

South Dakota FIREFIGHTER

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SEPTEMBER 2026 • VOL. 19 - NO. 7

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



On behalf of all the Fire Departments of South Dakota, the Board of Directors of the South Dakota Firefighters Association extend a very special invitation to fire departments to attend the annual tribute to the fallen firefighters on

Sunday, September 27, 2026, at 1:00 PM

The tribute will be held at the Fallen Firefighters Memorial site at the Capitol Lake Complex in Pierre.

With great respect we will be recognizing the addition of Nick Van Dam, Murdo VFD, who died on July 26th, 2025.

The service will include recognizing all the firefighters who have been lost in the line of duty in the State of South Dakota, remarks from the South Dakota Firefighters President, South Dakota Fire Marshal, reading of the Roll of Honor, and Placement of memorial flowers and Firefighter Flag.



On behalf of the
South Dakota Firefighters Association
Charles Kludt - President



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Huron FD called to vehicle fire

Huron Fire Department got some work on the evening of July 22. A quick response out to the rural district knocked out a car fire before it was able to spread into the structure. Good response and hustle. Thankfully minimal damage occurred. From the Huron Fire Department Facebook page.

Three Volunteer Fire Departments are Receiving Grant Funding

Three volunteer fire departments in South Dakota are receiving \$10,000 dollars in grant funding. It comes from part of the State Farm Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program. According to the program, roughly 82 percent of fire departments throughout the country are mostly or entirely volunteer based. The three fire departments receiving the funds are the Gayville Community Fire Department, Norris Volunteer Fire Department and the Springfield Fire Department. (By Liz Ryan, Gayville, SD, KELO, August 19, 2026)

Cause of Bear Butte Fire under investigation

The state fire marshal’s office will look into the exact cause of the Bear Butte Fire, that broke out off Highway 79 next to the Iron Horse Campground Monday afternoon. Numerous fire agencies responded to the blaze, which scorched nearly 457 acres. The fire was pushed by a southeasterly wind, sending it on a northwesterly direction. Fire crews called in air support from helicopters as the Ore jumped Rock N Rally Road before its forward progress was stopped at Bear Butte Lake Rd. No injuries among firefighters were reported. (KBHB-AM 810 Sturgis, August 12, 2026)

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.

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Published monthly by Blaze Publications Inc.

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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.

Lightning strike to blame for Spearfish fire

A lightning strike caused a house fire in downtown Spearfish, Wednesday, July 29. Spearfish Fire Department Fire Chief Scott Deaver said at about 4:30 p.m. the department responded to 321 N. 7th St., for a report of smoke rising out of the roof. About a dozen firefighters from Spearfish, five from Deadwood, and two from Whitewood worked together to extinguish active flames that were visible coming from that space. Photo by Wendy Pitlick, Black Hills Pioneer.



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. 6, 2026: Tactics on Tap, Watertown.

SEPT. 12, 2026: Wind and Fire and Iron Let's Roll Ride, a Memorial Ride to honor fallen heroes. Sign up 8 a.m. at Spearfish Station #1 (622 Canyon Street and Hudson) with stops in Deadwood, Hill City and ending at Twin Towers Memorial at Crazy Horse (Custer).

SEPT. 19, 2026: Badlands District Fire School, Winner Fire Department.

SEPT. 20, 2026: Northwest District Fire School, 8 a.m. Java Fire Department.

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

SEPT. 27, 2026: SDEA Fallen Firefighters Memorial, Pierre.

OCT. 2-4, 2026: SDEA Fall Conference, Rapid City, featuring Tom Merrill "Forged in Fire."

OCT. 3, 2026: Pheasant Country Fire Conference, Yankton.

OCT. 17, 2026: South East District Fall Fire School, North Sioux City, SD, North Sioux City Community Center, 205 Sodrac Drive, contact Jim Christenson, North Sioux City Fire Department, nscfd@nscfd.org, or call the station at 605.232.4286.

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

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

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

ACTION FIRE PHOTOS NEEDED!

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

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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.

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U.S. Fire Administration Firefighter Fatality Notification

ADAM J. AMROZI, 52 Lincoln Park (MI) Fire Department, died on July 19. On Saturday, July 18, Sergeant Adam Amrozi ended his scheduled 24-hour shift at approximately 9 a.m. after being held over. He responded to 17 calls during the shift spanning July 17 and July 18. On the morning of July 19, Sgt. Amrozi suffered a cardiovascular event and was discovered unresponsive at 7:15 a.m. at his home. He was transported to the hospital, where despite all efforts from medical professionals, he passed away later that morning.

NATHAN MATTHEWS, 43, US Wildland Fire Service, died on July 24. Firefighters from the Rifle Interagency and Pittman Valley Helitack Crews were involved in a burnover event while responding to initial attack fires in the Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit (UCR). Nathan Matthews (USWFS - UCR) was medivacked to a burn unit. Despite these efforts, Helitack Crewmember Matthews succumbed to his injuries on July 24, 2026. Sydney Watson (USWFS - UCR), Emily Barker (USFS - UCR), and Nick Hutcherson (USFS - Kaibab NF) died at the scene.

JAMES LUKASHUK, 64, Parispany (NJ) Troy-Hills Fire District 6, died on July 23. Firefighter/Commissioner/Honorary Chief James Lukashuk responded to two emergency calls on July 22, 2026, and returned home in the evening. Early the following morning, Firefighter/Commissioner/Honorary Chief Lukashuk was found unresponsive. Emergency medical services personnel responded but, despite all efforts, Firefighter/Commissioner/Honorary Chief Lukashuk was pronounced deceased at his home from a cardiovascular event.

BRYCE JUNGBLUTH, Eau Claire (WI) Fire Department, died on July 31. During his shift on July 23, 2026, that included responding to one emergency, Firefighter/EMT Bryce Jungbluth reported that he was not feeling well and had developed a headache. He completed this shift. Firefighter/EMT Jungbluth then worked two additional 24-hour shifts on July 24 and July 25 during which he responded to multiple emergencies including a structure fire. He continued to feel unwell and complained of a headache during these additional shifts. On the morning of July 26, 2026, Firefighter/EMT Jungbluth came off the third shift. Because he was still unwell, Firefighter/EMT Jungbluth went to a hospital where it was determined that he had suffered a sudden onset of hydrocephalus. Firefighter/EMT Jungbluth passed away on July 31, 2026.

GARY WAYNE JAMES, 80, Adrian (TX) Volunteer Fire Department, died on July 31. Firefighter/Trainer Gary Wayne James was responding to a vehicle fire in a fire department brush truck. During the response, Firefighter/Trainer James failed to negotiate a curve, losing control of the truck and causing it to roll over. Firefighter/Trainer James was ejected from the vehicle and pronounced deceased at the scene.

GEORGE MULLINS JR., 66, Shaler Villa Volunteer Fire Company (Pittsburgh, PA), died on Aug. 9. On August 9, 2026, Fire Police Officer George Mullins Jr. suffered a medical emergency at approximately 7:30 p.m. while performing traffic control duties at a fire department community event. Emergency medical personnel at the event quickly provided care and transported Fire Police Officer Mullins to a nearby hospital. Despite the efforts of medical staff, Fire Police Officer Mullins could not be resuscitated and was pronounced deceased that evening.

CHRISTOHER ANDERSEN, 64, U.S. Forest Service, Cleveland National Forest, San Diego, CA, died on Aug. 7. On the morning of August 7, 2026, Pilot Christopher Andersen, along with Pilot Miles Elliott, was piloting a helicopter engaged in water dropping near the Widemouth 2 Fire (approximately 12 miles south of Kanosh, Utah). Contact was lost with the helicopter at 10:41 a.m. A search later confirmed that the helicopter had crashed after wreckage was found. Both pilots did not survive the crash.

MILES ELLIOTT, 50, U.S. Forest Service, Cleveland National Forest, San Diego, CA, died on Aug. 7. On the morning of August 7, 2026, Pilot Miles Elliott, along with Pilot Christopher Andersen, were piloting a helicopter engaged in water dropping near the Widemouth 2 Fire (approximately 12 miles south of Kanosh, Utah). Contact was lost with the helicopter at 10:41 a.m. A search later confirmed that the helicopter had crashed after wreckage was found. Both pilots did not survive the crash.

Gov. Rhoden Expands Drought Mitigation Strategies

Governor Larry Rhoden signed Executive Order 2026-10 to expand assistance to South Dakotans during this drought emergency.

Today, Governor Larry Rhoden signed [Executive Order 2026-10](#) to expand assistance to South Dakotans during this drought emergency. The order expands South Dakota Wildland Fire's assistance and resources to help rural fire departments outside the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District.

"As a volunteer firefighter, I understand that every second counts when attacking a fire. And as a lifelong rancher, I recognize the difficulty feeding livestock during this ongoing drought," said Governor Larry Rhoden. "Supplementing local resources with approved state assistance will im-

prove response time, saving lives and property."

Over 90% percent of South Dakota is suffering from abnormally dry or moderate to extreme drought conditions.

Governor Rhoden previously signed [EO 2025-03](#), which allows for the deployment of firefighting airplanes and helicopters to assist with fires within the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District. This order extends those resources to any fire in the state if needed to protect lives and property.

This year, the Governor has verbally declared an emergency to exist for the "79 Fire" in April and

the "Bear Butte Fire" in August because those fires were outside the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District. This order approves similar future deployments to assist local fire departments immediately.

Earlier this spring, Governor Rhoden [activated](#) the state Drought Task Force to monitor drought conditions across South Dakota and be available to quickly respond to emergencies like this. The Drought Task Force endorsed the waiver at their meeting today when presented by the Governor's Office and the Department of Agricultural and Natural Resources.



AED Saves Fort Pierre Firefighter / Paramedic

- The emergency within an emergency

(Facebook post written July 27, 2026 by Rick Cronin)

Well, I nearly lost my best friend Joe Meligan today. (Well actually, he's more than a best friend – he's more like a brother.) I say nearly lost, because he had a sudden cardiac arrest while on ambulance duty on the scene of another emergency, but thankfully he was saved by other emergency responders on the same scene. You see, my best friend is a paramedic with AMR ambulance in Pierre. For the last 30 years, he has been an EMT, and now a paramedic as his full-time employment. He has also been on Fort Pierre Fire with me for nearly 30 years as well. He has seen more tragedy and death in his career than most people will see in 10 lifetimes. Transversely, he has also been a part of saving countless lives by his training and dedication to helping others by performing life saving measures.

This morning (Monday), he and many other emergency personnel were on the scene of an emergency near the Oahe Dam. While on the scene in the staging area, he had a sudden cardiac arrest. Thankfully, with the personnel on scene, CPR was initiated immediately, and an AED was used to shock his heart. Those two things saved his life. It's a simple as that....CPR and an AED...they saved his life.

He was taken to the Pierre hospital, and then flown to Sioux Falls heart hospital. He is doing much better this evening thankfully. He

had a block in an artery – he had the widow maker heart attack. While in the Pierre emergency room, I and several family members did have an opportunity to briefly visit with him. I will never forget the look in his eyes while we were talking, nor will I forget what he said. He said “Rick, I was dead for a bit. I was saved because of immediate CPR and a shock from an AED.. Those things (and those emergency responders on scene) are what saved me.” I told him I know. Even what he had gone through and all the activity in the ER trauma room at the time, he even said “now ya know why we're pushing to raise funds to get AEDs put into businesses in Fort Pierre – to hopefully help save lives.” I again said I know, and we'll continue pushing. Ya see, this guy always thinks about others first, and just wants to help others even when he's the one laying in a hospital bed with tubes; wires and all that attached to his body, even though he was scared as hell for what he had gone through.

Ironically, he and I have been spearheading trying to raise funds so that the fire department can purchase AEDs so that we can put them in some Fort Pierre businesses. What started as an idea to sell snow cones and cotton candy during the 4th of July parade to raise money, to many other donors since then, we've raised over \$10,000 for the project, which will allow us to buy 7 AEDs to put in local businesses. The goal is to help someone in need by having AEDs accessible to

the public if the need arises, to help try to save lives while emergency responders are on the way.

Today was a prime example of what CPR and an AED can do.... they can help try to save lives. And I'm sure glad those responders and equipment were there to save my best friend. His family, friends and

I are very grateful & thankful that he's still around.

Today I nearly lost my best friend. On a side note, since I wrote this, Joe has undergone surgery to get the blockage removed and a stent put in. He was released 2 days later & came home to what I consider a “Joe Meligans 2nd chance at life

welcome home” – which consisted of him being led into town by deputy sheriffs; an ambulance and several fire trucks – including nearly a dozen emergency vehicles lining both sides of the street in front of the fire hall and both Fort Pierre and Pierre Ladder trucks crossed above the street.



Watertown house fire

At around 8 p.m. on Aug. 7, Watertown Fire Rescue was dispatched to 16227 456th Ave. to a house on fire. Upon arrival, fire crews found a vacant farmhouse with fire coming from the front door. Crews quickly got to work and kept the fire from spreading to the entire house. Two rooms sustained significant damage, but firefighters were able to protect and minimize the damage to the owners' personal belongings. No one was in the structure when the fire started. No injuries were reported. WFR requested help to shuttle water to the fire scene from the South Shore Volunteer Fire Department. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

“Let's Roll” Ride



Attention Black Hills Area Firefighter Motorcyclists,

Come Join Wind & Fire and Fire & Iron Firefighters

On 9-12-26 Memorial Run To Honor the Fallen Heroes.

Meet @ Spearfish Station #1 (622 Canyon St & Hudson).

Signup Time 800am, Leaves After Their Service. With

Deadwood & Hill City Department Stops Ending At

TwinTowers Memorial @ Crazy Horse (Custer).

Questions? Please Contact Rich “Twig” Stanger
605-641-3069 or 303-818-1725(Text)
wnfire@rocketmail.com

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

DIRECTORS:

SOUTHEAST DAVE JORGENSEN

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
NWDir@sdfirefighters.org

BLACK HILLS CHERISE EVANS

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

"October 2-4 is the Fall Fire Conference being held at the Pete Lien & Sons Shooting complex in rural Piedmont, north of Rapid City. We have a great set of sessions that can appeal to all levels of emergency services. Email notifications were sent out and check the SDFA websites for registration details."

One for all the small towns

I need to apologize to our office staff and everyone that may have noticed, for an error, which was my fault, concerning event information for the Memorial Service that was sent out in August. I had approved the information for the Fall Conference and overlooked an item in the schedule.

The SD Fallen Fighters Memorial service will be on Sunday, September 27th at 1:00pm in Pierre.

Congratulations to Rockerville Fire Chief Gail Schmidt on being awarded 2026 Volunteer Fire Chief

of the Year by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).

The IAFC award was presented at the Fire Rescue International conference in Kansas City on August 12th.

This award is a great commendation for Chief Gail, the Rockerville VFD, Black Hills region, and the entire South Dakota fire service. Sharing the recognition with all the people and departments she is privileged to work together with on a regular basis.

When we hosted the NVFC Fall conference last year, it allowed us to showcase the aspects of the various agencies working together and the

Hello South Dakota Firefighters:

On August 12 this year I had the privilege of representing South Dakota at an awards ceremony in Kansas City, Missouri. This ceremony was to honor the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Chief of the year in both volunteer and career fields. The volunteer Chief of the Year is Gail Schmidt from the Keystone VFD. Career chief of the year is Amy Ramon of the Cy-Fair, Texas Fire Department. Congratulations Gail and Amy, well done.

September 27, 2026, at 1 p.m. CDT we will be in Pierre, SD at the Firefighter Memorial to honor the fallen fire fighters that have

made the ultimate sacrifice. Most of these firefighters are from South Dakota with some from out of state that died fighting fire in South Dakota. This year we will be adding Capt. Nicholas Van Dam who died July 26, 2025. All are invited.

The following weekend, Oct. 2-4, we will hold our Fall Conference at the Pete Lien Shooting Sports Complex near Rapid City. The address for the complex is listed as Piedmont, but to get there you go north from Exit 61 on the east side of Rapid City. It is approximately 11 miles with the last few being gravel. Get online register then come and listen to the speakers we have lined up. You

Thoughts From the Tailboard

Here it is, September already, our brains are trying to change from the hot summer days to cooler fall days. In Rapid City this summer has been one of the hottest on record and as I write this, we are over five ½ inches short of our normal rainfall. My yard shows a lack of moisture, and my water bill does too. The National Weather Service has just released the info that July was the hottest month ever in the lower 48 states. I sure know it was a long hot July. I'm not going to use the "s" word at this point for that other type of moisture.

In last month's article I said at our monthly Saturday morning training one of our new members asked me how he could become a better firefighter? How could he contribute more to the department? He's completed Firefighter I and II, Wildland basic, etc. What made me think was how do I answer him? What do I say to this very motivated firefighter who

has their feet on the ground? We met and talked. I'm sure every one of you will have your own ideas and thoughts, here is what I said. Of course, take all the training you can. There is no such thing as worthless or bad training. Maybe the trainer wasn't particularly good, but hopefully the subject matter is. Learn all you can about each truck. Learn how to start, run, draft, get the most out of each truck and pump. Play mind games when you go by a reasonable structure in your area. If that garage were on fire, what would you do? How would you attack the fire? Around the fire hall, are the trucks plugged in? Are the water coolers emptied after that last fire? These aren't big things, just simple items that help you become more valuable to your department.

The South Dakota Firefighters Association Fall Conference is October 2, 3 and 4. Instructors are lined up and ready, registration open and all the useful info is on the webpage. Remember it will be at the Pete Lien Public Shooting Range, ten miles north of

accomplishments coming from it. From seeing the differences in fire mitigation and prevention on private, state, and Federal lands in the Hills, to the wide open rangelands and Badlands.

We had NVFC members from several states go to a department pancake fundraiser in Fairburn. If you aren't sure where that it is, check a map. It was the perfect definition of what so many of our departments and firefighters do across the state.

There are several events taking place over the next few weeks.

The SD Fallen Fighters Memorial service will be on Sunday, September 27th at 1:00 p.m. in Pierre. The service will include the addition of Murdo firefighter Nick Van Dam. If you have not attending the service before, please, make plans as we honor all those lost in their service to the state of South Dakota.

There are district fire schools being held around the state. Badlands district will be in Winner on Saturday September 19th. Northwest district will be in Java on the 20th. Check the listings for classes.

You can be from any district and attend these trainings. If you see something you like, make the trip. October 2-4 is the Fall Fire Con-

ference being held at the Pete Lien & Sons Shooting complex in rural Piedmont, north of Rapid City. We have a great set of sessions that can appeal to all levels of emergency services. Email notifications were sent out and check the SDFA websites for registration details.

The SDFA Board of Directors will be meeting on Friday, October 2nd for their fall board meeting. If you have items for the board to consider, contact your district director to get it on our agenda.

The National Volunteer Fire Council Fall Conference will be in September at Owensboro, Ky. We will have a full report in the October news. Check the NVFC.org website for free training and grant opportunities for your department.

Fire Prevention Week 2026 is October 4-10 with the theme, "Charge into Fire Safety: Safe Charging Is a Superpower," focuses on lithium-ion battery charging safety. Check out the NFPA website www.NFPA.org for details and informational ideas.

Until next month,
Stay safe,

CHARLIE KLUDT
SDFA President



Don Ward, Vice President

"Oct. 2-4, we will hold our Fall Conference at the Pete Lien Shooting Sports Complex near Rapid City. The address for the complex is listed as Piedmont, but to get there you go north from Exit 61 on the east side of Rapid City."

can read more about the speakers on our Facebook page.

Keep praying for rain with cooler temperatures so we can stop

having Red Flag days.

DON WARD
VP SDFA



Denny Gorton, Retired Treasurer/Past President

"Learn all you can about each truck. Learn how to start, run, draft, get the most out of each truck and pump. Play mind games when you go by a reasonable structure in your area. If that garage were on fire, what would you do? How would you attack the fire?"

Exit 61 on I-90. Last month I said there was a little gravel, now it has been black topped all the way. No gravel, so feel free to bring your motorcycle, your spouse's new car or whatever. It's good oil as our department was just on a grass fire past the shooting range a couple of weeks ago.

Also, the SD Firefighters Fall-en Firefighters Memorial Service will be on Sunday September 27 at 1 p.m. CDT at the Capital Lake in Pierre. Come and pay your respects to those fellow South Dakota Firefighters who have died in the line of duty. We always say

we will not forget them, we will keep them in our hearts. This is the time that you can take a couple of hours out and keep your promise to those firefighters. We will be adding Nick Van Dam's name to the memorial.

As I finish this month's mindless wandering, the Sturgis Rally is winding down, the temperatures are winding down, the amount of sunshine is winding down, and my ambition is winding down. Do you suppose there is some connection? Take care, be safe.

DENNY GORTON

Mission firefighters respond to fire at sunrise apartments

At approximately 5:35 p.m. on Saturday, August 1, Mission Volunteer Fire & Rescue was paged for a report of a structure fire involving two apartment units at Sunrise Apartments in Mission.

Firefighters arrived at the 700-numbered block of apartments and found heavy fire pushing from two apartment units, along with smoke coming from the roof and adjoining apartment units. Information indicated that the block was abandoned.

With limited initial staffing and a heavy volume of rapidly spreading fire, Incident Command ordered searches of the adjoining apartment units before transitioning to a defensive strategy, which pulled all crews back from the building for safety.

Incident Command requested mutual aid from the Valentine Volunteer Fire Department, which responded across the state line with an engine, aerial ladder, and manpower to supplement the Mission crews.

At the height of the incident, both the Mission and Valentine departments had aerial master streams in service, prompting the City of Mission Maintenance Department to boost municipal water pressure to support firefighting efforts.

Firefighters remained on scene throughout the evening, mopping up and managing hotspots with the assistance of a backhoe from the city's maintenance department. The last fire department unit was back in service at 10:09 PM.

Agencies that responded to this incident include Mission Volunteer Fire & Rescue, Valentine (Nebraska) Volunteer Fire Department, Rosebud Sioux Tribe Ambulance Service, Mission Police Department, Todd County Sheriff's Office, Rosebud Sioux Tribe Law Enforcement Services, City of Mission Maintenance Department, and Cherry-Todd Electric.

The incident followed an active day for Mission Volunteer Fire & Rescue. Firefighters responded to Sunrise Apartments around 2 a.m. Saturday to a different apartment block for two separate fires, which firefighters quickly extinguished.

Later, at around 4 p.m. Saturday, crews responded to assist the ambulance service with an extrication at serious crash involving a passenger vehicle and a semi-truck at the junction of US Highways 18 and 83 two miles west of Mission. One firefighter was injured at that scene and self-transported to the hospital.



October 2-4, 2026

Registration is OPEN!

Rapid City, SD



Tom Merrill





Calen Maningas



Shawn Fischer

BRINGING YOU A MIX OF LOCAL SPEAKERS AND TOP NATIONAL TALENT!

THERE IS SOMETHING HERE FOR EVERYONE!

Salem Fire Department Welcomes New Pumper Truck

The Salem Fire Department is pleased to announce the addition of a new pumper truck to its fleet, made possible through the continued support and investment of the City of Salem.

The new apparatus features a Freightliner chassis and a fire body manufactured by Rosenbauer in Lyons, S.D. It is equipped with a 1,000-gallon water tank and a 1,250-gallon-per-minute pump, providing Salem firefighters with increased capability, performance and reliability when responding to fires, medical emergencies and other calls for service.

The new pumper was purchased through Heiman Fire Equipment in Renner, S.D.

The apparatus replaces a 26-year-old GMC pumper that was purchased in 2000. That truck has provided the Salem Fire Department with many years of dependable service and has played an important role in protecting the Salem community and surrounding area. As with any emergen-

cy-response equipment, however, age and continued use eventually make replacement necessary.

The addition of this new apparatus will provide Salem firefighters with a more modern and dependable piece of equipment as they respond to emergencies throughout the community and surrounding area.

Salem Fire Department Chief Nathan Olinger emphasized that firefighter safety remains his highest priority.

"My biggest responsibility as an officer is firefighter safety. Maintaining reliable, properly serviced and up-to-date equipment is an important part of achieving that goal."

Olinger also expressed his appreciation for the City of Salem and its continued commitment



to the volunteer fire department.

"The City of Salem has always been very supportive of our volunteer fire department. This purchase is a significant investment in the safety of our firefighters and the community we serve. Having reliable equipment when we are called upon is critical, and we are very appreciative of the City's support."

The Salem Fire Department is made up of dedicated volunteers who respond when their community needs them. Having dependable, modern equipment allows those volunteers to perform their duties more safely and effectively.

The new pumper represents an important investment in the future of the Salem Fire Department

and its ability to protect lives, property and the community for many years to come.

The Salem Fire Department extends its sincere appreciation to the City of Salem for its continued support of the department and its volunteer firefighters.

Northwest District Fire School

Sunday, September 20, 2026

Registration: 8:00AM

Java Fire Department



Class I: Grain Bin Rescue Trailer Full 8 Hour Class

This class will feature the Agtegra Rescue Prop which will be used to simulate a scenario requiring extrication and rescuing from a grain bin.

PPE: *Helmet, Gloves, Wildland Boots*

Instructor: Agtegra Rescue Caudre

Class II: Ag Rescue – Beyond the Bin

Full 8 Hour Class

This class will cover potential rescue scenarios found in the agricultural field that go beyond standard grain bin extrication.

Instructor: Leroy Ainslie- Fedora Fire Chief-Volunteer of 16 years-Instructor for 5

Class III: Wildland Firefighting Tactics

Morning & Afternoon Sessions Available

This class will address different tactics available to firefighters when confronted with a fast moving wildland fire. Special focus will be given to alternative methods of controlling the fire. *The afternoon session will include a live fire hands on training scenario. Morning attendees are able to attend the live fire also.*

Instructor: Brent Dirk LFD Chief

Class IV: Rural Electric Hands on Trailer

Morning Session ONLY

This class will provide hands on training in real life scenarios involving power lines, electrical power equipment and scenarios faced by the wildland firefighter in rural settings.

Instructor – Cam-Wal Electric

District Meeting: 12:00

School Fee: \$20.00 per Firefighter

Noon Meal: \$15.00 per Firefighter

Department Dues: \$100.00

Pre-Registration: Java Community Center

For more information contact - Chad Baumgarten 605-222-9702

- Scott Zambo – 605-845-6114

Truck hauling hay catches fire west of Faith on Highway 212

By MATT CHIBE

The Faith Volunteer Fire Department responded to a truck full of hay on fire west of Faith on Highway 212 Friday morning, forcing authorities to shut down the area for safety, according to the Meade County Sheriff's Office.

The fire was first reported at 10:10 a.m. west of town. The road was blocked, with flames spreading to the surrounding area.

The sheriff's office said it tried to get a lane open around 11:30 a.m. to start getting vehicles through again. Reports from the area suggest the truck was burned so badly that it could not be towed away.

Both the Meade County Sheriff's Office and the Faith Volunteer Fire Department responded to the fire.

Photo courtesy of Robin Morris



ACTION FIRE PHOTOS NEEDED!

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

READING SMOKE: A THREE-STEP SIZE-UP

By COLE KLEINWOLTERINK

In December 2024 and January 2025, we examined the four attributes of smoke: velocity, volume, density, and color. Understanding each attribute is important, but firefighters must also know how to combine those observations into a quick, repeatable size-up.

When reading smoke, I have found the greatest success using the three-step process I learned from Captain Rob Backer in his class, *The Art of Reading Smoke*. The process is fast, practical, and repeatable, giving firefighters a consistent framework for organizing what they see instead of relying on a single smoke attribute or first impression. With practice, it helps crews move from simply observing smoke to interpreting what it reveals about the fire's location, intensity, direction of travel, and rate of change.

STEP 1: INVENTORY THE SMOKE

Begin with a complete scan of the building. Identify every location where smoke is visible, note areas where it is unexpectedly absent, and evaluate the number and size of the openings through which it can escape.

Do not become so focused on visible flames that you fail to examine the rest of the building. Flames attract attention, but smoke from windows, doors, eaves, roof openings, vents, seams, and utility penetrations provide a more complete picture of what is happening inside.

Avoid describing the entire building as simply having "light smoke" or "heavy smoke." Instead, evaluate the four smoke attributes (volume, velocity, density and color) at each opening.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY WHAT IS INFLUENCING THE SMOKE

Account for outside factors that may distort what you see. Begin with the building itself, then consider how current weather conditions may be affecting the smoke's movement and appearance.

Consider the building's size, construction, layout, contents, and ventilation openings. Smoke conditions that appear significant in a small bedroom may look less dramatic in a warehouse, even when the warehouse fire is producing considerably more smoke simply because the container is much larger.

The building can also filter and redirect smoke. Hallways, closed doors, stored contents, wall cavities, floor systems, and attics create resistance, which may slow the smoke, lighten its color, or cause it to appear far from the actual fire.

Opening size also affects velocity. A small opening may create a concentrated, high-velocity stream, while a larger opening allows pressure to escape with less visible speed. For that reason, it's best to compare smoke coming from similar sized openings when possible. The second influence is weather.

Wind may push smoke back into the building, increase its velocity on one side, or hide conditions on another. Cold air can cause smoke to fall and remain near the ground. Humidity may keep smoke together in a defined column, while dry air may allow it to disperse more quickly. In freezing conditions, the smoke's appearance may change almost immediately after it reaches the exterior air. Condensation can lighten its visible color, so firefighters should evaluate what is occurring at the opening rather than relying only on the color seen farther away.

STEP 3: DETERMINE THE RATE OF CHANGE

Reading smoke is not a single observation made on arrival. Conditions must be reassessed throughout the incident, especially after firefighters open doors, break windows, begin ventilation, or apply water.

Continually evaluate whether the smoke is increasing or decreasing, whether laminar flow is becoming turbulent or turbulent flow is becoming laminar, whether the smoke is growing darker or denser, and how quickly those changes are occurring.

Continually size-up the smoke profile throughout the incident. Changes in visible fire may be misleading when smoke, heat, and pressure continue to build. Flames may disappear when a fire becomes ventilation-limited, while heat and unburned fuel continue accumulating inside. Less visible fire does not always mean conditions are improving.

Consider a two-story residence with dense, turbulent black smoke with bi-directional flow pushing from a first-floor window and dirty white smoke exhausting from the entire opening of the second floor window. Over several seconds, the upstairs smoke becomes darker, denser, and faster. Conditions on the first floor suggest that the main body of fire is nearby. The lighter appearance upstairs should not be mistaken for cooler or less dangerous smoke; its characteristics may have changed as it moved through the structure. The worsening conditions described on the second floor indicate that the fire is intensifying below and extending upward. Without timely water application, fire involvement on



the second floor is likely.

The three step process should leave firefighters with an operational picture: where conditions are most severe, which areas are being threatened, whether the problem is expanding, and how urgently tactics must be applied.

MONTHLY DRILL

Find several structure-fire arrival videos and pause each one shortly after the building becomes visible.

Have each firefighter verbally go through steps 1 and 2 by identifying the likely fire location, the direction it's likely to travel, the conditions affecting the smoke, and the potential for a hostile fire event at that moment. Then continue playing the video and complete step 3 by evaluating how conditions change over the next 30 to 60 seconds.

The more often crews practice this process, the faster and more

accurately they will be able to apply it during an actual size-up.

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

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!

Smoke on the Horizon: Becoming Firefighter Adjacent

By COLLIN DUPREL
"the Rapid City Post"

It was a small pillar when I first saw it. Smoke. On the horizon. Not unusual in ranch country. But questionable this time of year, in

these drier than ever drought conditions.

The problem with fires out here is you're never sure if they're on purpose, accidental or totally unknown. A short while later, that small pillar was bigger. Wider. Not

just dark, but white and thick gray. Not on purpose. Tell-tale signs of a grass fire.

I raced to our water tender, a former milk truck we bought more than a decade ago to haul water to livestock in our last drought. As

soon as the air brakes released, I was charging down the road, driving toward the smoke.

This truck has an older frame with cracks, pusher wheels that need maintenance and needs new tires all around; she isn't a fire-

fighting rig and she isn't built for speed: but she's got nearly 4,000 gallons of fresh water and a fast gasoline powered pump. Smaller and more maneuverable wildland firefighting rigs haul anywhere from 250-500 gallons, and on a big fire will need refilled more than once – that's where I come in.

Along the way, lights and dust behind me. Brush trucks, Volunteer Fire Department Engines, heading the same way I was. I gave them space and they blasted by me.

I arrived at the fire. It wasn't where I thought. It was on my new rural neighbor's place, imports from out of state. A burn barrel for garbage, placed out of sight on a 110-degree day, with tall grass around it.

Malice didn't cause the fire. Naïveté of a new lifestyle. One bad decision that will make them more responsible forever, and quite a few acres burned to teach them. Good people sometimes learn hard lessons, they did.

I spotted the Vale Volunteer Fire Department Water Tender and pulled up next to it. They were almost empty. Together we kept the small brush trucks in the firefight until it was out. By the time it was, my water tender was empty, and so was the "real" water tender that hauls 3,000 gallons.

Afterward, I talked with the Vale Fire Chief. He was concerned, our country is a tinder box waiting for immolation, he said in a few different words. It could get really bad, really quick. He asked if I could make a point to come to more area fires.

That was the day I became firefighter adjacent. I did say I wanted a hat that says "Vale Fire Department" on it. I haven't gotten it yet, but I'm not letting go of the dream. Get me that hat, Mike.

That was one month ago. Since then I brought my milk truck full of fresh water to support a grass fire started by lightning on my neighbor's place, a much larger fire started by a cigarette near Bear Butte, and a fourth fire in my own pasture, again by dry lightning. Four significant fires in just a few weeks, and fire season is getting more hostile.

Here's the part people don't talk about. Our emergency fire services are primarily volunteer. They're not paid. They're not given glory. They're given a fireproof coat and a job to do, and they do it for their neighbors.

They all have day jobs, but when a fire lights this time of year, what they're doing comes to a halt and they morph into speeding flashing lights and wet retribution.

I can tell you, when that next fire is on your property like it was on mine a few days ago, and you see your neighbors and friends show



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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.

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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!

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SEE HORIZON, PAGE 11

2026 SOUTH EAST DISTRICT FALL FIRE SCHOOL

October 17, 2026 | North Sioux City, SD

MORNING CLASSES:

Buttons, Bells, and Valves: Understanding Firefighter Systems – 3 HR

This interactive introductory course gives firefighters a practical, hands-on understanding of fire alarm systems, fire sprinkler components, and Phase I/Phase II elevator controls. Students will learn how these systems function on the fireground and will actively operate alarm panels, manipulate sprinkler system valves and components, and place an elevator into both Phase I recall and Phase II firefighter service. Designed for all experience levels, this engaging class strengthens foundational knowledge, improves situational awareness, and builds confidence in managing critical building systems during emergency operations
Chief Anthony Gaul, Sargent Bluff Fire Department

Lead the way for personal, Professional & Organizational change/ Training for failure 3 HR

Chief Doug Koopman, South Sioux Fire Department

Low water supply and Drafting Operations

Chief John Hoggard, North Sioux City Fire Department

AFTERNOON CLASSES:

Knock, Knock... We're coming In

Three hours, one mission stay safe!

Three hours of practical, hands-on training covering everything from selecting the right tools to controlling the door after entry- with a take-home door chock you make yourself.

Skills: Tools of the trade; Conventional Forcible Entry; Through-the-lock techniques; Door Control; Pulling ceilings

Build your own Door Chock to Take Home

Firefighter Rehab and Paramedic Madi North North Sioux City Fire Department

Horizon FROM PAGE 10

up to put it out, you feel what community actually is. It's not a street dance on a Friday night. It's burning air, sweaty hair, ashen faces and determination behind a water hose as they ride into smoke that blisters their eyes.

What the general population doesn't realize is that our Volunteer Fire Departments need our help. I'm not saying everyone needs to get an old milk truck and drive to every fire.

But if you've got a checkbook and you don't want to see nothing but ash on the prairie and in the Black Hills, you can cut them a check. Direct donations are a huge part of a Volunteer Fire Departments budget. That money buys equipment, protective gear, fuel- what the Volunteer Fire Departments need to make our communities safer.

Maybe you can't write a check. How else can you help?

Today, when you're done reading this, figure out who your closest local Volunteer Fire Department is. Find out when their next fundraiser is, they'll be having one.

You'll ask to volunteer, and they'll tell you how to help the most. Maybe it's running a table at a silent auction. Maybe it's asking

business people you know for item donations. Maybe it's making food to bring.

You might be reading this from a concrete parking lot or in your townhouse too; but here's the deal- it affects you too. In South Dakota, even if larger towns, YOUR fire services are largely volunteer too, and if that fire outside city limits gets too big – it's better to see firefighters racing out of town than it is to see them coming back in to evacuate you.

Not every fire needs every person to sprint and drive toward it. But every person who cares about their community can support those who run toward the smoke and not away from it.

Your neighbors, your friends and your family on these Volunteer Fire Departments need your help today, not later, so reach out and see what you can do.

(According to the [US Fire Administration](#), as of June 11th 2026, 96.6% of the South Dakota Fire Service is Volunteer Based, 2nd in the nation to the State of Delaware.

(According to the South Dakota Department of Health, as of 2026, 85% of Ambulances and Emergency Medical Services in South Dakota are Volunteer Based)

SCHEDULE

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.

12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Registration North Sioux City Community Center

-- 205 Sodrac Drive, North Sioux City, SD

Opening Statements

Classes

Lunch and Vendors at Community Center

Business Meeting

Classes

There is no cost for registration. Meal tickets will be available at the registration desk.

Contact Person: Jim Christenson- North Sioux City Fire Department

nscfd@nscfd.org 605-232-4286 Station

Southeast District Board Members:

President: Paul Scherschligt – Lesterville, 605-661-4289

Vice President: Jayme Adrian – Harrisburg 605-759-4238

Treasure: Bob Mier – Dell Rapids, 605-370-3563

Secretary: Kevin Frangenberg – Lesterville, 605-660-0721

Director: Bruce Cramer – Colman, 605-530-2919

Director: Brian Schmidt – Tea, 605-941-3430

Director: Aaron Mullinix- Beresford, 605-595-4230

SE State Director: Dave Jorgenson – Colton, 605-351-5051

SOUTH EAST DISTRICT

FALL FIRE SCHOOL

MASTER THE BASICS. OWN THE FIREGROUND!

BUILT BY FIREFIGHTERS. FOR FIREFIGHTERS.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE!

SOUTHEAST FIRE DISTRICT

Map of the Southeast Fire District showing the following counties: Deuel, Kingsbury, Brookings, Miner, Lake, Moody, McCook, Minnehaha, Turner, Lincoln, Yankton, Clay, Union.

- ✓ HANDS-ON TRAINING
- ✓ EXPERIENCED INSTRUCTORS
- ✓ REAL-WORLD SKILLS
- ✓ HIGH IMPACT
- ✓ DON'T MISS IT!

SATURDAY OCTOBER 17TH 2026

NORTH SIOUX CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

HANDS-ON TRAINING. REAL SKILLS. REAL IMPACT.

ACTION FIRE PHOTOS NEEDED!

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



IAFC 2026 Fire Chief of the Year

VOLUNTEER
Chief Gail Schmidt
Rockerville Volunteer Fire Department

Sponsored By:

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Rockerville Chief honored

[Pierce Manufacturing Inc.](#), an Oshkosh Corporation (NYSE:OSK) business, is proud to announce the 2026 [IAFC](#) Fire Chief of the Year honorees. Volunteer Fire Chief Gail Schmidt of the Rockerville Volunteer Fire Department in Rapid City, South Dakota, and Career Fire Chief Amy Ramon of the Cy-Fair Fire Department in Houston, Texas, have been named this year’s recipients.

Since 1996, the IAFC has annually recognized one volunteer and one career fire chief for outstanding service. Nominations are evaluated by a select committee, focusing on leadership, innovation, professional development, integrity, public service and contributions to the fire service. The 2026 IAFC Fire Chief of the Year awards were presented during the Fire Rescue International (FRI) event in Kansas City, Missouri.

“We are honored to recognize Chief Schmidt and Chief Ramon, two exceptional leaders who have dedicated their careers to strengthening the fire service and protecting the people they serve,” said Marty Bass, president of Pierce Manufacturing. “Their accomplishments reflect the very best of fire service leadership which include vision, integrity, resilience and a deep commitment to their teams and communities. Pierce Manufacturing is privileged to join the IAFC in celebrating these two remarkable chiefs and the lasting impact of their service.”

Volunteer Fire Chief Honoree – Gail Schmidt, Rockerville Volunteer Fire Department (South Dakota)

Chief Gail Schmidt has dedicated more than three decades to the volunteer fire service, serving as fire chief of the all-volunteer Rockerville Volunteer Fire Department since 2014. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated

an unwavering commitment to operational readiness, firefighter health and safety, professional development and regional collaboration. Her leadership has helped strengthen not only her department but fire and emergency services throughout Pennington County and the Black Hills region.

Among Chief Schmidt’s most transformative accomplishments was addressing a critical lack of reliable water supply within the department’s rural response district. Under her leadership, a multi-year initiative resulted in a district-owned water system featuring a 60,000-gallon storage system and a hydrant capable of delivering 600 gallons per minute at the department’s main station. The project significantly improved emergency response capabilities, firefighter safety and suppression effectiveness while also creating new regional training opportunities. She also led a regional grant initiative securing more than \$915,000, which represented more than \$1 million in equipment value, to replace obsolete radios and pagers and improve interoperability among emergency response agencies throughout Pennington County.

Chief Schmidt’s commitment to service extends well beyond emergency response. She has championed firefighter physical and behavioral health, helped advance mental health support for volunteer firefighters in South Dakota, developed regional training programs and served in specialized search and rescue roles. Her leadership during the extensive 2019 search for a missing nine-year-old child exemplified her extraordinary dedication to public service, with Chief Schmidt committing 65 operational days and traveling more than 750 miles on foot in support of the search effort.



Crews respond to St. Onge fire

The St. Onge Volunteer Fire Department extends its deepest appreciation to our mutual aid partners on today’s (Aug. 16) fire... Belle Fourche, Whitewood, Spearfish and Deadwood Fire Departments, SD Wildland Fire, US Forest Service, Lawrence, County Emergency Management, Lawrence County Sheriff’s Office, Lawrence County Dispatch, the local landowners and neighbors who supplied equipment, water and food. This was a very, fast growing fire which had the potential to turn uglier than it did...even had crews from Alabama and North Carolina on scene! A SD Wildland Fire engine remained on scene overnight to monitor the fire. From the St. Onge Fire Department Facebook page.



Chief of the Rockerville Volunteer Fire Department recognized as Fire Chief of the Year.

Gail Schmidt, Chief of the Rockerville (South Dakota) Volunteer Fire Department has been recognized by the International Association of Fire Chiefs as Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year for 2026.

Chief Schmidt received the award at the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Fire-Rescue International event in Kansas City, Missouri, August 12th, 2026

Chief Gail Schmidt has dedicated more than three decades to the volunteer fire service, serving as fire chief of the all-volunteer Rockerville Volunteer Fire Department since 2014. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to operational readiness, firefighter health and safety, professional development and regional collaboration.

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Chief Schmidt is one of the subjects covered in Paul Mobley 2017 critically acclaimed photobook "American Firefighter" the 2017 Silver Winner for Photography at the Foreword Indies Book of the Year Awards

Paul Mobley, renowned portrait photographer, has been featured on "CNN", "The Today Show" and "America's Heartland" (PBS) as well as in National Geographic.

Chiefs Schmidt exemplify the highest standards of leadership in the fire service.

Through decades of service, she has demonstrated the vision, perseverance and commitment required to strengthen their organizations while advancing the health, safety and effectiveness of the fire service.

Her selection as the 2026 International Association of Fire Chiefs, Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year recognizes her extraordinary individual achievements and the lasting impact of her leadership.





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

Pierre Rescue and Dive Squad Training Operations



The Pierre Rescue and Dive Squad recently conducted water rescue training operations on the Missouri River, focusing on search, recovery, and dive boat positioning techniques.

The training scenario involved a simulated jumper from the Pierre/Fort Pierre Bridge using a water rescue training dummy. The dummy was deployed from the bridge into the river, and crews worked through a coordinated search and recovery operation.

Training objectives included locating the target using side-scan sonar and active target scanning equipment. After successfully identifying the target's location, the dive boat maneuvered into position upstream and utilized a three-anchor deployment to securely hold the vessel in the river current. A diver was then deployed to the target and successfully completed the recovery.

Pierre Rescue recently added a new 26-foot Lake Assault rescue boat to its fleet. Powered by twin 200-horsepower Mercury outboard motors, the vessel is equipped to support a wide range of emergency response missions, including fire suppression, dive operations, towing, and advanced sonar scanning capabilities. The new rescue boat enhances the department's ability to respond safely and effectively to emergencies on the Missouri River and other area waterways. Submitted by Ian Paul, Fire Chief Pierre Fire Department.



Gayville Fire & Rescue recieves \$10,000 grant through the State Farm® Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program

Gayville Fire & Rescue is excited to announce that it is one of 150 volunteer fire departments across the nation to receive a \$10,000 grant through the State Farm® Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program. In collaboration with the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), State Farm has awarded \$1.5 million in grants to help local fire departments obtain needed equipment to increase their responders' safety, effectiveness and ability to serve their community.

With this grant, Gayville Fire & Rescue will be able to purchase 23 Motorola VII pagers, replacing our outdated pagers. A pager gives a volunteer firefighter a direct, dedicated emergency alert. Unlike cell phones, pagers operate on independent radio frequencies. They bypass overloaded commercial cell towers, work in remote rural areas with poor reception, and emit a loud, unmistakable tone that instantly wakes or alerts responders.

The Gayville Fire & Rescue Department is a 100% volunteer department with 28 active members that serves approximately 322 individual address points across 37.48 square miles in the southeastern corner of Yankton County and a portion of the southwestern corner of Clay County. Its service area includes residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land, as well as a major highway, a railroad, and county and rural roads. As a department made up of both firefighters and first responders, its members respond to a wide variety of calls to serve their community, including structure fires, wildland fires, motor vehicle collisions, injuries, and medical emergencies. Gayville Fire & Rescue is also proud to provide assistance to neighboring departments through mutual aid agreements.

"Our firefighters are dedicated to answering the call, no matter the hour or circumstance," said Gayville Fire Chief David Rabe. "Ensuring they have the right equipment and tools is essential to keeping them safe and effective on the job. This generous support from State Farm and the National Volunteer Fire Council will help us better protect both our responders and our residents in Gayville and the surrounding communities."



Members of Gayville Fire and Rescue include, front row: David Rabe, Jon Rolfs, Bill Clark, Chris Hibbs, Alan Moerhing, Joe Hoffman, Josh Lauck, Erik Sawtell, Dustin Tesky, Randy Thygeson, Nick Wuebben, Terry Rye, Nick Huber; Back row: Dawn Sawtell, Lisa Rolfs, Sharon Rolfs, Cas Rabe, (Not pictured: Brandon VanOsdel, Mike Kuchta, Chris Sawtell, Tom Kruse, Savannah Tesky, Rick Pearson, Josh Fox, Gabby Hibbs, Teighlor Karstens, Brendan Alvarado, Becky Alvarado, and Joey Brewer)⁰

This is the third year of the State Farm Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program. Volunteer fire departments are essential to public safety, especially in rural and small-town communities. However, many operate with limited budgets and struggle to secure the funding for critical equipment. These grants are a lifeline for local departments to obtain equipment that will increase safety, efficiency and effectiveness.

In addition to the grants, State Farm also provided the first 2,000 applicants with a one-year membership to the NVFC – the leading association representing the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services – so they have access to additional tools, resources, and training to support their continued success.

Learn more about the State Farm Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program at <http://www.nvfc.org/statefarm>.



Whispering Pines Chief raises flag

On July 26, Whispering Pines Fire Chief and Marine Corp Veteran Chief Gabe Doney raised the flag along with other family members at the Minnesota Twins game in honor of his brother, Nick Doney. Nick also served in the USMC. He was taken to soon, killed in a tragic car wreck two years ago.



**ACTION
FIRE
PHOTOS
NEEDED!**

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

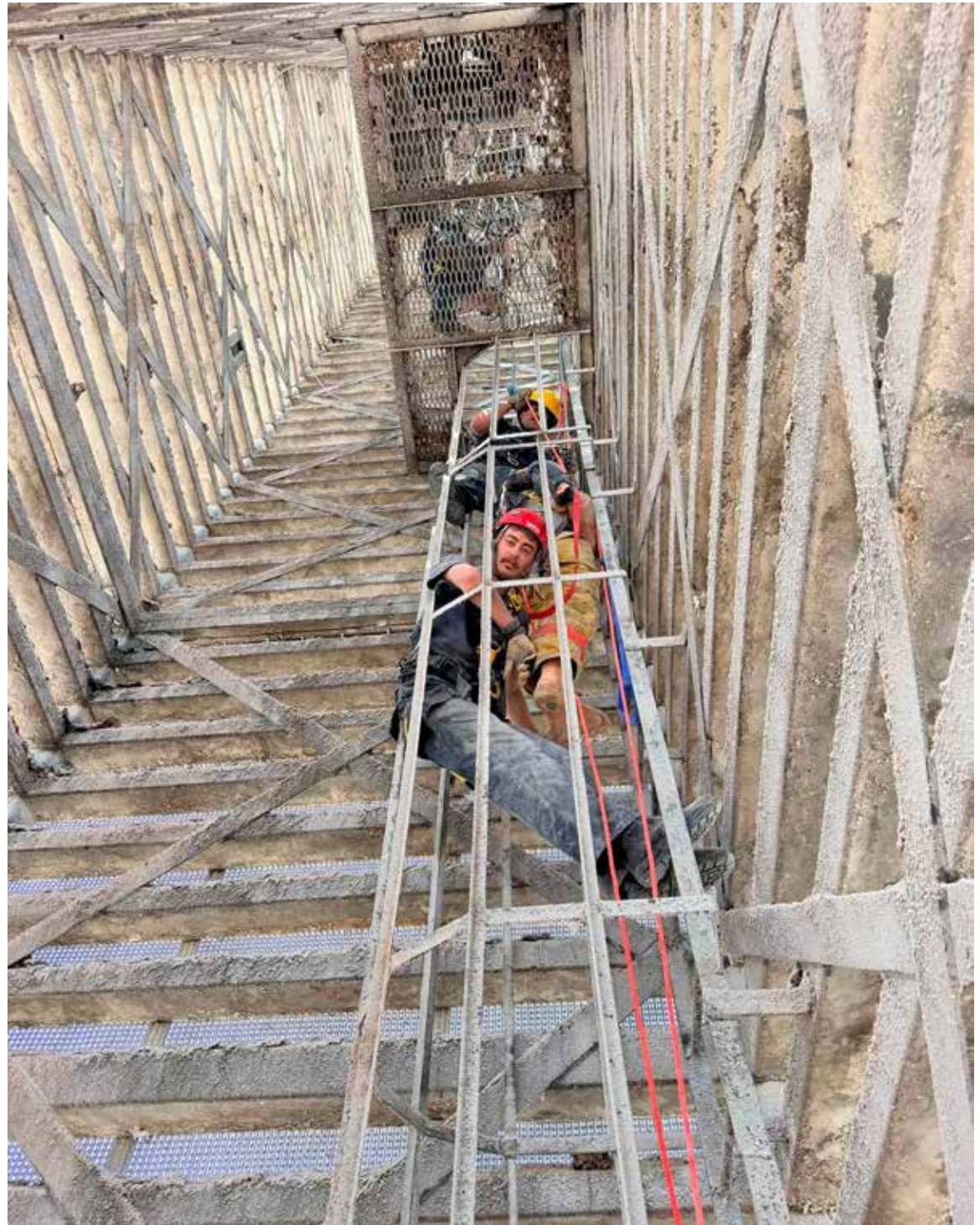


**Watertown Fire
Rescue firefighters
complete confined
space rescue course**

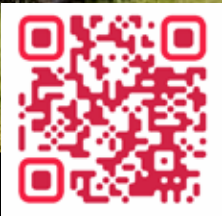
The week of Aug. 3, 11 Watertown Fire Rescue employees completed a three-day confined space rescue course led by LT. Cam Mack, LT. Sebek, and FAO Landeen. This course covered the fundamentals of hazardous materials, rope rescue, air supply, communications and how they apply to confined space rescue. The first two days focused on classroom instruction and hands on skills, while the final day put those skills to the test during realistic rescue scenarios. Crews responded to simulated confined space emergencies at Grace Lutheran church and AGWRX's commercial grain ground pile system, giving participants the opportunity to apply their training in challenging, real-world environments. A big thank you to Grace Lutheran Church and AGWRX for allowing us to use their facilities and to our instructors for sharing their knowledge. Training like this ensures our personnel are prepared to respond safely and effectively when these low frequency, high-risk incidents occur. From the Watertown Fire Rescue Facebook page.



Watertown Fire Rescue firefighters complete confined space rescue course



WE HAVE STOCK TRUCKS AVAILABLE **NOW.**



WILDLAND**UNITS**

When the fire season won't wait, neither should your apparatus. The Heiman Stock Wildland Unit is built on a proven platform that delivers the performance, reliability, and durability today's departments demand—all with the convenience of a standardized design and faster availability. Engineered for rapid response to wildland, grass, and rural fire incidents, it features a dependable WATERAX pump and water system, efficient equipment storage, and rugged aluminum construction designed to withstand years of service. Every unit reflects Heiman's unwavering commitment to quality craftsmanship, dependable performance, and customer support long after delivery.



ROSENBAUER**MAVERICK**

The Rosenbauer Maverick is a next-generation wildland and urban interface apparatus designed for agility and strength. Featuring a compact design, advanced pump system, and rugged construction, it delivers superior performance in challenging environments while keeping crews safe and ready for action.

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

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