



Nebraska State Fire School, May 18-20, Grand Island

Legislative Update

In the last issue, we mentioned Legislative Bill 105 and how its passage would benefit Nebraska. If LB105 is passed as introduced, an additional \$425,000 would be appropriated for two years to the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS). This appropriation would fund cost-share grants to property owners in the wildland/urban interface for removal and/or reduction of hazardous fuels. Eligibility for these grants would require completion of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, most of which have been performed in the Pine Ridge and Niobrara River Valley.



Currently, the bill has received support from the Appropriations Committee at a lower amount than was originally requested. Initial indications are that the bill should be passed out of Committee and become part of the NFS budget. With the signature of the Governor, these new funds will allow NFS to be more competitive in securing additional federal cost share funding.

50/50 Grants Status

The 2007 Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grants have been awarded. Every fire department that applied should know the status of their application by the time this newsletter is distributed. Deciding which applications to fund is never an easy task, and it's a job the Fire Protection Program takes very seriously. This year, the committee charged with allocating VFA grants included personnel from the Nebraska Forest Service and the Nebraska State Fire Marshals Office.

If you have questions regarding your application, contact Program Leader Don Westover at 402.472.6629.

Sandy's Corner

Online Reporting - It's Still a Good Thing!

It's been an interesting few months as we adapt to a totally new way of wildfire reporting here at Nebraska Forest Service. Thanks to all of you for your patience with us—and the program—as we work out the kinks in the system. Calls are getting fewer and fewer, and that is a good sign.

Of course, there are always common questions, and I want to go through these for you.

1. Each fire department's password is your county name. This field is case and space sensitive, so don't forget to capitalize the first letter(s) and include a space for two word county names. If it won't take the password, double check to make sure your keyboard does not have "caps" or "num lock" on.



Helpful Hint: In the drop down box

where you log in, if you just type in the first letter of your department, it will take you down to where that letter begins. This saves you from scrolling down through each department trying to find your department.

2. In addition to date of the fire, you need time dispatched and returned, with a space between the two. Also, make sure you put a colon between the hours and minutes, e.g., 01/01/2007 11:02

3. Periodically check your "pending wildfire submissions" for fires that have not been approved. If there is a problem with the wildfire, there will be a comment stating what is wrong, and you can correct the problem.

4. Have to's: date, firefighters, apparatus. Otherwise, it will not go through. Mark has tried unsuccessfully to program it where it cannot be submitted, but no success yet. We need both date and time, otherwise I can't approve it and the wildfire will wind up in "pending approval" with a comment.

I want to encourage all of you who are reporting online to consider "opting out" (if you haven't already done so) of having cards mailed to you. We currently have 105 departments that have done so. July 1st has been set as a "stop" time if you have opted out, so don't be alarmed if you continue to get cards mailed to you for the next few months. The process just takes awhile.

If your officers change (don't forget - I need Rural Board president and secre./treas. - not local department), send me an email and let me know what needs changed.

Recently, I was asked how departments are going to know when their report is due if they opt out of having a monthly yellow card sent to them. The answer: if you are entering a "no response," then preferably on the 1st of the month, because you are reporting for the previous month. If you are reporting wildfires, you can report anytime, either individually or all fires at one time. The Internet is open 24 hours a day. If it was me, I would mark on my calendar on the 1st that the monthly report of fires is due today and keep life simple.

I've been very proud of how well you are doing. Computers can be a real pain sometimes, and there have been many times when I wanted to put my foot through the screen. But...if you hang in there, you'll find most problems do have a solution.

To Those Reporting Via Postal Service...It's Okay!

The most common problem with the new yellow card is the date of the fire not being listed. We realize this is because there is so much information on the card and it is just overlooked, but please don't forget this. Several of you rather than drawing a line separating the date and time are simply putting it to the left of the first column. This will work until we can get the form revised to solve this.

If you do not know the latitude or longitude of the fire, the program automatically defaults to the "center" of your fire district. If your department doesn't own a global positioning system (GPS), this may be an item of



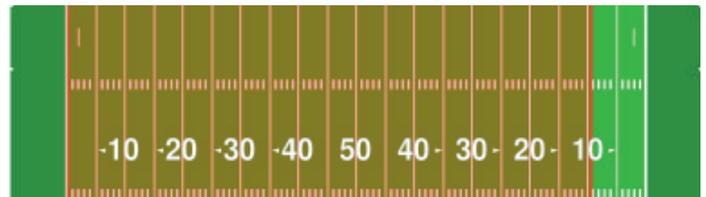
equipment you want to purchase down the road. (see story below) Remember though, if you report online, you won't have this problem.

Thanks to all of you who now faithfully complete the name, address and phone number of the fire chief on the yellow card. When I first began working here in 1993, the majority of the cards had no name on them. This helps me track changes in fire chiefs, which is very important. Good work!

If you haven't made the "plunge" yet, please consider reporting online. Once you begin, I doubt you'll stop because it is so much easier and quicker. If you are the fire chief and don't have Internet access, perhaps someone else in the department would take on the responsibility of reporting for you. I'm sure every department has a volunteer who is computer savvy. Just make sure they don't sign off as chief, otherwise, I'll remove the current fire chief's name and add theirs.

See you at Fire School on May 17-20th. Bring your questions; I'll try to have answers.

—Sandy



How Many Acres Did The Fire Burn?

The following are approximations that you can use to estimate the size of a wildland fire.

<u>1/10 Acre</u> 66 ft. x 66 ft. 40 ft. x 110 ft. 25 ft. x 175 ft.	<u>1/4 Acre</u> 104 ft. x 104 ft. 50 ft. x 200 ft. 25 ft. x 400 ft.
<u>1/2 Acre</u> 148 ft. x 148 ft. 75 ft. x 300 ft. 50 ft. x 450 ft.	<u>1 Acre</u> 209 ft. x 209 ft. 66 ft. x 660 ft. (1/8 mi) 17 ft. x 1/2 mi.

Additional measurements

- 1/4 mile x 1/4 mile = 40 acres
- 1/4 mile x 1/2 mile = 80 acres
- 1/2 mile x 1/2 mile = 160 acres
- 1/2 mile x 1 mile = 320 acres
- 1 section = 1 sq. mile = 640 acres
- 1 Acre = approx. 91 yards of a football field
- 1 football field = 1.3 acres

Firewise/Fire Prevention Mobile Exhibit

Nebraska Forest Service obtained a grant through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to construct a mobile wildland fire information and education exhibit. The exhibit was delivered in mid April and put into service almost immediately at a Firewise workshop in Ainsworth. The exhibit contains information on defensible space, fire department access, plant and tree selection, plant/tree spacing and landscape maintenance.



Our own Vanna, Sandy Lineberry, with the new Firewise trailer

The exhibit is primarily directed at homeowners and is available for use at local events across the state upon request. Our only requirement is that requests be made as far in advance as possible to accommodate staffing and scheduling. The bottom line, though, is the exhibit is here to use, so don't be shy about placing a request for it. We'll do our best to meet every request.

Tips from Tex

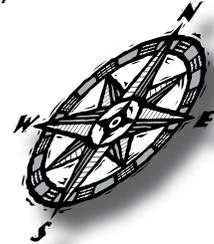
As I was sitting in my turkey blind, I started to think of the many conversations I've had with firefighters across the state regarding leadership training.

"Leadership training! What are you talking about? We're volunteers!" you're probably saying right now. My reply is yes, leadership training. Leadership training creates leaders. It's leadership training that creates leaders to lead a fire department, paid or volunteer. It's leadership training that will create our leaders for tomorrow's fire service.

How can we expect the next generation of fire service leaders to lead if we don't train and educate them.

Do we want to stick with the status quo and let them figure it out themselves, or do we want to prepare them so they go into a position more knowledgeable about their business? Being elected fire chief, assistant chief, captain, etc., by popular vote, last man at the meeting, only guy absent or the only fool who volunteered is over. The taxpayers are demanding more accountability of their fire department and their tax dollars. We shouldn't focus on the past but on the future, and the next generation of fire service leaders deserve the best we can provide them.

So, how can we do that? I'm working on a leadership program and hope to have it completed sometime this summer. As soon as it's available, we'll get word out and interested fire departments can give us a call. In the meantime, I'll leave you with something that was given to me in 1979 as I was being promoted to my first leadership position (sergeant) in the U.S. Army. It's as applicable today as it was back then.



Lead By Example

I'd rather see a sermon
Than to hear one any day;
I'd rather one should walk with me
Than merely show the way.

I can soon learn how to do it,
If you'll let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action
But your tongue too fast may run.

All the lectures you deliver
May be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lesson
By observing what you do.

Though I may not understand you
And the fine advice you give;
There is no misunderstanding
How you act and how you live.

Anonymous –

Mapping and GPS on the Internet

Since the last edition of *The Rural Firefighter*, some questions surfaced regarding the collection of latitude and longitude information. Google Earth was suggested for those fire departments that do not have access to global positioning system (GPS) units, but the address to the web site was never given. As mentioned in an earlier story, changes have been made to the online fire reporting system that no longer require you to have access to GPS. If you would still like to find Google Earth, however, go to <http://earth.google.com/> and follow the link to download the free software. For the folks who prefer not to or can't download software, a service called Acme Mapper is also available. On the internet, go to <http://mapper.acme.com/>. The page is based on Google Earth, so commands are virtually identical. Acme Mapper doesn't have the power or features of Google Earth, but if all you need is a site to find lat/long coordinates or see aerial images, it's made to order.

Additional GPS/mapping resources on the Internet:

Map24 - maps and aerial photos.

<http://www.us.map24.com>

Montana State Univ. - convert township/range/section to a rough latitude/longitude

<http://www.esg.montana.edu/gl/trs-data.html>

Comparisons of GPS units

<http://gpsinformation.net>

<http://www.gpsreview.net/>

Get Well Ralph!

Send your thoughts and well wishes to our good friend and training partner Ralph Moul. Ralph is the fire chief of Keystone/Lemoyne Fire Department and a training specialist with the Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Training Division. Ralph was hospitalized in early April but is now back home and recovering nicely. Hope you're back in the swing soon buddy!

Nugget of the Day

courtesy of www.firenuggets.com

"When the stuff hits the fan, firefighters don't rise to the occasion; they default to their level of training. What's your level of training?" — Lieutenant Bruce Clark, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, Firehouse 36

Share the Information!

In spite of how long the *The Rural Firefighter* (RFF) has been in print, from time to time we learn that some folks aren't aware of it or don't have access to it. We would like

to make a request of the fire chiefs and others who receive RFF in the mail—please share it with the members of your fire department! Post it on the bulletin board, make copies if needed and if all else fails, leave it in the bathroom! Much of the information is useful and some is aimed directly at

the entry level firefighter. *The Rural Firefighter* is also available on the Internet at www.nfs.unl.edu

Short Takes

The Fire Protection Program recently revised many of our most popular brochures. The brochures may be viewed and printed from the Nebraska Forest Service website at www.nfs.unl.edu/publications.asp.

Aerial Applicators "Yellow Book" Update

Please add: Reisig Bros. Aerial Spraying, Inc.

Scottsbluff, NE 69361

800-437-2408 or 308-632-7676

Four (4) aircraft, 300 gallons each

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103 Plant Industry Bldg.
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