

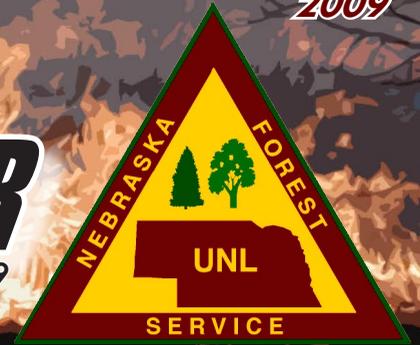
1969

40th Anniversary of The Rural Firefighter

2009

# THE RURAL FIREFIGHTER

Issue 02-09—May 2009



Nebraska Forest Service

www.nfs.unl.edu

## Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy

Nebraska's Pine Ridge has a history of large interagency wildland fires. Because state and federal agencies in Nebraska have limited fire suppression capacity, initial response in this fire-prone area rests on the shoulders of volunteer firefighters.

In March, NFS partnered with state and federal agencies to present the Second-Annual Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy at Fort Robinson State Park. The academy offered five National Wildfire Coordinating Group courses: S130/S190/L180 Basic Wildland Firefighter, S131 Advanced Firefighter, S215 Fire Operations in the Wildland Urban Interface, S231 Engine Boss and S290 Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior. The courses were provided at a very low cost, just \$30 per person, and were presented on weekends to accommodate the work schedules of volunteer firefighters. Four Annual Fireline Safety Refresher courses were also offered at various locations.

In spite of two late-season blizzards, both training hours and the number of students increased this year. Over a nine-day period, 136 hours of training were completed. Attendees included 128 firefighters from 14 fire departments, two Nebraska state agencies, Chadron State College and six federal agencies. The academy also attracted firefighters from South Dakota and Wyoming. Firefighters even came from Lincoln and Beatrice, more than seven hours away.

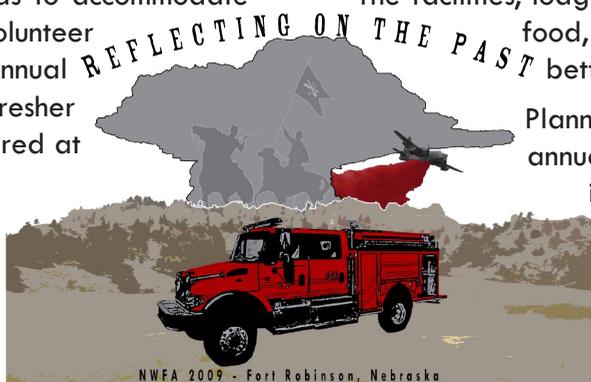
The academy also benefitted from the support of the Panhandle community. Numerous local businesses, agencies and entities contributed time, funding and facilities. Those entities included the Crawford Fire Department, Gering Fire Department and the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, in addition to many private businesses.

Interagency support for the academy also grew this year. Agencies involved with the academy included the Nebraska Forest Service, U.S. Forest Service, Nebraska State Fire Marshal Training Division, National Park Service, National Weather Service and the University of Nebraska. The Nebraska Game & Parks Commission also deserves big thanks this year. Fort Robinson State Park came on board this year as the host of the academy.

The facilities, lodging, and especially the food, couldn't have been better.

Planning for the third-annual academy began immediately. Fort Robinson State park was a gracious host for the academy and has set aside April 10-18, 2010 for next year's academy.

Plans include increasing the number of courses offered and expanding the curriculum to include prescribed fire and fire prevention courses. The focus of the academy will remain, however, to provide low-cost ways to empower volunteer firefighters to better protect the people, property and natural resources of Nebraska.



NWFA 2009 - Fort Robinson, Nebraska  
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

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*The Nebraska Forest Service: Improving peoples' lives by protecting, enhancing and utilizing Nebraska's tree and forest Resources*

# THANKS!!!

Our sincere thanks to these folks for greatly contributing to the success of the Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy:

### Fort Robinson State Park

Mike Morava                      Barb Prosser  
Robbie Hughes                      Jim Miller

### Fort Robinson Museum

Tom Buecker

### Fire Marshal Training Division

Brian Busse                      Allen Michel  
Ralph Moul                      Chuck Hoffman  
John Falgione

### National Weather Service

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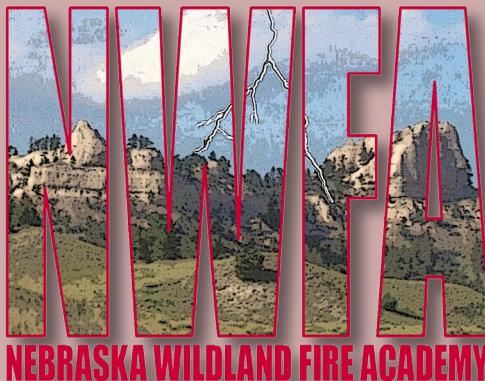
### Joe & Moni Hourt

Herb Frickey

### National Park Service

### Nebraska Forest Service

Jess Yahnke



### USDA Forest Service

Tristan Fluharty                      Matt Tschacher  
Matt Lucas                      Brent Lakin  
Tim Buskirk                      Brian Daunt  
Erica Lans                      Jane Darnell  
Melody Herbert                      Mary Lata

### Chadron State College

### National Wild Turkey Federation

And way too many folks to mention  
by name from:

Crawford Volunteer Fire Department  
Gering Volunteer Fire Department  
Chadron Volunteer Fire Department  
Harrison Volunteer Fire Department

### Thanks to these local businesses

Dakota Fire Supply  
Danko Fire Equipment  
Sturdevants Auto Parts  
Bauerkempers  
Edge Powersports  
Crawford Clipper/Harrison Sun

Clint Phillips & Casey McCoy  
Coordinators, NWFA

## Did You Know?

- Did you know each year, more than 4,000 Americans die in fires and 25,000 more are injured during fires?
- Did you know annually the direct property loss due to fire is estimated at \$8.6 billion?
- Did you know last year alone, 114 firefighters died on duty in the United States (28 have died in 2009)?
- Did you know 56 volunteer firefighters and 26 personnel died battling wildfires last year?
- Did you know in just two minutes, a fire can become life-threatening? In five minutes, a residence can be engulfed?
- Did you know 85% of all fires are preventable?

Did you know—YOU are the answer to preventing fire? How? It's as simple as conducting a fire prevention program in your community. Begin by educating your community on the perils of fire and how fires can be prevented.

Where do you get the information and assistance to start a program? I thought you would never ask! All you need to do is pick up the phone and contact any of the following people. We are just a phone call away!



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## Nugget of the Day

courtesy of [www.firenuggets.com](http://www.firenuggets.com)

**L**earn your job  
**E**ducate your team  
**A**ppreciate their efforts  
**D**ouble your own (efforts)  
**E**arn their respect  
**R**eturn it (to them)

## Tips From Tex

It's getting so depressing to go home and watch the news on television. All they talk about is the recession and unemployment. Just makes me want to crawl up with my blanket and wish my worries away. Sound familiar? Maybe; maybe not. But are we worrying about how this is going to affect us here, in the fire service, in Nebraska? We should be.

Now I don't believe it will have a major impact on budgets, but for those who depend on fund-raising activities throughout the year to supplement their budget, it might. We all appreciate the support we receive from the community during the pancake and spaghetti feeds, raffles, dances, fish fries, chicken BBQ's, etc. . But when times are tough, people's priorities will change.

So, what are you doing in anticipation of less income? Are you taking a proactive approach to the situation? Have you realized you may have to do things differently? Have you considered "alternative funding?" Alternative funding you say? What's that?

Well, it's just other ways of getting money to support your VFD operation. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant is one source you can look to for equipment, fire prevention and recruiting and retention grants. Another source is through billing for EMS and fire services. Yes, you can bill for fire services. All major insurance companies have provisions in their homeowners and automobile policies. A Google search on your computer for fire department grants will turn up lots of information. It takes some time and work on your part, but you need to start now before it's too late. Remember, you're not going to be the only one looking for help.

Start by COMMUNICATING with your rural, village, town or city boards and the rest of your department. Be PROACTIVE—don't wait. And remember, YOU are the one who has

to do this. No one can do it for you. Regardless of the situation, good or bad, your taxpayers are still going to expect the same service you have been providing. You may have to do things a little differently and cut back, but, nonetheless, your community will expect you to be there when they call.

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has published two outstanding documents that outline alternative funding:

- Federal Domestic Assistance Information
- A Guide to Funding Alternatives for Fire and Emergency Medical Service Departments

Both of these are available through their website (USFA.gov) or by mail: USFA, 16825 S. Seaton Ave, Emmitsburg, MD 21727.

I have both these documents and they are a wealth of information. These books are a "must-read" for diligent fire and EMS leaders. Remember, less time spent looking for money equals more time for planning, training and preparing for that next emergency.

Until next time, stay safe.  
George Teixeira  
Fire Resource Manager



## Nebraska Fire School

This year, the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) will again be at Nebraska State Fire School with three classes. Fire School is May 15-17 at Fonner Park in Grand Island. For more information, visit [www.nsvfa.org](http://www.nsvfa.org)

### Class 900 - Elected Officials

This three-hour course will be offered May 16th from 1-4pm. The class is directed toward rural board members and fire chiefs. Speakers include Jim Egr, NSVFA legal counsel, Gerald Stilmock, NSVFA lobbyist, Tim Hoeft, Phelps Co. attorney and George Teixeira, NFS.

Topics include statutes pertaining to rural

boards, rural board responsibilities, on-going legislative issues and legal topics brought by attendees.

### Class 904 - Red Card Certification

This four-day class begins at 8:00 AM Thursday, May 14 and concludes 6:00 PM, Sunday, May 17, 2009. The course is required to obtain national Red Card certification. It includes a basic leadership course and topics on safety, incident management, equipment, strategy, tactics and fire behavior.



### Class 905 - Fire Prevention and You

This year, the class features the use of puppets to teach fire prevention. Whether you're starting a new program or it's time for a refresher, register for this informative class. Each year, there are great new ideas and valuable assistance from the Partners in Prevention and class instructors. Peers teaching peers is a popular part of the class that provides a way to learn from folks who already have a prevention program in their community. It's a great opportunity to network, then go back to deliver your prevention message with more impact.

Sandra Groth, U.S. Forest Forest Fire Prevention Specialist from Idaho, winner of the Silver Smokey Bear award, and Sheryl Page, U.S. Forest Service Fire Prevention Specialist from Colorado, are included in the program this year.



### Sandy's Corner

Happy Spring everyone! Everyone, including me, is getting antsy about getting outside and working in the yard. I don't know about you, but I am tired of winter and ready for some warm weather and sunshine. The top of my convertible is ready to come down!



Just a few items to mention this issue, and a few pertain to communication. I had mentioned earlier about needing email addresses from all the fire chiefs. I'm doing pretty good collecting them but am still missing a lot. If you are a fire chief and you have an email address—please contact me at [slineberry1@unl.edu](mailto:slineberry1@unl.edu) so I can get you on my “mailing list for reminders” for reporting.

Also, we are slowly, but surely, getting all the 911 addresses in our database, but periodically a post office will return a letter. Some post offices can be real sticklers for having the exact address. Please check the address on this newsletter. If it still shows a rural route address, please let us know your new 911 address. One of the items on my “to-do” list this summer is to go through the entire database and begin calling people if I think their address might have been changed, so save me some time and let me know if there has been a change.

Mutual Aid—I currently have 19 mutual aid responses on the yellow cards I enter. These are departments that responded to a fire from another department. So far, I have been unable to match most of them with the department that called for assistance. If you called another department for help, please, please report the fire.

Last year, more than 100 responses could not be matched and that is sad. Let's try and do better in 2009!

We continue to add new departments reporting online. If you have not tried this yet, please give it a try. Overall, for those reporting by yellow card or online, you are doing great. So far this year, I have had only a few departments that failed to put “time out” and “time in” when they reported. Thank you for a job well done, and I'll see you at Fire School.



### Calendar of Events

May 15-17	Nebraska State Fire School, Grand Island
May 20	Red Card Refresher Rushville
May 21	Red Card Refresher Harrison
August 8	Nebraska Fire Chiefs Seminar, Lexington

## JUNE IS WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH!

Nebraska is again joining the west-wide effort aimed at creating a greater awareness of wildfires. Many of the 17 states west of the Mississippi are also participating. We hope you will join us to make folks in your districts and communities aware of the danger posed by wildfire

and the steps to take for preventing them. Most at-risk are rural residents of our state: farmers, ranchers or acreage owners.

The effort is being promoted by NFS, Nebraska Partners in Prevention and the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Office. Wildfire Awareness Month is a great

time for open houses, storefront displays, articles in the local paper or a spot on your local radio station.

This year's theme is JOIN US IN FIRE PREVENTION. The annual poster is available to view or download for local use on the NFS website ([www.nfs.unl.edu](http://www.nfs.unl.edu)).

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