



Fire Season is Right Around the Corner - Are You Ready?

Red Card Offered at Fire School

For the first time in the 71-year history of the event, the course leading to national wildland firefighter certification will be offered at the 2008 Nebraska State Fire School. This course is very different from the Fire School and of new challenges. Thanks to the hard work of the NSVFA Fire School Committee, those challenges have been dealt with and the class is scheduled.



This course is very normal courses at presents a variety Thanks to the NSVFA Fire School

The course consists of approximately 30 hours of classroom instruction and at least 5 hours of hands-on field work. Students will learn to construct fireline with hand tools, operate a drip torch and other firing devices, construct hose lays, take weather readings in the field and deploy a fire shelter.

Registration information will be available on the NSVFA web site at www.nsvfa.org in the near future.

See related story "Skills Crosswalk?" on page 3

50/50 Grant Status

Even though nothing is firm yet, every indicator is that Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grants will again be available for 2008. As in years past, these are federal dollars that can be used for the purchase of fire and communications equipment, SCBA, protective clothing, etc. Keep a few things in mind as you consider your application. First, the fire department's half of the grant can not be funded by another federal grant program. Second, your fire department must comply with the training requirements of the National Incident Management System to be eligible for the program. Be sure to answer that question on the project application. And finally, the Federal ID number for the fire district or department will be required this year without exception. The folks in the accounting office have put their foot down and **will not** accept another application without it.



An application is included with the Fire Chief's copy of this newsletter. For full consideration, applications must be returned by April 15, 2008. If you have questions, give us a call at 402.472.2944.

Even though it's referred to as one course, three National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) courses are provided together: S-130 Firefighter Training, S-190 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior and L-180 Human Factors on the Fireline. Be sure to make note of the very important fact that this course requires **36 hours** of class and field time over four days rather than the standard 12 hours of Fire School. To meet those requirements, the **course will start at 0800 Thursday, May 15, and conclude by 1800 on Sunday, May 18.** Firefighters attending the course will have a much different schedule than normal fire school classes, so make sure motel and travel arrangements are considered before you sign up for the course.

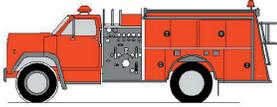
Another distinction that needs to be made is that **full attendance is required to pass this course**, as the number of required hours is part of the NWCG standard. Students unable to attend all 36 hours of the course will not receive an NWCG certificate. To offset this added burden, scholarships from the Nebraska Forest Service may be available for Nebraska firefighters. More information will be provided during class.

New Years Resolutions

In this new year...

I resolve to start a fitness program, so I do not become another heart attack statistic.

I resolve to drive fire apparatus more safely.



I resolve to attend more fire training than last year.

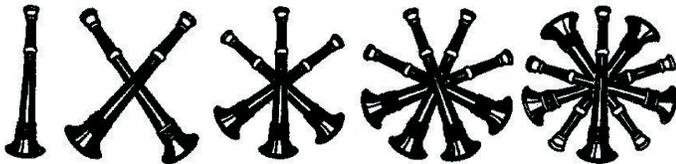
I resolve to actively recruit a new firefighter.



I resolve to promote fire prevention every day.

I resolve to work toward meeting accepted fire service standards whenever possible.

I resolve to teach a rookie what I've learned.



I resolve to develop future fire department officers.

I resolve to learn from the mistakes of others.

I resolve to become a better leader.

Calendar of Events

Feb. 15-17	Nebraska Society of Fire Service Instructors Les Lukert Winter Conference, Grand Island www.nfsi.com
March 2-6	2008 Wildland Urban Interface Conference, Reno, NV. www.iafc.org/wui
March 30	Otoe County Mutual Aid Association Mini Fire School, Syracuse. Sign up for classes at www.nebraskasfntd.org
May 16-18	71st Annual Nebraska State Fire School, Fonner Park, Grand Island. www.nsvfa.org

Fire service events may be submitted for the Calendar to Casey McCoy at 402-472-6634 or cmccoy3@unl.edu

Something to Think About

If the fire alarm sounds...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If a smoke alarm activates or sounds...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If overloaded electrical circuits in a home start a fire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If a child has to perform stop, drop & roll...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If a space heater placed too close to flammable materials starts a fire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If burning on a windy day starts a wildland fire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If smoking in bed causes a house fire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.



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If children playing with matches starts a fire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If someone attempting to burn trash without the use of an approved burn barrel cover starts a fire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If an unattended meal on the stove starts a fire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If failure to warn people of extreme dry weather conditions causes a wildfire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If someone has to leave their home because of a fire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If your community loses a business because of a fire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

If someone gets burned or loses their life to a fire...

you haven't done your fire prevention.

This could go on forever. The point is, if fires are going to be prevented, YOU have to do your fire prevention!

Bob Vogltance, fire resource manager
Prevention/Public Fire Education

Tips from Tex

February is here, so what are we doing now? I thought I'd take some time to update a few things.

First—the new “Yellow Book” is enclosed with this newsletter. As always, please read it before you need it. If you have any questions or concerns, please give me a call or send me an e-mail.



Second—back in October 2006, Pat Gould from Chadron presented the fire delegation at the NSVFA Conference the idea of each mutual aid association forming a mutual aid task force to better assist during a catastrophic wildfire event such as those that affected both Valentine and Chadron that year. The delegation approved a motion to work with the Nebraska Forest Service and have the task force information published in the “Yellow Book.” Well, one year and three months have passed and it doesn't look as if this is going to happen. As of this writing, I have received a response or information from just 16 of the 54 mutual aid associations for the task force. With out more participation, I don't feel that this meets the intent of the motion by the fire delegation. Therefore, you won't find the mutual aid task force in this years “Yellow Book.”

Third—in the November 2007 Rural Firefighter newsletter I asked for assistance from the fire departments across the state to help me produce a booklet of grant narratives from any Fire Act grant or other grant from which they have received monies. These booklets would then be available to any department that asked, free of charge. So far I have received one from Genoa and another from Odell. Thank you to both of those departments.

As you can tell from the last two items, participation is not going very well. I'm willing to help in any way I can, but it must go both ways. The mutual aid task force and the grant narratives book are good projects but they will not happen without your help.

Lastly, there are many of you out there who have wanted to update their mutual aid directory or to develop a

community plan. Until you get that information to me, I can't provide you with the material you requested. Let's clean off the desk and invest in some management time. I understand that as a professional volunteer, time is very precious. But you will only get out of it, what you put in to it.

Until next time, stay safe.

George J. Teixeira II, fire resource manager

Skills Crosswalk?

On January 23rd of this year, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) announced the release of a new opportunity for firefighters with structural firefighting experience and training to apply some of that training toward the requirements for the red card. Called “Skills Crosswalk: Wildland Training for Structural Firefighters,” the system was developed jointly by the USFA and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

At first glance, the crosswalk appears fairly straight forward. Fire personnel with existing qualifications that meet NFPA standards are enabled to use the Crosswalk to begin working toward NWCG standards for wildland firefighting (the red card). Upon more in-depth study however, the relatively small amount of information that has been released so far has generated many more questions than answers.

Little official information has been yet released by NWCG. Maybe their input will help clarify some of the questions yet to be answered. In the meantime, information on the Crosswalk may be found on the USFA website at: www.usfa.dhs.gov.



New Face at NFS Fire

Jessica Yahnke is the new forest fuel management specialist, for the Nebraska Forest Service, officed in Valentine. She is originally from Sparta, Wisconsin, but has spent the past 10 years living outside of that state. After graduating with a degree in forest management



from the University of Minnesota, she moved to Idaho and worked as both a seasonal forester and wildland firefighter for the Idaho Department of Lands. Although she said the fishing and backpacking

adventures were phenomenal, it was time to move on for better opportunities. A one-year position was available working for Ted Turner on his ranch in northeast New Mexico as a seasonal forester/wildland firefighter, and she took it to gain more experience. After her time there was up, she moved back home to be with friends and family before we invited her to work for us. Jess is a welcome addition to our field staff. She will be working with landowners and helping us treat hazardous forest fuels in the Niobrara Valley. Please join us in making her feel welcome!

Don Westover, Fire Program Leader

Sandy's Corner

We're Off to a Good Start in 2008!

I hope you are all staying warm because I'm having a little trouble doing that. Yes, I know, we should maintain a positive attitude recognizing that spring will be here soon, but I'm so very tired of this weather. Cancun... here I come!



For those of you still reporting with the yellow monthly report of wildfires card, please only use one piece of tape or one staple when you send the cards back. A little tape goes a long way. :)

If you are still "pondering" the idea of reporting online, please call me and I'll help "walk you through" the first time. After that, you'll be hooked on reporting online.

For those of you reporting online, please view your "pending and approved reports" periodically. It is really important that you do this. If there is a question and/or problem in my approving the fire, there will be a note stating why it has not been approved, and you will have the opportunity to correct the problem.

Reminder, when you report Mutual Aid to a department—please make sure it is a wildfire with acres of grass forest or crops burned. And remember, you are the "Fire Department" and the department you provided Mutual Aid to is the "Home Department." The "Home Department" is responsible for reporting the acres. Also, please be sure you have your dates and times accurate because these dates and times have to be linked to the "Home Department's" report. Likewise, it is very important that the "Home Department" reports the wildfire, otherwise there is no fire to link with the Mutual Aid. With this system, everything works together to meet the goal of accurate reporting.

Until next time...thanks for being such great volunteers in your local community. What would they do without you?

Sandy Lineberry, staff assistant

Nebraska Forest Service Rural Fire Protection

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