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(Neb.)-T-Shirt Sales To Benefit Area Fire Departments

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 09/24/2012 02:04 PM

(Chadron)-In late August, just one month ago, residents of the northern Panhandle of Nebraska were sending children back to school and gearing up for a busy sports season for not only the local high schools, but Nebraska Cornhusker games as well. Little did anyone know that dry thunderstorms rolling through the area on the afternoon of August 28 would send the area into a tailspin similar to 2006.

Several fires were started as a result of that storm, with the first reports rolling in on Tuesday afternoon. The biggest threat seemed to be the grass fire burning near the Dawes/Box Butte County border. There were many small fires in the area that day as well, some in Dawes, some in Box Butte, and some in Sheridan County. Many of the fire crews were called out several times, and the Hay Springs fire hall the next morning reported they assisted on several fires overnight.

Wednesday morning, the fire that seemed to be the most threatening was the Douthit Fire northwest of Crawford, and the West Ash Fire seemed to be small in comparison. Smoke plumes from both fires developed into what meteorologists call pyrocumulus clouds, or smoke that turns into a thunderstorm. Unfortunately, more lightning accompanied those storms, and the Wellnitz Fire in Sheridan County was sparked.

As Labor Day weekend rolled around, people thought not about what to do with the family for the holiday, but will people be evacuated. Several evacuation orders were issued for residences south of Highway 20, and even Whitney at one point. The fires effected everyone, it seems, in one way or another. Especially the firefighters and their families.

Firefighters up and down Highway 20 spent countless hours fighting the fires, away from their families and jobs, saving structures of people they did not know, fighting to help people they did, not doing any of it for recognition, but because they care about people. But people in the area want to express their gratitude for all the firefighters have done.

Fundraisers are taking place throughout Dawes and Sheridan Counties to help raise money for the departments to assist with costs accumulated during the fires. Cowgirl Swank in Chadron is selling t-shirts, with the proceeds going to those who were involved in the West Ash, Douthit and Wellnitz fires. Shirts are being sold for $25 each, and for an extra $5, can be shipped. Sizes range from youth size L toXXXL. To order, call 308-747-2027, or stop by the store located at 408 Main Street in Chadron.

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