

THE RURAL FIREFIGHTER

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Nebraska Forest Service

The Freedom to Choose

In my “free” time, I used to teach motorcycle safety courses when I wasn’t teaching wildland fire courses. My skill as a rider improved so much after I took a class that I wanted to be involved. Helping a new rider transform from barely moving to a confident rider in the span of about 15 hours was a very rewarding part of teaching the course.

“Freedom to choose” is a term you often hear in motorcycle circles—especially with regard to helmet use. As in motorcycle riding, discussions of wildland fire safety often debate about the freedom to follow or adopt a particular standard or practice (not so much about the legal requirement to do so). Scientists suggest that the first time we do something is a conscious choice, but over time it becomes more of an unconscious habit. Once that habit is formed, we can allow the habit to continue without question or we can make another conscious choice to change.

But do you know the funny thing about the freedom to choose? While many times we **are** free to determine our own actions, we **are not** free to choose the consequences. As the saying goes, when you pick up one end of the stick, the other end comes with it. You may choose to wear jeans and a T-shirt for initial attack, but you are not free to choose the heat and intensity of a burnover. You may choose to drive 10 miles

per hour faster to a call, but you can’t choose when that car pulls in front of you.

As Smokey Bear says, “If it’s predictable, it’s preventable.” Every day, firefighters strive to be prepared for whatever problem we may be asked to solve. Here are just a few of the ways firefighters can choose an action to favorably impact the potential outcome. I’ll let your imagination come up with the other end of the stick.

- Slow down, both in route and on scene.
- Learn how weather impacts fire behavior and how it interacts with favorable topography and fuels.



- Dress in the appropriate protective clothing **on every run** (as we say in the motorcycle world “dress for the wreck, not the ride”).

- Fight fire from the black as much as possible.
- Identify escape routes and safety zones on every fire, even (especially) the small ones.
- Push away from the table sooner and head to the gym.
- Take advantage of every

possible training opportunity.

- Consider alternatives to traditional “running attack” practices.

- Request aviation assets early and often.
- Consider the need to post a lookout, even if the fire is on flat ground in fine fuels.

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The Nebraska Forest Service: Enriching lives by protecting, restoring and utilizing Nebraska’s tree and forest resources.

Smokey Bear and “Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk” Inducted into Advertising Week Walk of Fame

New York, Oct. 1, 2014—Two of the Ad Council’s most historic public service advertising (PSA) campaigns were voted by the public as a “Favorite Advertising Icon” and “Favorite Advertising Slogan,” as part of Advertising Week 2014, the annual gathering of marketing and communication leaders in New York City. Winning the contest will put Smokey Bear and the slogan “Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk” in the Advertising Walk of Fame. The announcement was made earlier this week at the closing bell at NASDAQ in Times Square.



“We’re thrilled that so many have come to know and love Smokey Bear and the slogan ‘Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk.’ This recognition is an incredible example of how public service advertising can work its way into the American vernacular,” said Peggy Conlon, president and CEO of the Ad Council. “But the true measure of great advertising is the impact it makes on the world, and both of these campaigns have gone a long way in moving minds and changing behaviors.”

Created by the Ad Council, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters and ad agency FCB West in 1944, Smokey Bear is the center of the wildfire prevention campaign, the longest and one of the most successful public service advertising (PSA) campaigns in the United States. Smokey—who celebrated his 70th birthday in August—has helped reduce the number of acres burned annually by wildfires from 22 million

in 1944 to an average of 6.7million annually today. Since the launch of the campaign, media outlets have donated more than \$2 billion in time and space for the ads, with research showing that he is recognized by 96 percent of adults. In more recent years, Smokey has expanded his digital presence, gaining large followings on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter.

When the Ad Council and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) first created the Drunk Driving Prevention campaign in 1983, more than 20,000 people were being killed each year in alcohol-related crashes. The campaign took the unique approach of targeting the intervener—first with the tagline, “Drinking and Driving Can Kill a Friendship,” which eventually evolved to the widely recognized “Friends Don’t Let Friends Drive Drunk.” During the life of the campaign (1983-1999), the number of fatalities due to alcohol-related crashes dropped from 21,000 to 12,500.

The Ad Council is private and non-profit. To learn more, visit adcouncil.org.



New North Central Fire Management Specialist

On Oct. 20, the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) welcomed Nebraska native Justin Nickless to the Wildland Fire Protection Program. Justin joins the team as the NFS north central fire management specialist.

Justin started his firefighting career with the Ainsworth Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD) in 2006. Since then Justin has completed extensive wildland and structural fire training at the Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy and

Nebraska State Fire School along with local live fire training. Justin also gained broad fire knowledge and hands-on experience as an active member of AVFD. In 2009, he completed basic red card training with the NFS and has added many additional courses since then. In addition to his wildland fire certification at the Single Resource - Engine Boss level, Justin is certified in structure fire, vehicle extrication and rope rescue. In 2012 Justin was promoted to Safety Officer and then



Assistant Chief of Wildland Operations with AVFD.

Justin and his family are 12-year residents of Ainsworth Neb., where

he and his wife Jenny are raising their two children, Hunter and Tatum. Jenny is a local business owner and stays active in the community by volunteering to coach youth volleyball and t-ball. Justin coaches youth baseball and wrestling. He and his family spend their free time camping with friends. Justin and his son also “do as much hunting and fishing as possible.” The whole family shoots archery together and enjoys time together whenever possible.

Justin will be based in Ainsworth. His responsibilities will include managing the single engine air tanker base at Miller Field in Valentine and facilitating the wildland fire training of firefighters in north central Nebraska. You may also see him out on fires helping local resources whenever needed. Justin’s contact information was not available at the time of this writing, so look for that in the February issue of *The Rural Firefighter*. Welcome to the team, Justin!



Prescribed Fire Training Grants Available

In 2011, the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) led an initiative securing funding to support prescribed (Rx) fire training.

Funding targets the development of local Rx fire expertise and strengthened landowner, fire department, NGO and government agency relationships. The funding supports multi-agency efforts to expand training, accelerate certification, enhance capacity and expand the safe adoption of Rx fire.



Grants can reimburse Rx fire training expenses for in- and out-of-state training. Nebraska landowners, students, agency/NGO staff and firefighters are eligible. Eligible expenses include meals, lodging, airfare, rental cars, mileage and registration/tuition. Grants have enabled students to attend Florida's Prescribed Fire Training Center, the Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy and the Colorado Wildfire Academy. In addition, planning is underway to offer RX-310 Introduction to Fire Effects for the first time ever in Nebraska at no cost with full reimbursement of expenses. Details will be released soon.

For more information, contact Casey McCoy at cmccoy3@unl.edu.



Wildfire Reporting

Reminder!

In 2015, VFA grant evaluators will award extra points to fire department applications with current wildfire reports. Take advantage of these points by getting all your reports in as soon as possible!

With only two months remaining in 2014, the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) is compiling annual wildfire reports. The NFS relies on each fire department to submit reports for the thoroughness and accuracy for each year's wildfire occurrences.

Reporting a fire is quick and easy, with only one page of information needed. Not only does this information assist the NFS, other local, state and federal entities utilize the data. Each fire department can pull up wildfire reports for their district as well as statewide wildfire activity from all reporting fire departments. This is a great resource for monthly station meetings and training. Knowing the location, cause, personnel needed and the equipment used for each fire are valuable pieces of information that can also be used in targeted fire prevention messages for your community. And this all comes from the reports we obtain from fire departments throughout the state.

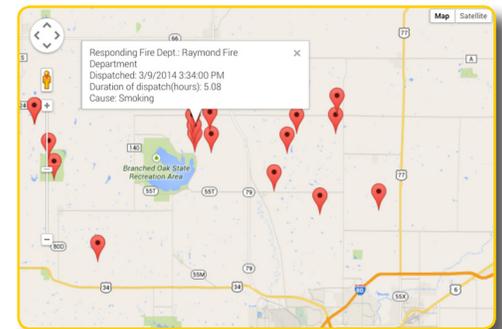
To report on the NFS website (nfs.unl.edu), on the right side of the page, under the fire danger rating map, is a link titled "Wildfire Reporting Log In." Click on this and select your fire department from the drop down menu. If you are a new user or have forgotten your password, please contact Mike Morgan at 402-472-2733.

The next screen is a snapshot showing our records of who is on the Rural Board for your fire department. If this information is incorrect, this is your

opportunity to make it right—just change it in the box. This is important for contracts and correspondence we send throughout the year.

After you verify contact information, you will be taken to the Wildfire Reporting menu. From here, you can submit a new wildfire report, submit a no response report or view your department's previously submitted reports. Choose the new wildfire report to submit your information as either the home department or mutual aid provider. Choose the no response report if there is a month your department did not respond to a wildfire call.

To submit a new wildfire report, the needed information is brief and easy to complete. The final step to submit a report is at the bottom of the reporting page where you will identify the location of the wildfire. You will see a



Wildfire reporting paints a picture of the Nebraska wildfire season for legislators, state and federal agencies and the public.

Google Map with a red pin on it. Click on this red pin and while holding your mouse button down, drag the pin to the approximate location of the wildfire, then release your mouse button. This will update the latitude and longitude location on the report. On the bottom left of the reporting page, simply click on the submit button and you're done!

Thank you for your timely reports! These help numerous departments and agencies, and provide a more accurate picture of Nebraska's wildfire season.





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We Need Your Opinion!

As costs go up and budgets decline, we are always looking for ways to cut expenses while maintaining a level of service. You can help. When you read this, please take a moment to send an email to cmccoy3@unl.edu or call 402-472-6634 and let us know your thoughts on future issues of *The Rural Firefighter*. We are trying to gauge the number of people who read the print version of *The Rural Firefighter* and if it may be more cost effective to transition to an electronic newsletter or other methods of communication. And if you have other ideas about how we can make *The Rural Firefighter* more useful, please let us know!

Calendar of Events

From all of us here at the Nebraska Forest Service, we wish all the best to our friends, partners and cooperators!

- Nov 3-6 Basic Red Card courses
Ponca State Park
- Nov 27 Happy Thanksgiving!
- Dec 25 **Merry Christmas!**
- Jan 1 Happy New Year!
- Feb 6-8 Les Lukert Winter
Conference, Kearney
- March 28 Nebraska Wildland
Firefighter course,
McCook
- March 29 Wildland Fire Aviation
Operations, McCook
- April 11-19 Nebraska Wildland
Fire Academy, Fort
Robinson State Park

The North Central Nebraska Community Wildfire Protection Plan is being updated, with a target publication date in Nov. 2014.

Fire departments in *Boyd, Brown, Cherry, Holt, Keya Paha, and Rock counties* if you have have not responded to the letter seeking input, please do so as soon as possible!

We need your input!



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