



Rocky Mountain Incident Management Team A  
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and  
Sheridan County Public Information



Joint Information Center (JIC)

Sept. 4, 2012, 3:20 p.m. MDT

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RUSHVILLE, NEBRASKA -- Firefighters on the Wellnitz Fire in northwest Sheridan County Nebraska and Southwest Shannon County in South Dakota are continuing to receive good news. Activities are beginning to slow down and initial demobilization efforts have begun. The State Fire Marshal Wildland Fire Team, all Volunteer Fire Crews, Nebraska State Patrol, Nebraska National Guard Ground Troops from 1057th, Civil Support Team and Joint Incident Site Communications Capability, as well as Nebraska Department of Roads and County Road Crews have been released from the fire lines.

The two areas near Ogalala in South Dakota, and the southeast quadrant of the fire zone in Sheridan County Nebraska which were identified on Monday as having significant remaining "heat" have been knocked down and crews are continuing to survey the fire line and eliminate other hot spots that may be found.

There are three primary safety hazards that the public should remain alert to. These include the potential for downed power lines that may still be energized. Being aware that trees that have burned may be unstable and pose fall hazards, and poor visibility and road conditions in some areas.

Sheridan County Deputy Emergency Manager, Everette Langford spoke with Northwest Rural Electric Association public power company. Their known damages are as follows: 100 poles known damaged/destroyed in Sheridan County--potentially 2x to 3x more than that when they can get in for a thorough assessment.

Sheridan County Sheriff's Office reports that crews have begun road repairs. Sheridan County Road Superintendent Kuester reminds all non-essential traffic to avoid these roads until repairs can be made.

#### **Air Operations**

- 14 personnel, One Blackhawk helicopter and two type three helicopters from the Nebraska National Guard Aviation Division remain on standby.

#### **Road Closures**

- For up-to-date road closures call [www.511.nebraska.gov](http://www.511.nebraska.gov) or call 511
- All state highways are open in the northern panhandle. Watch for fire fighters, smoke and wild fire.
- Smoke can rapidly reduce visibility.
- There may be intermittent road closures because of the response.

#### **Safety Message**

- Fire officials request that members of the public stay off county roads to keep them clear for firefighting efforts.

#### **Evacuations:**

- No evacuation orders are in place at the current time.

### **Weather Report**

- Weather conditions for September 4, 2012 remain in the RED FLAG WARNING with temperatures anticipated to reach 90 to 95 and northwest wind gusting up to 30 miles per hour during the afternoon before slowing this evening.

### **Start Date:**

- Aug. 29, approximately 5 p.m.

### **Start Location:**

- 10 miles north of Hays Springs/Rushville

### **Containment:**

- 74 percent

### **Cause:**

- Lightning

### **Acreage:**

- 77,159 -- An aerial survey Sunday resulted in a more accurate number of acreage affected.
- 44,159 in Nebraska,
- 33,000 in South Dakota

### **Personnel: 350**

- Cooperating Agencies in Nebraska: Sheridan County, Region 23 Emergency Management, Sheridan County Sheriff's Department, State of Nebraska, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska National Guard, State Fire Marshal's Wildland Incident Response Assistance Team, Nebraska State Patrol, Department of Roads and Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska Forest Service, Farmer's COOP, Cities of Rushville, Gordon and Hays Springs, 72<sup>nd</sup> Civil Support Team, Cherry Country Roads, American Red Cross, Oregon Trail Baptist Association, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation,

### **Crews: 3**

### **Engines: 71 apparatus**

### **Injuries: No new injuries**

### **Structures destroyed: 2 homes, 2 commercial properties destroyed and 24 outbuildings**

### **Volunteer Fire Departments:**

- Fire Departments that have responded to the fire in Nebraska include -- Ainsworth, Ansley, Atkinson, Axtell, Bassett, Bayard, Burwell, Casper, Cody Rural Fire, Curtis, Dalton, Edison, Elm Creek, Gordon, Hay Springs, Heart of the Hills, Hyannis, Keya Paha Co. RF, Kilgore, Maxwell, Merriman, Minatare, Minden, Morrill, North Platte, O'Neill, Oxford, Paxton, Red Willow Western, Rushville, Sargent, Sidney, Stuart, Thedford, Valentine, Wallace, Willsonville and Woodlake from Nebraska, and Kyle, Green Valley, Interior, Martin, Batesland, Tuthill, and Olerichs Departments from South Dakota.

**The Rocky Mountain Area Incident Management Team (RMAIMT) is an interagency regional team that responds to fires at the request of the State of Nebraska. The RMAIMT in this instance was requested to respond to the Wellnitz Fire and has access to additional resources not available locally. They work in cooperation with responsible agencies to return control of the incident to local jurisdictions as soon as possible. THIS WILL BE THE FINAL JOINT PRESS RELEASE AS RMAIMT IS TURNING CONTROL OF THE FIRE BACK TO STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.**