

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

## 2024 SDFA Fall Fire Conference Schedule AmericInn Hotel Conference Center September 27th – 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 - Fort Pierre, SD

### Friday 27 September

8:30am–12:00pm SDFA Board of Directors meetings  
1:00pm–3:30pm Joint Council of Emergency Services Mtg @ Conference Center  
5:00pm–7:00pm Registration Desk & Vendors open @ AmericInn Conference Center  
6:00pm–~8:00pm **Meet and Greet** Sponsored Social (hors d'oeuvres & cash bar) at Conference Center

### Saturday 28 September BREAKFAST ON YOUR OWN

7:30am–8:00am Registration Desk Open  
8:00am–9:00am General Membership Meeting & Discussions  
9:00am–12:00pm Conference Speakers/Keynote Sessions  
• **LJay Geist** – **“Tailboard Leadership”**  
12:00pm–1:00pm Noon Meal @ Conference Center – (included with your registration)  
1:00pm–3:30pm Conference Speakers/Keynote Sessions  
• **Dennis Reilly** – **“Firefighting Excellence for ANYTOWN USA”**  
3:30pm Depart to State Capital for Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service  
4:00pm–5:00pm **Annual SD Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service @ Memorial Site** (or inside Capitol Rotunda (weather dependent))  
5:45pm–~8:00pm **Sponsored Conference & Dear Old Timers Social** (hors d'oeuvres & cash bar) @ Conference Center



### Sunday 29 September BREAKFAST ON YOUR OWN

8:00am–11:00am **LJay Geist - “The Impact of One”**  
**Q&A with LJay & Dennis - Fire Service Leadership Coffee Table**  
11:00am thru Completion **SDFA General Membership Meeting & Discussions**

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# Box Elder Structure Fire

The Box Elder Volunteer Fire Department responded to a report of fire and smoke visible from a residential structure in the 700 Block of Box Elder Rd West, Box Elder SD, 57719 on Aug. 11, 2024 at 2:42 a.m.

First arriving firefighters found a free burning fire with a heavy smoke condition, issuing from the single story, residential structure with fire extending into the ceiling and roof assembly.

Rapid attack by firefighters contained the fire to the structure of origin, stopping the spread of the flames to nearby structures, infrastructure and other improvements.

The American Red Cross Serving Central and Western South Dakota, family and neighbors are assisting the residents.

No reports of injuries to firefighters or civilians were reported, unfortunately one domestic animal did perish as a result of the fire.



Please maintain your smoke and CO detectors, keep them clean, free of dust and dirt. When you change your clock, change detector batteries. Replace the entire detector after 10 years or if you suspect they are failing or

faulty.

Agencies responding included Pennington County 911, Box Elder Volunteer Fire Department, Box Elder Police Department, Box Elder Public Works, Black Hawk Volunteer Fire Department, United States Air force 28<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing / Ellsworth Air

Force Base Fire Department, Whispering Pines Volunteer Fire Department, Rapid Valley Volunteer Fire Department, the Rapid City Fire Department Ambulance Service, North Haines Volunteer Fire Department, the New Underwood Volunteer Fire Department, the American Red Cross

Serving Central and Western South Dakota, Black Hills Energy, Montana Dakota Utilities, and the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

The photo is courtesy of the Box Elder Volunteer Fire Department.



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9AM-2PM**

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## Spearfish Fire Department responds to gas leak

Spearfish Fire Department members responded to a natural gas leak at around 12:05 p.m. Tuesday. Deputy Fire Chief Brian Ziegler said excavation in the alley near 527 Jackson Boulevard caused the leak.

Ziegler said traffic was diverted around Jackson Boulevard's eastbound lanes between State Street and 11th Street to reduce

potential ignition sources and provide safe access for MDU.

"MDU was able to stop the flow of gas and perform needed repairs without incident," Ziegler said.

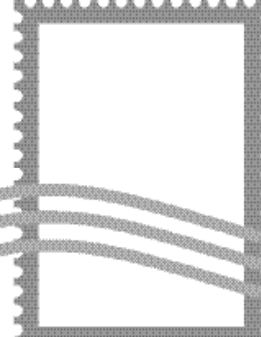
Traffic diversion was in place for about two hours, Ziegler said. (*Spearfish Black Hills Pioneer, Spearfish, July 18, 2024*)

**WANTED!**

**Action Fire Photos**

Please send them to  
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along with information to explain the photo.



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NOTE: Please include the label with the incorrect address found on the front page of this newspaper.

Thank You!



Publication of Blaze Publications Inc.

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Jen Larson..... Advertising Design Manager/Layout  
Brenda Zimple..... Type Setter

South Dakota Firefighter (USPS 024-718), is published monthly by Blaze Publications, Inc., 1306 10th Street SW, Humboldt, IA 50548. Periodicals Postage Paid at Humboldt, IA and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to South Dakota Firefighter, PO Box 1884, Rapid City, SD 57709

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# Memorial Service



The 2024 South Dakota Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service will be taking place on Saturday, Sept. 28th, 4 p.m. CST at the Memorial Site by Capitol Lake in Pierre.

In case of inclement weather, the service will be in the Capitol Rotunda.

Right: Honor Guard members performing flower placement during the reading of the Roll of Honor.

Below: The Dakota District Bagpipers echo throughout the Capitol Building during the 2023 Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service.



## 800 HAY BALES LOST IN GRASS FIRE IN BENNETT COUNTY

According to Vetal Volunteer Fire Chief Matt Hoppes, a fire that started in the ditch on 284<sup>th</sup> Street in eastern Bennett County on Tuesday, July 16, burned approximately 22 acres. Unfortunately, it engulfed about 800 hay bales that were stacked in one of Huddleston's stack

yards. Thanks to the quick response of Vetal, Tuthill, Long Valley, and Martin Volunteer Fire Departments, the fire did not spread to a nearby tree grove and river bottom.

*(Martin – Bennett Co, Booster II, Martin, July 24, 2024)*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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

**SEPT. 11-12, 2024:** International Association of Arson Investigators South Dakota Chapter, Brookings, Propane and Natural Gas Leak Investigations, Terry Hanson – Gas Training Specialties.

**SEPT. 21, 2024:** Yankton Fire Department's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

**SEPT. 27-29, 2024:** Fall Fire Conference, Fort Pierre AmericInn Conference Center, Fort Pierre.

**SEPT. 28, 2024:** Fallen Firefighters Memorial, Memorial site at Capitol Lake, 4 p.m.

**SEPT. 28, 2024:** Scenic Volunteer Fire Departments' Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Annual Fund-raiser, 17466 Bear Creek Road, Scenic, 11 a.m. – burger meal \$6 and hot dog meal \$3, 2 p.m. ribbon cutting.

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

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# DEPARTED FIREFIGHTERS

## U.S. Fire Administration Firefighter Fatality Notification

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

• **TY VOTH**, 27, Wichita, KS, died Aug. 1, 2024. Ty was a career firefighter with seven years of service with the Wichita Fire Department. On Thursday, Aug. 1, 2024, Firefighter Ty Voth, while at the scene of a house fire, collapsed. He was immediately taken to the local hospital where he passed away. The cause of his death has yet to be determined.

## Bruce James Geffre

1957 - 2024

Bruce James Geffre, 67, of Leola, SD, passed away Friday, Aug. 9, 2024, surrounded by his loving family.

A Celebration of Life Service was held on Saturday, Aug. 17, 2024, at Schriver's Memorial Chapel, Aberdeen, with Welton Maunu officiating.

Bruce James Geffre was born to Marvin and Viola (Rieger) Geffre on June 12, 1957, in

Leola, SD where he grew up on a farm NE of Leola with his five siblings, Linda, Lee, Glen, Dean and Dale. He attended country school through the fourth grade and then went to town school in Leola and graduated high school in 1975. Even though he left the farm after graduation the lessons and memories from the farm stayed with him forever. You can take the boy away from the farm, but you can't take the farm away from the boy!

After graduation, Bruce worked for the Schweitzer Flax Processing Plant in North Dakota for two years. He returned to Leola and worked for area farmers until he started at the Leola Elevator where he worked for over 39 years as the grain manager and retired in 2019 due to ill health.

On May 30, 1981, Bruce was united in marriage to Ronda Bain in Leola, SD. Together they welcomed two children into the

world: Natasha and Brandon.

In 2007, Bruce retired as Captain of the Leola Volunteer Fire Department after serving for 20 years. He was a member of the Leola Fire District at the time of his passing. In his earlier years, Bruce was also active as a Jaycee Member and trap shooting.



In his free time, Bruce loved deer hunting and all things fishing. It didn't

matter whether it was on the ice, a special spot at the Missouri River, or Lake Sakakawea in North Dakota; he was content with a fishing pole in his hand, making memories with his children and grandchildren! He was also very passionate about mowing and tending to a well-kept yard and Ronda's flowers.

Grateful for having shared Bruce's life are his wife of 43 years, Ronda Geffre; daughter, Natasha (Jerimiah) Radtke, and their children: Isaac, Lauren, Allison, and Logan; son, Brandon (Katlyn) Geffre and their son Brayden; four brothers: Lee, Glen, Dean (Robin) and Dale (Wendy) Geffre; one uncle, Ron Geffre; one goddaughter Brandi (Schumack) Sandland; mother-in-law Pat Trode; brother-in-laws Jim Bain, David Bain, and John Bain; sister-in-law Brenda (Darrin) Dykstra and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

## Walter Patrick Haley, Jr.

1941 - 2024

Hereford Volunteer Fire Department Firefighter, Walter Patrick Haley, Jr passed away Aug. 2, 2024, at Fort Meade VA Hospital, Fort Meade, SD.

Firefighter Haley was born Oct. 7, 1941 in New Underwood, SD to Walter Patrick Haley Sr and Margaret Ruth Keller.

He spent his childhood on the family ranch in Hereford, SD tending chickens and bringing in the cows.

In between chores and "being in trouble most of the time," Walter fondly remembered playing in the loft of the barn on the rope that ran from the pulley with his younger brother Clarence. Another favorite memory from his childhood was simply watching the cows and calves out in the pasture.

In 1955, Walter headed in to town for high school in Sturgis, SD with his fellow country boy and good friend Duane Reichert. Walter described himself as a bit of a "mover and a shaker" at that time in his life, which probably meant that he got himself into way more trouble than his parents were ever aware of.

His favorite subject was agriculture and he would continue to follow that path in college at the University of Wyoming, where he spent the next 4.5 years in pursuit of higher education.

A much-repeated story from that time was of learning how to "properly" use crutches from one of his fraternity brothers.

Which ended up being a skill that served him well multiple times later in life. In between his studies, which apparently wasn't enough according to the D in English found on a college report card that survived the years, he pursued his dream of taking home a buckle in Bull Riding.

While never taking home that elusive buckle, rodeo continued to be a lifelong passion and he frequently could be heard stating that if his family would let him, he would have gotten on a bull even in his later years.

After college, he returned to the family ranch where he continued the tradition of raising cattle and sheep, even though he always

stated that sheep were animals that actively looked for a place to die.

His favorite activity on the ranch was watching the baby calves play in the spring and he always felt a great sense of accomplishment when those same calves were taken to market in the fall.

Many an evening was spent out behind the barn in the rodeo arena with neighbors and friends tossing a loop on whatever steer they could get their hands on.

In 1975, Walter married Shari Barry after meeting her at a barbershop in town when he went in to get a trim. In 1979, Walter was widowed after a car accident took Shari's life.

In 1980, a chance meeting in the old St. Onge Bar would lead to a love that would last the rest of his life. In 1982, Walter married Linda Appleby Smith and became a father for the first time with his step son Monty Smith.

In 1985, he would become a father for the second time in the form of his daughter Bethany. Walter greatly enjoyed being a father and loved teaching his kids about animal husbandry, how to fix things, and reading to his young daughter.

He made sure to instill in his kids the value of a hard day's work and to the chagrin of their mother, the fine art of cursing while working cattle. One of his favorite memories was teaching Bethany to ride and was proud to watch her compete in sports and rodeo while in high school.

Walter was also very proud to be an American and showed his love for his country by spending 20+ years in the South Dakota National Guard where he retired in 1988 as a Chief Warrant Officer 03.

He continued to support his country even after retiring from the National Guard by spending another 5 years in the United

States Army Reserve.

Walter, 82, left this world to chase cows on the Lords range on Aug. 2, 2024 at the Fort Meade Veterans Hospital after a brief battle with an infection that this old rancher couldn't fix with a bottle of Vetericin, a dose of LA 200, and all that modern medicine could offer.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife of 42 years, Linda; daughter, Bethany Haley, Hereford, SD; step son, Monty (Kim) Smith, Sturgis, SD; grandsons, Bailey and Tanner Smith, Sturgis, SD; nephew, Patrick (Janeen) Haley, Spearfish, SD; niece, Stacie Haley, Belle Fourche, SD; and cousins and many friends.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Shari; brother, Clarence Haley; parents, Walter and Margaret; many good friends; his beloved dog, Jack and his roping horse, Jake.

Walter was always willing to sit down for a long talk, some words of wisdom, and to tell a few tall tales. It was up to you to decide if he was pulling your leg or not. His example of a life well lived doing what he loved and the value of putting a hard day of good work will continue on in those that knew and loved him.

Walter was a lifetime member of the Hereford Volunteer Fire Department and served as the Secretary / Treasurer of the Meade County Firefighters Association.

Condolences may be sent to the family at [www.kinkadeefunerals.com](http://www.kinkadeefunerals.com). In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Hereford Volunteer Fire Department and the Meade County 4-H association.

Funeral services were held on Aug. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the Central Meade County Community Center, Union Center, SD. Burial followed at Black Hills National Cemetery with an emergency vehicle line up.



# CLASSIFIEDS

## CLASSIFIED ADS FOR THE SOUTH DAKOTA FIREFIGHTER NEWSPAPER

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

## Adam Paul Weisz

1978 - 2024

Sturgis Volunteer Firefighter Adam Paul Weisz, 46, Sturgis, SD, passed away July 22, 2024.

Adam was born July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1978 to Larry and Cheryl (Schieffer) Weisz in Rapid City, SD. He grew up in Sturgis where he was very active on the Sturgis Soccer team. He played soccer for 13 years, lettering in soccer and band, where he played clarinet.

He enjoyed bowling and loved to golf with his dad and his nephew, Conor. He graduated from SDSU and worked for the Sturgis Parks Dept. for about 10 years.

He has worked for the Sanford Underground lab for 10 years.

Adam was a longtime member of the Sturgis Volunteer Fire De-

partment where he served for the last 20 years and EMS services for about 15 years.

He served on the Fire Dept. Board of Directors. Adam's passion was serving his community.

He is survived by his parents; his brother: Shawn (Nikki) Weisz; nephews: Conor (Tomlin) and Ethan Weisz; niece: Felicia Henry and her son: Zakai Kelly, as well as numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins;

special friends: Steve Matz, De-

nise (John) Matz, and his fellow firefighters.

He was preceded in death by his Grandma and Grandpa Schieffer, his Grandpa Weisz, and Grandma Douglas.

Memorial services were held on Wednesday, July 31, 2024, at Kinkadee Funeral Chapel in Sturgis, SD.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established to the Sturgis Volunteer Fire Dept.





# SDFA OFFICER REPORTS

## When Trauma Bumps your Faith...

I was digging around in the “archives” of my computer and found an article dating back to 2015. The article was related to a firefighter being attacked by a bear while fighting a wildland fire. The reality is that most of us will never encounter a bear, one thing we will encounter is traumatic events. The reality is if you are a first responder it is not a matter of if you will encounter traumatic situations, but when you will encounter trauma. While we have CISM processes, what is not often discussed, is what about spirituality and trauma. What happens when the traumatic event begins to impact your idea of God?

As I pondered this, before responding to another Debriefing (I wonder how I became the center of the CISM team in the Hills), I remembered a class that was offered at Fire School a few years back with the interesting name of “Theodicy and Trauma: Reconciling Belief with Experience”. Since most of us don’t like to think about trauma and how it might impact us, the class was lightly attended. However, you know me well enough to know I am like a dog with a bone, I am not going to let go!

Since there are many ideas of what Spirituality is all about, let me define what I mean, when using the term spirituality. Researchers in the field of spirituality have suggested three useful dimensions for thinking about one’s spirituality: Beliefs, Spiritual practices, and Spiritual experiences. Currently in the US, opinion surveys consistently find that most people endorse a belief in God or higher power. “In a 2007 Gallup Poll 86% of respondents

indicated a belief in God, while only 6% stated they did not believe in God. Many of these individuals would describe religion or spirituality as the most important source of strength and direction for their lives. Because spirituality plays such a significant and central role in the lives of many people, it is likely to be affected by trauma, and in turn to affect the survivor’s reaction to the trauma.” (Author Unknown)

Keep in mind those statistics are really dated and probably have changed significantly. However, even assuming a 75% rate of belief in a higher power, it looks like someone who can help us access the strengths of those spiritual aspects of our world would be helpful. Once again, we are in the world of the chaplain. Keep in mind, the chaplain is not just someone to bless the new apparatus, or give the invocation at our annual banquets. The reality is this, spirituality is not a “warm blanket” to assuage our worries. Sometimes spiritual beliefs add to the trauma we just experienced. For some people, an incident will result in depression, loneliness or feelings of being abandoned by the ‘God’ they have learned about, or been taught. For the next person, who experienced the same incident walks away with an increased appreciation for life and the wonder of it all. These people also find in that trauma more closeness to God, increased sense of purpose in life and even greater sense of purpose in life.

The challenge when it comes to dealing with spirituality, is that the ‘cookie-cutter’ approach of assuming that everyone is experiencing the same reaction is not valid. I recall a number of years ago speaking with the widow of a friend of mine who had died attempting to save a drunk. This was one of those devastating losses for

me and has had some lasting impact on my career as a responder. One afternoon about 6-8 months following her husband’s death she stated she felt the “peace of God”. Being a “good” pastor/counselor, I responded: “Either the peace of God or shock and numbness.” That was now nearly 30 years ago but I recall her words as easily as if they were spoken yesterday, “I am Assembly of God (a Pentecostal Denomination) and I know the spirit of God when I experience him.” In one short sentence she taught me that I cannot assume how someone else is processing the event. For this widow, that loss drew her closer to God. While for me, let’s put it this way, it took me a whole lot longer to accept that same sense of peace.

What if you are more like me and less like my friend? How do you recover the sense of meaning and purpose in your life? One way may be by recognizing that your ways of looking at the world has changed. I know I don’t drive the roadways in South Dakota anymore just randomly glancing at the “Think Signs” as I know someone’s life ended in a tragic manner at that place. However, I also redouble my efforts at keeping people safe as much as possible. I train to save lives and property. Even though I should probably retire, I keep answering the call as a way of making sense of the losses. For someone else, they might find relief and support through rituals experienced as part of religious or spiritual involvement. Regardless of what you do, we all need a way and a process to help restore our sense of meaning in this world. There is also a third option, and that is to walk away from any sense of faith deciding that the world doesn’t make sense to believe in a loving God when all this bad stuff happens.



Rodney Veldhuizen, Chaplain

“The reality is if you are a first responder it is not a matter of if you will encounter traumatic situations, but when you will encounter trauma. While we have CISM processes, what is not often discussed, is what about spirituality and trauma. What happens when the traumatic event begins to impact your idea of God?”

I am of the opinion that regardless of how strong your spiritual life is, or how solid your relationship with God, traumatic events frequently challenge our core beliefs about safety, our own self-worth and the meaning of life. At the end of the day traumatic experiences can become the starting point for a discussion of the many ways first responders define what it is to have faith. Before I wrap this up, let me offer a quote from an old philosopher, reflecting on the problem of trauma, and our belief in God. “Job, (the Biblical man who lost everything) says what he thinks and feels, and how every person would likely feel in his position. His friends on the other hand, talk as if they were secretly being watched by the powerful Ruler whose case is open to their verdict, and if, in making their verdict, they cared more about winning His favor than about the truth. This trickery of maintaining something just to keep up appearances, contrary to their true beliefs, feigning a conviction they did not have, stands in stark contrast to Job’s candor, which is so far removed from flattery that it borders on audacity, but nevertheless casts him in a very favorable light.” (Immanuel Kant). Why would I add this quote? To remind us all that there are times when we need to unload our thoughts and emotions to the Almighty in ways that may seem to others to be questioning our faith. Only to find that those “questions” have allowed us to

excavate to the bedrock on which we stand. I would also warn you that if you attempt to step in a “reason” with someone who is experiencing what has been called “the crisis of belief” you only make things worse.

At the end of the day, keep in mind that just because your responders or even yourselves are active in the faith community, this does not grant immunity from the struggles of traumatic events. What we are finding is that research suggests that for many trauma survivors, spirituality may be a resource that can be associated with resilience and recovery. However, for some, the circumstances of the trauma may lead to the questioning of important and previously sustaining beliefs. This can lead to spiritual struggle or even loss of faith. While spirituality is a great resource for us, keep in mind it can create challenges of its own and often will distance us from others in the faith community who have never had to wrestle with the images and situations we have to deal with on a regular basis.

I cannot leave this topic without an invitation to each and every one, if you find yourself with more questions than you have answers for, don’t be afraid to look up a fire chaplain to help sort through the questions that have no easy answers.

CHAPLAIN ROD

## Black Hills Wind and Fire motorcycle ride

Black Hills Wind and Fire held a fundraiser motorcycle ride to benefit Children Home Society on July 31. Amount raised was \$1,735 that day, with fundraising continuing with boot collection this summer also.





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# SDFA OFFICER REPORTS



**Charlie Kludt, President**  
 "The South Dakota Firefighters Association Board of Directors invite you to the SDFA Fall Fire Conference, General Membership Meetings, and Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service the weekend of 27-29 September at the AmericInn Conference Center in Fort Pierre. We have two gentlemen, LJay Geist and Dennis Reilly, familiar with the volunteer and career service that will be talking about ideas for tactics and operations for small departments."

## Training, Training, Everywhere

There are learning and review opportunities for everyone.

District Fire Schools are being held all around the state over the next few weeks. It doesn't matter where you live or department you are on, you can attend any of the fire schools.

Check the SDFA website and Facebook, or the Fire Marshal's office for more information on training near you that might be of interested.

The South Dakota Firefighters Association Board of Directors invite you to the SDFA Fall Fire Conference, General Membership Meetings, and Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service the weekend of 27-29 September at the AmericInn Conference Center in Fort Pierre.

We have two gentlemen, LJay Geist and Dennis Reilly, familiar with the volunteer and career service that will be talking about ideas for tactics and operations for small departments.

They will be presenting individually and in a joint session for

topics of your interest.

There will be a Meet & Greet social on Friday evening, and, Conference & Dear Old Timers Social on Saturday evening at the conference.

We will be having the general membership meeting and open discussion session. This has turned into one of the best open sessions for discussion, brainstorming, and Q&A from the membership about state issues.

Register for the Fall Conference at the SDFA website.

The Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service will be on Saturday afternoon, 28 September, at 4 p.m. at the Memorial Site in Pierre. We moved it to be a direct part of the conference so more individuals will have opportunity to attend.

This year we have added Cavalour Fire Chief Joshua Kogel to the monument Roll of Honorees.

Get your email registered with your department listing. The SDFA sends out news, updates, training, and registration information to the emails registered in our membership system. You can

create an account or have your email added to your department's roster.

SDFA Board will be holding the fall meeting over the Fall Conference weekend. If you have something you would like to discuss or issue for us to consider, contact your district representative.

For those departments that received State Fire Grant funding, be sure to get your remittance request turned in to the Fire Marshal's Office. Discussions of another grant opportunity are in the works, but we may need your input for prioritizing items. More to come.

Fire and Home Safety week will be coming in October. "Smoke Alarms: Make them work for you."

If your department does a public service program, be sure to send in an article and photos to the SDFA paper.

Hope to see you at the Fall Conference. Stay safe,

**CHARLIE KLUDT,**  
 President

Well, here it is, summer is winding down, we are heading full speed ahead to fall. Me, I like the fall weather. Cool in the mornings, might have to have a jacket on, by midday, short sleeve shirts, shorts and then come evening, back to a jacket. I don't like that the days are getting shorter and shorter. As I write this month's article, I have only one of the big projects I had planned for summer left.

On a sad note, last month in the *SD Firefighter* newspaper there were six firefighters that passed away. My thoughts are with those families. It is sad when six firefighters are no longer with us, we have lost good firefighters who combined had over 120 years of experience. That's experience that is nearly impossible to replace. Hopefully the younger firefighters will be stepping up. Rest in peace my fellow firefighters.

Remember, the SD Firefighters Assn. Fall Conference. Details are in the paper, but please take some time and come join your fellow firefighters. Share a laugh. Share

a story. Share your thoughts. Share a complaint. Share a beverage. Share the camaraderie. Share learning something new. Share honoring those who gave their life for you. Share that we said, "we will never forget you".

If you are familiar with the movie *JAWS* from a number of years ago, people were afraid to go into the water for fear of sharks. There was a saying, "just when you thought it was safe to go in the water". That saying applies to needing to have a medical director sign off on your ambulance service who provides first responder service. Does this apply to the local fire department who does not transport? At this point no one knows and basically have been advised to just continue as you have been. What kind of direction is that from the State agency? Understand it's early in this process, but still it's one more hurdle placed upon those who volunteer their time and energy to serve their fellow citizens. Let's make it more difficult to volunteer



**Denny Gorton,**  
 Treasurer/Past President  
 "If you read President Kludt's article last month he said that the monthly SD FIREFIGHTER newspaper will be coming to you via email. So please get those email addresses to Samara so she can update them, or better yet, you can set it up so you will have direct access to our Growth Zone membership program and keep all your department info current. Talk about a neat feature, that is one."

our time.

If you read President Kludt's article last month he said that the monthly *SD FIREFIGHTER* newspaper will be coming to you via email. So please get those email addresses to Samara so she can update them, or better yet, you can set it up so you will have direct access to our Growth Zone membership program and keep all your department info current. Talk about a neat feature, that is one.

Speaking from the treasurer's position there will be changes

coming there too. I know it's early but start thinking about renewing your SD Firefighters Assn. membership for 2025. Some of that due's invoice, roster, etc., most likely will be coming via an email also. So please check that spam, junk, whatever it's called folder for these important pieces of information.

With that I'll close for this month. Stay safe.

**DENNY GORTON,**  
 Treasurer

# SDFA AUXILIARY REPORT

It's back to school season!

With the kiddos heading back to school it's a good time for a few reminders:

- Put the phone down while driving
- School zones = 15 mph speed limit
- Always stop for pedestrians and buses
- This may be a teen's first year driving to school, be patient.

It's also a great time to have a chat with kids about safety plans, go over your meeting spot outside. Talk about fire drills at school.

These conversations don't

have to happen with just the little kids, talk to your son or daughter who is going off to college. Ask them if they know what to do if there was an emergency on campus.

Back to school time is hectic,

no parent will tell you otherwise, but safety doesn't deserve a backseat.

**AMY HORN,**  
 Auxiliary

## Amy Horn, Auxiliary Director

"It's also a great time to have a chat with kids about safety plans, go over your meeting spot outside. Talk about fire drills at school. These conversations don't have to happen with just the little kids, talk to your son or daughter who is going off to college. Ask them if they know what to do if there was an emergency on campus."

# 2024 SDFA AUXILIARY BOARD

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# STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

## Incident reporting system modernization that will affect South Dakota Fire Departments.

By SD State Fire Marshal  
PAUL MERRIMAN

The way South Dakota fire departments report their incidents to the SD State Fire Marshal's office is going to be changing next year. Currently the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) is leading a national effort to develop and launch a new interoperable fire information and innovative analytics platform. This new system will be known as the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS).

As for now, SD fire departments will need to keep reporting their incidents to the SD State Fire Marshal's Office the same way they are currently reporting.

Once NERIS is developed and operational, USFA will work to migrate fire and emergency services departments onto the new platform as a replacement for the legacy National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). This migration will occur over the next year to support a smooth transition from NFIRS to NERIS.

Once this transition happens, the NFIRS system will be shut down and the current SD Incident Reporting System will effectively become obsolete thus shutting it down also.

NERIS is looking to significantly improve and streamline the data entry process. The NERIS platform is being developed with a mobile-first approach that simplifies incident data entry and ensures compatibility on mobile devices, as well as other hardware such as computers and tablets. This approach will allow more local fire departments, with minimal technology capabilities and less staff time, to submit their data more easily. Integration with other data collection systems, including third party RMS (record management systems) and CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) systems to pull information into the incident records automatically to

assist users in filling out the incident reports. NERIS is also being designed to crosswalk applicable Federal wildland data from the Inter-agency Fire Occurrence Reporting Modules (InFORM) and the Integrated Reporting of Wildland-Fire Information (IRWIN). The NERIS system is currently in BETA testing, with version 1.0 planned to be ready to start onboarding users sometime around November of 2024. Onboarding of Fire Departments and other emergency services will continue from then thru December of 2025. Plan is to have everyone fully transferred over to the NERIS system in 2026.

Links below for more information on the new NERIS system: <https://www.usfa/fema.gov/nfirs/neris/>

As we learn more about and plan for this change, The State Fire Marshal's Office will be sending out additional information on the implementation of this new system and work with our SD Fire Departments to

make sure they are informed of the processes along with sharing the training the departments need to be able to use the NERIS system when it becomes available. Please contact the State Fire Marshal's Office with any questions you may have regarding this transition.

tem: <https://www.usfa/fema.gov/nfirs/neris/>



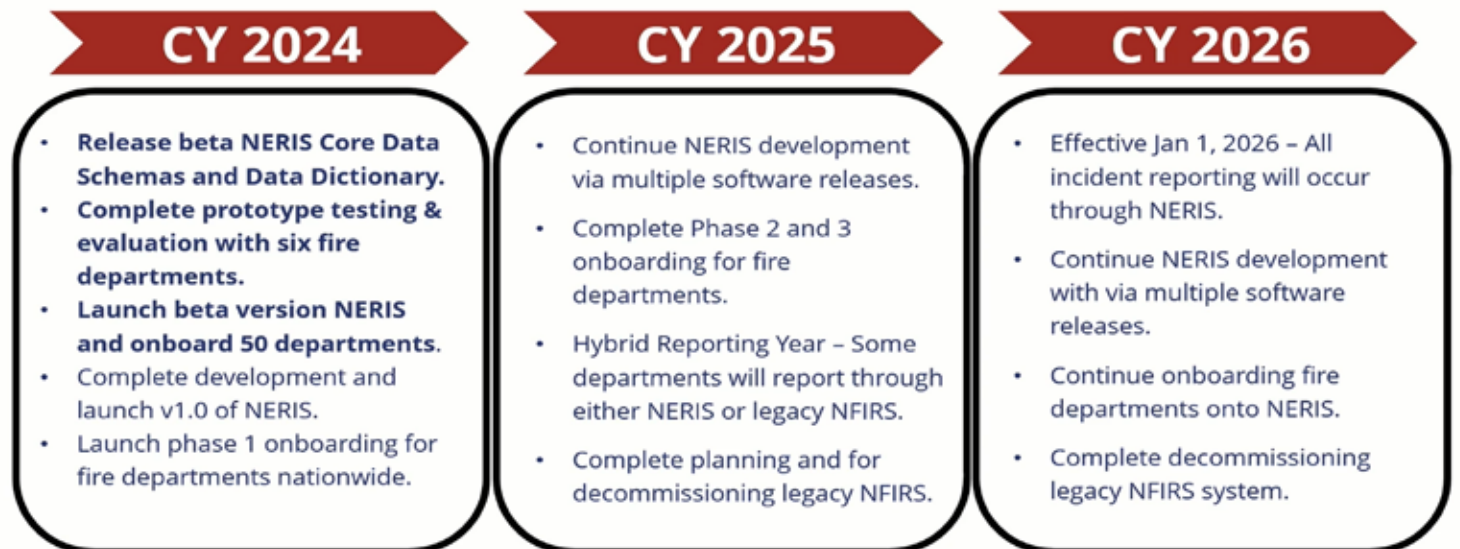
Paul Merriman, State Fire Marshal

"As for now, SD fire departments will need to keep reporting their incidents to the SD State Fire Marshal's Office the same way they are currently reporting."



Is Your Department interested in being a NERIS Early Adopter?

### 3-Year Timeline



### Homework: Be NERIS Ready

Identify

- Role:** NERIS Lead
- Responsibilities:** Coordinate onboarding, training, and administrative aspects of the transition.
- Qualifications:** Deep understanding of your department's data structures and organizational infrastructure.



Determine

- Vendor Relationships:** Identify your CAD and RMS vendors along with your PSAP or 911 Dispatch Center.
- Mutual Aid:** Catalog your mutual and automatic aid agencies within your response area.



Gather

- Station Details:** Information on station locations, units, and specifics such as unit capabilities, minimum staffing levels, and cross-staffing arrangements.
- Geographical Data:** Shapefiles or maps delineating fire department jurisdictional boundaries. For assistance, consult your city or county GIS department.





# Gloves

By JERRY KNAPP

Gloves. Have you found a pair of NFPA compliant gloves you really like or do you just put up with them? What size do you wear? Small, medium, large? You are missing out on the right glove size that fits you....there are 36 to choose from.

Your gloves suck because they are not fitted properly, mine were not either, until now. NFPA came out with a requirement in 2018 edition to require you to properly fit your gloves. How you ask?

Just like you fit your boots.... by length and width! The length

is the length of your forefinger and the width is across your knuckles. Gloves are being made in slim models, a bit narrower across the width for 100% of our female firefighters and about 30% of male firefighters need the slim version. That is width.

Length: Your fingertips should go all the way to the end of the glove fingers to insure you have the proper length. If you go with these measurements, you will likely not hate your gloves anymore.

Firecraft safety products specializes in gloves. The inventor/boss, Tom Lochner, designs

them, makes them, patents them and sells them....in 36 sizes. Of course there are 2xs, xs, s, m, l, xl, 2xl,3xl and 4lx. Most important, these all come in slim for narrow hands and a short finger version or you can have the right size, smaller width and shorter fingers all in one glove!

I don't make any money selling these gloves but I do wear them and I have the right size, they are comfortable, like my boots that fit. FLAME model gloves are the best.

For more info go to Firecraft-safetyproducts.com. Select: Flame gloves and look at the

downloadable sizing guide to help all your members get the right size. Your local sales rep will have a complete selection (36 sizes) for you to try on to be sure you are getting the best fit.

Measure for gloves just like you do for boots...length and width. So when your sales rep says what size gloves do you wear.... sm, med, lg....tell him "ones that fit!"

*Jerry Knapp is the Chief of the Rockland County, NY Hazmat Team, and is a 49 year veteran Firefighter/EMT with the West Haverstraw NY Fire Department. He served on the technical panel*

for the UL residential fire attack study. Knapp is the co-author of two books: *House Fires and Tactical Response to Explosive Gas Emergencies* published by Fire Engineering. He is the owner of *Suburban Tactical Inc* specializing in fire officer and firefighter training.

## South Dakota Wildland Fire: Where to find us online

We are often asked where to find South Dakota Wildland Fire posts and pictures online.

We appreciate the interest and offer the links below.

Thank you for your support.  
**South Dakota Wildland Fire (SDWF)**

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/southdakotawildlandfire/>

“South Dakota Wildland Fire (Official)”



**SDWF X (formerly Twitter):** <https://twitter.com/SDWildlandFire>

**SDWF Website:** <https://wildlandfire.sd.gov/>

**SDWF YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/@southdakotawildlandfire](http://www.youtube.com/@southdakotawildlandfire)

**SDWF on Department of Public Safety social media**

**DPS Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/SDPublicSafety>

**DPS X (formerly Twitter):** [twitter.com/SDPublicSafety](https://twitter.com/SDPublicSafety)

**Interested in working for SDWF:** <https://wildlandfire.sd.gov/hiring.aspx>



## The new face of firefighting.

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### See more.

Wider field of view helps to improve situational awareness.

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Bone conduction headphone for clear incoming radio communications.

### Breathe easier.

New regulator design provides improved breathing performance.



Contact Feld Fire for a demo of the new 3M Scott C5 Vision!

◀ [FeldFire.com](http://FeldFire.com)

## ACTION FIRE PHOTOS NEEDED!

Please send them to [jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com](mailto:jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com) along with information to explain the photo.



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

23-0405



# Fire destroys Mitchell townhomes

By LUKE HAGEN and MARCUS TRAXLER, Mitchell Daily Republic

Thursday afternoon blaze brought four departments to scene, cause likely outdoor outlet

Shirley Carroll just wanted to know that Rambo was OK. Carroll on Thursday afternoon was at the Moose Lodge in Mitchell when she heard a fire had overtaken her home. The fire was reported shortly before 3:30 p.m. at 1605 E. First Ave., at a collection of townhomes in Mitchell, located between Hitchcock Park and Wild Oak Golf Course.

Carroll's home, Unit No. 6, was one of at least two properties that were a complete loss. When she pulled up and saw an orange blaze and black smoke billowing from the roof, she thought of Rambo, her 8-year-old male Shih Tzu dog.

"He's my pride and joy," said Carroll, who has renters insurance and has lived at the property for three years. "I couldn't care less about anything else I have here. I just thought, 'I have a dog in there. I have to get in there.'"

Of course, emergency personnel on scene wouldn't let Carroll into the residence. But when firefighters opened the back door, out came Rambo.

"How could it have gone up that fast?" Carroll said.

The blaze could be seen between three units of the Copperleaf Townhomes, which are managed by Mills Property Management and are owned under a similarly named LLC.

Elena McKewon, a chief operating officer for Mills, said all of the residents who lived at the townhomes at the time of the fire were able to get out safely. She said all 12 units were occupied by residents at the time of the fire.

"We are certainly grateful for the first responders and how quickly they were able to get there and respond to the fire. We're just very grateful for that response and we know that the community of Mitchell is a close-knit community and I'm confident we will have community support as we continue to work through everything and support our residents."

Mitchell Fire Chief Dan Pollreisz said Thursday one of the residents was taken to the hospital to be evaluated.

"We know for sure two units were destroyed by fire before our arrival," Pollreisz said. "We did get a good stop on the fire. I don't



Mitchell firefighters battle a house fire on August 8 in Mitchell. Chief Dan Pollreisz (white shirt) is shown assessing the fire conditions. Photos by Luke Hagen of the Mitchell Republic.

believe we have a lot of fire that got through to either of the other neighboring townhomes. We had a good turnout to fight this fire ... and with the mutual aid from the other towns, that's what really helped us out."

Mitchell Fire Marshal Shannon Sandoval on Friday said it was a faulty outdoor plug-in at Unit No. 6 that appears to have caused the fire as the suspected cause. He explained the ignition stayed within the walls and climbed up to the attic to make it hidden from view until it broke free from the roof.

"An outlet had some type of fault," he said. "There was stuff plugged in to it."

Sandoval said the townhomes are installed with sprinkler systems and because of that there was more fire upon arrival than officials expected. With a breeze on Thursday and heavy flames right away, firefighters were attempting to stop the spread to other townhomes. They had the heavy fire knocked down within one hour of arrival.

He explained adjacent Units

No. 4 and No. 7 both sustained smoke and/or water damage. Firefighters also returned to the scene overnight at about 2 a.m. Friday when a hot spot reignited.

Pollreisz said many of his firefighters had to take breaks to rest and drink water due to the challenging conditions in the heat earlier Thursday. "It's a warm day and there was a lot of fire when we got here," he said.

According to Davison County property records, the 12 townhomes on the site were built in 2014, with each unit including two bedrooms and a bathroom.

Fire departments from Alexandria, Ethan and Mount Vernon also joined the Mitchell Fire and EMS personnel on the scene, while the Mitchell Fire Division brought in its ladder truck to fight the flames. Firefighters were cutting into the roof in the area around the garages at the front of

the houses.

Sandoval estimated 40 to 45 firefighters and emergency per-

sonnel were on scene.

Photos by Luke Hagen of the Mitchell Republic.







## Wall Area Wildland Fire

Wall Volunteer Firefighters responded to a reported wildland fire in the 2300 block of Creighton Rd, Unincorporated Pennington County, SD on Aug. 8, 2024 at 12:33 p.m.

Firefighters, hampered by drought stressed vegetation, 80 plus degree temperatures and low relative humidities, were able to contain the rapidly moving fire to 370 acres, preventing the fire from further destroying valuable pasture, ranching assets and threatening the City of Wall.

Jim Kitterman, Chief of the Wall Volunteer Fire Department, would like to remind travelers, residents and users of our grasslands to be extra cautious during dry conditions.

“Everyone using, recreating, traveling or doing field work in our grasslands needs to be on guard and make an effort to not create any source of ignition” stated Kitterman.

“The community really pulled together behind our firefighters and stopped this from becoming worse, I really appreciate the teamwork demonstrated today and the on-going support, we could not do this without it”

No reports of injuries to civilians, firefighters or domestic animals.

Agencies responding included Pennington County 911, Wall Volunteer Fire Department, Interior Volunteer Fire Department, Quinn Volunteer Fire Department, New Underwood Volunteer Fire Department, Wasta Volunteer Fire Department, Box Elder Volunteer Fire Department, Phillip Volunteer Fire Department, Ellsworth Airforce Base Fire Department, South Dakota Wildland Fire, South Dakota Game Fish and Parks, Badlands National Park, Buffalo Gap National Grasslands, Pennington County Sheriff’s office, Pennington County Highway Department, local ranchers, neighbors and the City of Wall.

The photos are courtesy of the Wall Volunteer Fire Department, Reid Hansen, and South Dakota Wildland Fire.

## Early morning house fire in Buffalo Gap

One person is dead after an early-morning fire Sunday in Buffalo Gap.

Custer County Dispatch received a call regarding a structure fire at 3:04 a.m. from a neighbor of the home that was burning. When firefighters arrived on scene, part of the home, located at 410 N. 3rd St., was fully involved.

Randy Schroth, Buffalo Gap fire chief, said his son lives next to the home that was on fire and was the first to respond along with another son, and he was five minutes behind. A couple more

firefighters were on scene around 10 minutes later.

Schroth said firefighters didn’t know what side of the home the victim was on when they arrived, or if the victim was even in the home. When they arrived, he said, flames 15 to 20-feet tall were shooting out of the part of the home that was on fire.

Schroth said he called for mutual aid from the Fairburn Volunteer Fire Department and Hot Springs Rural Fire Department, which has self-contained breathing apparatuses and more training in interior attack in structural

fires.

Meanwhile, Schroth said his firefighters worked to keep the fire contained to one part of the home while also working to prevent its spread to adjacent structures. The propane was shut off and the power company contacted to shut off the electricity.

“It was sparking around there pretty good,” he said.

Responding to the call were the Buffalo Gap Volunteer Fire Department, Hot Springs Rural Fire, Fairburn Volunteer Fire Department, the Custer County Sheriff’s Office, Hot Springs

Ambulance Service, South Dakota Highway Patrol and Custer County Coroner.

In addition to the deceased individual, a dog was also found inside the home, the Custer County Sheriff’s Office reported. The fire started in the area of the home in which the victim was located.

The state fire marshal is investigating the cause of the fire, and the name of the deceased has not been identified.

*(Custer County Chronicle, Custer, July 31, 2024; written by Jason Ferguson, staff writer.)*

**ACTION  
FIRE  
PHOTOS  
NEEDED!**

Please send them to  
[jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com](mailto:jeff@southdakotafirefighter.com)  
 along with information  
 to explain the photo.



# Fire burns through 8K acres in Harding County

A grass fire has burned 8,017 acres in northwestern South Dakota northwest of Buffalo as of Wednesday afternoon.

Harding County Emergency Manager Kathy Glines said the Travers Fire is “somewhat contained” at the moment.

“It’s still active, we are very cautiously saying it is kinda contained. They have a fire line around it, but there are still several hot spots,” Glines said.

The biggest threat combating officials from containing the fire is wind. Glines said if the winds were to increase, that could lead to detrimental issues and lead the fire to further progress.

Precautions to keep the town of Buffalo safe have been made by establishing two fire lines. Glines said the wind has not shifted yet to the town’s direction, but wind direction can prove to be unpredictable and the county wants to be prepared.

“We’re kinda waiting on the wind, that’s gonna be the tell-tale,” Glines said.

The fire started Monday afternoon after a lightning storm rolled 10 miles outside of Buffalo. Since then, the fire has rapidly expanded northwest from its starting location.

The fire was originally contained by officials after burning 227 acres Monday. However, strong winds blew the fire open shortly after that.

Seven Harding County volunteer fire departments are actively fighting against the fire, along with volunteer fire departments from Butte County, Perkins County, Bureau of Land Management and North Dakota and South Dakota Wildland Fire.

Harding County Sheriff Wyatt Sabo said there has only been one reported injury from the incident. A young woman who was assisting in extinguishing the fires had gotten carbon dioxide poisoning from the smoke, but has received proper medical attention and should make a speedy recovery.

“That smoke was so heavy they couldn’t even see the fire line,” Glines said.

As officials do everything they can to fight off the flames, Glines said they have received tremendous amounts of community support. Several residents have brought food, water and supplies to assist the firefighters in this crucial time.

No roads have been closed since the beginning of the fire, but Sabo encourages everyone to be cautious and to provide plenty of room for emergency personnel to respond to the scene.

*(Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, Aug. 1, 2024; written by Madison Willis, staff writer.)*



## Herreid FD assists with flag ceremony

On Monday, July 29, the Herreid Fire Department held a joint “Disposal of Unserviceable Flags” Ceremony with Herreid Sons of the American Legion Squadron #170. The flag burning ceremony is a proper, respectful, and patriotic way to dispose of American Flags that have become tattered, torn, faded, and frayed. Dual fire department member and Sons of the Legion Member Lance Vander Vorst directed the ceremony including the ceremonial flag disposal reading and prayer. More than 400 American Flags were properly disposed of in the ceremony. The Herreid Fire Department took great pride in attending the short ceremony before beginning their monthly training session.



## Webster fire department responds to vehicle fire

Webster Fire Department responded to a small fire which emerged on a truck during the afternoon of July 31. The fire was already extinguished by the time first responders arrived at the scene.

The fire broke out near Northside Implement prompting calls to the fire department. The fire is suspected to be resulting from an electrical component of the vehicle but is yet to be fully determined according to Assistant Fire Chief Eric Kwasniewski.

Employees of Northside Implement helped extinguish the fire prior to the fire department’s arrival according to Kwasniewski.

“A couple of workers had the fire out by the time we got there,” Kwasniewski said.

At the scene, three trucks and eight firefighters arrived to ensure the safety of the occupant and those around the fire. The fire department utilized thermal cameras to ensure the fire was no longer a threat.

There were no injuries sustained during this incident.

*(Webster Reporter and Farmer, Webster, Aug. 5, 2024; written by Brenner Cariveau, staff writer.)*

**Don't need it... SELL IT!**  
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## Supporting those who protect and serve Strengthening communities at every intersection

MacQueen provides emergency solutions to enhance safety and quality of life in the communities we serve across the Midwest.

We are committed to delivering innovative and quality products along with lifetime support for all your emergency needs.



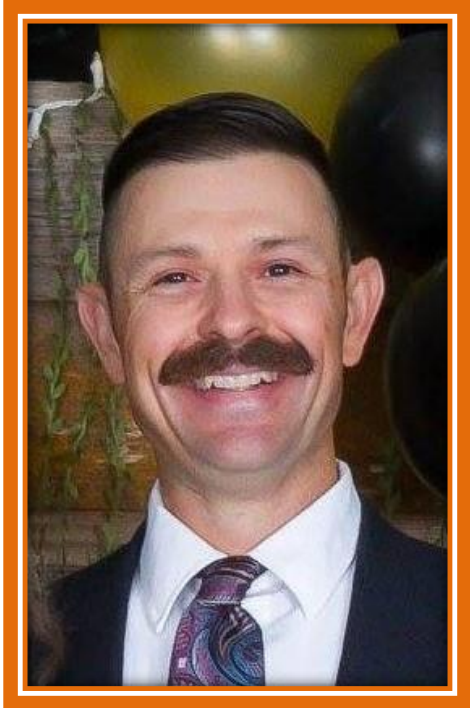
Contact your local MacQueen representative to learn what solutions are best for you!

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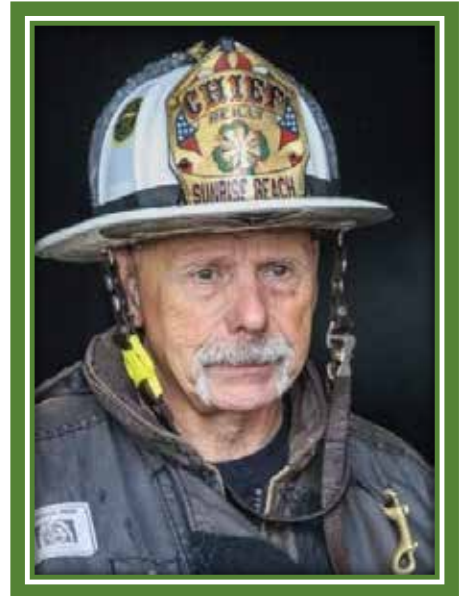
## Our S DFA Fall Conference Speakers



LJay Geist has been in the fire service since 2009. After being a volunteer for a couple years he quickly knew he was ready to go career. LJay holds the rank of driver for the Garden City, KS Fire Department. He is part of their wildland team and has instructed three recruit academies for the department, has presented at the Mid America F.O.O.L.S. Conference, several regional conferences and been a guest on the [National Fire Radio Podcast](#). In his spare time he enjoys time with kids, hunting, golfing, wildland firefighting and speaking at conferences.



**Dennis Reilly** is a 48-year fire service veteran and retired fire chief and is the owner of The First Line Fire Service Training Company. Reilly served as the fire chief in Pittsburg, KS, and Sunrise Beach, MO, and as an assistant in North Carolina and California and retired as a battalion chief in Cherry Hill, NJ. He was an original member of New Jersey Urban Search and Rescue Task Force 1. Reilly holds a master's degree in public administration from Penn State University and is a CFO. He has spoken at numerous events, including the Command Officer Boot Camp and the Orlando Fire Conference. Reilly is a U.S. Army veteran who served in Iraq during the Operation Desert Storm.



## 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.*

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# Town & Country Fire Department retires six and gains eight new members.

The Town & Country Fire Department, Woonsocket, recently awarded retirement plaques to six of its members. These members gave a combined total of 160 years of service and dedication to the community. Their countless hours devoted to the fire department and public safety does not go unnoticed. While the fire department is disappointed to see them go, they are also excited to welcome eight new members to take their place. These new members have committed to take the state certified firefighter 1 and 2 class later this year. Once this class is completed the department will once again be 100% certified to the firefighter 1 & 2 standard. So if you see any of these public servants out on the street be sure to give them a big "Thank You" and show your appreciation.



## Platte Fire Department Has Friday Call

The Platte Volunteer Fire Department responded to a call last Friday evening for a bale fire at the Troy and Connie Kirsch residence northeast of town. Crews were called out around 6 p.m. and returned to the shed around 8:30 p.m. Around eight bales burned.

*(Platte Enterprise, Platte, July 31, 2024)*

Above: New members of the Town & Country Fire Department (Woonsocket) include: Cayden Slykhuis, Brayden Leischner, Mitch Korb, Andy Krueger, William Clarey, Tyler Krueger and Collin Schmiedt. Not pictured is Rocky Berg. Right: Town and Country Fire Department presented retirement plaques to Eric Christensen, 21 years of service, and Keith Ohlrogge, 40 years of service. Also receiving plaques were: Trent "Budda" Foss, 44 years of service; Scott Alexander, 35 years of service; Kylie Forbes, 10 years of service; and Troy Walz, 10 years of service.



## Spearfish volunteers respond to two fires Tuesday

Spearfish Fire Department responded to a house fire on Wyoming Court near Canyon Street on Tuesday afternoon.

The fire started outside of a Spearfish home around 2:45 p.m., the result of an outdoor cooking accident. No one was injured, and the home owner and a neighbor had the flames knocked down by the time fire crews arrived. Once on scene first responders checked to make sure the fire hadn't spread to the house or further on the property.

Later, at around 8:55 p.m. on Tuesday, a small fire was caused by a lightning strike.

A tree caught fire above Acorn Ridge, near Exit 17. The fire never grew to be larger than one-tenth of an acre, and was quickly contained.

*(Spearfish Black Hills Pioneer, Spearfish, Aug. 8, 2024; written by Sierra Ferguson, staff writer.)*



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### Joe Foss Field Promotions

Joe Foss Field Crash Fire Rescue members Nathaniel Rollins of Madison and Jacob Schroedermeier of Harrisburg were presented their white helmet and badges from Chief Jason Zych for their promotions. Rollins will serve as Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention. Schroedermeier will serve as Assistant Chief of Operations for the B-shift.

## FIREWORKS BELIEVED TO HAVE STARTED APARTMENT FIRE

Local law enforcement is investigating some incidents of vandalism which includes the incineration of three mailboxes due to fireworks, as well as a structure fire which is believed to have also been caused by fireworks.

According to Hot Springs Police Chief Ross Norton, two mailboxes were destroyed by fireworks late in the night on Friday, July 12, and then a few hours later, just after midnight in the morning of Saturday, July 13, a fire was reported at a quad-plex apartment building on North 6th Street.

The fire burned a portion of the siding on the south side of the structure but did not enter the building. First responders were able to put the fire out quickly before it spread, but several residents in the building had to be woke up and evacuated.

Witnesses reported hearing a loud bang about a half hour before the fire alarm sounded. Police Chief Norton said they have a Ring camera video from a nearby house which also captured fireworks exploding near the apartment before the fire was reported.

New Hot Springs Fire Chief Riley Stevens, who was voted into the position last month, said while fireworks are highly suspected, there was not any evidence of fireworks found at the scene.

Police Chief Norton said the mailbox fires and the apartment fire are believed to be related as they all occurred in the same area of town and in the same timeframe. He however said that they do not have any current suspects.

In addition to the two mailbox incidents last Friday night, Norton said there was another mailbox which had been incinerated by fireworks the previous week and his department is close in making an arrest in that incident. He said it is possible all of the acts of vandalism are related.

The Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department also responded to a minivan fire on Friday afternoon in the Motel 6 parking lot on the south end of town along the Hwy. 18 truck by-pass. Firefighter Seth Stevens, who was one of the first on the scene at that incident, said Hot Springs Police officers and motel employees attempted to put out the flames with extinguishers before they arrived. Once the firefighters were on the scene, flames had completely engulfed the vehicle but they were quickly put out.

The minivan had Nebraska plates but no other information was available about the incident, so it is unknown if the driver was a guest at the motel or simply driving by when it occurred.

*(Fall River County Herald, Edgemont, July 18, 2024; written by Brett Nachtigall, publisher.)*



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### Lake Andes firefighter retires

Randy Winckler has retired from the Lake Andes Fire Department with 35 years of service. Thank you for your service.



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# International Association of Arson Investigators South Dakota Chapter

## September 11-12, 2024

### Propane and Natural Gas

### Leak Investigations

Terry Hanson - Gas Training Specialties

This course covers the characteristics and properties of propane and natural gas, examining the causes of leaks and the methodologies for conducting thorough leak investigations.

#### Hotel Information

Comfort Suites  
929 25th Ave  
Brookings, SD 57006  
605-937-5867

\*\*Group Name: SD-IAAI Conference\*\*

### Schedule

Tuesday, Sept. 10

Golf Tee Time 5:30pm

Wednesday, Sept. 11

Registration 8am - Class 9am  
IAAI Meal 6:30pm

Thursday, Sept. 12

Class 9am

#### Venue

607 20th Ave  
Brookings, SD

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## Registration Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Make Checks Payable to: SD Chapter IAAI

Mail Registration Form and Fee to:

Tyler Tjeerdsma  
909 S Fawn Court  
Sioux Falls, SD 57110

For more information please contact:

Jeremy Scott 605-692-6323 or  
Tyler Tjeerdsma 605-310-9929

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