

# THE RURAL FIREFIGHTER

Issue 01-15—Feb 2015



Nebraska Forest Service

## Ignite the Spark of Leadership

Developing the next generation of leaders and building a stronger fire department—are you doing this? Is your department taking steps to develop leaders? Are you teaching younger firefighters the skills they will need when the older generation isn't there anymore?

As veteran firefighters, it's our job not only to fight fires but to educate new firefighters and to teach the skills needed to step into the boots of leadership. How do we do that? There are as many different approaches to this as there are fire departments. What's important is that we are actively developing our personnel to take on these roles when that time comes. I have been on many fire scenes and heard someone say "What is he/she doing? Don't they know that's not how we do that!" Or who's driving that truck? Who's on that truck with you? All of a sudden it's a realization that you have a truck full of rookies on a 1,000-acre fire and none of them really know the right and wrong of firefighting!

So who's to blame for this? That's easy to answer, right? Or is it? Is only one person on the department responsible for training the new kids or is it everyone's job? Do you have a mentor program for rookie firefighters? Or is it a trial by fire, literally? Seem like a lot of questions? I can tell from my own years in fire, I have experienced a little of both and I'm grateful for the leaders I have had and currently have. In the fire service we need to



be progressive. It's imperative that we keep developing the next generation, giving them more ownership of the activities within the department.

So why would we want to do this? Not only is it an incentive for members to learn and grow firefighting skills, I believe it also makes the department stronger all the way around. We all have recruiting issues these days. Building an organization that folks want to be part of can only improve the situation. Perhaps it won't solve it, but every opportunity we get must be taken to keep growing our departments. We get better participation from current members and interest from new members.

We all have a million issues that could be improved with a little leadership development and team building. So, as we begin a new year, think about how you can make your departments better. It matters not what position you currently are in. You could be chief, captain, veteran firefighter or rookie. It all starts with you wanting to improve on what you have, hosting a new training event or attending one elsewhere. There are opportunities everywhere for your department to take advantage of. Try forming a training committee within the department that can develop training protocol. Incorporate team building drills

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

"The Spark . . ." continued from previous page within your training. The possibilities are endless! So as we say in the wildland fire world, ignite the spark of leadership and strive to make your department and personnel stronger than last year. If your training plans include wildfire training, please contact us at the Nebraska Forest Service for those needs. And don't forget to mark your calendars for the Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy, April 11-19 at Fort Robinson State Park. We look forward to hearing from you. See you on the fire line and have a safe 2015.

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## Prescribed Fire Training Grants Available

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

Funding targets the development of local Rx fire expertise and strengthened landowner, fire department, non-governmental organizations (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. Firefighters, Nebraska landowners, students and agency/NGO staff 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.



Firefighters are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. Much of the training can be applied to wildland fire suppression. In addition, training will enable firefighters to provide leadership for a growing number of landowners utilizing Rx fire for land management, as well as be better prepared to interpret Rx burn plans submitted with open burning permits.

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



## NWFA '15

The 8th Annual Nebraska Wildland Fire Academy (NWFA) will take place April 11-19, 2015, at Fort Robinson State Park near Crawford. Courses are just \$25/day and include breakfast and lunch. Lodging is available for \$25/night. Many courses are presented on weekends.



Online registration and payment is encouraged. Check the Nebraska Forest Service website (nfs.unl.edu) and follow NWFA on Facebook for more information. Classes are typically 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily. Details are available on the NFS website. This year's courses are:

- L-280 Followership to Leadership
- M-410 Facilitative Instructor
- RT-130 Annual Safety Refresher
- RX-310 Introduction to Fire Effects
- S-130/S-190 Basic Firefighter
- S-131 Firefighter Type 1
- S-133 Look Up/Down/Around
- S-211 Portable Pumps and Water Use
- S-215 Fire Operations in the WUI
- S-230 Crew Boss (Single Resource)
- S-231 Engine Boss (Single Resource)
- S-270 Basic Air Operations
- S-290 Intermediate Fire Behavior
- S-336 Tactical Decision Making
- S-339 Division/Group Supervisor
- L-958 All Hazard Ops Section Chief



Fire departments will receive the 2015 **Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Application** and 2015 **Emergency Assistance For Wildfire Control (The Yellow Book)** with this issue of *The Rural Firefighter*. If you didn't receive them, please call Kris Scanlon at 402-472-2733. VFA information, instructions and application are also available on the Nebraska Forest Service website:

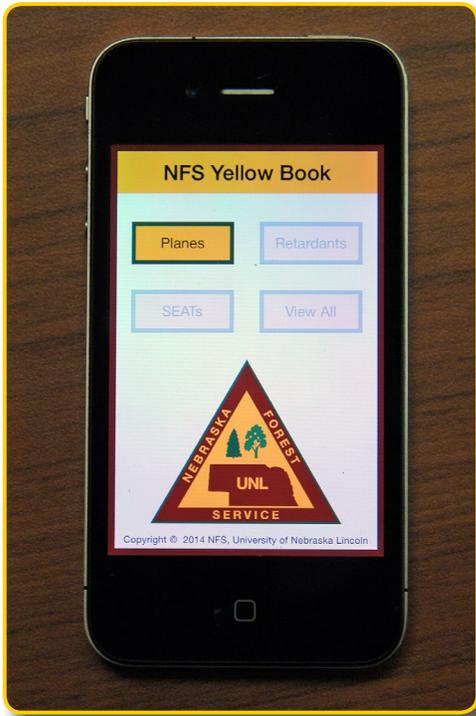
[nfs.unl.edu/Fire/CostShareAssist.asp](http://nfs.unl.edu/Fire/CostShareAssist.asp)  
Applications are due by April 15, 2015, so don't delay grant prep.

### Reminder!

In 2015, VFA grant evaluators will award extra points to applications from fire departments with current wildfire reports. Take advantage of these points by entering your reports as soon as possible through the NFS Wildland Fire Protection page. [nfs.unl.edu/wildland-fire-protection](http://nfs.unl.edu/wildland-fire-protection)

## Yellow Book App in Development

For many years, the Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) has annually produced the publication *Emergency Assistance for Wildfire Control* (new version released this month). Informally referred to as the “Yellow Book,” this publication has been the go-to resource for information on the Nebraska fire aviation program for many years.



In the coming months, the Yellow Book will undergo a transformation, providing fire aviation information at your fingertips via a new tablet and smart phone app.

The app is being developed in cooperation with the Jeffrey S. Raikes School of Computer Science & Management at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Raikes School is an innovative program that selects students for participation based on academic achievement and leadership experience. A team of six students selected the Yellow Book app from several other potential projects and, with input and guidance from NFS and FU staff, are working on the project for a year. The team plans to finish by the end of the year.

When completed, the app will include information available currently through the hard copy. In addition, the app will have a number of additional features:

- Size and number of aircraft available from each aerial applicator
- Initiate a call to a cooperater from within the app
- Class A Foam cache locations
- Currently active SEAT base
- Fire size measurement in acres
- Fire reporting

As least two interfaces are planned. The first—a map interface showing the position of the user in relation to aircraft—will be available when the app is used in an area with adequate cell phone reception. If reception is inadequate or unavailable, aircraft information will still be available in a list format. The list will be sorted with the closest aircraft listed first.

The app will be free and available for both iOS and Android users. The team has also discussed future upgrades to the app, including real time availability of aerial applicators and an “automated” request system.

Every firefighter knows that one of the keys to wildfire response is speed. This app will streamline the process of ordering aviation resources, shaving the time needed to launch initial attack resources. Stay tuned for further updates and notification when the final version of the app is ready for release.



**Nugget of the Day**  
A firefighter who feels appreciated will always do more than what is expected.  
Rhett Fleitz  
[facebook.com/FireCritic](https://www.facebook.com/FireCritic)

## Fire Shop Notes

Great news!!!! The Fire shop is now Bob Labenz as our shop foreman, at full staff. With the addition of and Randy Markwardt in the parts department, we now have all positions filled and are ready to meet your needs. Bob comes to us with more than 30 years' experience in the trucking and construction industry, and Randy retired after 25 years in the Marines and Nebraska National Guard, serving as a mechanic and Motor Sergeant.

Currently orders are caught up, so if your department wants to upgrade, now would be a great time to get your foot in the door so processing can begin quickly. With springtime just around the corner, let's all get busy, do that deferred maintenance and really check the trucks over. Here are some critical areas to hit. Tires, are the pressures correct and tread depth adequate? Remember, if you can see Abe's forehead, you're a little short on rubber. Antifreeze is another overlooked area. Have you changed the antifreeze in the last five years, checked the protection level or tested the acidic level? It is also imperative to check for the ground strap leading from the radiator to the frame, as this is necessary to reduce electrolysis and prolong engine life. Oil leaks can very quickly morph into a real bleed and leave you stranded by the road, so puddles on the floor should not be brushed aside but diagnosed and repaired as soon as possible.

Don't hesitate to call the shop for advice, help or just to see what's new.

Lew Sieber  
Fire Equipment Manager  
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PS: We now have some laser printers available at the shop for \$25 and they are brand new.





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# FIRE

Nebraska Forest Service

## 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](mailto: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

- Feb 6-8 Les Lukert Winter Conference, Kearney
- Feb 7 Annual Fireline Safety Refresher, Bayard
- Feb 10 Annual Fireline Safety Refresher, Tamora
- 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
- May 15-17 Nebraska State Fire School, Grand Island

*We're planning additional S-130/S-190 and refresher classes in several more locations. Subscribe to the training email list or follow us on Facebook and Twitter for the latest news.*

## Training Email List

Nebraska firefighters can receive email notification of upcoming training through the Nebraska Wildfire Training Listserv. Signing up is easy. Send an email to: [LISTSERV@UNL.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@UNL.EDU) (note there is no 'e' on listserv)

Type in the message field (the subject line may be left blank):  
SUBSCRIBE wildfire-training

Do not include a signature block, as Listserv will try to interpret each line as a command. The system will reply with information on sending messages, unsubscribing, etc.

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