and Rapid City police departments, the South Dakota National Guard, the Air Force and the Marines.

The event connected people interested in the field with the dif-

ferent agencies, as well as schools such as Black Hills State and Western Dakota Tech who offer programs in public safety and emergency services. The city says it is hiring for the Box Elder Police Department and saw the fair as a way to meet the need for first responders in the community.

"So across the board, even across the country, there's been a shortage in the sense of people wanting to be in the first responder

community and career path," said Rebecca Bader, the Public Information Officer for the City of Box Elder. "So this is a great way for people to understand and talk to people that are in it day in and day out, the experts in their field, to see if this would be a good fit for them to come and join."

(KNBN-TV NBC 21 Rapid City, October 8, 2026)

Wall Welcomes New Single-Engine Airtanker Base

Governor. Larry Rhoden Strengthens Wildfire Response through SEAT Base

Wall, S.D. 10-16-2026 – Firefighters from South Dakota Wildland Fire, Wall Volunteer Fire Department, Quinn Volunteer Fire Department and the Wasta Volunteer Fire Department where joined by South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden in a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the official opening of the new Single Engine Air Tanker (S.E.A.T.) Base at Dave Hahn Field in Wall.

Former City of Wall Mayor Mary Williams, Current Mayor Gordy Kraut, State Representative Steve Duffy and State Senator Helene Duhamel along with City of Wall Council members Zack Hoffman, Melanie Shull, dignitaries representing the Wall Economic Development Corporation and the Wall Chamber of Commerce joined in the ceremony.

“I’ve been a volunteer fireman my whole life, so I know what it feels like to run into a fire. And my administration continues to fight to ensure firefighters have the resources they need to protect our communities,” said Governor Larry Rhoden. “This new base will play a key role in mitigating wildfires. I have no doubt it will keep the Black Hills and other forest areas like the Cheyenne River Valley safe.”

The new SEAT base will strengthen South Dakota’s wildland fire response by shortening the amount of time, it takes to

respond to fight wildland fires. SEATs can haul up to 800 gallons of water or fire retardant to deploy at a point-of-attack, in support of firefighters on the ground that are protecting people’s lives and property when every second counts.

Earlier this year, Governor Rhoden supported firefighting by cutting the ribbon on two South Dakota Wildland Fire facilities in Hot Springs and Rapid City. He also signed Executive Order 2026-10 to preapprove South Dakota Wildland Fire’s assistance and resources to help rural fire departments outside the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District.



Next-Gen 911 Interoperability - One Step Closer

The Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) is collaborating with the Next Generation 911 (NG911) Interoperability Task Force and other partners to advance interoperability standards. Together, they have reached a significant milestone: the release of the first open-source repository of NG911 test code for interoperability and standards conformance.

Achieving seamless, end-to-end interoperability across jurisdictional lines has long challenged emergency communicators. According to recent National Emergency Number Association (NENA) statistics, there are 5,748 different 911 platforms across the country, each operating its own combination of technologies and systems. States and counties are responsible for managing and maintaining their own systems, many of which are still analog, and agencies face significant decisions as they upgrade.

Modernizing 911 systems is expensive. With a range of suppliers, formats, and configurations, determining how new compo-

nents will function with older, existing technologies is critically important. Thinking long-term is key, as the cost of changing to newer standards can be prohibitive. S&T is helping jurisdictions navigate this challenge through its interoperability and standards-conformance work.

“Nationwide adoption of NG911 systems is estimated to cost around \$15 billion collectively,” said S&T Program Manager Eileen Rubin. “Agencies’ budgets are already stretched thin, and they can’t just keep swapping in components until they have a seamless fit.” Through this effort and the release of an open-source repository, S&T and its partners are poised to provide greater clarity to public safety professionals and jurisdictions seeking to adopt or upgrade NG911 systems, strengthening interoperability and resilience.

The repository, available at no cost on the [Texas A&M University System GitHub](#), currently includes test scripts for more than 200 NENA i3 standards requirements. Additional test cases will be re-

leased for public use and feedback as development progresses. The scripts allow procurement staff to verify that new equipment meets standards and is compatible with existing systems. As more agencies adopt common standards, compatibility will increase.

This work will give public safety agencies greater confidence in the systems they procure through a well-defined, independent testing regimen. Improved interoperability strengthens emergency response, enhances first responder safety, and fosters a competitive market for NG911 systems, helping reduce costs and streamline implementation. By involving industry partners, the program accelerates innovation and expands the scope of available test cases.

This initiative is the third phase of a larger effort with the [Critical Infrastructure Resilience Institute](#) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, a DHS Center of Excellence, and the Center for Applied Communications and Networks (CACN) at the Texas A&M University System to es-

tablish an independent NG911 Interoperability Testing Program. This partnership demonstrates how S&T’s Centers of Excellence bring together academic expertise, public safety practitioners, government, and industry to deliver practical solutions to homeland security challenges.

Phase 3 also paved the way for a new, ISO-accredited NG911 testbed at CACN, which is already operational and will assist future laboratories in establishing testing capabilities. This effort supports a repeatable process with consistent results.

S&T will continue to fund ongoing testing architecture focused on standard conformance and end-to-end interoperability tests. Future phases will enhance capabilities to include more complex test cases and scenarios, update testing documentation as standards evolve, and transition program governance to industry-led management. This work will enable faster 911 dispatching and more efficient collaboration across jurisdictions. However, there remain roughly 1,000

more tests to be performed, and additional funding is necessary to complete more of this work.

The NG911 Interoperability Task Force is a coalition of industry, public safety professionals, government agencies, academic institutions, and nonprofits dedicated to advancing conformance and interoperability among NG911 solutions. Its collaborative efforts, along with S&T funding, have been instrumental in developing and releasing a program that will help agencies adopting new 911 systems ensure those systems are interoperable and aligned with the latest standards.

Charged by Congress to ensure communications interoperability for federal, state, and local public safety agencies, S&T works to equip first responders with tools that enable them to share and receive vital, often lifesaving, information.

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