

Also available on the internet at [www.nfs.unl.edu](http://www.nfs.unl.edu)

# THE RURAL FIREFIGHTER

Issue 02-10—May 2010



Nebraska Forest Service

[www.nfs.unl.edu](http://www.nfs.unl.edu)

## Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy

In April, Nebraska Forest Service partnered with state and federal agencies to present the Third-Annual Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy at Fort Robinson State Park. The academy offered eight National Wildfire Coordinating Group courses: S130/S190/L180 Basic Wildland Firefighter, S131 Advanced Firefighter, S230 Single Resource (Crew Boss), S231 Engine Boss, S290 Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior, P310 Fire Prevention Education Team Member and RT130 Annual Fireline Safety Refresher. The courses were provided at a very low cost, just \$30 per person, and were presented mainly on weekends to accommodate the work schedules of volunteer firefighters.

Over a nine-day period, 178 hours of training were completed. Attendees included 191 firefighters from 9 fire departments, three Nebraska state agencies, Chadron State College and four federal agencies. The academy also attracted local, state and federal firefighters from Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. Numerous photos of the academy are available on the Nebraska Forest Service home page and on Facebook.

The academy again benefitted greatly from the support of the Panhandle community.

Numerous local agencies and entities contributed time, funding and facilities. Those entities included the Crawford Fire Department, Crawford Public Schools 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, the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and the Nebraska Society of Fire Service Instructors.

Planning for the fourth-annual academy is already underway. Fort Robinson State park was again a gracious host for the academy and has set aside April 9-17, 2011 for next year's academy.

Plans include increasing the number of courses offered and expanding the curriculum to include prescribed fire, fire prevention and pump operations courses. Courses will also be offered in a variety of ways to allow firefighters from other areas of the state to attend while cutting travel requirements. 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.



**NEBRASKA WILDLAND FIRE ACADEMY**

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**

**New address!**

Nebraska Forest Service  
102 Forestry Hall  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0815  
402.472.2944  
402.472.2964 (FAX)

### Wildland Fire Protection Program

**Don Westover**  
Program Leader  
402.472.6629

**Sandy Lineberry**  
Staff Assistant  
402.472.6623

**Bob Vogltance**  
Fire Prevention  
402.372.5665

**George Teixeira**  
Fire Resource Manager  
402.472.5870

**John Overstreet**  
Western Fire Specialist  
308.432.3179

**Lew Sieber**  
Equipment Manager  
402.624.8061

**Jess Yahnke**  
Forest Fuels Specialist  
402.376.3241

**Casey McCoy**  
Fire Training Manager  
402.472.6634



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

## **Tips From Tex** **Leaders Listen**

For those who know me, you know that I firmly believe we need to incorporate leadership training into the fire service. This goes for both paid and volunteer firefighters. But recently I was posed with a question by a fire chief who asked “how do I know I’m a good leader?” I wasn’t expecting this



question from this particular chief, so I needed clarification. Once received, I answered, “Just ask.”

Do you really want your people to tell you how they think you’re doing? If you’re one of those who likes to “shoot the messenger,” then you may get the response that YOU want to hear. If you want to know when your zipper is down, you may get an honest response. If you want honest feedback then you must be willing and able to accept it. This also means acting on it. This does not create an opportunity to cast blame on others or make excuses. You asked, we told you, now fix it!

If you’re an officer, you can make changes in your department. The higher you are in rank, the greater your ability to effect changes—if you are ready to listen. Listening to feedback from others may allow you to do your own “reality check.” Don’t bury your head in the sand. If you asked for advice and respect the person who is giving it, they are telling you for your own good. Don’t assume no one is complaining just because you can’t hear the complaints.

Listen closely to what you say and how you say it. Did you reply to a question in a sarcastic or condescending manner? And if you were screaming when you said it, more than likely, it went in one ear and out the other. Developing interpersonal skills is a key to leadership. But at its most basic level is the rule “treat others as you would want to be treated.” Effective leadership comes from effective

communications. Sometimes you just need to shut up and listen.

### **Ten Traits of Great Leadership**

**Great leaders have character** The essence of leadership is character, including integrity and honesty.

**Great leaders don’t do it alone** Recognize the abilities of others and empower them. Realize you can’t do everything. Never claim all the credit.

**Great leaders make friends** Friendly relationships come from the respect and trust for the people you work with. This cannot be developed overnight.

**Great leaders take responsibility** You alone are responsible for everything that those who follow you do, or fail to do.

**Great leaders are problem solvers** Leaders not only solve problems, they have the ability to recognize them before they become an emergency. There will always be fires to put out. The best leaders not only put them out, they learn from them.

**Great leaders are decision makers** Don’t be bogged down with the details. Focus on the big picture.

**Great leaders know how to delegate** Delegate projects with specific responsibilities but don’t allow important decisions to be made without asking the “boss.”

**Great leaders understand motivation** Simply stated – they understand how to motivate people.

**Great leaders show thanks** Never miss an opportunity to show appreciation, even if it’s a simple thank you or a pat on the back.

**Great leaders are learners** A leader never passes up the opportunity to learn.

Until next time, Stay safe.  
George J. (Tex) Teixeira II  
Fire Resource Manager  
(402) 472-5870, gteixeira2@unl.edu



### **Calendar of Events**

May 21-23	Nebraska State Fire School, Grand Island
June	Nebraska Wildfire Awareness Month
June 7-13	Colorado Wildland Fire & Incident Management Academy, Canon City
July 9-11	State EMS Conference Norfolk

# 2010 Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy in Pictures



PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE



## **Wildfire Awareness Month**

**JUNE 2010**

Again in 2010, Nebraska is joining other western states in an effort aimed at creating greater awareness of wild-fires. Many of the 17 states west of the Mississippi participate.

We hope each fire district/community will join us to increase the awareness of the dangers posed by wildfire and the steps to take for preventing them. The greatest risk is to the rural residents of our states: the farmers, ranchers and acreage owners.

This effort is promoted by Nebraska Forest Service, Nebraska Partners-in-Prevention and Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Office.

Wildfire Awareness Month is a great time for an open house, school visits, storefront displays, newspaper articles or time on the local radio station.

If you have questions, please call:  
Bob Vogltance  
Nebraska Forest Service  
Fire Resource Manager, Prevention  
441 S. Colfax St  
West Point, NE 68788  
Phone: 402-372-5665  
FAX: 402-372-0113  
bevogltance3@cableone.net

## **All Caught Up**

During our day to day work, we tend to get caught up in the activities and may overlook the opportunities for fire prevention. Let's make an effort to be on the lookout for fire prevention opportunities.

As we encounter people during the day, take a moment to talk with them about what they are doing, then speak a little prevention message. Get yourself prepared by having a supply of Smokey Bear prevention materials (pencils, erasers, lapel pins, etc.) as well as these Nebraska Forest Service brochures with a prevention message.

- Camper's Need Fire Prevention Too
- Hunter and Anglers Need Fire Prevention Too
- Electrical Fire Prevention on the Farm and Ranch
- Preventing Fire on Your Farm
- It's the Little Things that Count
- Preventing Farm Equipment Fires
- Don't Let Fire Reap Its Harvest
- Fireworks in the Country

To request brochures contact Bob Vogltance : 402-372-5665.

To request an order form for fire prevention materials contact Jean Paff: 402-472-2733 or jpaff2@unl.edu



The University of Nebraska–Lincoln does not discriminate based on gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.