

## **Fire chief urges extreme caution**

Written by Wauneta Breeze  
Thursday, 28 June 2012 17:00 -

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**By Sheri Hink**

### **The Wauneta Breeze**

High temperatures, hot wind and low humidity have come together to create an extreme risk of fire in the Wauneta area.

Wauneta Volunteer Fire Department chief Donny Allen says, "We are in and out of red flag warnings so often, we must be very, very careful."

"A red flag warning means that critical fire weather conditions are either occurring now or will be shortly. A combination of strong winds, low relative humidity and warm temperatures will create explosive fire growth potential," explains the National Weather Service website.

Especially with the upcoming Independence Day holiday, it is important that everyone does his or her part to prevent fires.

Allen says the dry conditions and wind have created conditions favorable to starting fires.

"Parents really need to watch what kids are doing because we're in a tinder box," he said.

Extreme caution is needed when using any type of fireworks this year, but especially with those that shoot sparks long distances.

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“If you are shooting off aerial fireworks be careful which way they are pointed. Fireworks today are supposed to burn out before they hit the ground, but that doesn’t always happen,” explains Allen.

“Use common sense, in rural areas especially,” he said.

The National Council on Firework Safety recommends those using fireworks to always have a water hose or bucket of water available when lighting fireworks.

## **Recent fires**

The fire whistle is becoming a common sound in Wauneta as the WVFD has been busier than usual fighting fires started due to the extreme conditions.

As of noon Tuesday, WVFD had responded to three fire calls plus two mutual aid assists since Friday.

Area fire departments have been kept busy fighting fires in their own districts as well as responding to mutual aid requests in neighboring fire districts.

## **Busy Friday**

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Fire activity started midday on Friday when the WVFD responded to a fire call at 12:30 p.m. MT on Highway 6 between Enders and Wauneta.

Allen reported a truck blew a tire, the sparks from the blowout started spot fires in the ditch which then moved into some bales.

The fire was in Imperial's fire district, the WVFD responded as a mutual aid to Imperial.

Later Friday, at 8:43 p.m. MT the WVFD started out to a mutual aid call south of Imperial. Once there the fire was under control and they headed back.

On their way back to Wauneta, at 9:12 p.m. MT, they received a call for a fire south of Wauneta. Allen said they immediately called for mutual aid from Stratton.

The Wauneta crew and Stratton crew arrived at the scene at approximately the same time.

A lightning strike caused 100 acres of wheat stubble and standing wheat to burn nine miles south and two miles west of Wauneta.

The Imperial VFD also headed over to help after their own fire was out, but once the fire was almost under control the rain started and took care of the end of the blaze and the Imperial VFD wasn't needed. The Wauneta crew made it back to the shop at 11:00 p.m. MT.

## **Imperial lends a helping hand Saturday**

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The Wauneta VFD had a break from fire calls, of sorts, Saturday morning when members of the Imperial VFD came to Wauneta to stand at the fire station so the WVFD members could attend Mindi Goings funeral service.

While the IVFD was at Wauneta's shop they washed the trucks for WVFD.

Allen said the members were very appreciative of Imperial VFD's help Saturday morning so the entire crew could attend the service.

He said that area fire departments often travel to another town when the entire department needs to attend a funeral service. It shows great camaraderie between area departments.

## **Fire near town Saturday night**

Saturday evening at 7:40 p.m. MT there was another call for the WVFD to respond to a fire, in town this time. There was a loose connection on a power line right east of Harchelroad's machinery lot in the southeast corner of town.

The members of the WVFD made quick work of the blaze and were back in the shop by 8:56 p.m. MT.

## **Monday evening fire**

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Monday evening the Wauneta fire crew was back in their trucks, this time headed to a call for mutual aid northwest of Benkelman.