

South Dakota FIREFIGHTER

"SERVING FIREFIGHTERS
FROM THE WESTERN HILLS
TO THE EASTERN PLAINS"

WWW.SDFIREFIGHTERS.ORG

JULY 2026 • VOL. 19 - NO. 5

REACHING MORE THAN **6,900** SOUTH DAKOTA FIREFIGHTERS EACH MONTH



The Board of Directors of the South Dakota Firefighters Association are pictured at the 140th South Dakota State Fire School held in Watertown from June 11-13. In front from left to right are: Mark Stoks, Northeast; Cherise Evans, Black Hills; President Charlie Kludt, vice-president Don Ward and Chad Baumgarten, Northwest. Second row: Rick George, Central; Dave Jorgenson, Southeast; Rick Gustad, South Central; and Jason Mosterd, Badlands. Samara Erickson serves as secretary. See many more Fire School photos inside this issue.



HIGH-PERFORMANCE PPE FOR FIREFIGHTERS

The TAILS System delivers advanced protection, exceptional mobility, and proven durability for today's firefighters.

Ready to upgrade your PPE?
Contact your M&T Fire representative today.



APPARATUS | BRUSH TRUCKS | PPE | RESCUE | SERVICE

QUALITY FIREFIGHTING PRODUCTS SINCE 1994

800-223-0792

mtfiresafety.com



Watertown trains for electric vehicle fires

On June 1, members of Watertown Fire Rescue participated in specialized training on electric vehicle fires and lithium-ion battery hazards presented by Next Level Training Network. As electric vehicles, e-bikes, scooters, and other battery-powered devices become more common, understanding their hazards is increasingly important. The training provided valuable insight into how lithium-ion batteries behave during failures and the challenges they can create during emergencies. A few key takeaways we want our community to know:

- If you own an electric or hybrid vehicle, take time to familiarize yourself with emergency procedures, vehicle safety features, and the manual operation of doors and emergency exits.
- Avoid storing or charging lithium-ion powered devices such as e-bikes, scooters, or large battery packs in bedrooms, hallways, stairwells, or near exits. If a battery fails, it can produce intense heat, fire, and toxic smoke very quickly, potentially blocking escape routes.

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.

**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:

- Basic \$10,000 of Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) insurance — 24 hrs/day
- Purchase up to \$250,000 additional AD&D
- \$10K of Line of Duty Health and AD&D, fire related health incidents, i.e. heart attack, stroke, other.

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

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

A classified ad in the South Dakota Firefighter!

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

For ADDRESS CHANGES CONTACT:
Taylor Moore
605-501-2162
info@sdfirefighters.org

Published monthly by Blaze Publications Inc.
NEWS & ADVERTISING DEADLINE:
15TH DAY OF EACH MONTH
Email: jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com
P.O. Box 122, Humboldt, IA 50548

Advertising Rate Card available upon request.
We welcome your views, opinions, news tips and questions.
Letters to the editor must be accompanied by a name and daytime telephone number, and may be edited for space.

Hill City VFD assists at wildland fire

Even with the recent rain and green grass, wildland fires are possible. On June 9, Hill City Volunteer Fire Department assisted the forest service for five hours on a wildland fire started by an abandoned campfire. Please remind your guests and customers that open burning is illegal in the Black Hills Fire Protection District. From the Hill City Volunteer Fire Department Facebook page.



Sioux Falls structure fire

Sioux Falls Fire Rescue responded to a report of a structure fire in the early morning hours of Monday, June 8.

Sioux Falls Fire Rescue responded to a Structure Fire at the 4300 Block of West Valhalla Boulevard around 1:30 am on Monday. Once on the scene, firefighters found heavy smoke but no flames, and it was determined that the fire had self-extinguished.

Crews conducted an overhaul and continued to monitor the scene for hotspots for two hours after the fire was determined to be extinguished.

Sioux Falls Fire Rescue dispatched 6 units, 1 support unit, 20 personnel, and was assisted by

Metro Communications, Patient Care EMS, Sioux Falls Humane Society, Sioux Falls Police Department, EXCEL Power Company, and Mid-American Gas Company.

The fire remains under investigation.

(By Dakota News Now staff, June 8, 2026)

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

SEPT. 20, 2026: MLFTU training, Brandon, SD.

SEPT. 27, 2026: Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service, 1 p.m., Fallen Firefighter Memorial Monument, Capitol Lake, Pierre, SD.

OCT. 2-4, 2026: SDEFA Fall Fire Conference featuring speakers Tom Merrill and Rodney Foster, Pete Lien and Sons Sports Shooting Complex, Piedmont, SD.

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

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

ACTION FIRE PHOTOS NEEDED!

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



For more than a century, **Fort Garry Fire Trucks** has built apparatus trusted by departments across North America. The all-new **Ranger Wildland Off-Road Fire Apparatus** is engineered for wildfire response where traditional trucks struggle to operate. Built on a proven 4x4 platform, the Ranger delivers the off-road capability, durability, and firefighting performance crews need in rugged terrain and rapidly changing conditions.

Purpose-built for next-generation wildland response, the Ranger combines rugged construction with serious firefighting capability. Powered by a Cummins L9 engine and equipped with a Waterax B2X pump, it delivers dependable pressure and water volume for fast-moving wildfire and interface operations. Reinforced construction, aggressive all-terrain tires, and **over 1,200 gallons of onboard water** give departments the confidence to push farther and work harder when conditions become extreme.

The Ranger is designed with **firefighter safety and operational awareness** at its core. Available 360° camera systems, thermal imaging technology, GPS inclinometer displays, and CrewProtect™ in-cab filtration help crews operate confidently in smoke, darkness, dust, and rough terrain. From grass fires to large-scale interface operations, the Ranger delivers the capability, reliability, and performance departments can count on when every second matters.

ONE TOUGH TRUCK

WWW.FGFT.COM TOLL FREE: 1-800-565-3473
53 BERGEN CUTOFF ROAD, CENTREPORT, MANITOBA R4B 0A6



Ranger Brochure

Sourcewell

Awarded Contract

Contract # 082025-FTG

Reflections...

Volunteer Firefighters: Service Embedded in Commitment

Volunteering is more than simply helping others. It reflects character, dedication, and a willingness to serve the community when emergency support is necessary.

WHEN MOTIVATION FALLS SHORT

- Volunteering only because no one else will does not show

true personal commitment.

- Helping only when it is convenient reflects limited dedication.
- Serving only during major incidents can make the commitment seem selective.
- Joining only because friends are involved may lack personal purpose.

- Volunteering to improve one's reputation shifts attention away from service.

WHAT MEANINGFUL SERVICE LOOKS LIKE

Meaningful volunteering builds trust and strengthens community connections. It shows care, encourages responsibility, and gives

members the opportunity to gain experience from and support one another.

THE REWARD OF SERVING OTHERS

For volunteer firefighters, the greatest reward is not payment. It is seeing relief in the faces of those they have helped and know-

ing their community values their efforts and responsibilities.

TARZ MULLINIX,
Lifetime member of the SDFA

May this guidance strengthen your outlook, dedication, and commitment in life.

U.S. Fire Administration Firefighter Fatality Notification

JEFFERY LYNN DERRICK, Firefighter Jeffery Derrick, 67, responded with the Tri-Lakes Volunteer Fire Department (Pittsburg, TX) to a grass fire. While battling the blaze, shifting winds changed the fire's direction and the fire spread into high grass and pastureland where firefighters were working the fire lines. Firefighter Derrick tried to make his way back to the fire department vehicle but became disoriented and was overcome by the fire. Firefighter Derrick was pronounced deceased at the scene.

TODD A. KOCH, on March 8, while preparing to leave his house in response to a motor vehicle accident, Fire Police Officer Todd Koch, 68, Richland town (PA) Fire Company, suffered a medical emergency. He was found unresponsive at his home shortly thereafter by his brother. EMS responded and administered lifesaving measures to Fire Police Officer Koch. Fire Police Officer Koch was then transported to a local hospital where, despite all efforts, he passed away on March 11. The cause of death was reported to be a cardiovascular event.

ROBERT "BK" T. KILDUFF JR., on May 23 at approximately 8:05 p.m., firefighter Robert Kilduff Jr., 53, responded with the Boston Fire Department to a residential structure fire that quickly went to three alarms. After arriving on scene, firefighters quickly extinguished much of the fire and kept it from spreading to neighboring houses. A short time later, a mayday was declared after firefighter Kilduff fell from a rear porch on the third floor. Fellow firefighters located firefighter Kilduff and, along with emergency medical personnel, treated him at the scene. Firefighter Kilduff was then transported to a local hospital where, despite all efforts, he passed away from the injuries he sustained in the fall. Firefighter Kilduff was a third generation Boston firefighter.

STEVEN S. LEPSALTER, while preparing to end a fire watch at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport and head to his regular shift, Firefighter/Paramedic Steven Lepsalter, 54, Broward Sheriff's Office Department of Fire Rescue and Emergency Services, suffered a medical emergency. Deputies and fire rescue personnel responded and, upon arrival, found Firefighter/Paramedic Lepsalter unresponsive on the ground. Firefighter/Paramedic Lepsalter was transported to a local medical center where he was pronounced deceased. The cause of death has yet to be determined.

DEMAIR LLOYD, at approximately 7:00 a.m. on May 29, 2026, Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department, Largo, Maryland, Firefighter/Paramedic Demair Lloyd, 43, completed a 24-hour shift during which he responded to multiple incidents including a medical call at 6:28 a.m. Later that day at 11:53 p.m., Firefighter/Paramedic Lloyd suffered a medical emergency at his home. Emergency personnel responded and transported Firefighter/Paramedic Lloyd to a local hospital where, despite all efforts, he was pronounced deceased on May 30, 2026. The cause of death has yet to be determined.

JOHN D. MORGAN, while working his shift, Harlem-Roscoe IL Fire Protection District Firefighter/Paramedic John Morgan, 53, did not report to the apparatus floor when a call came in for a grass fire. Fellow first responders searched for Firefighter/Paramedic Morgan and found him unresponsive a short time later. Firefighter/Paramedic Morgan was pronounced deceased at the station. The cause of death has yet to be determined.

GEORGE "BUD" TURNER, during the day of May 23, Engineer George "Bud" Turner, 84, West Whiteland Fire Company, Exton, PA, responded to multiple emergency calls including a barn fire as well as an investigation into a strange odor. In the evening that same day, Engineer Turner attended the fire department's awards banquet. As he was driving home after leaving the banquet, Engineer Turner experienced a medical emergency and crashed his vehicle. Engineer Turner was pronounced deceased at the scene of the crash.

CARLOS E. RAMIREZ, while on duty providing fire and life safety services at a vehicle raceway, Senior Firefighter Carlos Ramirez Jr., 28, Advanced Fire and Rescue Services, Santa Clarita, CA, suffered fatal injuries when the fire apparatus he was driving rolled over. Senior Firefighter Ramirez sustained traumatic injuries in the rollover and was treated on scene. Despite these efforts, Senior Firefighter Ramirez was pronounced deceased at the scene.

HAROLD OSBORN, on June 8, at approximately 8 p.m., Seelyville (IN) Volunteer Fire Chief Harold Osborn, 51, and members of his fire department responded to a medical emergency that required manually lifting a patient. A few hours after the response, Chief Osborn's wife found him experiencing a cardiovascular event at his home and immediately initiated CPR. Emergency personnel responded to the home and transported Chief Osborn to a local hospital where, despite all efforts, he was pronounced deceased on June 9.

WAYNE WOODBURY, on May 15, 2026, Assistant Fire Chief Wayne Woodbury, 76, responded with the Searsmont (MA) Volunteer Fire Department to a fire in a wood chip silo at a lumber mill. While operating the fire department truck and working to contain the fire, an explosion occurred. Assistant Fire Chief Woodbury was injured in the explosion and was transported to a local hospital. He was later transported to a medical center where he remained until he passed away on June 14, 2026. Firefighter Andrew Cross from the Morrill Volunteer Fire Department was also killed on the day of the incident. Multiple other first responders were also seriously injured and are still being treated.

ISAI HUERTA, Lieutenant Isai Huerta, 29, responded with Odessa (TX) Fire Rescue to a residential trailer fire. While firefighters were operating on scene, conditions deteriorated rapidly, and Lieutenant Huerta sustained injuries. Lieutenant Huerta was transported to a medical center where he was later pronounced deceased. Five other firefighters who sustained non-life-threatening injuries during the incident were treated at a hospital and released.



Johnson Siding FD dive training

Johnson Siding Fire Department was given an opportunity to be part of the June training exercise with the Rapid City/Pennington County Water Rescue Team on Wednesday, June 10, at Coldbrook Reservoir outside Hot Springs. While four divers spent time underwater on a free swim, three other members engaged in grid-search pattern techniques with their comrades on shore. JSFD personnel were integrated to act as 'diver tenders,' which allows a secondary means of communication with the divers, while performing a steady, coordinated, and methodical search of a specified area. The joint training is part of the ongoing interagency cooperation efforts between RCFD and JSFD to ensure seamless integration in an actual emergency. These opportunities provide our department with valuable insight into how these operations are performed, and how we can provide the greatest possible positive impact on the outcome. From the Johnson Siding Fire Department Facebook page.

Dell Rapids structure fire

On June 4, Dell Rapids Fire Department responded to a fire on their historic Main Street. With the help of the Baltic, Colton, Lyons, Renner and Sioux Falls fire departments, Dell Rapids Ambulance, Minnehaha County Emergency Management, Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office, SD Highway Patrol, the city of Dell Rapids public works, and several individuals from the community, they were able to limit the damage to the structure of origin. This team effort protected two other businesses. While they were unable to stop the fire from leaving Pinz (bowling alley) a total loss, they did everything possible. From the Dell Rapids Fire Department Facebook page. Photos courtesy of Colton Fire Department Facebook page.



Standing Behind Those Who Show Up First

At Glacial Lakes Energy (GLE), safety, community, and partnership aren't just words — they're how they operate. And when something goes wrong, our local fire departments are the ones who show up first.

That's why GLE launched their Fire Department Grant Program.

GLE reached out to more than 70 career and volunteer fire departments within roughly 50 miles of their production plants in Aberdeen, Huron, Mina, and Watertown and asked a simple question: What do you need?

Not a wish list. Not extras. The equipment that truly makes a difference when the call comes in.

Because of GLE's close ties to agriculture and ethanol production, they encouraged departments to consider ag-related rescue and emergency situations. Most importantly, they asked them to focus

on what would improve safety and preparedness for their teams and communities.

THEY TOLD US. WE ACTED.

"We received 33 applications totaling more than \$371,000. The requests were practical and important — grain bin rescue equipment, breathing gear, water storage tanks, rescue tools, and PPE. We funded every project exactly as requested because when firefighters tell you what they need to protect lives, you listen and you act," stated Mark J. Schmidt, GLE Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Why It Matters

Many of these departments operate with limited funding and rely heavily on volunteers. These are people who leave work, dinner tables, and their families behind to respond when emergencies hap-

pen. The right equipment can change the outcome of a call. It improves response, increases safety, and helps protect both responders and the people counting on them.

That matters to GLE.

STRONGER DEPARTMENTS. SAFER COMMUNITIES.

This wasn't about convenience. It was about having the right equipment when seconds matter and making sure the people we rely on have what they need to do their jobs safely and effectively. Better-equipped departments mean faster response, safer operations, and stronger communities.

"That's good for our employees, our plants, and the communities we're proud to be part of," stated Schmidt.

Schmidt closed by saying, "Bottom line - we know who shows up

when things go wrong. This is our way of helping make sure they're ready when they do."

PROUD TO PARTNER

GLE proudly supported the following fire departments: Aberdeen Rural, Alpena, Ashton, Bowdle, Brant, Bristol, Cavour, Clear Lake, Columbia, Doland, Faulkton, Florence, Garden City, Gary, Hayti, Hazel, Henry, Hosmer, Huron, Lake Norden, Letcher, Mellette, Miller, Northville, Redfield Rural, Roscoe, Toronto, Turton, Wallace, Watertown, Wessington, White, Wilmot, and Wolsey.

WHO ARE WE - GLACIAL LAKES ENERGY, LLC

Glacial Lakes Energy, LLC (GLE) was formed in 2001 as a South Dakota cooperative and is proudly owned by more than 4,200 shareholders. GLCP owns Glacial

Lakes Energy (GLE), which operates four ethanol production facilities located in Watertown, Mina, Aberdeen, and Huron, South Dakota.

Combined, GLE produces more than 370 million gallons of renewable ethanol annually, purchases over 127 million bushels of corn each year, produces approximately 1.1 million tons of feed products/distillers grains, and 69,000 tons of corn oil.

In addition to its four South Dakota plants, GLE also holds ownership interests in Granite Falls Energy, Redfield Energy, and Harvestone Commodities Group.

GLE is committed to supporting agriculture, renewable energy, and the rural communities where we live and work.

SDFA OFFICER DIRECTORY

PRESIDENT CHARLIE KLUDT

P.O. Box 606
Viborg, SD 57070
605-326-5072 Home
605-940-1087 Cell
Pres@sdfirefighters.org

VICE PRESIDENT DON WARD

1202 Union St.,
Belle Fourche, SD 57717
605-645-2689 Cell
vpres@sdfirefighters.org

SECRETARY SAMARA ERICKSON

1017 S. Cleveland Ave,
Pierre, 57501
605-940-1795
Samarajo1982@gmail.com

TREASURER DENNY GORTON

PO BOX 1884
Rapid City SD 57709
484-0806 Cell
sec@sdfirefighters.org

DIRECTORS: SOUTHEAST DAVE JORGENSON

501 NE 2nd St.
Colton, SD 57018
605-446-3980
SEDir@sdfirefighters.org

NORTHEAST MARK STOKS

901 13th Ave. SW
Aberdeen, SD 57401
605-380-9817 Cell
NEDir@sdfirefighters.org

CENTRAL RICHARD GEORGE

39604 227th St,
Woonsocket SD 57385,
605-461-9190,
CenDir@sdfirefighters.org

NORTHWEST CHAD BAUMGARTEN

PO BOX 599
Lemmon, SD 57638
374-5868 Home
222-9702 Cell
NWDDir@sdfirefighters.org

BLACK HILLS CHERIE EVANS

4555 Candlewood Pl, Apt. 308
Rapid City, SD 57702
605-393-7801 Cell
BHDDir@sdfirefighters.org

BADLANDS JASON MOSTERD

526 Franklin St,
Burke, SD 57523
605-840-0252
BLDir@sdfirefighters.org

SOUTH CENTRAL RICK GUSTAD

PO BOX 33
Platte, SD 57369
605-337-9629 Home
605-680-2637 Cell
SCDir@sdfirefighters.org

NVFC DIRECTOR JEREMY WALLA

6408 Prestwick Rd
Rapid City, SD 57702
605-484-3911 cell
jeremy.walla@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TAYLOR MOORE

605-501-2162
info@sdfirefighters.org

SDFA OFFICER REPORTS



Charlie Kludt, President

"State Fire School will be returning to Watertown and Lake Area Technical College next year, 10-12 June 2027.

We already have several of the favorites and suggested courses on the list. The city of Watertown, Watertown Fire Rescue, Lake Area Technical College, and Performance Towing make for a great partnership in planning fire school."

Ready for the Rest of Summer

Thank you to everyone that attending State Fire School last month in Watertown.

We had around 550 attendees from all areas of the state each day for the weekend of training. I appreciate knowing that we have hundreds of firefighters that have learned something from the knowledge and experience of others, and may make a difference in their careers as volunteers to help others when they call us in their time of need.

Thank you to the membership for maintaining their trust in me for another three years to be President of the SDFA. I like to think that I represent the fire service as well as I can, and listen to our members when concerns and ideas

are presented. Explaining the topics of concern, viewpoints, and understand decisions of the SDFA Board to the members, state agencies, and legislative groups can be challenging and rewarding.

I look forward to working with the SDFA Directors and the transition of duties with our Association Management team.

Thank you to Governor Larry and First Lady Sandy Rhoden for stopping by the LATC campus and visiting some of the various training sessions at State Fire School. As a longtime volunteer firefighter, they both understood the importance of practical training, safe operations, and the family aspects of the fire service.

After mentioning well wishes in the election, he had only the simple request to encourage people to

Thoughts from the Tailboard

It's a wrap!!!! Isn't that what they say when they have finished a movie? Just finished the 140th South Dakota State Fire School. Holy cow. 140 years of fire schools. I believe there were only two times a fire school wasn't held. I believe once during World War II and once during COVID. I know sometimes those darn young whipper snappers ask if I was there for the first one. Just to set the record straight, no I wasn't.

This year's fire school had another milestone. At least it was a bittersweet milestone for me. I have been on the Board in one capacity or another for 32 years. President, Past-president, Secretary and Treasurer. Over those 32 years I have worked with many great individuals. Some have since passed away, others I still get the honor and privilege of visiting with. As I look back on

those years, I see where we were and where we are now. Talk about a giant leap into the future, hang on and see what's coming down the road. I don't know where to begin to thank for allowing me to be a part of this absolutely fantastic organization. The direction the Board is heading in is only going to take the Association even higher. This is important as then the firefighters of South Dakota will benefit also from better training opportunities. This is all good. What a bright future the fire service of South Dakota has in front of it. Take advantage of it.

The other day on a U-Tube something, I watched country singer Eric Church give a commencement address at North Carolina State. He related their life ahead of them to the six strings on a guitar. How each string worked with the others to make music or if one string was out of "tune" it was not good. It was very good, maybe google it and see if you can find it. Made me think about firefighters. I relat-

get out and vote and increase the voter turnout.

State Fire School will be returning to Watertown and Lake Area Technical College next year, 10-12 June 2027. We already have several of the favorites and suggested courses on the list.

The city of Watertown, Watertown Fire Rescue, Lake Area Technical College, and Performance Towing make for a great partnership in planning fire school. Knowing what we have available and classes that could be sought after makes it entertaining to seek new ideas.

Each year, more and more businesses recognize the dates and show their appreciation to the firefighters that make time to come. I hope everyone had the opportunity to take something meaningful and memorable home with them. The conversations outside the classroom socializing around a table with a lemonade and Fresca can be just as valuable as the time in the training room. Plus, we all need a good laugh now and then.

Reminder of the deadline for the State Fire Assistance Grant is August 1st.

The \$5million grant funding will be similar to the 2023 grant for PPE. Departments registered with the State Fire Marshal Office should have received a package and an email notification of the

grant application. If not, contact the State Fire Marshal office.

The Independent Insurance Agents of South Dakota (IIASD) also has their annual fire and EMS grant application period open. Check the IIASD website or your local independent Insure agent for details and application.

The spring and early summer conditions have been sketchy and unpredictable, so far. Review those emergency response and disaster plans before they come. The corn-growing humidity is on the way.

Our neighbors in Nebraska continue to battle wildfires out west and storms in the east. Just a reminder to be prepared.

The SDFA Board is also assisting with the review of codified laws and statutes related to fire service items on the books. If you want to educate yourself, on an evening when you can't sleep, go to the legislature website and search for words like, firefighter, firemen, fireman, fire service, or any other fire department term you can think of. Then you'll see how many laws there are related to the fire service in South Dakota.

Happy 205th to America and enjoy your summer.

Stay safe,

CHARLIE KLUDT
SDFA President



Denny Gorton,
Retired Treasurer/Past President

"... for a fire department to make "beautiful music" all the strings have to work together. Sorta like a ladder. How each rung works with the other rungs to make a useful tool, or maybe a useful life."

ed it to the fire service and how for a fire department to make "beautiful music" all the strings have to work together. Sorta like a ladder. How each rung works with the other rungs to make a useful tool, or maybe a useful life. It was about five or six minutes so just take a shot and see if you can find it.

It never fails, as soon as one training session is over, a person starts thinking about the next. So here goes, don't forget the annual fall conference planned for the first weekend in October in Rapid City. You will be seeing a lot more info on what will be offered, but knowing the Board and the instructors,

it will be well worth your time.

As I wrap up this month's article, once again Nebraska is getting their butts kicked. This time it is near Crawford and Fort Robinson. Crawford is my hometown, so I have been watching the events very closely. Again, my thoughts are with the firefighters and all the residents. They are getting a handle on it, but still.

With that I'll close for now, be safe, and hug your loved ones, they and you need it.

DENNY GORTON

ACTION FIRE PHOTOS NEEDED!

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



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

A classified ad in the
South Dakota Firefighter!

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



SOUTH DAKOTA FIRE MARSHAL

Investigations • Prevention • Education • Enforcement

Dear South Dakota Volunteer Fire Departments:

During the 2026 Legislative Session, SB 136 appropriated funds to the South Dakota Department of Public Safety to provide grants to qualifying volunteer fire departments to assist with the purchase of firefighter personal protective equipment (PPE).

Departments interested in participating in this grant opportunity have until August 1st, 2026, to submit their application.

Grant applications can be found at <https://www.sd.gov/dps>.

Completed grant applications can be submitted electronically or via mail. Any unallocated funding



**Doug Hinkle,
State Fire Marshal**

“Departments interested in participating in this grant opportunity have until August 1st, 2026, to submit their application.”

will be awarded through additional application periods until funding is depleted.

Please contact us if you have any questions.

**DOUG HINKLE,
State Fire Marshal
SD Department of
Public Safety
SD State Fire Marshal's Office
221 S. Central Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501
(605) 773-3562
www.dps.sd.gov/firemarshal**

SDFA AUXILIARY REPORT

Another Fire School has come and gone. It was great to see old friends and make some new ones. This year we had some epic raffle prizes! I would like to first thank my husband, Brian Schmidt, for helping secure so many of these generous donations. I would like to thank the following people/businesses for donating this year:

- Corey Gronewald
- Blackcat Fireworks-Tea
- Ruffland Kennels
- LSE Manufacturing
- Steve Wilson
- Nick Huber
- Agri Cover Inc
- Dakota Beverage - Sioux Falls
- Glacial Lakes Energy - Watertown
- Rosenbauer
- Meat Lodge - Sioux Falls
- Pet Wants Sioux Falls
- Hidewood Meats
- Fairway-Tea
- HyVee-Tea
- Wilderness Athlete
- Schmitz Meats - Dell Rapids
- Bald Brothers Meats - Brookings
- JFB Meats - Watertown
- Visit Watertown
- 4M Designs - Watertown
- Watertown Brewing Company
- Bottoms Up - Corson
- M & T
- Security Savings Bank - Sioux Falls
- Caribou - Watertown
- MacQueen
- Cowboy Liquor Store - Watertown
- Runnings - Watertown
- Tractor Supply - Watertown
- Dinges
- Trav's Outfitters - Watertown
- Bear Country
- Reptile Gardens
- Jones Family Eye Clinic
- Bramble Park Zoo
- Pro Image Partners
- Liz Brandt & Julia Sassman

The proceeds of our raffle go toward our portion of 2 scholarships that go to high school seniors, fire school expenses and 2 \$1000 grants that go to volunteer departments/auxiliaries that are in need.

I would also like to thank everyone who purchased raffle tickets. If you would like to donate a raffle

prize next year, please reach out to me or anyone on the Auxiliary Board.

Can't wait to see what we have next year! Thanks again!!

**TONI SCHMIDT
State Auxiliary President**



Trench Safety Stand Down held in Rapid Valley

Trench Safety Stand Down was held on May 7-8 in Rapid Valley, Unincorporated Pennington County. Demonstrations each day helped contractors and firefighters learn trench and excavation hazards. It reinforced the importance of using trench protective systems and about protecting workers and rescuers from trenching hazards. The Rapid City Fire Department also held a demonstration scenario of a Trench Rescue. The Safety Stand Down was sponsored by: South Dakota 811, OSHA, Associated General Contractors of South Dakota, Complete Contracting Solutions, RCS Construction, Scull Construction, Site Work Specialist, Construction Industry Center, Dean Kurtz Construction, CSI, Lidel Construction Company INC, Sunbelt Rentals, Rapid City Fire Department, South Dakota Task Force one and the Pennington County Fire Service. Photos courtesy of the Rockerville Volunteer Fire Department and the Pennington County Fire Service.

MORE AIR = MORE FIRE

By JERRY KNAPP

Dispatch reported multiple calls, heavy fire and people trapped in the house. As soon as the rigs arrived on scene your members came off with tools, fully geared up and headed toward the house. They asked occupants on the lawn "Is everyone out?" Forcing the door they chocked it open and advanced in for the search. As they disappeared crawling into smoke vent point ignition flashed jets of flames out the front door and over a couple second floor windows.

The hoseline seemed to take forever but review of the videos taken by civilians showed the stretch was quick, but not quick enough. The flashover was sudden. In about 80 seconds the fire raced up the stairs, trapping your search team as their gear was saturated with heat and they burned to death. One member was able to bail out a second floor window one was not and suffered horrible burns that took his life. House fires are our most important alarm and often our most deadly.

This same basic scenario has been replayed multiple times in our recent Fire Service history resulting in many LODDs: Cherry Road, Washington DC, Diamond Heights, San Francisco and Boston, Back Bay fire. Read these fire reports, learn from them the critical details, some are 25 years old and we must learn from them to honor our fallen. The purpose of this article is to familiarize you with a few key fire dynamics facts to help prevent similar scenarios in your department.

Think of the modern house fire described above as your wood stove or charcoal barbeque grill. Air is coming in the bottom (the open front door members forced and chocked open) providing oxygen for combustion of the wood or charcoal in the grill or in this case oxygen for the burning con-

tents of the house. Flames gobble up the air and race up the stairs. Like our stove, in the house, super heated gases, in the 2000F range is boiling, racing up the stairs to kill your members. Flammable gases in the smoke will ignite when it consumes some more air.

WHAT?

What do you do when you want to increase the rate of burning in your stove? Add more air and sure enough you get more fire. We have all done it, it is not a secret. Fire in a stove, grill or house...fire will follow the conditions it is given.... more air more fire. Yes, it is that simple.

SO WHAT?

So what can we do on the fireground to prevent this from progressing to rapid flashover? Make some strategic and tactical changes based on live burn testing and fireground experience.

1. Limit the air, control the door, close it if you can. If you cant kill the fire with water, choke it out. Don't take windows or cut the roof until water is on the fire or very close.
2. Fast water. Getting water on the fire as quickly as possible will make conditions better quickly for both trapped occupants and searching firefighters. Decisive amounts of water on the fire prevents conditions necessary for rapid fire growth. Relentlessly train your members to stretch, flow and operate aggressively from inside or outside (if you cant get in).
3. Use VEIS when applicable as an aggressive search tactic. Remember to close the door to buy yourself some time. Remember if you are trapped on an upper floor and the fire has cut off your escape route, find a room, get inside and close the door.

NOW WHAT?

Learn and adjust your strategy and tactics for search, ventilation and fire attack from the recent (and not so recent) research by UL and NIST. Search for, study and understand this world class fireground and live burn based research that will save civilian and Firefighter's lives if you embrace it. It is far too much to try to explain in this short article. It is however expertly summarized by Deputy Chief George Healy from FDNY in the 1st Issue 2026 of WNYF magazine in a brilliant article titled "Low Intake, High Exhaust and Its Deadly Consequences."

Chief Healy states, "As a result of multiple research projects conducted with NIST and UL, the FDNY has translated these findings into practical, common-sense tactics that have been tested and validated in the laboratory and refined on the fire floor for more than 2 decades. These tactics emphasize controlling the fire environment rather than reacting to it and include door control performed by the first due ladder company—tactical ventilation, strict coordination of suppression and ventilation through the 3 Cs—Control, Communicate and Coordinate; and the use of exterior fire control guided by the 4 Ss—Straight, Steep, Steady, Sprinkler."

The advances in strategy and tactics briefly described above have been paid for in blood by many LODDs in our recent past. Honor their memory by learning from their sacrifice, it is what they would have wanted. These modern tactics are made possible by the world class live fire testing, research and tactical refinements of organizations like UL, NIST and FDNY. We must honor our Fallen Fire Service members by learning from their experiences to provide a better future for those we serve and those we servie with.



Deadwood residential fire

On Thursday, June 4, at approximately 2:33 p.m., Deadwood Fire and Rescue was paged to an address on Denver Ave., for a reported structure fire. Deadwood Fire Chief was first on scene finding heavy smoke conditions with significant flames on the back side of the home.

Incident Command was established and mutual aid requested from Lead and Spearfish Fire Departments. Initial searches of the duplex found no victims. Crews entered both the upper and lower-level units of the duplex and attacked the fire from both levels. During the fire fight, firefighters ventilated the structure with positive pressure fans and were able to extinguish the fire. There were no injuries to firefighters, occupants or animals. One firefighter was evaluated for heat exposure on scene. Chief Ellis requested the presence of the South Dakota Fire Marshall's office to investigate due to the nature of the fire. Displaced residents were assisted by the American Red Cross. Assisting agencies: Deadwood Police Dept., Lead Fire Dept., Spearfish Fire Dept., Whitewood Fire Dept. & Auxiliary, Monument Health Ambulance, Lawrence County Emergency Mgmt., Black Hills Energy, Montana Dakota Utilities, Deadwood Public Works and American Red Cross.

YOU SHOULD HAVE YOUR DEPARTMENT FEATURED!



Just fill out the attached form and send it back with a group photo and we'll feature your department in an upcoming issue of the South Dakota Firefighter Newspaper.

Submitter's Name _____ Submitter's Phone # _____

Department Name: _____ Total Number of Members: _____

Volunteer _____ # Paid _____ Year Department Established: _____

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)

Please type the names as they appear in the photo. For best reproduction, please send or e-mail the actual photo and not a photocopy or scanned copy.

Officer's Name:

Office:

Mail to: South Dakota Firefighter Newspaper,
PO Box 122, Humboldt, IA 50548
E-mail to: jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com

SDFA 2026 Fire School

South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden visiting some of the various class and training locations at State Fire School in Watertown.



Responding to the Invisible Hazard: Best Practices for CO Calls

By COLE KLEINWOLTERINK

Carbon monoxide responses are easy to treat like routine calls. Most of the time, we are dispatched for an alarm activation, a beeping detector, or a vague report of someone “not feeling well.” There is no smoke showing, no visible hazard, and no obvious emergency from the street. That is exactly what makes these calls dangerous. Carbon monoxide is odorless, tasteless, and colorless. It gives us very few warning signs until occupants become symptomatic or our meters tell us something is wrong.

PRE-RESPONSE: SET THE INCIDENT UP FOR SUCCESS

Dispatchers should instruct occupants to evacuate and leave the building as-is when safe to do so. One common mistake is allowing occupants to open every window and door before the fire department arrives. While their intention is understandable, it can make the investigation more difficult by releasing the accumulated gases before crews can locate the source. If occupants can safely leave without opening windows, shutting off appliances, or changing the environment, that gives firefighters a better chance of identifying the problem.

While responding, crews should begin building their investigation plan. CO is produced by incomplete combustion, so firefighters should start thinking about anything in or around the home that burns fuel or produces exhaust. Furnaces, water heaters, stoves, fireplaces, generators, vehicles, small engines, and blocked vents can all create a hazardous environment. Cold weather, power outages, recently started heating systems, attached garages, and exterior vents covered by snow or debris should immediately be on the radar. CO calls are investigations, and the best investigations start before the crew ever steps through the door.

The meter should also be prepared early. The most important tool on a CO call is the meter, but only if it is used correctly. Meters need time to work. They must pull in air, analyze the sample, and display the reading. Firefighters should turn meters on early, allow them to complete their self-check, and perform a fresh air zero in known clean air before entering the structure. This should not be done inside the building or near apparatus exhaust.

ARRIVAL AND INITIAL ACTIONS

On arrival, the first priority is occupant assessment. Occupants should be assessed for signs and symptoms of CO exposure, including headache, dizziness, nausea, weakness, confusion, shortness of breath, chest discomfort, or flu-like symptoms. Another red flag would be any symptoms that improve after leaving the structure. If anyone reports symptoms,

an ambulance should be added, and SpCO monitoring should be utilized when available.

Crews should pay special attention to children and pets. Kids and pets can experience carbon monoxide symptoms before adults. Because children have faster metabolic rates and smaller bodies, they inhale more air relative to their size, causing oxygen-depleting toxins to build up much faster in their bloodstreams. Pets may also show signs before adults because they are often smaller as well. If the family says the dog was acting strange, the child was unusually tired, or multiple people in the home “just do not feel right,” take that information seriously.

Full PPE and SCBAs should be donned on all CO calls. These calls can change quickly. A false alarm may be a false alarm, but that decision should be based on investigation findings and meter readings. Depending on the department’s SOGs and the initial readings, crews may not need to be breathing air the entire time, but the SCBA should be on their back and ready.

Before entering, crews should confirm the 4-gas meter has been turned on, completed its self-check, and has been fresh air zeroed in a known clean environment. If the meter alarms during entry or investigation, crews should exit, mask up, and return to locate the problem.

INVESTIGATION: METER SLOWLY AND SEARCH METHODICALLY

Metering should be slow and deliberate. A quick walk-through with the meter held out in front of the firefighter is not an investigation. Meters need time to sample the atmosphere, process the information, and display an accurate reading. Crews should pause approximately 30 seconds in each area before moving on. If firefighters move too quickly, they can essentially outrun the meter and miss the hazard, only to later claim the building is clear.

Because carbon monoxide has a specific gravity very close to air, it mixes easily throughout the structure. It does not always rise or settle in a predictable way. Crews should check the entire building, not just the room where the detector was sounding. This includes all levels, attached garages, mechanical spaces, and possible exposure areas. While metering, remember one simple rule of thumb: once inside the structure, do not press buttons on the meter.

If crews arrive and windows are already open, they should consider that the readings may no longer reflect the original hazard. If the meter does not immediately show dangerous levels, closing windows and doors during the investigation may help recreate conditions and locate the source. This must be done with judgment. If the meter immediately shows a hazardous

atmosphere, exit, mask up, and operate accordingly.

When investigating, start with the likely sources. The basement is a priority because it often contains mechanical equipment. Check the furnace, water heater, boiler, fireplaces, stoves, dryers, and any other fuel-burning appliances. Check attached garages for vehicles, generators, or small engines. Monitor near the ceiling, mid-level, and near the floor. Even though CO mixes with air, checking different levels helps ensure a more complete investigation and may reveal other hazards.

Crews should also inspect the home’s CO detector for age, dust, battery condition, and proper function. A bad detector does not automatically mean there is no problem, but it is part of the investigation. The detector is the reason we were called, and it should be evaluated just like any other piece of evidence on scene.

Do not forget the exterior. In a three-firefighter company, this is a good assignment for the engineer. Blocked or restricted exhaust vents are a common cause of CO issues, especially during snow events or cold weather. Walk the perimeter of the structure. Look for snow-covered vents, blocked appliance exhausts, damaged vent pipes, or items stored against the home that may interfere with ventilation. A fuel-burning appliance may be operating correctly but still create a CO problem if the exhaust is being pushed back into the home.

Remember to investigate exposures as well. In apartments, townhomes, and other attached occupancies, this means checking adjoining units — not just to the left and right, but also above and below. CO can travel through shared walls, utility chases, HVAC systems, attic spaces, basements, and other common voids. Expand the investigation until the affected area is identified, the entire exposure concern has been addressed, or meter readings confirm there are no signs of CO in the adjoining spaces.

IF A SOURCE IS FOUND

If CO is detected, the crew should attempt to identify and secure the source. If the source is an appliance, it should be shut down or isolated if possible. This may include shutting off a furnace, water heater, stove, fireplace, generator, or vehicle. If the source involves a generator or vehicle, make sure it is moved or shut down in a way that prevents continued exposure.

The utility provider should be contacted when appropriate, especially when CO is detected and the source involves gas appliances or cannot be confidently identified. The fire department should attempt to remain on scene until the utility company arrives when applicable. The officer in charge and the utility representative should determine when the structure is safe to occu-



py.

Ventilation is required when readings are elevated. A practical action level is anything above 9 ppm. Natural ventilation is preferred when possible. Open windows and doors to allow the structure to clear. If fans are needed, use battery-powered or electric fans. Do not use gas-powered positive pressure fans for CO ventilation because they can introduce exhaust into the environment you are trying to make safe.

After ventilation, close all openings to the structure and allow the building to sit for a few minutes. Then recheck the structure with the meter. If CO is detected again, crews should consider the possibility of an additional source, an improperly secured source, or an incorrectly identified source. Ventilation without re-monitoring is an incomplete investigation. During the second monitoring, crews should confirm that readings have dropped to the department’s accepted threshold and remain there after ventilation has been completed and the structure has been returned to normal conditions.

IF NO SOURCE IS FOUND

If CO is suspected but not detected, crews should not immediately dismiss the call. A zero reading does not always mean there is absolutely no gas present. It means the meter is not detecting CO above its threshold. That distinction matters when speaking with occupants.

When no source is found, firefighters should continue the investigation methodically. Check all levels of the home. Recheck the mechanical room, attached garage, fireplace, stove, and exterior vents.

Consider whether the building was ventilated before arrival. Consider whether an appliance was running earlier but has since shut down. Consider whether a vehicle was recently running in the garage. Consider whether a generator had been operating but was moved or turned off before arrival.

If the cause is unclear or the reliability of the detector is questionable, the occupants should be advised to contact a certified technician to evaluate the appliances, detector, and air quality. If there is any doubt, the utility company should be requested or consulted. It is better to slow the call down than to leave occupants in a potentially unsafe environment.

Be accurate with occupants. Do not overpromise. A better explanation is, “Our meters are not detecting hazardous levels at this time,” rather than, “There is nothing in the house.”

RE-OCCUPANCY

Re-occupancy should not be treated casually. Occupants should not return until the cause has been identified and secured, or the alarm has been confirmed false. The structure should be ventilated to below the department’s accepted threshold. All detectors should be reset and functioning properly.

Occupants should be educated about CO hazards, detector maintenance, and the importance of calling 911 again if the alarm reactivates or symptoms return. They should understand that CO is invisible and that symptoms may be vague. They should also understand their responsibility to maintain working CO detectors and

Pennington County's newest vehicle

The Pennington County Fire Service held a dedication of its new service vehicle on Tuesday, May 26. The County Fire Administration recognized Commissioner Deb Hadcock for her continued strong support of County Fire and fire departments throughout Pennington County. The Pennington County Board of Commissioners was also recognized for its financial support, along with the Pennington County Sheriff's Office, including recognition plaques presented to Sheriff Brian Mueller, Alvin Morava, Keith Wetzell and Rod Neisent for their support and hard work in outfitting the vehicle. Doty Volunteer Fire Department Chaplain Maggie Brown christened the agency's first new vehicle in more than eleven years with water and oil. Dignitaries from throughout Pennington County attended the dedication and recognition ceremony.



CO Calls

FROM PAGE 10

have appliances serviced when needed.

If the cause is uncertain, the safest answer is to involve the utility company or a certified technician before normal occupancy resumes. The officer in charge should not feel pressured to declare a building safe when the investigation does not support that decision. We have a responsibility to make a reasonable determination based on our equipment, our findings, our SOGs, and the resources available to us.

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is the final piece of a quality CO response. The fire report should clearly describe the actions taken, the meter readings found, the areas checked, the suspected or confirmed source, whether the utility company was contacted, how the structure was ventilated, and what information was provided to the occupants before leaving.

The report should include initial readings, readings during the investigation, readings after ventilation, and the location where those readings were found. If the detector was checked, document its condition. If the utility company was requested, document that. If occupants were advised to contact a certified technician, document that.

Good documentation protects the officer in charge, and the department. It also shows that the call was handled as a real emergency, not a nuisance alarm.





Carbon monoxide calls require discipline. They are not fast calls. They are not "just alarms." They are investigations into an invisible hazard that can injure or kill occupants and responders. The best practice is simple: slow down, wear your SCBA, use the meter correctly, search for the source, ventilate when needed, confirm the atmosphere is safe, educate the occupants, and document what you did. The danger may be invisible, but our response to it should be deliberate, professional, and thorough.

Cole Kleinwolterink is a member of the Waukee Fire Department, Granger Fire Department, and Fire Science instructor at Des Moines Area Community College. Feel free to reach out to him at kleinwolterink@gmail.com with any questions, comments or inquiries.



Rooted in tradition. Designed for the future.

Built on the proven "wireframe" SCBA backframe and pneumatics platform, the 3M™ Scott™ Air-Pak™ XD SCBA focuses on today's firefighter who requires an extreme duty SCBA, while maintaining cleanability, comfort, and connectivity.

- 
Integrated Drag Rescue Loop provides a horizontal pull strength of 1,000 lbs. to assist with rescuing a downed firefighter.
- 
Low-profile SCBA designed to help minimize snag points when working in tight spaces.
- 
Redundant Safety Features including the dual-redundant pressure reducer are designed to help the SCBA perform, while also providing firefighters peace of mind.
- 
"Buddy" Lights help enable a 360° view of the firefighter's air pressure and PASS status.



Contact Feld Fire for a demo of the new 3M Scott Air-Pak XD!

◀ FeldFire.com



YOUR SINGLE SOURCE APPARATUS / SERVICE / EQUIPMENT 
 GRAIN VALLEY | 1330 NW Jefferson St. · Grain Valley, MO 64029 · P800-568-2403
 ST. LOUIS | 10403 Baur Blvd., Ste. E · Olivette, MO 63132 · P314-396-9745
 CARROLL | 113 N. Griffith Rd. · Carroll, IA 51401 · P800-568-2403

SDFA 2026 Fire School



SD Evolutions results

The 96th annual hose evolution race competition was held Thursday night at the 2026 South Dakota Fire School in Watertown. Weather damped the Watertown Thursday night band and food vendor activity, but the hose races and water fights were still held

in the downtown Fountain Park area. Hudson Fire took the overall win with best times winning the 2 1/2 hose lengthening race with a time of 34.80 seconds, Fort Pierre followed with a 43.90 for second place. Hudson took the next race, the gated wye with a 31.40, Fort Pierre finished with a 46.39. Race number 3, truck evolution, was

won by Fort Pierre in 24.67 seconds. Hudson completed the truck race with a 30.42 but gained a three second penalty for a dropped nozzle, making the final time of 33.42.

LARRY NICKLES
Yankton Fire Deputy Chief,
Retired



SDFA 2026 Fire School



S DFA 2026 Fire School



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

SDFA 2026 Fire School



SDFA 2026 Fire School



SDFA 2026 Fire School



North Haines Volunteer Fire Department celebrates 50 years of service

Members past and present were among the guests celebrating the milestone

By CHRISTINA HOLIDAY

North Haines Volunteer Fire Department marked 50 years on Saturday with a special celebration of the department's service.

First founded in 1976, the once small rural volunteer department has turned into a key emergency response agency serving the North Elk Fire Protection District.

Current and former members were among the special guests in attendance, along with Rapid City Fire Department officials and Governor Larry Rhoden.

Fire Chief Matt Thompson among those reflecting on the department's history, and his own. "That just goes to show how much time and effort everybody's put into it, how well we've come over the years."

From the back in the day of our little building over behind Lakota Homes to what we are in today, 21 years ago, we moved in here," he said. "We've bought a lot of different equipment. The training is advanced."



It's been an awesome just to be part of this department for so long. Something I never imagined I'd be doing 23 years ago, or that I'd be standing here to recognize this event."

The department's equipment and fire engines were on display for the community to see up close, along with fire hose demonstrations.

Rapid Valley Volunteer Fire Department temporarily took over duties and calls for North Haines firefighters so they could attend the ceremony.



North Haines Volunteer Fire Department to mark 50 years with public celebration Saturday

The North Haines Volunteer Fire Department will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a public event Saturday at the North Haines Fire Station, marking five decades of volunteer fire and emergency service in the Rapid City area.

The celebration will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the station, located at 1290 Country Road. A special program is scheduled for 1 p.m. to recognize the department's history, accomplishments and the volunteers who have served since its founding in 1976.

Organizers said the event will include appearances by Gov. Larry Rhoden and other local officials. The program will also honor the fire chiefs who have led the department over the past 50 years, including current Fire Chief Matt Thompson.

"Fifty years is an important milestone for any organization built by volunteers," Thompson said. "This celebration honors the

firefighters, families, and community members who have supported the department through the years." The North Haines Volunteer Fire Department serves the North Elk Fire Protection District and surrounding areas with fire suppression, rescue and emergency response services. Refreshments will be provided throughout the day, and the event is free and open to the public.

Today marked a significant milestone for the North Haines VFD as it celebrated 50 years of service. We extend our sincerest gratitude to everyone whose hard work and dedication made this event a resounding success, as well as to the surrounding departments, community members, and the general public for their unwavering support. This support is deeply appreciated. We would also like to express our thanks to the special guests who attended in support of North Haines VFD.

NORTH HAINES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

GOVERNOR LARRY RHODEN

For 50 years, the North Haines Volunteer Fire Department has answered the call when people needed them most. As a longtime volunteer firefighter myself, I was proud to join in their 50th anniversary celebration in Rapid City. Thank you to all our volunteer firefighters who help keep South Dakota safe!



Johnson Siding training

On Saturday, May 23rd Johnson Siding Fire Department was joined by the on-duty crew from Rapid City Fire Department Station #5 for vehicle stabilization training. Station #5 is of course the closest RCFD Station to our district, and when available, would be the primary mutual aid department for any type of incident. Their firefighters and medics expressed great appreciation for the invitation, and not only gave excellent feedback during our training, but participated in our After Action Review. The opportunity to train together gave us all a chance to come together in a way that isn't usually possible at a real-world incident. From the Johnson Siding Fire Department Facebook page.

Rescue in Custer State Park

Custer County Search and Rescue was paged with Custer Ambulance Service on May 24 for a report of a hiker who had suddenly become weak and could not move on the Sunday Gulch Trail near Sylvan Lake in Custer State Park. The phone call was garbled, and the issue was not clear at first. Upon reaching the hiker (who was with another person) we found they were responsive and talking but unable to walk without possibly falling. Intravenous fluids were given by paramedics, and we placed the hiker in our litter for a carry operation up to the Sylvan Lake Road (below the Hood Tunnel) where the ambulance was waiting. We're grateful for help with this carry out, as you can see in the photos the Sunday Gulch trail is rough and quite narrow (and sometimes surprises people with its length and complexity). We were ably assisted by deputies with the Custer County Sheriff's Office as well as a Conservation Officer from Custer State Park. The hiker was doing OK upon reaching the ambulance but was taken to the hospital. We're not certain what caused the problem, but this is a good time to remind everyone that you should have plenty of water and snacks when hiking, wear proper footwear on these rugged trails and let someone know where you're going and when you expect to return. Your cell phone may not work in all locations, so don't forget that text messages will sometimes go through when a phone call will not. You can text 911 for emergency help if necessary; please follow all instructions that may come back from 911 dispatch, as these will help us find your location and get to you more quickly. From the Custer County Search and Rescue Facebook page.





MACQUEEN™

**BUILT TO
ENDURE**

Maximum durability means maximum readiness. MacQueen delivers comprehensive fire apparatus solutions backed by expert service and support.




[LEARN MORE](#)



Semi Fire Causes Temporary Ramp Closure on I-29

An early morning semi-truck fire temporarily closes ramps on I-29 Saturday (May 30).

The Brookings County Sheriff's Office reports being dispatched around 12:45 a.m. to a vehicle fire on the southbound I-29 on-ramp at

mile marker 140.

Responders found the semi fully engulfed halfway down the exit ramp, and authorities temporarily closed the ramp while fire crews worked for about two and half hours to extinguish the blaze.

The sheriff's office said the driver of the 2016 Peterbilt semi noticed a burning odor before realizing the front end of the semi was glowing. The driver safely retrieved some personal belongings and exited the cab before the semi

became fully engulfed in flames.

No injuries were reported. The semi and its contents were estimated to have a total value of around \$60 thousand. The sheriff's office said the fire's cause is likely mechanical, and no foul play is suspected.

The Brookings County Sheriff's Office, Brookings Fire Department, White Fire Department and Aurora Auto Body and Towing all responded to the scene.

(By Jay Roe, Connoisseur Media, KXLG, June 1, 2026)

DANKO SKID UNITS



FIRE | RESCUE | EMS

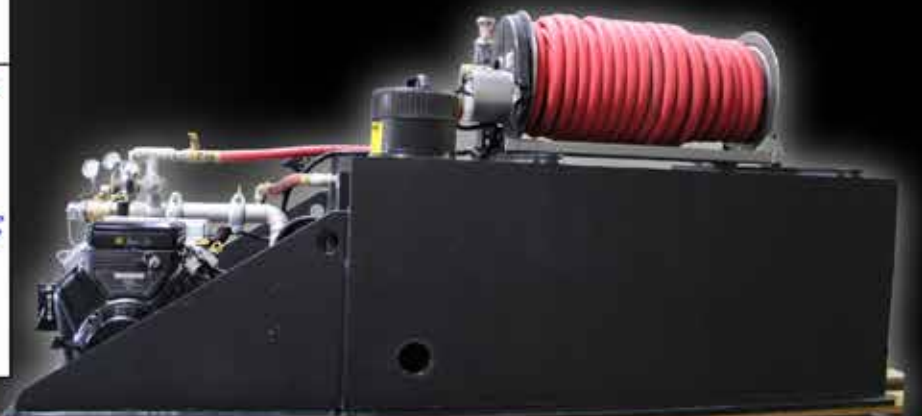
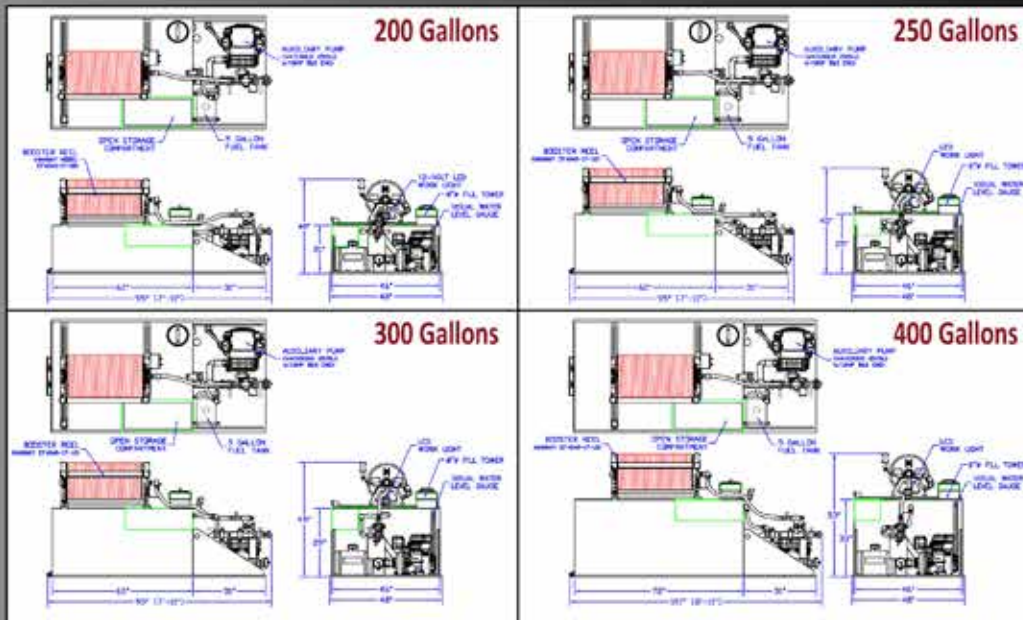
250 & 300 GALLON UNITS AVAILABLE

STAND OUT DANKO FEATURES:

- Built in reel rails
- Standard 12 gallon foam cell space for plug and play
- Dielectric barrier between stainless plumbing and aluminum mounting brackets
- Hot dipped galvanized Victaulic
- Manifold provided with additional ports for future discharges
- Quick install for customer, 4 mounting bolts and skid is wired complete, only require hot and ground

866-568-2200

TRUCKSALES@DANKO.NET



ESTIMATED BUILD TIMES - 10 DAYS

SDFA 2026 Fire School



SDFA 2026 Fire School

PHOTOS BY RICK GEORGE



SDFA 2026 Fire School

PHOTOS BY RICK GEORGE



SDPAA
LIABILITY & PROPERTY POOL

SDML
Workers • Compensation • Fund

First Responders, their spouse, and dependents are eligible for **FREE & CONFIDENTIAL** services.

CONFIDENTIAL, FREE, THERE FOR YOU!

CONNECTIONS
INC
First Responders Assistance Program | First Responders & Family Solutions

info@connectionseap.com
www.connectionseap.com
Call today: 800-779-6125

Helping Your Family Find solutions:

- Stress
- Emotional Problems
- Post Traumatic Stress
- Anxiety & Depression
- Mental Health
- Chemical & Substance Abuse
- Marriage & Family Issues
- In-person Counseling or Telehealth

**MOST SLIP-ONS SHIP IN A BOX.
OURS SHIPS **RUNNING.****



CHECK IT OUT YOURSELF

NOW AVAILABLE.



We build this one differently. The tank is a TTI rotationally-moulded poly shell – 79.2 gallons, UV-stabilized, fully drainable, carrying a 25-year warranty. We mate it to a WATERAX® high-pressure pump on a genuine Honda GX270, plumb the pressure-relief bypass, fit the reel and frame, and wet-test the assembled unit before it leaves the Sioux Falls warehouse. It arrives primed, proven, and ready for the bed of the truck.



- **Honda GX270 - 8.5 HP, 270cc**
- **WATERAX® Pump**
- **79.2-Gal TTI Poly Tank**
- **Hose Reel**
- **100 ft (30 m) of red Gates Plant Master 300 hose**
- **Lexan® polycarbonate combination fog nozzle, 3/4 in GHT – straight stream to fog**
- **Galvanized Mount & Skid**
- **Pressure-Relief Bypass**

Contact your Heiman Fire Partner for more info!



WHEN PROTECTION MEANS EVERYTHING.



Chris Bornitz
Eastern South Dakota
605.530.8210
chrisbornitz@heimanfire.com



Randy Hook
Central & Eastern South Dakota
605.254.1791
randy.hook@heimanfire.com



Brian Gaalswyk
Western South Dakota
605.769.0376
briang@heimanfire.com

View Trucks & Shop for Fire Equipment online at **HEIMANFIRE.COM**