

Finlayson Fire and Rescue, Askov Fire and Rescue and Hinckley Fire were called out for mutual aid by Sandstone Fire on a structure fire east of Sandstone on Feb. 14. See more photos inside. Submitted by Mike Drahosh of Finlayson Fire and Rescue.



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WHEN PROTECTION MEANS EVERYTHING.

Early morning fire totals Siwek Lumber's Truck and Maintenance Shop

By TALIA MILAVETZ,
Belle Plaine Herald

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, Dec. 9, a fire destroyed Siwek Lumber's truck and maintenance shop in Jordan.

"It's the only building on our property that isn't either filled or surrounded by lumber. Of all the buildings that could have caught on fire, that was the least likely to spread," said owner Dave Siwek.

He said that fact coupled with the quick response from the Jordan, Belle Plaine and New Prague fire departments prevented the situation from escalating.

"It's a lumberyard, right? There's lots of fuel around here," he said.

Siwek said neighbors called the fire department on Wednesday morning, after hearing a loud noise.

"They heard a pop, like a small explosion. I think they believe it was one of the propane tanks on the forklift that was in there blew up," he said.

According to a press release from the Jordan Police Department, the fire was reported around 3 a.m.



The Jordan, Belle Plaine and New Prague Fire Departments responded to the scene at Siwek Lumber in Jordan on Dec. 9.

"The cause of the fire is currently under investigation by the MN State Fire Marshal's Office; however, early indication was unlikely due to foul play or criminal in nature."

Siwek said the truck and

maintenance building is a total loss, in addition to a large loader, forklift, and other small pieces of equipment.

He said two trucks are still usable, though they are covered in heavy smoke.

"They look kind of funny all black and smoky, but hopefully we will get that cleaned off," he said.

Since the damage was contained to the truck and maintenance

shop, Siwek Lumber was able to open on Wednesday, Dec. 9 and continue operating as normal.

No one was injured as a result of the fire.



Firefighters were able to keep a lumber yard fire from escalating.



A truck and maintenance building was a total loss in Jordan.

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'God put me in the right place'

Ogilvie fireman pulls amputee from flames

By KIRSTEN FAURIE,
Kanabec County Times

An Ogilvie firefighter pulled a man from a burning building, likely saving his life.

Around 11 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21, William Gregory was winding down the evening with some TV when he heard a loud bang — like an explosion — across the street at his neighbor's house on 175th Ave., Ogilvie.

Gregory is good friends with his neighbor Mark Lacrosse and visits him often. Lacrosse, described as a middle-aged man living alone had his right leg amputated above the knee; Gregory often visits and helps Lacrosse to haul wood or they work together repairing cars.

In fact, Gregory had been there just earlier that evening.

When he heard the bang, Gregory said he called 911, put on his boots and headed down his driveway.

Just a couple miles north, Jason Hippie's fire pager went off.

Hippie, the Ogilvie Area Fire Department's assistant chief, joined the fire department 13 years ago because he was looking for a little more "adventure" in his life.

With his bag of first-responder gear already in his vehicle, Hippie responded directly to the scene.

When Hippie arrived, he saw the home on fire and heard a man

yelling from the attached garage. Hippie rushed over, and found Lacrosse on the floor, trying to make his way out the door. Hippie described the garage as "crisp," two walls and the ceiling were in flames.

Hippie began pulling Lacrosse from the home and down the driveway.

"You don't think about it really. You just react. Time stands still."

As Hippie pulled Lacrosse further from the burning garage, Gregory rushed to his side and began to help.

"He was a big help, because I was pretty spent and so was the victim," said Hippie. "We need more people like that in the world."

Hippie said any member of the Ogilvie Fire Department would have done the same as he did, "We have a fabulous crew." Hippie just happened to get there first.

"It was fortunate God put me in the right place at the right time," he said.

According to Gregory, Lacrosse is currently being treated for third-degree burns at Hennepin County Medical Center.

Ogilvie Fire Chief Pat Cramsie said the cause of the fire is unknown at this time. The next day, all that was left of the home was the foundation and some smoldering shingles.

Estimating the Cost of Fire Department Operations in Minnesota

By JON NISJA,
State Fire Safety Supervisor

I joined the fire service in Nov. 1978. Soon after I started, information was published showing it cost the fire department around \$300 to respond to an incident. I never saw a copy of the information, nor do I know whether it was based on the costs for a full-time or paid-on-call fire department. I was never sure if this was based strictly on "hard costs" (direct and indirect personnel costs) or whether it included "soft costs" (fire stations, pensions, apparatus depreciation, etc.). It appears that this same \$300 number made its way into many communities' false alarm ordinances, because it seems to be a common fine or assessment amount (often after one or two other false alarms).

In 2020, we undertook a study to identify the total cost of fire department incident responses. Actual fire department operating budgets can be somewhat elusive, but we located a website (fiscalexcellence.org) that tracks the cost of various government services (streets, schools, natural resources, police protection, fire services, etc.).

The most recent publication, "How Does Minnesota Compare" for fiscal year 2016, shows that Minnesota spends \$233 per household on fire protection. They de-

scribe the following types of costs: firefighters, auxiliary services, fire inspection and investigation, support for firefighting activities, and other firefighting facilities (such as fire hydrants and firefighting water supplies). Since these were broad categories, we assume that they include the cost of fire service personnel, benefits, training, apparatus, facilities and equipment.

There were 2,185,172 households in Minnesota in 2016. 2,185,172 households times \$233 per household = \$509,145,076.

When you divide the total cost of fire protection per year (\$509,145,076) by the number of incidents (332,202 in 2019), you get \$1,533 (rounded to \$1,500) as the cost per incident response.

This may seem high to you or your department; maybe it is. These are statewide numbers, so some fire departments will be higher and some will be lower. It is, however, interesting to look at the ambulance fee schedule for fire department EMS and see that basic life support transports are typically billed at around \$1,500, and advanced life support transports cost about \$2,000.

Do you know the actual cost per incident for your fire department? Have you researched it lately, or are you still relying on cost estimates from decades ago?



Garfield mobile home fire

The Garfield Fire Department responded to a mobile home fire one mile west of Garfield on Feb. 1. The owner of the mobile home suffered minor burns and cuts and was taken to Alomere Health for treatment. Firefighters were able to quickly extinguish the fire. Photo by Al Edenloff of the Echo Press.

ARSON A POSSIBILITY IN DETROIT LAKES RV FIRE

A Tuesday night fire that caused heavy fire and smoke damage to a building at Wold's RV Sales on Highway 10 West, Detroit Lakes, is under investigation for possible arson.

Detroit Lakes Fire Chief Ryan Swanson said Wednesday morning that his office is being assisted in the investigation by the State Fire Marshal's Office and the Detroit Lakes Police Department. He said he couldn't comment further as to the reasons that arson is suspected.

Nobody was hurt in the fire. It was reported by a motorist pass-

ing by on Highway 10, who saw flames coming out several windows on the east side of the metal building, which is divided by a block wall. The blaze was contained to the parts and showroom area, but the entire building had heavy smoke damage, Swanson said.

None of the recreational vehicles or other outdoor inventory parked at the site were damaged, he added.

Firefighters from Detroit Lakes, Audubon and Frazee, as well as Detroit Lakes police officers, Becker County deputies

and medical staff with St. Mary's EMS were among those who responded to the fire shortly before 10 p.m. Tuesday.

Flames could be seen coming out windows on the east side of the building, and acrid smoke wafted out of the building to the west as emergency workers fought the blaze. The fire was reported under control about an hour later, at 10:47 p.m.

(Detroit Lakes Tribune, Detroit Lakes, Jan. 3, 2021; written by Nathan Bowe, staff writer.)



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I'm not a firefighter, but I played one once for a day

By KATHY LAUR,
MPA City Administrator,
Tonka Bay, MN

When Excelsior Fire District Chief Curt Mackey sent out an email to partnering cities about a live burn they were going to be doing in Shorewood, and interested city council members and city administrators could participate if they wanted, I couldn't answer fast enough. This was an opportunity for a civilian like me to take part in a real firefighting training, in a real burning house. When would I ever have a chance like this? Now some of you may think like me; that this would be an awesome experience! And then, there will be others, who think; no way, I don't even want to be near that. And, that's ok. I have a feeling you're in the majority.

Of all the partnering cities, and that includes Deephaven, Greenwood, Shorewood, and Tonka Bay, only one other person, Councilmember Lou Dierking of Excelsior, stepped up to join me inside the burning house. Of the dozens of firefighters participating in training that day including a few from the Hopkins FD, Lou and I were only two of four females taking part in the live burn. The other two women were Fire Marshal Kellie Murphy-Ringate and firefighter Sandy Dostal. They were there to make sure Lou and I knew what to expect and explain as we went along, what was happening, and what would come next. They were also our safety nets in the event we felt anxious or unsafe and wanted to get out of the burning house earlier than later. We had a safe word – dog food, and an arm signal in case we couldn't be heard. Fires are loud.

It sounds a bit crazy; I know. Why in the world would someone with zero knowledge in fire-

fighting volunteer to put themselves in a situation they have no training in and possible danger? Well, in my case, I'm the daughter and sister of two former firefighters. I grew up in a neighborhood with a half dozen firefighters. I was taught to respect these men (that's all that there was back then), they run into danger when everyone else is running out. They save people's lives, rescue them and are brave. As a kid it wasn't uncommon to have friends whose dads were firefighters and for those friends to grow up to be firefighters too. For me, it was never something I aspired to be mostly because I didn't think girls could grow up to be firefighters. I, of course, no longer feel that way. I have come to realize through this experience, that I am woefully out of shape.

On Friday, Feb. 26 Lou and I met with Murphy-Ringate, SCBA Coordinator, Marshall Glodoski, and firefighter, Mark Glodoski. They introduced us to the SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) equipment. If you're a scuba diver then you know this is how you breathe underwater. Lou and I had never been scuba diving. The SCBA worn by firefighters is HEAVY, surprisingly so, and we hadn't even put on the turn-out gear yet. We were fitted for boots, pants, jackets, hoods, helmets, and gloves.

On Saturday, we loaded the gear onto one of the fire rigs and then went to participate in a briefing much like you'd see on shows like Emergency, Chicago Fire, and the movie Backdraft. This is the last reference I will make to these "Hollywood" depictions because they are nothing like the real thing outside of briefings. Chief Mackey explained how the training exercise would look to the firefighters and that there would be five different



groups of them going in to knock down the fire. Mackey also introduced Lou and I along with city councilmembers Tim Connolly of Tonka Bay, Tom Fletcher of Greenwood and Steve Erickson of Deephaven, who came to watch the training. After the briefing, everyone headed over to the house in Shorewood where the fire would take place.

According to Shorewood City Administrator Greg Lerud, the old farmhouse came on the market a couple of years ago, and the city had its eye on it for some time for a storm water pond. The property also included a couple of out-buildings. Shorewood has significant stormwater issues in the western part of the city, and as road improvement projects take place, it's necessary to add storm water management, but needed a place to provide rate and volume control. This site is ideally located. The city purchased it two to three years ago. The city offered it to the EFD for training purposes.

Lou and I walked around the house with Murphy-Ringate while she explained that the A painted on the house was for the front, B was the side, C was the back, and D was the other side of the house. She pointed out the exits and their importance during a fire along with other factors crucial to fighting fires. After this bit of explanation, we got into our approximately 75 lbs. of gear. Murphy-Ringate took us into the house to point out where we would be and what we could expect to see. She and Dostal would be behind us through it all.

In the corner of the house's dining room, there was some hay, wood, and cardboard. While we knelt in the opposite corner, a firefighter started the fire. Cardboard kept being added to get the fire really going. In the meantime, I watched in awe as the flames got bigger and bigger and traveled up the wall and across the ceiling. Smoke filled the living room next to the dining room. In the house's entrance, the smoke formed a line dividing the room in half. The upper half thick with smoke and the bottom half smokey, but there was still

visibility. Now I know why I was taught to crawl to safety in a fire. I was especially conscious of my breathing during this experience. My brother told me my breathing would increase as I got anxious, but I never felt that way. I was calm. I had the utmost trust in the gear I was wearing and the equipment on my face and back. I also knew Murphy-Ringate and Dostal had my back and I would be ok.

Then it happened, my nose itched. Of all things! I couldn't do anything about it but pray it away and clearly God had better things to do at that time than to alleviate my nose itch. Fortunately, the firefighters for which this fire was actually intended for came in low and on their knees to knock down the fire with little bursts of water so as not to get too much steam in the room. They do that to avoid a steam burn to their skin through the turn-out gear. Turn-out gear has a vapor barrier. They moved from the dining room to the living room. It was time for Lou and me to exit. Thanks goes out to Dostal who helped me get back on my feet. Being down on my knees, with the weight of the equipment, I would have had to crawl out the door without her. That would have been embarrassing.

One of the things I noticed about the fire was that there was no black smoke. Murphy-

Ringate explained that it was because there was no furniture or carpet in the house, therefore no petroleum. It was a "clean" burn, meaning white and gray smoke. Another interesting thing I learned was in order to get much of the smoke out of the house, firefighters opened the front door and sprayed the hose out the door. The smoke inside the house rushed out the door. Chief Mackey explained that it is called hydraulic ventilation. They use the fluid power from the handling to ventilate the space to remove smoke and heat. It makes the space more tenable and increases the chances of making a rescue during a primary search.

The men and women of the EFD that do this as a part-time job, and hold down "regular" jobs, and have families, are simply amazing. They have ongoing training throughout their time on the department and let me tell you, it's not easy. They don't do it for the money either, they do it because they love the work. We all need to be grateful they do.

For Lou and me, our firefighting experience lasted three and a half hours. We didn't have to worry about clean up or any of the other uncool messy duties after the fire was out. We got to go home and tell our families about the experience. Now, I get to talk a little shop with my dad and brother.

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Fire departments can apply for canned drinking water from Anheuser-Busch and the National Volunteer Fire Council

Water donation supports volunteer departments responding to wildfires

Anheuser-Busch and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) are teaming up for the third year to provide critical hydration to volunteer fire departments responding to wildfires through the Emergency Drinking Water for Wildland Firefighters program.

The program is an expansion of Anheuser-Busch's longstanding

ing tradition of providing emergency drinking water and supplies for disaster relief efforts. Anheuser-Busch is continuing its commitment in 2021 by pledging to donate 1.5 million cans of clean drinking water to help keep wildland firefighters hydrated as they protect and strengthen their communities. Since the program began in 2019, over 3.2 million cans of water have been distributed to more than 520 departments in 47 states.

"Hydration is a vital component to firefighter health and safety, and an important part of keeping firefighters functioning at their best during response," said NVFC chair Steve Hirsch. "We appreciate Anheuser-Busch's ongoing commitment to support our volunteer boots-on-the-ground responders. This is an invaluable program that provides a critical resource to volunteer departments, so they can use their limited budgets on other necessities."

"Our emergency drinking water program is a tremendous source of pride for all of us at Anheuser-Busch as our way of recognizing the efforts of those who help us build stronger, more resilient communities in times of need," said Julio Suárez, senior director of community affairs at Anheuser-Busch. "Providing these critical hydration resources to our nation's brave firefighters is our way of saying thank you for their efforts and sacrifices for the continued safety of our communities."

To apply for the emergency drinking water, departments must be located in the U.S., annually respond to wildfires, be over 50 percent volunteer, and serve a population of 25,000 or less. Departments in declared emergencies due to wildfire will also be able to request water outside of the application period to help with their immediate wildfire response needs.

The application period is open through April 23 or until all water has been allocated. Visit www.nvfc.org/ water to apply and for additional information about the program.

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beers in the industry. From responsible drinking programs and emergency drinking water donations to industry-leading sustainability efforts, we are guided by our unwavering commitment to supporting the communities we call home. For more information, visit www.anheuser-busch.com or follow Anheuser-Busch on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, emergency medical, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides critical advocacy, resources, programs, and education for first responders across the nation. Learn more at www.nvfc.org.

145th Annual MSFDA Conference and Fire School Canceled

Due to the continued uncertainty of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the MSFDA Board has made the difficult decision to cancel the 145th Annual MSFDA Conference & Fire School, scheduled for April 23-24, 2021 in Bemidji.

Award nomination forms, names for honorary life membership and the memorial service will continue to be accepted.

FIREFIGHTERS BATTLE FIRE IN CASS LAKE

Firefighters not only battled a fire Wednesday, Feb. 9, but below zero temperatures with a wind chill of 35 below while responding to a house fire in Cass Lake.

A Cass County Sheriff's Office deputy was first on scene and observed the attached garage of the two-story home was engulfed in flames, Lt. Bryan Welk with the sheriff's office said.

The fire, on the 16000 block of White Cloud Trail, was reported at 6:28 a.m. by a neighbor. The Cass Lake Fire Department responded to the scene and called the Bemidji Fire Department for mutual aid.

Welk said there were four adults in the house at the time of the fire and they all escaped injuries. The American Red Cross was called to assist the adults.

The Minnesota State Fire Marshal's Office is investigating the cause of the fire. Welk said the fire was not suspicious and it appears the garage and home were destroyed.

The Cass Lake Ambulance Service assisted at the scene.

(Brainerd Dispatch, Brainerd, Feb. 10, 2021)

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MSFDA OFFICER REPORTS



**MARK ROSENBLUM,
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"I encourage all of you to understand any legislation that impacts firefighters. The MSFDA has been involved with legislative lobbying efforts for decades. Yes, you pay membership dues to us so we will collectively participate with other organizations in representing you in St. Paul, but it's crucial that you understand what we are doing on your behalf."

Minnesota Firefighters, As I write this, Southern Minnesota is reeling from our annual March snowstorm. Northern Minnesota was given a reprieve from this storm that dumped feet of snow in the Rockies. As the reigns of the pandemic begin to loosen, it's legislative season in St. Paul. Our elected leaders are pounding out the endless hours of hearings and wrangling over minutia in the drafted bills and throwing dollars around in the seven figure ranges like Monopoly Money. The Minnesota State Fire Department Association is a small player in the said wrangling's. Dabbling in pension issues, as part of MnFAC (Minnesota Fire Association Coalition), has been my charge since sometime at the end of the 90's when I needed to get some wording changed that excluded (inadvertently) my very own relief association. When you

speak pension with most firefighters in the state, they quickly usher you toward their relief association treasurer or some other knowledgeable chap who knows how to speak your language.

After being one of the few who has spoken this language for nearly 20 years, it's time for others in the state to take hold of this charge and represent their relief associations by learning about the single largest benefit currently available to firefighters in the state. This year, I have been waving my flag and supporting and being concerned about a piece of legislation being put forth by PERA to add a provision to the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Plan (statewide plan). I was just ushered to the treasurer, wasn't I? But in all seriousness, the plan I came from, is not in the statewide plan. Yet, I have only been able to recruit a handful of peo-

ple over the years to participate in these conversations who actually have plans in the statewide plan. We need more people to learn how to speak this language so you can knowledgeably speak on your own behalf. Having me (and a handful of others) do it for you doesn't convey the same meaning as you doing this yourself. Also, when you understand your plan, you subsequently understand when new provisions, such as the one being proposed, may have a negative impact on your plan.

I encourage all of you to understand any legislation that impacts firefighters. The MSFDA has been involved with legislative lobbying efforts for decades. Yes, you pay membership dues to us so we will collectively participate with other organizations in representing you in St. Paul, but it's crucial that you understand what we are doing on your behalf.

The MSFDA is the voice of the firefighter in Minnesota, but we can do better as firefighters by understanding the legislation that directly impacts us. Please get involved in your region by learning how your fire relief associations' pension plan works!

Thank you and happy legislative session (Spring)!

**MARK ROSENBLUM,
President**

This time of year, we are typically very involved in the planning stages of our annual conference. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, this is not the case. Although we will not be together in person for our annual banquet and memorial service, we would still like to recognize firefighters around our state.

On our website under the Annual Conference tab, you can find the "Award Nomination Form".

The categories are:

- Firefighter of the Year
- Fire Department of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement
- Prevention/Community Awareness

Please take a moment and fill out a nomination form for someone in your department that has made a difference and deserves recognition for their efforts and/or achievements. Nominations will be accepted until April 15, 2021.

If you have had a member or retired member pass away since the last conference please send in their name, years of service and a picture so we can include them in our Memorial Service at our next conference.

Another way in which we recognize our members is with "Honorary Life Membership". If you or other firefighters on your department have served 20 years as an active firefighter on one (or more) of the fire departments in Minnesota who are members of

**DEEDEE JANKOVICH,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**
"On our website under the Annual Conference tab, you can find the "Award Nomination Form".

The categories are:

- Firefighter of the Year
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- Lifetime Achievement
- Prevention/Community Awareness."



the MSFDA, please submit their names to me.

On another note, our board has been busy with our SAFER grant! The grant's purpose is to join interested candidates with a statewide marketing effort so they can learn what it takes to become a firefighter in Minnesota and connect them to departments in need. The grant will also focus on providing departments with resources to improve their recruitment process. If you are interested in taking advantage of

this opportunity, please visit our website for more information. We are anxious to work with you on this exciting program. Please watch our website and Facebook page for updates and as always, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me or any of the MSFDA Board of Directors.

Wishing you all a happy spring!

**DEEDEE JANKOVICH,
Executive Director**

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and can move a
fire truck?**

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your truck moving fast!**



MSFDA OFFICER REPORTS

Greetings all! I'm a history buff. I enjoy learning about the past-events, individual people, conflicts, engineering feats, exploration, etc. Sometimes, if history is forgotten or not studied, it is hard to understand why things are the way they are. Often it's due to a particular incident or the efforts of a few dedicated individuals in the past which has its influences as time continues on.

I was particularly interested when I learned Madison Fire Department had done cleaning around their station and came across nine old framed pictures. They decided to donate them and I worked out a meeting date with Madison Firefighter Mark Olson. It turned out he had some business to take care of in Willmar which is about halfway for both of us. We met for lunch (thanks again for buying Mark!), loaded the pictures into my vehicle and headed home. While driving the hour or so back home, I found myself thinking about the MSFDA and historical preservation within our organization.

When I got home, I unloaded the pictures and looked at them closer. Eight of them are panoramic shots of the delegates in attendance at the annual MSFDA conference from the 1920s, 30s and 40s. One is a group shot of the firefighters at the NW Fire School held at the U of M in Sep-

tember, 1930. Some of the photographs are a little beat up from the ravages of time but they are still cool.

I was curious what other state firefighter associations across the country were doing with their history. I serve on the board of the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC). I sent an email with a few questions out to the 47 other states in the NVFC and received many responses. Some have a very organized system in keeping their history, some have no system but recognize they should be doing something.

The MSFDA is nearly 150 years old, being permanently organized in 1874 by a small group of far-sighted firefighters. There weren't a lot of fire departments in existence at the time. The first few years, membership could be counted with fingers and toes. Membership dues were \$5 per year. Annual budget was less than \$200. The mission was to promote the welfare of our members through cash benefits for injury or death, favorable legislation, training, information sharing and fire prevention. We certainly have grown in membership - having just over 600 of the state's 785 departments as members. Our mission hasn't changed much over time. We continue to advocate for all Minnesota firefighters - from the rookie to the

chief, volunteer, paid on call or career.

Think about what it took in those days to just get together and organize. Communicating and meeting are much easier today than 150 years ago. Technology has evolved allowing us instant means of communication. Horses, trains and walking were the means of travel, telegraph and handwritten letters were the means of communicating - the telephone not being invented until 1876. It took many years before telephone service even made it out to rural areas. Heck, my dad mentioned electricity finally arrived in the 1940s to the farm where he and I grew up.

The board of the MSFDA has done a lot of work over the years on behalf of Minnesota's firefighters. I'm storing almost all of the MSFDA's records kept from our annual conferences dating back to 1876 and plan to write about it over the next couple years. DeeDee has the book where handwritten minutes were kept from our organizational meeting in January, 1874 - very cool stuff.

There are some gaps in our historical records. Starting in the early 1900s, we printed and distributed copies of our "Red Book" which covered the proceedings of our annual confer-

**DAVE YURCZYK,
1ST VICE PRESIDENT**
"Eight of them are panoramic shots of the delegates in attendance at the annual MSFDA conference from the 1920's, 30's and 40's. One is a group shot of the firefighters at the NW Fire School held at the U of M in September, 1930. Some of the photographs are a little beat up from the ravages of time but they are still cool!"



ence. Someone before me organized them in chronological order and noted which year's Red Books were missing. We are missing many from the 40s & 50s. The note also mentioned the Red Book was not printed in either '68 or '69. If you or your department has copies of Red Books from that era, we would be interested in them or copies of them. We are also interested in any other vintage MSFDA memorabilia - pictures, conference delegate ribbons / badges

or other items you may wish to donate.

The history and very existence of our organization was and continues to be shaped by the experiences, efforts and passion of individual firefighters, everyday people wanting to help others. Preserving our history helps honor their service and provides a living legacy dedicated to all the men and women in the fire service.

DAVE YURCZYK



Mark Olson of Madison Fire Department presents historic framed photos from MSFDA conference from the 1920s to the 1940s to Dave Yurczyk, 1st vice-president of the MSFDA.



Historic framed photos from MSFDA conference from the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.

Devotional for Firefighters

The Sermon on the Mount is one of the most influential and criticized texts in the Bible. In this Sermon, Jesus pushed the law found in the Torah to its limits and dared us to live it out. He made it impossible for any of us to keep and then charged us to keep it.

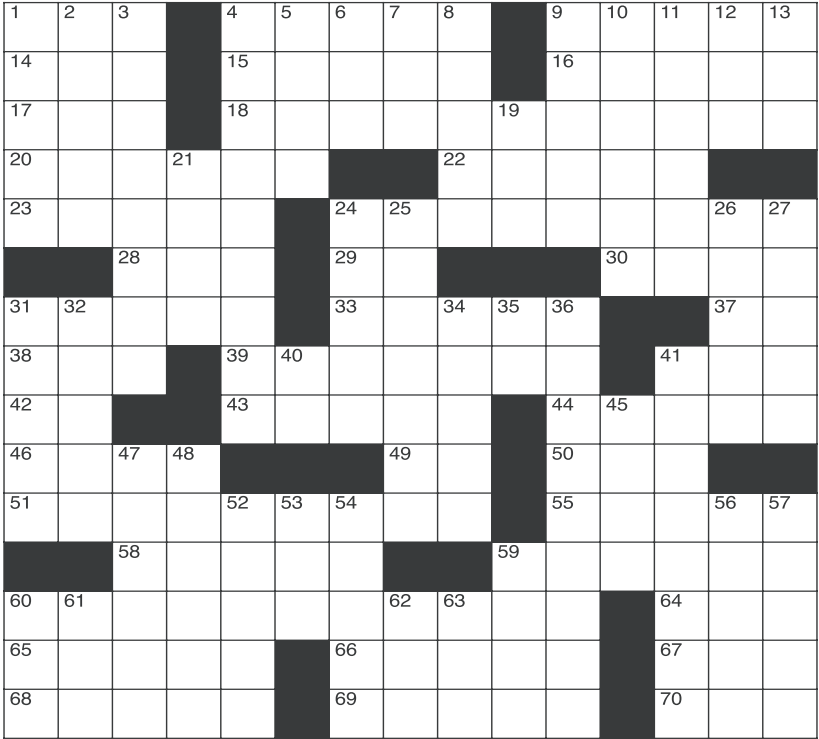
I often think of those whom Jesus spoke to and in the moment in which He spoke and realized that He was injecting something completely revolutionary. History tells us the people he had spoken to were just driven out of their homes and many had lost everything to the onslaught of invading Romans.

It was in that moment this Rabbi (teacher) told them among other things not to resist an evil person, to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, not to judge but leave room for God (the list goes on and on).

Impossible you say and still the Son of God said do it and you will have treasures in heaven. So, does Jesus expect me to give everything away, avoid lust at all costs and trust Him for everything? The simple answer - YES - Other great leaders in our time have suggested the same thing, living out Jesus words, men like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. just to name a few.

So the question is, can I possibly translate such ideals into my everyday life? Can I do this? Jesus thought we could. Something to think about! - If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you shall be saved. For God did not send HIS Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. - it begins with a heart change and everything else will begin to fall into place.

PASTOR SAM



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Pituitary hormone (abbr.)
- 4. Ceramic jars
- 9. Monetary units
- 14. Alias
- 15. “Superman” actor
- 16. Britonic tribe
- 17. Shorten
- 18. LA Dodgers manager
- 20. Hoarded
- 22. Theatrically portray
- 23. Noah’s grandson
- 24. Dependent
- 28. Peyton’s little brother
- 29. Cools the house
- 30. Principle part of
- 31. Type of wrap
- 33. Peels
- 37. Commercial
- 38. Make an attempt
- 39. Arrange in steps
- 41. U. Utah athlete
- 42. Old English
- 43. Trade
- 44. Nostrils
- 46. Ticket seller ___Hub
- 49. Of I
- 50. Institute legal proceedings against
- 51. Takes apart
- 55. Doorway
- 58. Long int’l river
- 59. Trailblazing athlete Gibson
- 60. Former CBS News host
- 64. Sign language
- 65. Badgerlike mammal
- 66. Thin strips of wood
- 67. Brooklyn hoopster
- 68. Portents of good or evil
- 69. Footwear
- 70. When you think you’ll arrive

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Batflower genus
- 2. Predatory seabirds
- 3. Fish farm
- 4. Arrangements
- 5. Go in advance of others
- 6. Bulgarian monetary unit
- 7. “___Maria”
- 8. W. African ethnoreligious group
- 9. Wild Asian oxen genus
- 10. Vinegary
- 11. To this
- 12. Explosive
- 13. Female sibling
- 19. Orlando museum (abbr.)
- 21. Type of hoop
- 24. About Holy Father
- 25. Academic environment
- 26. Extremely angry
- 27. Surrenders
- 31. Swiss mountain pass
- 32. Sharp mountain ridge
- 34. Erases
- 35. Spielberg’s alien
- 36. Absurd
- 40. Dorm worker
- 41. Used to make pesticides
- 45. The sister of your father or mother
- 47. A way to let know
- 48. Can’t produce much vegetation
- 52. Small streams
- 53. Folk singer DiFranco
- 54. Weights
- 56. Start over
- 57. Black Sea resort city
- 59. Wimbledon champ
- 60. Corporate executive (abbr.)
- 61. Unskilled actor who overacts
- 62. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
- 63. Of or relating to ears

Answers on page 12

DeeDee's Dish

Good Old-Fashioned Pancakes

(SERVES 8)

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 3½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon white sugar
- 1¼ cups milk
- 1 egg
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted

DIRECTIONS

Step 1

In a large bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, salt and sugar. Make a well in the center and pour in the milk, egg and melted butter; mix until smooth.

Step 2

Heat a lightly oiled griddle or frying pan over medium-high heat. Pour or scoop the batter onto the griddle, using approximately 1/4 cup for each pancake. Brown on both sides and serve hot.



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STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

What the Minnesota Legislature is doing and how it can affect the fire service

By AMANDA SWENSON

I think I might be like many others who get a little frustrated during election season watching candidates with negative campaigns or unattainable promises. But now that we are past election season and into legislative season, it's time to pay attention. The real work is happening right now in St. Paul.

Take a few minutes to learn

more about the initiatives moving through the house and senate. A number of bills have been introduced that have an impact on the Minnesota fire service. While some may not have a direct impact on you or your community, I encourage you to consider the broader issues of public safety and firefighter safety across the state.

One bill the State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) has been tracking closely is HF109 and SF155, introduced by Representative Noor, which would require buildings over 75 feet tall with a least one floor of residential housing to be retrofitted with sprinklers. The SFMD recognizes the value of fire protection systems in life

safety. This change would not only protect the lives of residents but potentially firefighters, too.

The Hometown Heroes Assistance Act is another bill that has implications for the fire service across the state. This proposed legislation has a direct impact on the Minnesota fire service, offering financial support for cancer and cardiac diagnosis, education, and mental health services.

A bill being monitored by the Minnesota Fire Association Coalition (MFAC) is the change in event center fire and building code classifications. This language could change the occupancy threshold for fire sprinkler protection systems in these types

AMANDA SWENSON,
DEPUTY STATE FIRE MARSHAL

"A bill being monitored by the Minnesota Fire Association Coalition (MFAC) is the change in event center fire and building code classifications. This language could change the occupancy threshold for fire sprinkler protection systems in these types of facilities."

of facilities.

Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association (msfca.org) is a great resource to learn more about what is happening during the legislative session related to the fire service and broader emergency services.

There are fireworks changes, several local issues, a statewide

fire museum and others on the table. I encourage you to each look at the legislation that has the potential to affect the fire service. More importantly, take the time to contact your representatives by phone, email or old-fashioned letter. Your voice matters for you, your department and your community.

Get To Know Your Board Members

Jon Kahnke

Jon Kahnke has proudly served as the Region 12 Minnesota Valley MSFDA representative since 2015 and currently serves as the

association's 2nd Vice President as well.

Having grown up in Waseca, MN and a lifelong resident, he worked in the local printing industry as a beginning career but

found the passion of the fire service in January of 1997. Jon started his career as a paid-on-call firefighter for the City of Waseca and since then has held multiple leadership positions which include: Training Officer, Captain, Assistant Chief, and Interim Fire Chief before retiring from the paid-on-call side of the department in January of 2020. Jon also served as a fire program instructor for South Central College until 2012 at the North Mankato campus.

Jon was afforded and accepted the opportunity in June of 2009 to become a Full Time Shift Commander for the City of Waseca and serves in this capacity currently. He proudly shares the passion of the fire service with his wife and son who are both firefighters with Waseca.

Outside of the fire department and MSFDA, Jon is an appointed board member of the MBFTE and FSAC as well. When not working or fulfilling requirements of other fire service duties, he enjoys spending time with his family and outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, and traveling.

It is, has been and continues to be a wonderful and rewarding opportunity to serve the citizens of his community and those he represents throughout the State of Minnesota.



EARLY MORNING FIRE DAMAGES VERNON CENTER MARKET

The Vernon Center Market, located at Hilltop Street, was destroyed by a fire that started early in the morning on Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2020.

The Vernon Center Fire Department was on the scene around 3:30 a.m. according to Vernon Center Mayor Dana Ziegler. Amboy, Good Thunder and Lake Crystal Fire Departments were paged for mutual aid. Chief Ben Froehlich said the Mapleton Fire Department received a page for tanker trucks at 6:26 a.m. and they were back at the Mapleton station by 1:30 p.m.

Other emergency personnel

at the scene included the Lake Crystal Ambulance Service and two Blue Earth County Deputy Sheriffs, as well as a representative from the State Fire Marshal's Office.

Ziegler stated, "This is a big loss for our community. We don't have a lot of businesses and every one of them is important to us."

Ziegler extended a thank you to all the fire departments who helped. "Thank you to our City Supervisor Mark Willette for keeping water in the tower. He did a great job. And thank you to our own fire department who did

a fantastic job."

Ziegler also acknowledged all the community members who stepped up to help, offering food and water, Peterson Motor Grader brought in an excavator to help at the scene.

A fund to help business owner Ronnie Montgomery has been set up at Community Bank. Donations can be made at locations in Vernon Center, Amboy, Mankato or Eagle Lake.

(Maple River Messenger, Mapleton, Dec. 31, 2020; written by Koni Preston, editor.)



Why MN Firefighters Need Access to More Health Resources

Our firefighters are tested both physically and mentally nearly every day on the job, and the health resources they receive now just aren't cutting it. Cancer, emotional trauma and cardiac disease affect firefighters at rates that are approximately double those of the general public, and these health problems are the three reasons why Minnesota legislators need to pass the Hometown Heroes Assistance Program bill (SF621 and HF377) and provide first responders with the tools necessary to prioritize and protect their health.

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Cardiovascular disease is the number-one killer of firefighters nationwide and is by far the leading cause of line-of-duty deaths in the fire service. In 2020, Howard Lake Fire Chief Daryl "Taddy" Drusch tragically died of a heart attack just hours after responding to an emergency call. Even young and healthy firefighters suffer from hardened arteries and impaired heart function after just three hours of prolonged firefighting, according to a 2010 study from the Illinois Fire Ser-

vice Institute.

EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

The mental and emotional costs of being a firefighter are high, and consequently those in the fire service experience much higher rates of mental health challenges than the general population – including sleep disorders, depression, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidal ideation/action. In April 2018, Superior Fire Department battalion chief Erik Sutton died from suicide, just weeks after retiring. The on-the-job bravery of firefighters is legendary, but that doesn't mean they should suffer in silence when facing occupational stress and emotional trauma.

CANCER

According to the National Fire Protection Association, more than 68 percent of all firefighters will develop some form of cancer in their lifetimes. The chance of lung cancer and leukemia diagnoses, and cancer-related death increases with the amount of time spent at fires. Consequently, Glen Solem from Grand Lake

Fire Protection District died in early 2020, after a 14-month battle with esophageal cancer.

We must protect our firefighters from these chronic illnesses however we can, but currently, critical funding shortages make it difficult for fire service leaders to prioritize firefighter health measures and equipment. That's why the Minnesota Firefighter Initiative (MnFIRE) launched in 2017 as an innovative and inclusive approach to unify and spark conversations among firefighters, their families, their communities and state policymakers regarding firefighter health, and why MnFIRE is championing the Hometown Heroes Assistance Program, a bi-partisan bill to improve access to care for firefighters in need of treatment by establishing a statewide \$7.2 million appropriation of funds.

The bill will provide supplemental health insurance and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) resources, ensuring all of our state's 20,000 firefighters have access to the care needed to handle a cardiac, emotional trauma or cancer diagnosis – and prevent these diseases from harming

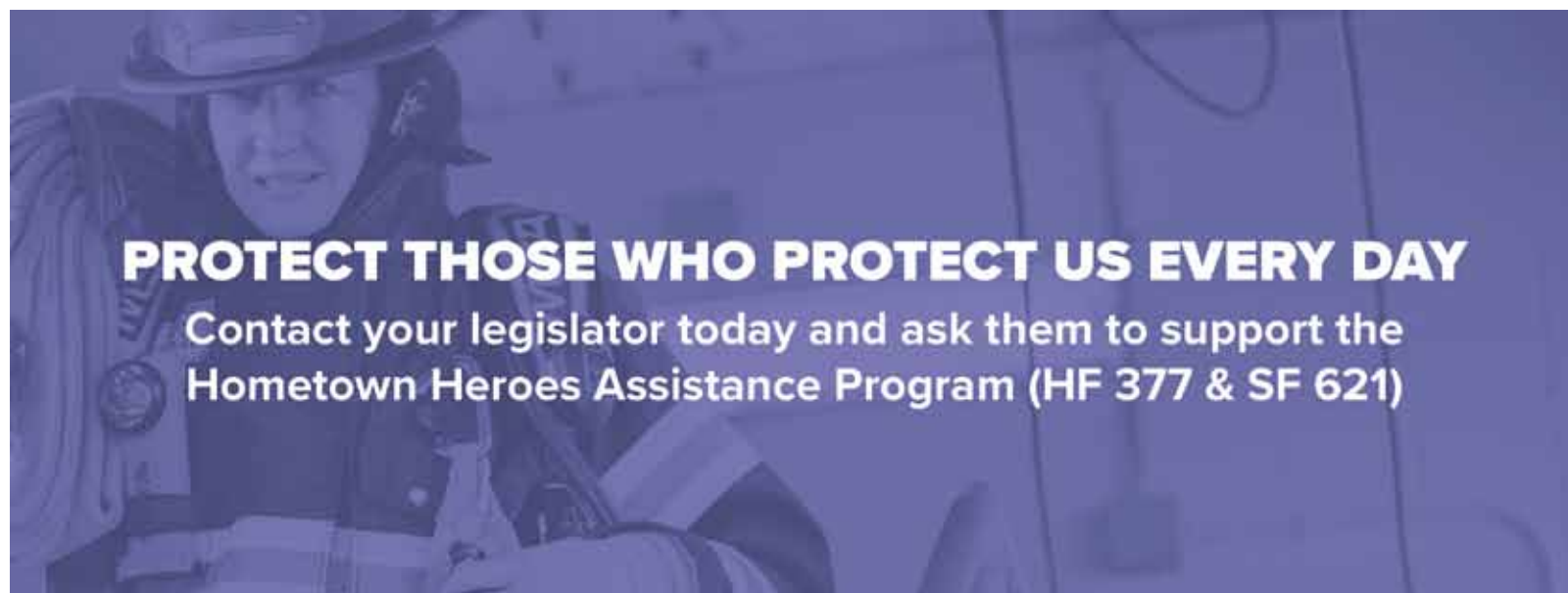


firefighters in the future.

The Hometown Heroes Enhanced Critical Illness plan complements existing medical coverage and helps fill financial gaps caused by out-of-pocket expenses such as mortgage payments, college tuition or treatment not covered by firefighters' medical plans. In addition to providing coverage for cardiac, cancer and mental health issues, the EAP benefits provide coverage for non-career and volunteer firefighters, who have historically not been covered by these programs. Support for annual MnFIRE Awareness Trainings, taught by firefighters and other health experts to provide fire-

fighters with actionable tips on how to protect themselves from cardiac, cancer and mental health problems, is also included in the program.

All public decision-makers – from the State Capitol to city halls – must make Minnesota fire service a funding priority to give our firefighters the help they need to stay healthy and continue serving their communities. To learn more about the Minnesota Firefighter Initiative and to schedule a MnFIRE Awareness Training, visit www.mnfireinitiative.com.



Stearns County landfill fire

The Stearns County Sheriff's Department investigated a landfill fire early on March 9. Cold Spring Fire found a large area of the landfill burning. Rockville Fire, Richmond Fire and Chain of Lakes Fire were all sent to assist. The fire was extinguished and the cause is undetermined. Photos courtesy of the Stearns County Sheriff's Office.

Expanding Relationships

By DAVID SCHLIEK,
Chairman - Minnesota Fire
Service Certification Board

As you have progressed through your career, can you think of a relationship or two that have resulted in new opportunities? We have all seen organizations that have benefited from expanding relationships. Over the past few months, the Minnesota Fire Service Certification Board (MFSCB) has done just that.

The MFSCB, over the past few months is working on two different projects that will help it expand relationships. The first is with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), and the Minnesota Professional Fire Fighters (MPFF), with project number two being the development of the NFPA 1081 – Fire

Brigade standard with staff from Flint Hills Refinery.

The IAFF project involves allowing Minnesota IAFF/MPFF members that have taken courses and receiving a ProBoard accredited certification reciprocity into the MFSCB database. The impetus behind this move was as follows. There are fire departments in Minnesota with IAFF members that have used IAFF training staff to do courses in Haz-Mat and Confined Space. As a part of the course the students were given certification examinations. These certifications are ProBoard accredited (after Haz-Mat Awareness and Operations – April 2013, Haz-Mat Technician – 2015, Confined Space Awareness, Operations, and Technician – July 2018). These are the only levels of certification that are awarded by

the IAFF. The IAFF accreditation has gone through the same rigors of review as has the MFSCB.

The MFSCB will now allow Minnesota IAFF/MPFF firefighters that have achieved ProBoard certification (again after the dates listed above), to be granted reciprocity into the Minnesota system. Benefits are many, in that now IAFF members will have all their certifications in one database. They will also be able to keep their certifications up-to-date within the Minnesota system. Many of those Minnesota fire departments with career personnel require firefighters to remain current with levels of certification. Certification currency is a component of the promotional process.

The second project is that of developing NFPA 1081- Standard for Facility Fire Brigade Member

Professional Qualifications. The MFSCB has been approached by Flint Hills Refinery with questions about certifying their staff at the Fire Brigade level. This conversation transpired over a couple month period of time, with the result being the beginning of the process of developing examination procedures. There are several levels within the standard, with the focus being on levels of Incipient Facility Fire Brigade Member – Chapter 4, Advanced Exterior Facility Fire Brigade Member – Chapter 5, and Interior Structural Facility Fire Brigade Member – Chapter 6. The Flint Hills group has talked of working on additional levels within this standard in the future.

The team has been working on practical skill stations since Feb. 2, with a hopeful date of mid-

April for submission to ProBoard and IFSCAC. An approximate approval date of mid-June is the current timetable. This is the first major initiative of this nature done with industry. The MFSCB sees several opportunities across the state for these types of examinations.

As you have built a successful career on recognizing and acting upon professional relationships, the MFSCB also sees and has seen benefits of this type of working together. With the Minnesota fire service being stakeholders in the certification system, as the MFSCB works on these types of initiatives, they will only serve to strengthen the certification process, as well as providing benefit to each and every one of Minnesota's participating firefighters. Be safe and be well.

MSFDA Receives FEMA Grant To Assist Members With Firefighter Recruitment

The Minnesota State Fire Department Association (MSFDA) has been awarded a 1.4 million dollar grant through the FEMA "Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response" (SAFER) program. The MSFDA Board of Directors approved the grant submission to support its members with the recruitment of new firefighters. MSFDA will use the

money over four years to develop a statewide recruitment website, build standard recruitment practices, educate recruitment officers on the best hiring practices, and encourage every firefighter to become a recruiter. A vendor, Capstone LLC, was selected to develop and initiate the program who recently implemented a new statewide website known

as "Minnesota Fire Hire" (www.mnfirehire.com) and social media platforms on Facebook and Instagram.

To assist our members even further, we are using nearly half of the grant funding to provide a full set of personal protective equipment and health screening to member departments experiencing significant recruitment

shortages. These expenditures need to be connected to a new employee, however. To learn more about the program, visit the MSFDA website at www.msfd.org, fill out the contact form, attend an upcoming class, and participate in future programs and requests.

The MSFDA is excited to offer these resources to its mem-

bership and understands there is much more to recruiting long-term firefighters than posting a sign in the front yard. Please help us by participating in this program and following our website for more information and benefits.

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Crews called for mutual aid to Sandstone fire

Finlayson Fire and Rescue and Askov Fire and Rescue were called out for mutual aid by Sandstone Fire on a structure fire east of Sandstone on February 14. Finlayson, Askov, Sandstone responded with pumpers and water tenders, along with Hinckley Fire responding with a tender. Entry could not be made into the structure as it was deemed unsafe for the firefighters. After a long battle in freezing temperatures the structure was a total loss, but the surrounding buildings were saved. No injuries were reported. Submitted by Mike Drahosh of Finlayson Fire and Rescue.



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Answers to this month's crossword

T	S	H		O	L	L	A	S		B	A	H	T	S
A	K	A		R	E	E	V	E		I	C	E	N	I
C	U	T		D	A	V	E	R	O	B	E	R	T	S
C	A	C	H	E	D				E	M	O	T	E	
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Need New Gear? Apply Now for MSA's and DuPont's 2021 Globe Gear Giveaway

13 departments will each receive four new sets of turnouts and four helmets

MSA, DuPont, and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) are teaming up for the 10th year to provide state-of-the-art personal protective equipment to better protect our volunteer firefighters who need it most. Through MSA's and DuPont's 2021 Globe Gear Giveaway, 13 departments will each receive four new sets of turnout gear along with four helmets to increase firefighter safety. This decade-long program has provided over \$1 million worth of life-saving gear to date.

"We are honored to have partnered with MSA and DuPont for 10 years to be able to provide volunteer fire departments with needed protection to enhance the safety for their firefighters," said NVFC chair Steve Hirsch. "So many volunteer departments struggle just to make ends meet. It is inspiring to be part of this program that has helped to properly equip hundreds of firefighters throughout the nation so they can be ready to respond when the call comes in."

"Protecting firefighters is what we do at MSA," said Eleni Lucido, vice president and general manager of MSA's business in the U.S. and Canada. "For more than a century, we've been committed to providing workers all around the world with the equipment they need to help keep them safe,

so we're proud to partner with DuPont and the NVFC to provide state-of-the-art turnout gear to departments in need."

John Richard, global vice president and general manager of DuPont Safety said, "Together with MSA, DuPont is honored to support this program that gets the latest innovations in gear to firefighters across the U.S. DuPont, along with our fellow co-sponsors of this program, is committed to fire service and bringing the latest innovations in gear to help protect those who protect us."

The application period is now open. To be eligible to apply for the giveaway, departments must be over 50 percent volunteer, serve a population of 25,000 or less, be located in the U.S. or Canada, be a member of the NVFC, and demonstrate significant need for new gear. MSA provides NVFC memberships to the first 500 applicants to help departments meet the membership requirement.

Learn more and apply by June 1 at www.nvfc.org/gear. Winners will be announced monthly be-

tween July and December. Stay tuned to the NVFC website, Dispatch newsletter, and Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as the Globe Facebook page, for details.

ABOUT MSA

Established in 1914, MSA Safety Incorporated is the global leader in the development, manufacture and supply of safety products that protect people and facility infrastructures. Many MSA products integrate a combination of electronics, mechanical systems and advanced materials to protect users against hazardous or life-threatening situations. The company's comprehensive product line is used by workers around the world in a broad range of markets, including the oil, gas and petrochemical industry, the fire service, the construction industry, mining and the military. MSA's core products include self-contained breathing apparatus, fixed gas and flame detection systems, portable gas detection instruments, industrial head protection products, firefighter

helmets and protective apparel, and fall protection devices. With 2019 revenues of \$1.4 billion, MSA employs approximately 5,000 people worldwide. The company is headquartered north of Pittsburgh in Cranberry Township, Pa., and has manufacturing operations in the United States, Europe, Asia and Latin America. With more than 40 international locations, MSA realizes approximately half of its revenue from outside North America. For more information visit MSA's web site at www.MSA-safety.com.

ABOUT DUPONT WATER & PROTECTION

DuPont Water and Protection is a global leader in creating water, shelter and safety solutions for a more sustainable world; enabling its customers to win through unique capabilities, global scale and iconic brands including Kevlar®, Nomex®, Tyvek®, Corian® Design, GreatStuff™, Styrofoam™, and FilmTec™.

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ABOUT THE NVFC

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides critical resources, programs, education, and advocacy for first responders across the nation. Learn more at www.nvfc.org.

GRANITE FALLS HOME LOST IN MORNING FIRE

An early Sunday morning fire destroyed a manufactured home in the Chippewa Terrace Trailer Park at 185 East US Highway 212 in Granite Falls.

Granite Falls firefighters found the manufactured home on Lot 17 fully engulfed in flames when responding to the call at 6:21 a.m. The adult male occupant of the home was located safe outside of the residence, according to Granite Falls Police Chief Brian Struffert.

Firefighters worked in sub-zero temperatures to extinguish the blaze and confine it to the property. Neighboring properties do not appear to have been harmed, the chief noted.

The state fire marshal's office was contacted. After being briefed by the fire chief, the fire marshal found no need for the office to respond or to investigate.

No foul play is suspected, according to the police chief. The cause of the fire has been ruled "undetermined" due to the severe damage.

The Granite Falls Fire Department, the Granite Falls Ambulance, the Granite Falls Police Department and Chippewa County Sheriff's Office responded to the scene.

(West Central Tribune, Willmar, Feb. 10, 2021)

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DEPARTED FIREFIGHTERS

NVFC Mourns Passing of Longtime CEO Heather Schafer

Heather Schafer, the National Volunteer Fire Council's (NVFC) chief executive officer, passed away suddenly on Mar. 15. Heather had helmed the organization, which also marked its 45th anniversary on Mar. 15, for 27 years and the NVFC saw dramatic growth and success under her leadership.

"It is with a deeply heavy heart that we announce the loss of Heather Schafer, who has been an integral part of the NVFC for more than half its existence," said NVFC chair Steve Hirsch. "She will be greatly missed by the NVFC staff, board, members, and the entire fire and emergency services community. She was a visionary, and we are grateful for all she has done to further the NVFC's mission. Her legacy won't be forgotten."

Heather joined the NVFC in 1993 and took on the role of CEO in 1994. She managed the NVFC's internal and external operations and played an integral role in developing and implementing the organization's strategic plan. During her tenure, the NVFC grew immensely – from hundreds of members and a staff of two, to over 25,000 members and a staff of 11.

With Heather's leadership, the NVFC secured federal grants that allowed the organization to offer groundbreaking programs and resources. She led the development of the Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program, Fire Corps, Share the Load program, Make Me A Firefighter program, and more. She also formed many partnerships and collaborations that benefited the volunteer

emergency services community. In addition, she oversaw the NVFC's advocacy efforts, which resulted in many victories for the fire and emergency services over the years.

Heather's contributions to the organization cannot be overstated. Her guidance and vision will have a lasting impact on the NVFC and the volunteer fire and emergency services. Heather's commitment, innovation, and passion for the organization's mission has helped to shape the NVFC into what it has become.

In addition to her work with the NVFC, Heather volunteered at her local fire department and loved to kayak and spend time with family and friends. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her loved ones as they navigate this very difficult time.



Information about arrangements will be posted to the NVFC website at www.nvfc.org when they become available.

We can all take care of our elders

By KATHI OSMONSON

We all know and love an older adult, someone over 65 years old.

Those loved ones are dying in fires more than any other age group.

You can help to prevent this. Talk with them about their cooking habits. Are they safe? Do they store things in the oven? Do they wear tight fitting clothing while cooking? Remind them of the 3-foot rule: Keep everything that can burn at least 3 feet away from the stove or anything that gets hot. Cooking is the leading cause of fire in Minnesota.

If your loved one smokes, encourage them to smoke outside. Extinguish every cigar or cigarette, every time, in a large ashtray filled with sand or water. Never, ever smoke near, or when using, medical oxygen. Smoking is the top cause of fatal fires in Minnesota.

Remind them to keep space heaters away from their beloved afghan blanket, or anything else that can burn. This includes furniture, reading materials, curtains, etc. The 3-foot rule applies here, too. Think about storage around furnaces, water heaters and dryers.

Test your loved one's smoke alarms for them. Change the batteries every year and replace the device every decade. There should be one in every sleeping area, and at least one on every level of the home. Make sure exit routes are clear of tripping hazards. Practice their safe escape plan with them. They may not be able to do what they could do 10 years ago, such as climb out of a window. Do they use a walker or cane? Make sure they keep it near their bed when they sleep. Glasses, same thing. Be aware of their hearing and cognitive abilities. Can they hear the smoke alarm, and do they remember what to do?

Ensure the outside of their home is well-lit and the address numbers are visible to first responders.

When teaching fire prevention for older adults, try appealing to their adult children through social media or similar means. Encourage adult children to follow the above guidelines to keep their loved ones safe.

When working with the older adults, appeal to the things they care most about: their grandchildren, their pets, etc. Check the website for older adult fire and fall prevention curriculum and for a PowerPoint you can use in a virtual presentation.

Together, we can all take care of our elders.



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Montgomery residents escape early-morning fire

By WADE YOUNG,
Montgomery Messenger

Two residents in Montgomery escaped an early-morning fire on Wednesday, Jan. 6, but sadly, a pet dog did not.

The fire broke out at the two-story, single-family home at 201 Boulevard Ave. NE. The Montgomery Fire Department responded to the scene just before 1 a.m. When Fire Chief Kenny Pavék arrived, he found the house fully engulfed in flames, and the police officers with owner Mitchell Dappen and his roommate, Sean Passe safely outside.

It was at that time, Pavék called the New Prague Fire Department for mutual aid.

"Firefighters had to fight the fire mainly from the outside of the structure due to the conditions inside," he said. "This makes it much more difficult to control the fire and get at hot spots, but the fire was under control within a few hours. New Prague cleared around 3:45 a.m. The Montgomery crew remained on scene until 6:30 a.m. fully extinguishing the fire."

Dappen has owned the property for almost five years. He was about to go to bed that night when he noticed a smell when the furnace kicked on.

"I decided to check it out. I put on my clothes and headed downstairs to see where the smell was coming from. That's when I saw the fire in my office, in the SE corner on the main floor," he explained.

Dappen tried to put out the fire with a bucket on the counter in the kitchen but the blaze quickly got out of control.

"I checked back near my office and the fire was out the door within 15 seconds or so," he said.

He started screaming for his roommate, Sean Passe to wake up and get out of the house.

"We both made it out only moments before the flames were at the back door, Dappen said.

He believes an old laptop he was using for work caused the fire, however it is being investigated by the Minnesota State Fire Marshal and the Montgomery Police Department.

"The laptop was completely dead when I put it on the charger a few hours earlier, and this is the location the fire stated," Dappen stated.

While the two men escaped safely, Passe's best friend, a one-year-old, small, yellow lab named Abby didn't make it.

The men are staying with parents who live locally. Dappen is not sure what he plans to do with the property.

"I may rebuild, but I'm just not sure at the moment," he said.

According to the public record site, Beacon, the home has an estimated market value of \$107,200.

"We would like to offer our condolences to the people that suffered losses in this fire and ask the community to keep them in your thoughts and help them out if you are able," he said. "We would also like to thank not only the departments listed above, but also the Le Sueur County Sheriff's office, the Montgomery

Street Department, local utility companies, and Casey's of Montgomery for their help at this fire."

The fire chief reminds people of some things they can do to keep themselves safe in their homes.

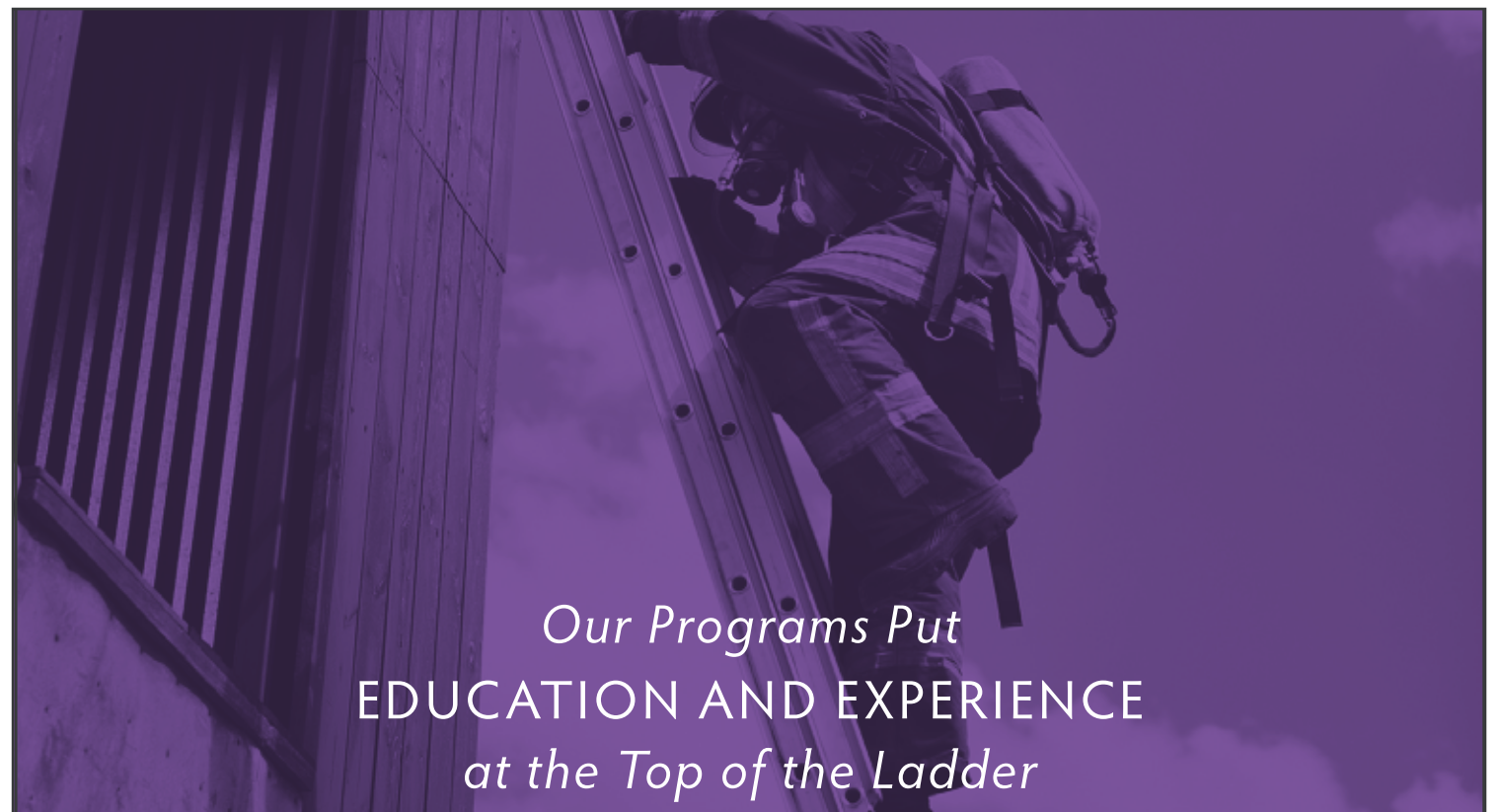
"This is a tragic event, and not every fire can be prevented, but we can all do things to help keep the losses in the event of a fire to a minimum," he stated. "Some of the simplest are having working smoke detectors and testing them regularly, and to have an escape plan and practice it twice a year." Ways to help

Both of the men have nothing left. Dappen's sister, Casey Van Houdt, who is organizing his account, said he will have to start from nothing.

"It just breaks my heart," she wrote. "He is the type of person who is so giving, and I'm praying that he will see that come around to him in this time of need."



Montgomery and New Prague firefighters work to put out an early morning fire on Jan. 6 in Montgomery. Photo by Wade Young of the Montgomery Messenger.



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Sebeka mobile home complete loss

Emergency crews were dispatched to a trailer house fire just before 9 a.m. on Feb. 23 east of Sebeka. The trailer was fully engulfed when the Sebeka Fire Department arrived. Wadena Fire Department was called in to assist as was Menahga Fire Department. Occupants of the home were able to escape. Firefighters were able to extinguish the fire but the home was a complete loss. Photos by Rebecca Mitchell of the Pioneer Journal.





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FIREFIGHTERS BATTLE GARAGE FIRE NEAR MELBY

Evansville firefighters battled a garage fire near Melby on Monday night, Feb. 1.

At 5:25 p.m., the Douglas County Sheriff's Office received a 911 call about a garage fire at Martin Iron Works at 24093 County Road 24 NW, near Melby. The sheriff's office, Ashby Fire Department/Ambulance and Evansville Fire Department responded.

Upon arrival, the fire department found the fire was in the attic area of the garage. Ashby and Evansville firefighters were able to extinguish the fire. There was fire, smoke and water damage throughout the garage.

It appears a fire in a burn barrel on the northwest corner of the garage started the roof area on fire, according to the sheriff's office. The owner told authorities that he had been burning cardboard.

(Echo Press, Alexandria, Feb. 3, 2021)

GAYLORD CHIMNEY FIRE

Gaylord firefighters were called to their first chimney fire in many years Sunday afternoon, according to Fire Chief Dean Schons.

Schons said the Gaylord Fire Department was called to 26281 441 Avenue in Dryden Township shortly after 1 p.m. Firefighters were at the scene approximately 45 minutes.

Schons explained the homeowner was using a wood burner and that is how the fire began. The homeowner had the fire extinguished before firefighters arrived. Firefighters checked for structural damage to the home. No structural damage was reported. There was some smoke in the home, the fire chief reported.

(The Gaylord Hub, Gaylord, Jan. 28, 2021)