

**Mutual Aid Task Force**  
George Teixeira, Nebraska Forest Service

With the devastating wildfires that struck western Nebraska this year a number of lessons were learned. First and foremost was the overwhelming amount of help from Fire Departments from across the state which was greatly appreciated. But, due to this support, some issues / questions/ ideas have been raised.

Let's address the issue of self-deploying. By self-deploying, 1). The I.C. does not know your coming because he did not specifically request you. Especially if you are from outside his Mutual Aid area. 2). Then there is the issue of insurance coverage / liability, and 3). If the incident becomes a state or federal disaster, you will not be able to get reimbursed if you self-deploy. With that said, let's see if **we** can develop a system in which **we all** can benefit from should a disaster occur, be it a wildfire, tornado, flooding, etc.

During the 124<sup>th</sup> Annual NSVFA Conference held in York, NE, Oct 19-21, 2006, the membership voted and approved a motion "to support a Mutual Aid calling tree through development of a sub-committee or task force which would work with the Nebraska Forest Service". The motion passed unanimously.

My perspective on this motion is to have each Mutual Aid Assn. put together a Task Force (TF) that is identified and can be deployed as needed. Each Mutual Aid Assn. would put together a Task Force by identifying a specific piece(s) of equipment from each town within the Mutual Aid (i.e. grass truck, pumper, tanker, etc.) to be part of the TF. By doing this, we will not "strip" the closest town to the disaster of its equipment and manpower. When the TF is developed and should it be needed, the IC would then contact your county Dispatch center and inform them your TF is needed. Your dispatch would tone out all departments and notify them that the TF is needed (much like business as usual, only asking specifically for the TF). We know that this will not happen overnight, and that many of you may have questions and concerns. However, I firmly believe that if we start working toward the development of this idea now, that we can have it on paper and working (if necessary) by spring. My intent is to have a compiled list of each TF and all County 911 center non-emergency phone numbers as part of the "Emergency Assistance for Wildfire Control" (Yellow Book). To accomplish this, please fill out the below form and mail it to George Teixeira, Nebraska Forest Service, P O Box 830815, Lincoln, NE. 68583-0815 or email the same information to George at the email address at the bottom of the next paragraph.

Please start discussing this within your Mutual Aid Associations and let us know what you think. Should you have any questions or concerns, you can contact Ron Chada, President NSVFA at (308) 532-9016 or [rchada@charter.net](mailto:rchada@charter.net), Pat Gould, SFM and Chadron Fire Chief at (308) 432-5074 or [pat.gould@sfm.ne.gov](mailto:pat.gould@sfm.ne.gov) or myself at (402) 472-5870 or [gteixeira2@unl.edu](mailto:gteixeira2@unl.edu).

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**Mutual Aid Calling Tree Information: (PLEASE PRINT)**

Mutual Aid Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Includes Departments: \_\_\_\_\_

Dispatch Center "Non-Emergency" Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Person submitting this information: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

(Mail form to George Teixeira, Nebraska Forest Service, P O Box 830815, Lincoln, NE. 68583-0815)

## **From the Nebraska Revised Statutes, Chapter 81 Statutory language regarding the provision of assistance for disaster or emergency**

### **Section 81-829.65**

*Emergency operations; moving of equipment outside limits of local government;  
law enforcement personnel; powers; insurance.*

The governing body of each local government of this state shall take the necessary action to permit the movement of its emergency equipment and personnel, utility equipment and personnel, or such equipment and personnel as defined in the state, city, village, county, or interjurisdictional emergency operations plans outside the limits of such local government in order to render aid in the event of disaster, emergency, or civil defense emergency or in connection with any program of practice or training for such disaster, emergency, or civil defense emergency when such program is conducted or participated in by the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency or with any other related training program. If such personnel includes law enforcement personnel rendering aid in their law enforcement capacity, the law enforcement personnel shall have the power and authority to enforce the laws of this state or any legal ordinances or resolutions of the local government where they are rendering aid or otherwise perform the functions of their office, including the authority to arrest and detain suspects, as if enforcing the laws or performing the functions within the territorial limits of their primary jurisdiction. Such movement may be to any point in this state or may be into any adjoining state when mutual aid arrangements have been entered into on behalf of this state with such other state as authorized by section 81-829.56. Each local government shall self-insure or contract for insurance against any liability for personal injuries or property damage that may be incurred by it or by its personnel as the result of any movement made pursuant to this section.

#### **Source:**

Laws 1957, c. 380, ◆ 1, p. 1323

R.R.S.1943, ◆ 81-829.32

Laws 1973, LB 494, ◆ 30

Laws 1988, LB 961, ◆ 1

Laws 1996, LB 43, ◆ 44

Laws 1997, LB 546, ◆ 1