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Issue 03-07— August 2007

THE RURAL FIRE FIGHTER

NEBRASKA FOREST SERVICE

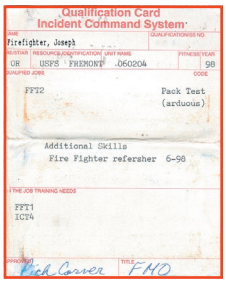
www.nfs.unl.edu

Plan Fall Wildland Fire Training Soon!

Wildland Fire Training

In spite of dry conditions, Nebraska appears to have escaped a repeat of last summer's busy fire season. As I write this though, South Dakota is dealing with a fire just across the state line that caused one fatality and the loss of over 20 homes. Crawford and Chadron sent structure protection engines to help. Once again, the fire behavior was described as some of the worst ever seen — and these folks have seen a few forest fires. So keep your fingers crossed and start planning for the fall. Not just that it's almost Husker football time again, but that the season best suited for wildland fire training will soon be here.

The Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) now offers the national wildland firefighter certification class - the "red card." The class is actually three classes — S-130 *Firefighter Training*, S-190 *Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior* and L-180 *Human Factors on the Fireline* — combined into 24-26 hours of classroom instruction and 8-10 hours of field work. In the near future, possibly as early as this fall, roughly half of this class will be available for completion online.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Rich Carver FMO

Other classes are also available. *Nebraska Wildland Firefighter*, typically offered at Fire School, can be adjusted from 3 to 12 hours to best fit the fire department's training schedule. New wildland fire classes will also be available soon. An off-road oriented driving class, S-216 *Driving for the Fire Service*, is in the works, as is a course aimed at new firefighters called *Engine Operator*. Also on the horizon are a leadership course from George Teixeira and a wildland fire simulation course based on tactical decision games with sand table exercises.

If you don't see what you're looking for, please give us a call. Requests are filled on a first come, first served basis.

Tips from Tex

Summer is upon us in full force now and we must contend with the threat of wildfires. These hot, dry days make the likelihood of wildfire even greater. As of this writing, we've had a few small fires (less than 1 acre), but that could change in a lightning flash, a flick of a match or a toss of a cigarette butt.

With this in mind, the Nebraska Forest Service has updated the "EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR WILDFIRE CONTROL" handbook. In February, the handbook was distributed to every Nebraska fire department, the Nebraska State Patrol, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, every county 911 dispatch center and Nebraska Fire Marshal deputies across the state.

Look around your fire station or desk and locate your copy. It has a bright yellow cover, thus the nickname "Yellow Book." There is a lot of information provided in this book which could be helpful in a wildfire emergency. Most important is a listing of the aerial applicators who are cooperating with the Nebraska Forest Service to provide aerial fire suppression. Check the list to see which ones in your area are participating. Determine who is available now before you need them.

Don't forget the procedure for requesting an aerial applicator. Your incident commander must request the applicator. A property owner, county emergency manager, dispatcher, sheriff, or Fire Marshal cannot. The incident commander can authorize these individuals to contact the nearest authorized applicator and request their assistance. If this applicator is not available, then go to the next one.

Once the aerial applicator has been contacted, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency in Lincoln must be notified and advised that there is a wildfire emergency and aerial

applicators have been requested. This will allow for the use of the state emergency firefighting funds to pay for the aircraft. If you wait until after the fire is out to notify them, it is no longer an emergency and funds won't be available. This means you could find your fire district paying the bill. The Nebraska Forest Service must also be notified of the wildfire, but this can wait until the next normal business day.

Now, go get your "Yellow Book," dust it off and read it before you need it. Look through it, become familiar with the procedures and then place it where it can be found should you need it. If you need additional copies, go to our website where you can download it from the Fire Control Section of the site. If you need any assistance, please call me and remember "fight Wildland fires from the BLACK."

Until next time, take care and stay safe.
George J. (Tex) Teixeira II, Fire Resource Manager

Calendar of Events

Aug. 25	Nebraska Fire Chiefs Assoc. Seminar & Mid-Nebraska Mutual Aid School, Madison
Sept. 24-28	Nebraska Chapter, International Assoc. of Arson Investigators Conf., Grand Island
Oct. 18-21	Nebraska State Volunteer Firefighters Association Conference, Ogallala

Sandy's Corner

Give it a Try...

If you have access to the Internet and haven't tried online reporting, I encourage you to give it a try. So far we have approximately 130 departments who are reporting online, and we have heard nothing but good reports. As a volunteer in your community, the less time you have to spend reporting the better. Everyone says online reporting saves them time.

Just a few suggestions on reporting online wildfires:

- Please make sure "Cause" and "Acres" has something listed in the field. Everyone seems to be doing okay entering "Number of Firefighters" and "Vehicles," but sometimes leave "Cause" and "Acres" blank. This is required information.
- There is a separate location to enter Mutual Aid. Please do not enter a Mutual Aid fire in "Reporting a Wildfire." They are different. Likewise with monthly "No Response." Fires are entered in a different area also.
- Periodically, review fires you have submitted and see if they have been approved by me. If something prevents me from approving a fire, there will be a note at the bottom that will indicate why it was not approved and give you an opportunity to correct the error.

An updated list of those not wanting cards mailed to them each month has been submitted to Ag Communications. If by September you are still receiving a card and have requested they be discontinued, please contact me at slineberry1@unl.edu or call me at 402.472.6623. I will check to make sure your department is on the list.

The Yellow Monthly Report of Fires card has been revised to include a specific blank for "Date of Fire" instead of having "Date," "Time In" and "Time Out" in the same area. "Date of Fire" was being overlooked and I was having to call many of you. Please discard all old cards. I am still receiving the ½ sheet cards, and they do not have the correct information on them.

Years ago, I used to think rural boards had their elections in the fall, but I've come to the conclusion they are different according to area. My concern is maintaining an accurate database of officers, which is very important when dealing with cost-share, agreements and excess property. If you have had a change in officers (Rural Board - not Department), please remember to contact me so corrections can be made. We want the correct officers to receive mailings

Good luck and keep up the good work!
Sandy Lineberry, Staff Assistant

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