

SEAT PROGRAM FAST FACTS

SEAT = Single Engine Air Tanker

- Permanent bases are located in Alliance, Chadron, and Valentine; a base is planned for Scottsbluff in spring of 2017.
- Additional mobile bases can be utilized at any airport throughout the state, allowing the SEAT to become a quick response asset for VFDs statewide.
- The Wildfire Advisory Group (WAG) is tasked with analyzing weather and fuel conditions throughout the state, determining the placement of the SEAT.
- The WAG places the plane at airports near the highest risk of wildland fire.
- The SEAT can be airborne and en route with retardant within 15 minutes of receiving its orders.
- The SEAT uses LC-95, a retardant agent, that penetrates the tree canopy providing fire resistance from the soil to the trees crown.
- Once applied, LC-95 does not evaporate easily, allowing LC-95 to remain effective beyond one operational period.



“ON AN ACTIVE FIRE FRONT, IT WAS THE PERFECT TOOL FOR THE JOB. IT BOUGHT US TIME TO MAKE SAFE DECISIONS.”

-CHIEF TIM GRUBBS, BANNER COUNTY VFD



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NEBRASKA FOREST SERVICE



NEBRASKA'S SEAT PROGRAM

WF-SEAT-052017

HENDERSON FIRES: THE DIFFERENCE OF SEAT

The 2016 Henderson Fire was ignited by lightning in the steep terrain south of Scottsbluff. Known as the Wildcat Hills, the forest is a mix of ponderosa pine and cedar/grass understory.

Once on the scene, Chief Tim Grubbs was reminded of another fire in the area in 2007. Similar conditions helped fan the flames, allowing it to rapidly spread to 1,000 acres. Over the course of four days, 15 fire departments, 40 engines, nearly 175 firefighters, and some much needed rain were able to bring the blaze under control.

The '16 fire, Grubbs said, also carried the potential to "blow up" into a mega-fire.

Determined to contain the fire, Chief Grubbs ordered in the Nebraska SEAT. Within 15 minutes, the SEAT was en route to the fire with over 500 gallons of retardant.

In all, the SEAT dropped three loads of retardant on the fire. Areas considered dangerous for firefighters to access were targeted, allowing critical time for firefighters to create a safe attack plan.

As a result of the quick thinking by Grubbs and first responders, the 2016 fire was brought under control in 30 hours and held to just 50 acres. A tremendously different result from the 2007 fire.

BELMONT FIRE: CRAWFORD, NE



South of Crawford, the Belmont fire ignited in a drainage with heavy ponderosa pine and a grass understory. Chief Brian Prosser immediately ordered the SEAT, located some 20 miles away.

Upon arrival, SEAT pilot Dave Haddon, expressed concern that the fire would be difficult to contain and had the potential to grow rapidly.

Because of access issues and threats to nearby homes, Haddon recommended Chief Prosser order an additional SEAT from Hot Springs, SD.

Just 1.5 hours after the fire started, both the Nebraska and South Dakota SEATs were providing a tandem aerial attack. Six retardant drops helped the 90 firefighters contain the fire to under 20 acres in just 10 hours.

Chief Prosser believes the SEATs did more than just control the fire. The pilots provided valuable safety information for ground crews, protected nearby homes, and gave firefighters time to safely fight the fire.

HENDERSON FIRES: FACTS AND FIGURES

Estimated costs of 2016 response = \$98,222
Estimated costs of 2007 response = \$875,000

2016 HENDERSON FIRE:

Estimated costs: \$98,222

- 50 acres burned
- 30 hours from first reports until controlled
- 40 volunteer firefighters, 15 engines
- 1200 hours of labor
- SEAT en route within 15 minutes
- SEAT made three drops
- \$28,272 of labor
- \$56,250 engine cost
- \$13,700 SEAT cost

2007 HENDERSON FIRE:

Estimated costs: \$875,000

- 1000 acres burned
- 96 hours from ignition unit fully suppressed
- Approximately 175 firefighters, 40 engines from 15 VFDs
- \$395,808 of labor
- \$480,000 engine costs
- Finally suppressed with the aid of rainfall