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Minnesota Firefighter



USPS #13020 ISSN 2374-121X **DEC. 2023/JAN. 2024** • VOL. 11 - NO. 1

The official publication of the Minnesota State Fire Department Association



The Outdoor Classroom provided some training time for firefighters at the 146th Annual Conference and Fire School. See more photos inside. Photo by Sarah Johnson, Atomic Pink Photography.



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146th Annual MSFDA Conference and Fire School

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NVFC Holds Annual Fall Meeting in Cooperstown, NY

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Board of Directors met on Sept. 21-22 in Cooperstown, NY, to conduct Council business, participate in committee meetings, and guide the direction of the organization. Sixty-six directors from 40 states were present, including Dave Yurczyk from Minnesota, along with other leadership from state fire associations, corporate members and sponsors, and guests.

The board is comprised of up to two representatives from 47 state fire service associations and meets twice a year in the spring and fall. Highlights from the fall 2023 meeting are as follows.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

NVFC committees met on a range of issues including health and safety, legislation, recruitment and retention, wildland, standards and codes, and more. The EMS/Rescue Section also held its biannual meeting. Director Yurczyk chairs the DE&I Committee, is vice chair of the Finance Committee and is a member of the Recruitment & Retention Committee and a member of the Firefighter Cancer Subcommittee. In addition, two general sessions were held with the full board to discuss matters of national and state interest and provide input and guidance on the strategic direction of the organization.

Among the decisions of the board was to add the Helping Emergency Responders Overcome (HERO) Act to the NVFC's legislative priorities. The HERO Act would establish a series of programs designed to address public safety behavioral health issues. In addition, the board voted to establish the Ron Roy Memorial Scholarship in honor

of the late Washington director, who passed away on July 31.

The packed agenda also included an update on the FirstNet Authority and a panel discussion on Advocating on Behalf of the Volunteer. Dr. Alberto Caban-Martinez of the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center addressed the Health, Safety, and Training Committee about the Firefighter Cancer Initiative, a research project seeking to understand and address the excess burden of cancer among firefighters.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Prior to the start of the meeting, a group of directors and invited guests gathered in New York City on Sept. 20 to visit the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and participate in a wreath laying and remembrance ceremony.

Meeting host Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) welcomed the board to Cooperstown with hospitality after registration on the evening of Sept. 20. Other activities during the meeting included a Chair's

Lunch sponsored by Clarion Fire & Rescue Group, a reception and dinner hosted by FASNY, and a Networking Lunch sponsored by OnStar. The annual fundraising auction, sponsored by ESIP, raised \$7,630 for the NVFC's health and safety initiatives. The meeting concluded with an optional trip to the Baseball Hall of Fame, sponsored by Provident.

SPONSORS

The NVFC enthusiastically thanks meeting host FASNY and all the sponsors who helped

make the meeting possible: Adapt Management, Anheuser-Busch Foundation, California Casualty, Clarion Fire & Rescue Group, Columbia Southern University, ESIP, Josh Cellars, Lincoln Financial Group, National Fire Protection Association, OnStar, PH&S Products, Provident, Tesla, Ward Diesel Filter Systems, and Wendell's Mint.

NEXT MEETING

The next board meeting will take place April 26-27 in Arlington, VA.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Email your Upcoming Event by the 10th of the previous month (ex. Aug. 10 for the September issue) to jeff@minnesotafirefighter.com. There is no charge.

SEPT. 20-21, 2024: 147th Annual MSFDA Conference, Mankato.

Action Fire Photos Needed!

Please send them to jeff@minnesotafirefighter.com along with information to explain the photo.



Scenes from the

146th Annual MSFDA Conference and Fire School

Guest Activities • Photos by Sarah Johnson, Atomic Pink Photography



Minnesota Firefighter

Publication of Blaze Publications Inc.

Jeff Gargano..... Publisher/Editor
 Jen Larson..... Advertising Design Manager/Page Layout
 Brenda Zimple..... Type-Setting

Minnesota Firefighter (USPS 13020) ISSN2374121X is published bi-monthly (Dec/Jan, Feb/March, April/May, June/July, Aug/Sept, Oct/Nov) by Blaze Publications Inc., 1306 10th St SW, Humboldt, IA 50548. Periodicals Postage Paid at Humboldt, IA 50548-1759 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to: Minnesota Firefighter, 28711 Holly Drive NW, Isanti, MN 55040-7462.

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Five ways to optimize your sleep

By PAUL J. ANDERSON, M.D.
MnFIRE Medical Director,
Cardiac

Getting quality sleep is tough. Anticipation of a call at night is like watching the alarm clock when you know you need to get up early. Your sleep quality suffers. Then a call comes in, and your sympathetic “fight-or-flight” response is activated. This sharpens your focus and primes your body to perform, but makes it incredibly difficult to fall back asleep once the run is complete.

Plus, sharing your sleeping quarters with others, like in a firehouse, can limit the ability to personalize one’s sleep environment when time for sleep is available. And at home, firefighters tend to prioritize time with family and other personal obligations over resolving “sleep debt” accrued from a busy night on duty. Understandably so.

Sleep is the most restorative and rejuvenating element of human life. During sleep, the body clears waste products of metabolism and cellular function and builds

neural networks in the brain that are responsible for learning and memory. Sleep replenishes our immune systems, balances our hormones and repairs our bodies so that we are primed for work and activity when we wake the following morning.

According to renowned sleep expert Dr. Matthew Walker, there may not be a single cellular process that doesn’t benefit from a good night’s sleep. Lack of routine quality sleep for seven to eight hours per night has been associated with performance deficits and increased risk of cardio-metabolic disease, mental illness, cognitive decline, cancer and early death. But nighttime calls are inevitable, whether you are a full-time, part-time, on-call or volunteer firefighter. Therefore, firefighters must do all they can to maximize sleep quality when sleep opportunity is available.

Here are some considerations to optimize your sleep:

1. BUILD A SLEEP SANCTUARY

The ideal sleep environment is cool, dark and quiet. If you are

utilizing shared sleeping quarters, aim to set the temperature somewhere between 60 to 67°. Avoiding screen use for two hours before bed is incredibly important, as the light emitted from electronic screens has a powerful impact on the body’s internal clock. Fans and other generators of “white noise” may help create a restful environment in an otherwise noisy environment. It also may be worth considering lighting sleeping rooms with light that are less stimulating to the eyes. Think red or dimmer light.

2. DEVELOP A BEDTIME ROUTINE

The brain needs to associate the bed with sleep only. Common techniques to help calm the body and recruit the parasympathetic “rest and digest” system include warm showers, gentle stretching, meditation, and structured breathing. Consider a pre-bed routine that starts with taking a hot shower, followed by some reading under dim light on a non-electronic source, then five to ten minutes of “cyclic sighing” in bed (four seconds deep inhale, eight seconds slow exhale). These behaviors can calm the nervous system and set the stage for sleep.

3. NAP STRATEGICALLY

Napping can improve daytime alertness and help resolve sleep debt, but it has to be done properly. Napping at the wrong time of day or for too long can compromise nighttime sleep quality. Naps for less than 30 minutes

in the early afternoon (around 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.) are best, when the body’s circadian rhythm yields a natural dip in arousal. But only nap if you feel the need, because oversleeping is also harmful to overall health.

4. LIVE AN ACTIVE AND HEALTHY LIFE

Daily exercise leads to the increased accumulation of adenosine, the primary molecule responsible for tiredness, or “sleep drive,” at the end of the day. Exercise will also help with weight loss, which can prevent the development of sleep disorders like obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). Limiting caffeine intake to the morning and less than 400 mg daily is ideal. Aim for minimal alcohol intake as well, and know that a drink is less disruptive to sleep if had earlier in the day versus evening. Meal timing can also affect the body’s internal clock, so avoiding eating for the first one to two hours after waking and two to three hours before bed can be helpful.

5. PROMOTE A PRO-SLEEP CULTURE

The machismo “I’ll sleep when I’m dead” mentality needs to

end. Research tells us that education, awareness, and implementation of sleep programs in fire departments are effective in improving overall sleep quality. Address fatigue and sleep status often, discuss it with other firefighters and make sleep a priority at home. To help set the tone, consider reading Walker’s book *Why We Sleep*. It will reaffirm that quality sleep is a foundation of overall wellness and perhaps motivate you to make favorable changes to your sleeping routine.

Chronic sleep deprivation is likely to accelerate the development of illnesses that are already all too prevalent in the fire service. While high-quality sleep may be a challenge for firefighters, some of these simple adjustments can help you prioritize better sleep techniques and your overall health.

PUT YOUR DEPARTMENT ON A PATH TO BETTER SLEEP

The Minnesota Firefighter Initiative (MnFIRE) now offers a training specifically focused on sleep. Help your team get a better night’s sleep – register your department today for this free MnFIRE sleep training at mnfire-training.org.

Scenes from the 146th Annual MSFDA Conference and Fire School

Sprinkler Demonstration

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MSFDA OFFICER REPORTS

**DEEDEE JANKOVICH,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

"To celebrate our 150th Anniversary past board members, Ron Kelm (Brownton Fire - ret.), Judy Thill (Inver Grove Heights Fire), Mike "Spanky" Schroeder (Willmar Fire - ret.) and Shane Schmidt (Alexandria Fire - ret.) attended the banquet and were recognized for their years of dedication to our association."



The 146th Annual MSFDA Conference and Fire School was held Sept. 15-16 in Breezy Point and we would like to extend appreciation to all our sponsors, instructors, volunteers, and attendees for making it a success!

Throughout the conference, attendees had the opportunity to participate in a wide range of sessions, in both hands-on and classroom settings.

Each year, one of the highlights of the conference is the banquet dinner and awards presentation, where the hard work and dedication of outstanding members are recognized. Annabelle Hardwick (Mantorville Fire) was awarded Firefighter of the Year and Gibbon Fire Department received Fire Department of the Year.

To celebrate our 150th Anniversary past board members, Ron Kelm (Brownton Fire - ret.), Judy Thill (Inver Grove Heights Fire), Mike "Spanky" Schroeder (Willmar Fire - ret.) and Shane Schmidt (Alexandria Fire - ret.)

attended the banquet and were recognized for their years of dedication to our association.

If you were in attendance, our hope is that you found the conference valuable (and fun!) and will join us again next year in Mankato, Sept. 20-21, 2024.

Our membership continues to grow, and we have now reached 662 member departments. The MSFDA board continues to be committed to providing our members with exclusive benefits and being an advocate for ALL firefighters throughout the state. If your department is not currently a member, contact me to learn more.

Stay tuned to our Facebook and website for more updates and opportunities to engage with MSFDA as we work together to shape the future of the fire service.

Wishing you all a safe and happy holiday season!

**DEEDEE JANKOVICH,
Executive Director**



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Devotional for Firefighters

"I didn't skimp or trim in any way, Every truth and encouragement that could have made a difference to you, you got."

I read a story of a YMCA instructor in the 1930's who pitched an idea for a class to his supervisor. It was based on principles he had learned as a salesman. His supervisor couldn't afford to pay him the \$2 a night fee so he agreed to pay him on commission. Within a couple of years his course was so popular he was earning \$30 a night instead of \$2.

He was later asked to write a book and his book became a best seller for over a decade. Mr. Carnegie's book "How to Win Friends and Influence People" remained a major influence for over a generation. It was said that his book could be reduced to one simple phrase "Encourage one another." Sounds familiar... Hebrews 3:13 says to "Encourage one another day after day, as long as its still called 'Today.'

We are closing in on the Thanksgiving/Christmas season and for many it's not the best of times. There may be people in your life that need a word of encouragement and it may take a simple phone call to remind them how special they are. I know God thinks they're special when he decided to come to earth as a baby, to remind us how much we are loved by God. "For God So loved the whole world that He sent His one and only Son..."

So please, take 120 seconds and call someone or drop them a note at the office to let them know "They Are Special". By the way, so are you.

Something to think about.

PASTOR SAM

146th Annual MSFDA Conference and Fire School

Awards • Photos by Sarah Johnson, Atomic Pink Photography



Gibbon Fire Department was named Fire Department of the Year.



Annabelle Hardwick of Mantorville Fire Department was named Firefighter of the Year.

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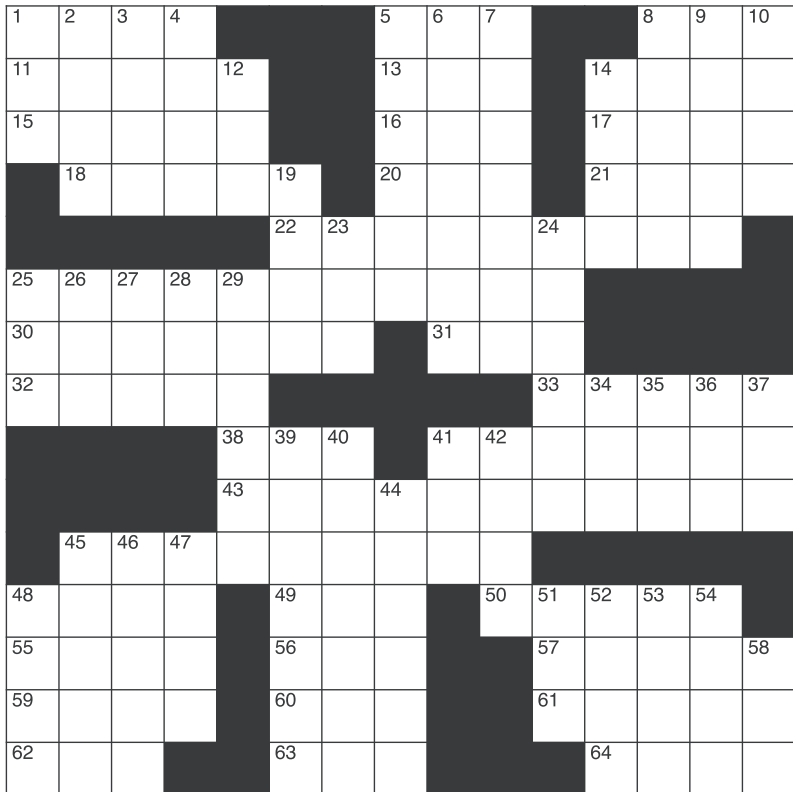


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CLUES ACROSS

1. Egyptian bull-god
5. America
8. Type of field (abbr.)
11. Reagan's Deputy AG
13. Negative
14. Mother of Hermes
15. Summer and Winter Olympics gold medal winner
16. In shape
17. Oh my goodness!
18. People of Guinea or Sierra Leone
20. A form of "to be"
21. Succulent plant
22. Estranges
25. Honest
30. Showing conviction
31. High schoolers' test
32. Implant
33. Acknowledgment
38. Cash dispenser
41. Transferred to another
43. Superhero group
45. Photographers
48. Small, rich sponge cake
49. Power to perceive
50. Heavy cavalry sword
55. Israel's first permanent UN delegate
56. Everything
57. Afflicted
59. Language spoken in Chad
60. Pioneering MC Kool Moe _ _
61. Jewish spiritual leader
62. Keyboard key
63. Soviet Socialist Republic
64. Impudence

CLUES DOWN

1. Type of degree
2. Expression of sorrow or pity
3. Large, predatory lizard
4. River in Romania
5. Biased
6. Parties
7. TV's used to need one
8. Philly football player
9. Recognized ethnic group of China
10. Gradually disappear
12. Large, dark antelope
14. Vegetarians won't eat it
19. Takes the energy out of
23. Body part
24. Succeed in achieving
25. Where golfers begin
26. Computer memory
27. One who buys and sells securities
28. Midway between north and northeast
29. Quiet and rather dull
34. A limb on which to walk
35. It precedes two
36. Of she
37. Commercials
39. Necessary for sewing
40. Infectious viral disease
41. Expression of good wishes
42. Some are contact
44. More plentiful
45. Secret political clique
46. Behind the stern of a ship
47. Supernatural force
48. Altar in Orthodox churches
51. Swiss river
52. Impartiality
53. "Luther" actor Idris
54. They resist authority (slang)

Answers on page 11

DeeDee's Dish

Snickerdoodle Cheesecake Bars

INGREDIENTS

Cheesecake Layer

- 16 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 c. powdered sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp. salt

Crust Layer

- 2 1/2 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon, divided into 1 tsp & 1/2 tsp
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 c. granulated sugar, divided into 1/2 c. & 1 1/2 c.
- 1 c. unsalted butter, very soft
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs, room temperature



DIRECTIONS

- Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9x13 glass baking dish with baking spray. Set aside.
- In a large mixing bowl, cream together the cream cheese, powdered sugar, eggs, vanilla extract, and salt for 1-2 minutes or until smooth. Set cheesecake mixture aside.
- In a separate medium bowl, combine the all-purpose flour, 1 tsp. of cinnamon, baking soda, and salt. Set the flour mixture aside.
- In a separate small bowl, stir together 1/2 c. granulated sugar and the remaining 1/2 tsp. cinnamon. Set the cinnamon-sugar mixture aside.
- In a separate large mixing bowl, cream together on low speed the unsalted butter and remaining 1 1/2 c. granulated sugar for 1-2 minutes or until light and fluffy. Add the vanilla extract and the eggs, one at a time, and continue to mix for another 1-2 minutes or until the eggs are completely incorporated.
- Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture and mix on low, just until combined. Do not over-mix the Snickerdoodle cookie dough.
- Press 2/3 of the Snickerdoodle cookie dough into an even layer onto the bottom of the prepared baking dish. You may need to wet your fingers slightly to help push the dough into an even layer. You will reserve the remaining dough for the topping.
- Sprinkle 2-3 tbsp. of the cinnamon-sugar mixture evenly over the dough.
- Spread the cheesecake mixture into an even layer over the bottom layer of dough, then drop pieces of the remaining cookie dough randomly over the cheesecake layer.
- Sprinkle the remaining cinnamon-sugar mixture evenly over the top of the Snickerdoodle cheesecake bars.
- Bake for 45 minutes or until the edges are lightly golden and the center has set.
- Allow the Snickerdoodle cheesecake bars to cool completely on the counter before slicing and serving.



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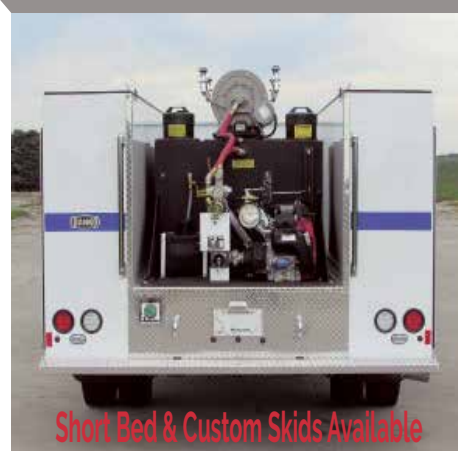
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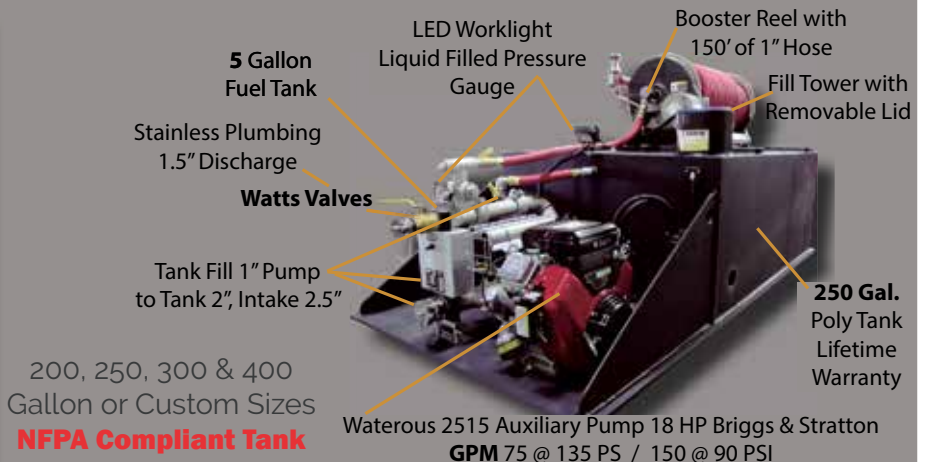
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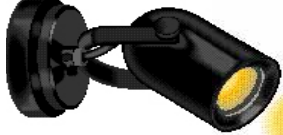


Scenes from the

146th Annual MSFDA Conference and Fire School

Indoor/Outdoor Classrooms • Photos by Sarah Johnson, Atomic Pink Photography





Region Director Spotlight

Princeton Fire & Rescue Department



Kyle Hulke
Region: 14

Kyle Hulke has been a member of the MSFDA Board for one year from Region 14 and has been a firefighter for 20 years.

I am a Captain with South Bend Fire Department outside of Mankato and was recently promoted to that position in April of 2023. I was a Lieutenant for 4 years prior to that. January of 2024 will be the start of my 12th year on SBFD.

Before that I was on a volunteer service outside of Eau Claire, WI for five years. I was on Gold Cross Ambulance for eight months before serving as a firefighter/civilian contractor in Iraq for a year. I received my

associate degree in Fire Science from Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire, graduating as a Firefighter/EMT. I am certified Firefighter II, have Fire Instructor I, Fire Officer I, Telecommunicator II, Driver/Operator, and Mobile Water Supply. I work for SASCs Fire training in Southern Minnesota. I also am a member of the Minnesota chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators.

I attend as many in service trainings as I can. I have attended several National Fire Academy classes, none of them on campus unfortunately. I have also attended numerous state fire schools, in North Mankato, St. Cloud, Rochester, and Duluth.

I look forward to working with a great region and great firefighters for many years to come.

I have three married sisters,



and eight nieces and nephews. My family is spread out in Minnesota and Wisconsin. My parents live in Lindstrom, MN. One sister and her family lives in Maple Grove, and my other two sisters live in Eau Claire. I don't have any pets. In my spare time, I enjoy hiking and biking, and I volunteer with the Kiwanis Holiday Lights display in Mankato.



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Our Values. Law is a service-based profession. We believe that a commitment to serve others is a core value of a good lawyer. Firefighters serve all communities across Minnesota and put others first, and in turn, suffer serious injuries. We treat our clients and their families with dignity and respect during tough times. Why do we take personal and professional satisfaction in representing firefighters and their families? **Firefighters align with our values.**

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BIRD ISLAND RESIDENCE FIRE

On Sept. 18, 2023 at approximately 6:40 p.m., the Renville County Sheriff's Office received a report of a residential fire in the 900 block of 4th St. S., Bird Island, MN. Emergency crews located the fire and found the garage portion of the residence was fully engulfed in flames. Emergency crews were able to contain the fire in the garage.

On Sept. 19, 2023, around 4 a.m., emergency crews were called back to the residence because the fire had reignited. The residence had significant damage and deemed a total loss. Preliminary investigation revealed that the fire started in the garage and spread throughout the residence.

The Bird Island Fire Department was assisted on scene by the Renville County Sheriff's Office, Olivia Fire Department, Bird Island MRU, Olivia Ambulance, Olivia Police Department, and the Minnesota State Fire Marshal's Office.

The Renville County Sheriff's Office and Minnesota State Fire Marshal are continuing the investigation.

(News Mirror, Hector, Sept. 27, 2023)

Scenes from the

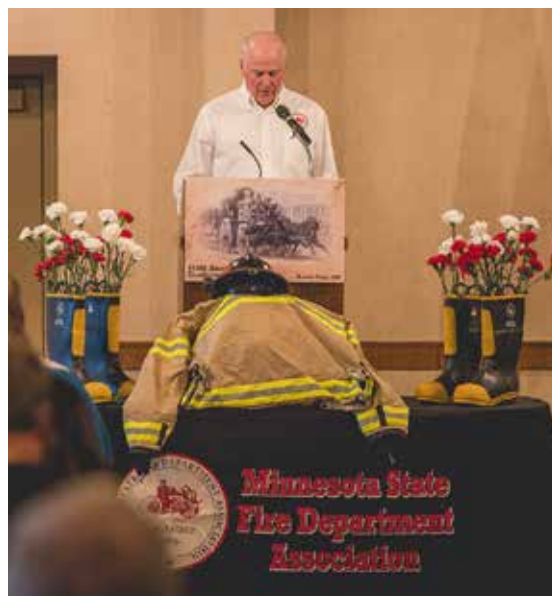
146th Annual MSFDA Conference and Fire School

Memorial Service • Photos by Sarah Johnson, Atomic Pink Photography



Answers to this month's crossword

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Scenes from the

146th Annual MSFDA Conference and Fire School

Photos by Sarah Johnson, Atomic Pink Photography



Scenes from the

146th Annual MSFDA Conference and Fire School

Vendors/Vendor Reception • Photos by Sarah Johnson, Atomic Pink Photography



Some firefighters banded together and bought Sophina The Cookie Girl a Twins basket that was on the silent auction.



If you have it and don't need it...
SELL IT!
Minnesota Firefighter Classifieds...
jeff@minnesotafirefighter.com

Reflections on 38 Years in the Fire Service

By DALE POLZIN,
Nicollet Fire Department,
Retired

Way back in 1985, pagers were kind of a new thing for the fire department. The city also utilized a 'fire whistle', which doubled as the civil defense/tornado siren. As a young man working in town just a block from the fire station, I would hear the whistle sound, see the volunteer firemen running or driving to the fire station, and see the fire trucks respond to calls. I wanted to be a part of that. Give back to the community. Help out people in need. Drive big red fire trucks with sirens and flashing red lights. How cool would that be? So, I applied to become a member. I was accepted as a member of the Nicollet Volunteer Fire Department in September of 1985, just weeks shy of my 23rd birthday. I soon learned that being a member of the fire department was so much more than I could have ever

imagined.

The department was just getting involved in first responder training as only a handful of members had taken the training. A few more of us took the training that fall/winter. Firefighter I and II did not exist back then. We had a retired Mankato firefighter come into our station to do our firefighter training. I believe this was done through Mankato Vo-Tech (South Central College) and I'm not sure if this was called Basic 1403 yet or if this was before that designation. The best training, however, was on the job training. Every call I responded to, whether it was a medical call or a fire call or an accident call, I learned something every time. If I wasn't actively doing something, I was watching the actions of others. Watching the 'bedside manner' of our more experienced firefighters at medical calls. Always watching, listening, and observing if I was not assigned a task to do at fire calls. The thirst

for knowledge as a firefighter can never end.

As a firefighter I loved putting on that SCBA and being on the entry team into that burning structure. The adrenaline rush, the excitement, the unknown. It was a feeling like no other. As I became an officer my mindset changed. Instead of wanting to rush in to a fire, I was more concerned about keeping my guys safe. Should I send someone in? When do I need to pull them out? There was way more stress being an officer as compared to being the firefighter that just wanted to get in there and put the fire out.

I said that being a firefighter was so much more than I ever could have imagined. I never could have imagined seeing three fire fatalities in our small, rural community, seeing death and gruesome injuries from car accidents too numerous to count, seeing parents lose children and telling sons and daughters their parents have passed away. People

would ask, 'How do you do what you do?'. My answer always was 'We do what we are trained to do and God is in charge of what happens'. I never could have imagined the friendships I've made from being a member of the fire department. The members of the department are like family. No matter someone's background, there is a special bond you share with them. I never could have imagined the number of people throughout the state that I've become friends with in the fire service. I never could have imagined spending 38 years as a volunteer firefighter. The Minnesota fire service is truly remarkable.

The training available these days is so much more advanced and so much more readily available than it was years ago. Take advantage of your community colleges and private training companies that offer an array of training opportunities. Every department should be maximizing their MBFTE training dollars

and taking advantage of all of the online resources available. There is no excuse for having a poorly trained department no matter your size. Firefighter safety should be everyone's number one goal and training is the first step in achieving this goal.

My advice to any firefighters reading this ... GET INVOLVED! Volunteer for committees, go to your regional meetings, attend your departments training nights and fundraiser functions, go to other department's fundraisers. Don't just be a member of your department, be an active member!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dale Polzin retired from the Nicollet Fire Department in September with 38 years of service. He was the department secretary for 13 years, Assistant Chief for 14 years, and South Central Region secretary/treasurer for 13 years.

Coloring Contest



Two age categories: 0-5 & 6-12 • Deadline: Friday, December 22
Mail to MSFDA, 28711 Holly Drive NW, Isanti, MN 55040

Name _____ Age _____

Fire Department _____

Mutual Aid vs. Auto Aid

How collaboration can enhance response to emergencies

By **JERRY STREICH**,
Fire Chief / Emergency
Manager (Ret.)

One of the fundamental phases of fire service delivery is effective resource allocation. The basic element of emergency planning is to first determine your risks based on a hazard analysis. The risks in your community may be different than your neighbors so your response plans may not be identical. As your community grows, so may your risks, so being attentive to your community development planning is paramount. If you receive a multi-story residential property, a nursing home, processing plant, airport, freeway, or the like, your response plan and training should change to ensure your team is prepared for the fight. Each new structure and process, or even tenant, can require a change in resource allocation.

Once you determine your risks, you can then determine the level of response you need to mitigate the hazard that "could occur." The response level should include personnel and equipment needed to resolve the incident as quickly as possible. If you plan now, you will not have to do it when a disaster occurs. That creates chaos.

For most fire departments

across the state, the largest fire incident to plan for is a residential structure fire. Again, if you have commercial property in your community, this may change. Each structure type, the commodity within them, and the processes they use must be consistently evaluated. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) provides guidelines and standards in Standard 1710 (career) and 1720 (volunteer) on how many firefighters are needed on scene, and the recommended response time for each demand zone (Urban, Suburban, Rural, Special Risk). It also outlines resource deployment, and water supply as well. It is crucial that each department understands this standard and uses it as a tool for their deployment planning.

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) conducted sixty tests to determine how crew size and arrival times influence saving lives and property. The experiments were conducted using a 2,000 sq. ft. residential property and concluded a four-person crew was 30% faster than a two-person crew, and 25% percent faster than a three-person crew in performing twenty-two essential fire ground tasks. There were times when I was managing in-

cidents, that I was praying for a truck to even show up. Have you ever experienced a time when no one showed up to an incident? Many departments are experiencing a shortage of staff to respond to calls, especially during the daytime hours and holiday seasons. If you can relate to this, you should consider reviewing your response plans and implementing a mutual aid or auto aid plan with your regional partners.

Mutual Aid:
Mutual aid is a collaborative, predetermined agreement where neighboring personnel and equipment are called to assist you at an incident. It is important to meet with each agency you plan to call at a time of need to ensure they are willing to participate. The agreement should be reciprocal and written down. Mutual aid requests typically come from the Incident Commander (IC) when they determine they need assistance. For example, there is a fire in a large residential structure in your area. You have several personnel and equipment on scene but could use the neighboring departments ladder truck to assist your fire extinguishment attack at the peak of the roof. The other example is for specific skills, such as incident management. You could call for chief officers to respond to your area to establish an experienced ICS chart for a safe and effective response. The key here is, the IC must make the call to

dispatch to active this plan. Mutual Aid is not automatic.

Auto-Aid:
Auto-aid on the other hand is a more specific and immediate form of requesting resources. This agreement is automatic, typically based on an address and/or incident type. When the 911 call comes into dispatch and your planned parameters are entered into the computer aided dispatch system (CAD), the resources are automatically paged at the same time as the primary responder. This is determined by the number of personnel and equipment you would expect to need if there were a significant incident at a location. For example, there is a fire reported on the first floor of a senior living center. The "fire" designator in CAD recognizes the address as a senior living facility and immediately generates the response plan you put into place. This saves time, property, and lives.

Some communities are implementing "box alarms" for specific levels of requests. A first alarm may not include any other resources other than your own. A second alarm would dispatch a predetermined group of resources based on a plan that is input into dispatch. Developing levels of predetermined alarm types saves time as the IC does not have to consider what resources they need to request. If you need more people and equipment, you level up the alarm.

Planning of this type needs to be reciprocal and fair. If a neighboring community continues to call you for incidents, they should be able to handle, you may need to discuss how they are affecting your call volume and wear on your firefighters. If you are always the first engine on the scene to a community's incident, there may be a problem. Personally, I never mind supporting the neighbors, but I have always watched how it affects my community's risks and the firefighters I lead. Our focus must remain with the community we serve. If there are times you cannot support one another, that is fine. Most are faced with the same staffing and equipment shortages. The State Mutual Aid Plan allows each department to call anyone they need for assistance. Start locally, move regionally, and then state-wide. From there, you can move state to state, and national based on your needs.

When you know your communities' risks and the response needed to mitigate emergencies for those, you can plan for an effective response. The worst time to exchange a business card is on the scene. If your current plans have not been discussed in the past five years, I encourage you to blow the dust off them and see if they need to be updated. Planning is a key element to our success and the safety of others.



Annual States Networking meeting

The annual States Networking meeting was held in Des Moines on Nov. 10-11. Attendees from Iowa included Roger Carr, Aaron Clemons, Kent Brix, Mike Kime, Rick Schmidt, Lonnie Newhall, Chuck Raska and Taylor Moore. Attending from Nebraska were John and Marlene Bomar. Attending from Kansas were Courtney Fegter, Shane Pearson, Ron Ewing, Justin Couse and Laramie McPherson. Attending from Wisconsin were Barry Kuenkel and Ron Hampton. Illinois attendees were John Swan, Terry Ford, Rosemarie Arvia, Bill Offerman and Kevin Schott. Attending from Minnesota were Ed Hoffman and Travis Olson. Don Ward represented South Dakota and Keith Smith represented Missouri.

Brandon Boettcher, Isanti, Awarded Columbia Southern University Scholarship

National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) members Brandon Boettcher (Isanti, MN) and Nicholas Seliger (Portland, TN) have been selected to receive a scholarship to Columbia Southern University (CSU). Each scholarship will cover up to 60 credit hours towards one of CSU's online degree programs.

Brandon Boettcher is aware that many in the fire service can be resistant to change. However, he welcomes it. As a drone pilot for his rural volunteer department, he has seen firsthand how technology can improve fire-fighting operations.

"Some of this newer technology includes better tools such as thermal cameras inside helmets that help us find hot spots, which frees up hands for other tools," Boettcher explained. "Other significant technological advancements include the use of cloud computing, which teaches us about fire growth and activity."

With the scholarship, he hopes

to pursue his master's degree in information technology and serve as a resource for his department and fellow responders to learn about and integrate technology into training, response, and recruitment.

"Firefighters and EMTs must be aware of the technology that is available to them," said Boettcher. "Once this technology is properly introduced to the fire service, it will save lives and properties. With a degree in information technology, I can be a part of this process."

Nicholas Seliger felt drawn to the fire and emergency services from a young age. As a child, his father, a firefighter, would take him to the firehouse and let him ride along in the fire truck. Now a volunteer firefighter himself, he has taken a special interest in the impact well-trained responders can have during critical situations.

"Education plays a crucial role in the fire and emergency servic-

es field, as it equips professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively protect lives and property," Seliger explained. "While my involvement in the fire service has been rewarding thus far, I aspire to take on more substantial roles within this field."

He intends to use his scholarship to pursue a degree in fire science, which will enhance his decision-making and leadership skills and consequently improve the safety of his community.

"This educational opportunity will enable me to contribute back to the emergency services community by applying specialized knowledge towards effective leadership, organizational communication, code enforcement, and community risk reduction initiatives," Seliger concluded.

This is the 15th year CSU has awarded scholarships to NVFC members. For more information on the NVFC scholarship, visit ColumbiaSouthern.edu/



NVFC. In addition to eligibility to apply for the scholarship, NVFC members receive a waived application fee and 10 percent tuition discount.

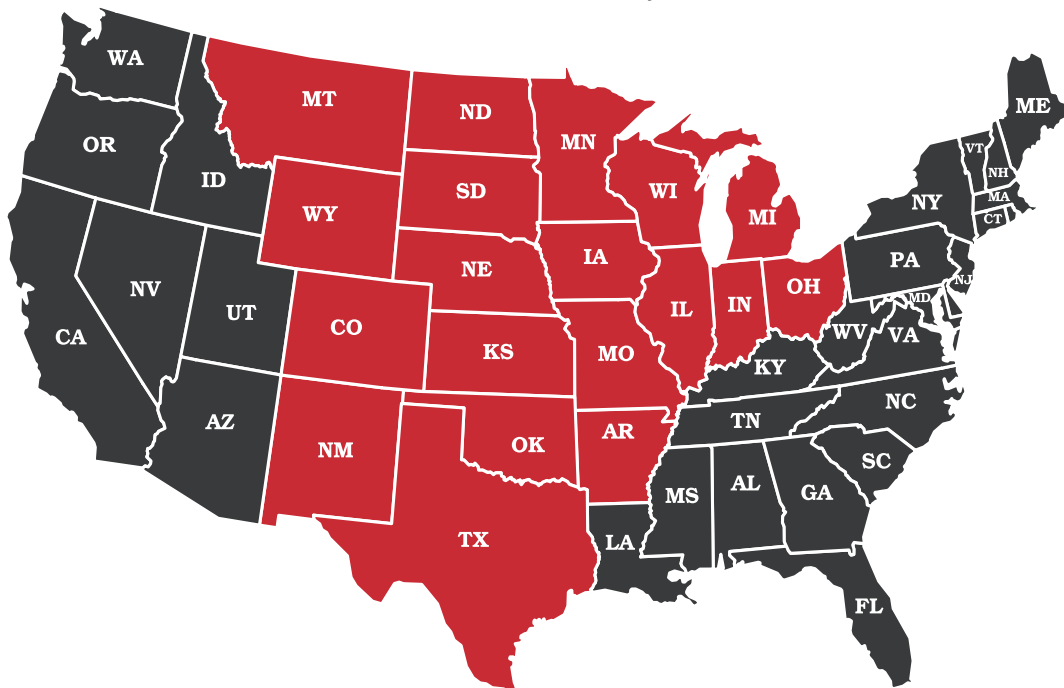
ABOUT COLUMBIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

As an innovator in online education, CSU was established in 1993 to provide an alternative to

the traditional university experience for today's adult learner. CSU offers online associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs such as business administration, criminal justice, fire administration, and occupational safety and health. Visit ColumbiaSouthern.edu or call (877) 347-6050 to learn more.

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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.

CASS LAKE LODGE DEEMED TOTAL LOSS AFTER FIRE

The main cabin at the Cass Lake Lodge has been deemed a total loss after a fire broke out there on Tuesday night.

According to a release from Cass County Sheriff Bryan Welk, dispatch received a report at 10:20 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 12, of a structure fire at the Cass Lake Lodge, located in Pike Bay Township in rural Cass Lake.

Emergency personnel arrived and found the main cabin and lodge facility engulfed in flames.

The cabin was unoccupied at the time of the fire and no injuries were reported, the release said.

According to a Facebook post from the lodge, it has been deemed a total loss.

"As you're waking up this morning, I'm sure you are finding out that the lodge and the mega cabin was on fire," the post read. "Although it was a total loss, we are very grateful no one was hurt. Thanks to the Cass Lake Fire Department and the Bemidji Fire Department for all their help. Please keep us in your prayers as we navigate through this loss."

The fire remains under investigation, with assistance from the Cass Lake Fire Department, the Bemidji Fire Department and the Minnesota Fire Marshal's Office.

(The Pioneer, Bemidji, Sept. 16, 2023)