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Thank you to all of the members who contributed photos to this first issue! NWSA really appreciates your contribution. If you'd like to contribute images for potential inclusion in future issues, please email high resolution digital files to info@nwsa.us. Make sure to include peoples' names, locations and photo credit, if required.

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Welcome to the First Edition of Fireline!

As all of us in the wildfire world know it takes an orchestrated family of firefighters to battle the blazes as they grow larger and larger, and we hope to use this magazine as a vehicle to have discussions about fires and the people that put their lives on the lines to protect, life, home and our environment! We believe there is a need for a vehicle to share information on scientific research, wildfire behavior studies, review new equipment available, and share lessons learned. The possibilities are endless!

We look to future editions to include articles about agency resources, cooperative resources, professional private and all the issues that affect us all on the line.

In addition, we hope that you will submit articles of interest to us. They will be reviewed by our editorial staff at NWSA for potential inclusion in our biannual issues. You may submit your pictures and articles to info@nwsa.us for review. Credit will be given to the writer of each article, so please submit a short bio and photo of yourself, along with the written submission. Moving forward, we will have magazines distributed in November and March of each year.

To have someone added to our mailing list, please send your name, address and phone number to info@nwsa.us.

Deborah Miley
Executive Director

NWSA Moments!



This picture shows the NWSA Board of Directors on a recent visit to the Wildland Firefighter Foundation office in Boise (November 2013).



The NWSA Board of Directors, from left to right: Don Moss, NWSA Board; Mike Wheelock, NWSA Board; Debbie Miley, Executive Director, NWSA; Vicki Minor, Executive Director for Wildland Firefighter Foundation; Rick Dice, NWSA President; and Bruce Ferguson, NWSA Board.



This picture was taken at the Benefit Dinner Auction at the NWSA Conference for the Wildland Firefighter Foundation, which is sponsored by NWSA.

The Role of the National Wildfire Suppression Association in Wildland Fire and Emergency Incident Support

The **National Wildfire** Suppression Association (NWSA), founded in 1991, is a 501 (C) 6 Business League. Today the association represents over 200 private firefighting companies in 23 states. These companies are capable of fielding a workforce of over 12,000 trained firefighters, as well as a large contingency of equipment during the height of wildfire season.

NWSA member companies provide waterhandling resources, heavy equipment, timber faller modules, 20-person hand crews, and other specialized resources that complement the agencies' toolbox of resources. In the United States, private sector fire resources make up over 40 per cent of all resources available to help in fire suppression efforts, as well as other emergency response incidents.

Braving the smoke, heat and danger of wildland fires or the aftermath of other national disaster is an "army" of federal, state and local agencies. When the magnitude of the event exceeds an agency's available resources, they can call in reinforcements from the professional private fire services. Because these companies work under pre-existing agreements and contracts with the federal and state agencies they can be dispatched

immediately when needed. Many of these companies have responded to wildfires, hurricane recovery and some even helped with the space shuttle recovery.

Why is there a need for private professional contract fire services? The relationship between the federal and state fire organizations and the private wildland fire contract industry began in the early 1980s—an era of shrinking budgets and a growing number of wildland fires. Prior to that, almost 30 years of the wettest and coolest period in the last 100 years led the U.S. Forest Service to reduce its firefighting capacity from 1,200 to 500 crews.

The emergence of the private contract resources—national and regional 20-person firefighting crews, engines, dozers, tenders and other specialized equipment and support services—gives the agencies the flexibility they need to increase or decrease support as needed with a cost effective, call when needed resource. The contractor bears all the costs of training, equipment, travel and insurance costs.

NWSA has long been a proponent of strong compliance with the contracts/ agreements as well as higher industry standards in the private sector.

NWSA has built many working relationships with the federal, state and local governments, as well as national and state politicians. We pride ourselves on working to resolve issues of concern to create a better working environment for all parties. We share with the agencies our concerns about the following:

- Safety on the fireline;
- Determining the most cost effective, optimal mix of resources on the fireline;

- Encouraging strong oversight regarding compliance with the agreements/ contracts; and
- Establishing true Best Value in the agreements and contracts to ensure that the agencies and taxpayers get the best possible resource for the dollars.

Private entities that contract with the government for wildland fire/emergency response can join NWSA and receive member's benefits including:

- Free first time membership dues for one calendar year;

- Access to discounted equipment through our corporate sponsors;
- An ongoing exchange of information pertinent to our industry;
- Attendance at our annual NWSA Membership Conference with agency speakers, fire weather predictions and much more;
- Representation on issues that affect the majority of our membership, with both regional and national agency representatives as well as congressional staff;

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For More Information

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 - Local representation in those areas in which the association has Chapters:
 - Region 6 and 10 (Pacific Northwest);
 - Region 5 (California);
 - Region 1 (Northern Rockies);
 - Region 2 and 4 (Intermountain Region);
 - National Contract Resource Chapter (Type 2 IA National Crews); and
 - Region 8 (Southwestern US Region).
 - Voluntary participation in our Professional Contractor Certification Program; and
 - Access to the NWSA Training Database System to print incident qualification cards that meet all contract/agreement requirements. This is available for those who use NWSA instructors for training.
- NWSA looks forward to working with all who participate in contract/agreements with the federal, state and local agencies. 🏠

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Photo provided by Oregon BLM



ABOVE: Figure 1. The percent of contracted suppression costs to local vendors by fire. Map provided by Branden Rishel.

Wildfire Suppression Contracting

The effect of local business capacity during large wildfires

By Autumn Ellison, Cassandra Moseley, Max Nielsen-Pincus, and Cody Evers

The amount of suppression money spent locally influences the economic impact of large wildfires on nearby communities. Increased local spending leads to greater gains in employment during large wildfires. The amount of suppression spending awarded locally varies considerably, however, and little is known about what influences how much suppression is captured locally.

This study explored how a county’s contracting history and economic specialization influence local capture levels during large wildfires.

APPROACH

We examined local contract spending for a sample of 135 wildfires that cost the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest

Service more than one million dollars in total suppression spending from 2004-08. We analyzed how the number of federal contractors in a county prior to a wildfire and county economic specialization influenced local capture when large wildfires occurred.

RESULTS

Contracted services were 39 percent of the total suppression spending for our sample of large wildfires, greater than the cost of state agreements and federal personnel combined. The proportion of contract spending that occurred locally varied greatly between fires, from zero to 62 percent (see Figure 1, above). On average, local contract capture was 12 percent.

Both the number of vendors in the county prior to the fire and local economic

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When large wildfires occurred, counties that had more vendors contracting with the federal government in suppression-related services in the five years previous to the fire captured more contract spending locally than counties with fewer vendors.



specialization significantly influenced how much contract money was captured locally. When large wildfires occurred, counties that had more vendors contracting with the federal government in suppression-related services in the five years previous to the fire captured more contract spending locally than counties with fewer vendors.

In addition, counties with diversified, unspecialized economies captured more contract spending. Counties with more narrow economic specializations, including specializations in services and government, had lower rates of local capture.

CONCLUSION

Our research suggests that local economic structure and the number of vendors actively contracting with the federal government are important predictors of how local economies experience large wildfires. 🔥

This briefing paper was made possible with funding from the Joint Fire Service Program, USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station, and the University of Oregon. The University of Oregon is an equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This publication will be made available in accessible formats upon request. ©2012 University of Oregon. Design and Editing Services DES0410-044i-H52729.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The complete report can be found in the Ecosystem Workforce Program (EWP) Working Paper #47, "Wildfire Suppression Contracting: The Effect of Local Business Capacity during Large Wildfires," which is available at www.ewp.uoregon.edu/publications/working.

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SAFETY is on the Line

Learn about the National Wildfire Suppression Association's Training Program

A wildfire destroys everything in its path. With a mere shift of the wind, it can become a monster endangering not only those that live and work in its path but also those who work to suppress the flames. The skills of federal, state, local government and private wildland service firefighters are honed by arduous and constant training required to fight wildland fires, and survive. Anyone who does not have that level of training jeopardizes everyone on the fireline. Member companies of the National Wildfire Suppression Association (NWSA) take responsibility for their firefighters and those they work with on the fireline very seriously.

NWSA is recognized by federal, state and local agencies for the quality of its instructor certification program. The program is designed to provide resources that meet or exceed all training, safety, experience and physical fitness standards identified by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) in the Wildland Fire Qualifications System Guide.

In 1994, the NWSA received the first ever awarded Training Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) given to a private entity. This gives NWSA the authority to certify instructors who are qualified to train private sector, agencies and other interested parties. The NWSA has held that MOU every since, and, to date, the NWSA has trained over 39,000 firefighters utilizing a cadre of certified instructors, many of whom are retired agency personnel with many years of experience in the wildland fire world.

NWSA has a nationally recognized database for tracking all training by NWSA Certified Instructors and is open to other affiliate organizations. The system records training and can be utilized to track event history for firefighters. Additionally, the system creates a recognized Incident Qualification Card.

NWSA has a cadre of over 80 certified instructors across the United States, and NWSA voluntarily monitors its instructors through random spot checks of their classes by outside third party inspectors. In addition, instructors meet annually to ensure that they are trained in all new changes to the NWCG Training Guides, and NWSA standards. It is also required that all NWSA Certified Instructors sign a Code of Ethics. An NWSA Training Committee, headed by the NWSA Training Coordinator, oversees this educational process.

In 2009, NWSA started a voluntary Professional Contractor Certification Program that is available to our member companies. This program requires those that participate receive at least four hours of instruction annually in a professional training session offered by NWSA and/or one that is offered through other government entities, such as OSHA or their Workers Compensation Carrier.

NWSA also offers classes at their Annual NWSA Conference every year. These classes meet the requirements for this certification. NWSA has partnered with many government entities to provide training on things such as business ethics, drug and

continued on page 15



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alcohol training for crew and engine bosses, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulations that apply to the industry, driver training, and much more. NWSA has also developed a Crisis Management Guide to help member companies be prepared in the event of a serious injury or fatality while on fire assignment.

For those who have qualified for this certification, you will now see on the Incident Qualification Cards of those that have completed the course, NWSA Professionally Certified Contractor.

The NWSA has also worked with local, state and federal agencies on firefighter record verification to ensure that everyone is qualified for the position that they hold. NWSA has long encouraged the agencies to move away from self-certification of firefighters, and to find an effective way to verify qualification and training.

A critical role of the NWSA's mission is to educate and help promote professionalism, quality and safety within the private industry.



For more information on the training available, go to www.nwsa.us.

FACT

The National Wildfire Suppression Association (NWSA) is recognized by federal/state and local agencies for the quality of its instructor certification programs. They are designed to provide resources that meet or exceed all training, safety, experience and physical fitness standards identified in the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Wildland Fire Qualifications System Guide (PMS 310-1).

More than 12,000 private wildland firefighters receive training by NWSA Certified Instructors annually. The focus on performance and safety has resulted in loss ratios (accidents) that are significantly lower.

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Region 1	186	230	134	23	31	66		9	66	72	19		157		4		997	1556
Region 2	26	33	29	3	3	0	8		1	2			16	3			124	196
Region 3	65	30	30				5		13				27	2			172	221
Region 4		86		7	7			1			1		87	22	4		215	416
Region 5	347	22	133	22	42								422		8		996	1864
Region 6	268	382	192	178	327	31	62	10	48	32	6		265		24	171	1996	6532
Region 8	76	30	36									19	11	1	2		175	275
Region 9	9	23	5									4	1	1			43	91
Region 10																	0	0
Total	977	836	559	233	410	97	75	20	128	106	26	23	986	29	42	171	4718	11151

Data taken from 2012 Resource Report from USFS.

**These figures do not include all the additional firefighters who are trained to ensure that we have people available for dispatch. At any given time we estimate an additional 30 percent.



Based on an agency's assessed needs, it can supplement its own resources by utilizing the following agreements/contracts. Companies that contract with the government for emergency response work under a variety of contracts/agreements to provide resources and services to the agencies. Following is a brief description of some of these.

INCIDENT BLANKET PURCHASE AGREEMENT (I-BPA)

This is a pre-season agreement for 22 pieces of equipment, supplies or services to be used on fire and all-hazards incidents. I-BPAs are awarded on a competitive basis using commercial item procedures. They are often referred to as the VIPR agreements.

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- All-Terrain Vehicles;
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- Coach Bus;
- Communications Trailer;
- Copiers;
- Dozer;
- Engine;
- Excavator;
- Faller and Faller Module;
- Feller Bunchers;



- Fuel Tender;
- Generic*;
- GIS Unit;
- Gray Water Truck;
- Handwashing Unit;
- Helicopter Operations Support Trailer;
- Masticators-Boom Mounted;
- Masticators-Track Mounted;
- Mechanic with Service Truck;
- Mobile Laundry;
- Mobile Sleeper Unit;
- Portable Toilet;
- Potable Water Truck;
- Refrigerated Trailer;
- Rental Passenger Vehicles;
- Rental Trucks;
- Road Graders;



- Skidder;
- Skidgines;
- Sofftrack;
- Tent and Canopy;
- Tractor Plow;
- Transport;
- Water Tenders; and
- Weed Washing Units.

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The scope of the Interagency Firefighting Crew Agreement (IFCA) is for private contractors to provide the services of Type 2, 20-person fire crews, including vehicles and equipment. These crews are dispatched nationally as needed and there are approximately 165, 20-person Type 2 hand crews available under this agreement. Seventy-five per cent of their usage is on federal ground.

This agreement is based on a "Best Value" criteria, including personnel record inspections and a proposal written with points given based on information submitted. From that information there is a Dispatch Priority List created for each dispatch location. This agreement was first issued in 1987 and has been in existence since that time.

NATIONAL CONTRACTS

These are federal contracts that are administered out of the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. These contracts provide for a guarantee of payment if they are not dispatched during a given period. They are dispatched ahead of other regional agreements.

These contracts include:

- National Type 2 Initial Attack Hand Crews – 41 – 20 person crews across the United States;
- Crew Carrier Buses;
- Fire Retardant;
- Airtankers;
- Helicopters – CWN;
- Helicopters – Exclusive Use;
- Mobile Food Services;
- Mobile Shower Units; and
- Smoke Jumper Aircraft.

EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT RENTAL AGREEMENT (EERA)

An EERA is an agreement written at an incident and the duration is for the length of the incident only. Under these agreements there are no specific requirements for pre-season inspections, training and record verification, nor position qualifications. The individual enters into these agreements as a 1099 vendor and is responsible for all state, federal and local tax payments. These resources are utilized at the discretion of the agencies. The IBPA vendors are to be utilized before the EERA on an extended attack fire.

CONCLUSION

In addition to the agreements discussed, there are many other state agency agreements for these services at the local level.

There are approximately 12,000 trained private firefighters working under all these agreements at the height of fire season in the United States. 🏠

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The National Wildfire Suppression Association **17**

Education About Wildland Fire

A cost analysis of private wildland fire services, and agency wildland fire hand crew and engines



This **cost analysis** report has multiple objectives, including:

- Educating decision makers of the true costs of each type of resource.
- Educating the general public that the private wildland fire services industry provides approximately 40 per cent of all wildland fire resources on any given incident.
- Educating decision makers that the private wildland fire services can be a quality, cost effective resource in the agencies' toolbox of resources, which should be utilized.
- To eliminate myths and false perceptions that private wildland fire services are "too expensive."
- To provide a professional cost analysis using sound methodology.

INTRODUCTION

During the years 2000-12, federal government expenditures for wildfire suppression were over 1.4 billion dollars annually and it is widely believed that the size and expense of wildfires will continue to increase.

DEFINITIONS FOR THIS REPORT

Hand crew definitions for this report: Agency hand crews may be Type 1, Type 2 Initial Attack (Type 2 IA, or Type 2). Private wildland fire services crews are:

☰ Type 2 IA hand crews are under national contracts.

☰ Type 2 hand crews are under Best Value Agreements administered primarily by the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Engines definitions for this report: Agency engines are Type 3, 4 or 6. Contract engines may be Type 3, 4 or 6.

Agency forces, for the sake of this report, include federal and cooperator (state, county and local agency) resources.



Services Industry is Essential

Although a variety of agency and private wildland fire service resources are utilized on incidents, hand crews and engines are most often deployed in both categories and are the subjects of this comparison. (See the included sidebar with definitions, on page 18).

Two cost centers must be considered when comparing the costs of agency and contract resources:

1. The direct (daily) cost to the incident of that resource; and
2. The pre-suppression and indirect costs.

When looking at the cost figures of agency and private wildland services resources it is important to understand that costs for private wildland fire services are all inclusive for pre-suppression (indirect) and suppression charged to the incident, while the agency/cooperator costs are only suppression costs and do NOT include pre-suppression (indirect) costs charged to the incident.

Based on the direct costs that were reviewed and the assumptions made on indirect costs, private wildland fire services, for both the hand crew and engine categories, are at least 30 percent less expensive.

SUMMARY

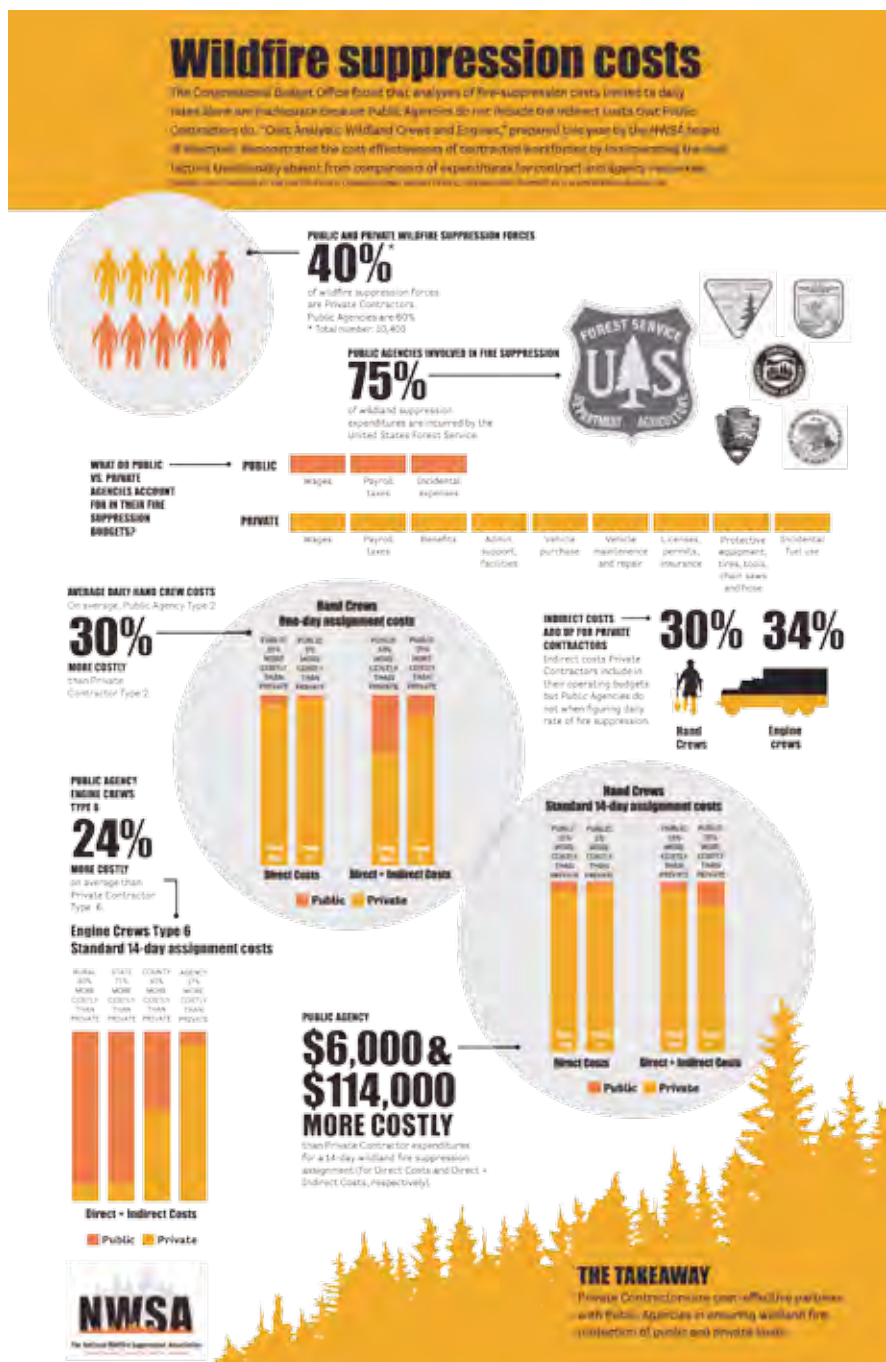
Costs for this report were taken from I-Suite reports—the system utilized by the agencies—and include five large fires in three states during 2011. The National Wildfire Suppression Association (NWSA) surveyed well established contractors to determine, as a percentage of revenue, the indirect costs incurred during the course of business operations.

The report entails two comparisons: the cost of each resource based on **direct**

daily incident costs taken from the collected I-Suite records, and the indirect costs not depicted in the I-Suite direct daily resources costs. The survey showed that the average pre-suppression (indirect costs) were 30 percent for hand crew and 34 percent for

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During the years 2000-12, federal government expenditures for wildfire suppression were over 1.4 billion dollars annually.



engine crews. These indirect costs were applied to the agency resource cost figures.

FINDINGS

Based on the direct costs that were reviewed and the assumptions made on indirect costs, private wildland fire services, for both the hand crew and engine categories, are at least 30 percent less expensive.

The agencies bearing the responsibility for wildland fire protection must maintain the readiness and capacity necessary for the protection of life, property and the environment. This is undisputable. The need for a realistic discourse regarding the most effective methods of achieving optimum

capability through the most efficient mix of resources, however, has long been neglected.

This discourse should include an in depth look at not only the costs associated with each type of resource, but also the dispatch protocols in place to ensure the cost effective use of all resources.

The NWSA echoes the OIG report done in 2010 by U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General, requesting prompt additional efforts to accurately quantify all cost elements associated with every resource category utilized during wildfire suppression incidents.

Effective application of the resulting information will allow more efficient management of available resources for successful achievement of incident objectives and optimal taxpayer benefit.

You can download a full copy of the report at www.nwsa.us/nwsa-news. 📄

FACT

While most wildfires are readily contained through the efforts of relatively few resources, the largest fires require hundreds or even thousands of resources in order to achieve incident management objectives.

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Meet Four Firefighters Who Have Made a Career out of Battling Blazes

By Paul Adair

Although there are many reasons for becoming a wildland firefighter, there is only one goal; to combat wildland fires. Every year, thousands of brave men and women from across the country, and from many different walks of life, come together to courageously put their lives on the line to help protect states, communities and property from the destruction posed by wildfires.

For over 40 years, **PatRick Environmental Inc.** has pioneered the contract wildland firefighting business, operating by their motto, "Where experience and professionalism makes the difference." As family-driven business founded in 1971, PatRick is Oregon's oldest private firefighting firm and is headquartered out of Redmond. Established by company patriarch Rick Dice, the firm is truly a family affair, that includes Rick's wife, sister and three sons; Jeremy, Joel and Justin.



Justin Dice, PatRick Environmental Inc.

As a sixth generation wildland firefighter, it could be said that **Justin Dice** was born into the job and that firefighting runs through his veins. For as long as he can recall, Dice has had the opportunity to witness what it really means to be a firefighter firsthand—both the positives and

the negatives—and wouldn't have had it any other way.

"I've always loved it," says Dice. "Helping people and seeing their gratitude is the most rewarding part of the job for me. That, and spending time in all of the wildlands of America—in the places where people rarely visit. This can be a very fulfilling career if you love the outdoors and travel."

Working on the front lines of wildland fires, Dice is trained up to Task Force Leader and operates as a Type One burn boss (RxB1). However, as is common for the profession, he is constantly upgrading and taking on other classes to better round out his skill set; keeping himself and his fellow firefighters safer in the process.

Dice believes that, along with other benefits, being part of the private firefighting sector strengthens the fraternity of the firefighters working on the team when compared to working in the public realm.

"I believe that working in the private sector is more personal," says Dice. "I think our esprit de corps is higher, that we have exceptional overhead, our fiscal responsibility is rewarded, and that success and high performance is rewarding to all our employees."

Dice sees great benefits coming from an organization such as the National Wildfire Suppression Association (NWSA), knowing that the networking, training and communications work together to better give a clear and unified voice to the wildfire fighting private sector. The NWSA provides an avenue for that voice to be heard nationally and then to also help bring the private contractors together, keeping the industry strong.

In 1993, **GFP Emergency Services' Michael Pennavaria**

started out his career as a structural firefighter near Cincinnati, Ohio. It was there, while on duty, that he watched a documentary on wildland firefighting in the



Michael Pennavaria, GFP Emergency Services.

Pacific Northwest and found that his career path was irrevocably diverted.

"Within six months I had resigned from the department and moved to Bend, Oregon where I immediately got a job in the Ochoco National Forest on a USFS fire crew," says Pennavaria. "Since then, no two days have been alike. I've been able to fight fire in 11 different states, in another country, and have met many interesting people. I enjoy the physical and mental challenges it offers on a daily basis, as well as the camaraderie of being part of a crew."

As rewarding as the job can be for firefighters like Pennavaria, there are still a number of challenges to be overcome beyond the physical demands, including the long days and nights, and facing the risks associated with the fires themselves.

"The most challenging part for me is the sacrifice necessary to do this job," says Pennavaria. "I have discovered how difficult it is to be away from my wife and kids for long stretches of time and, over the last 20 years, many summer activities and family functions have been overridden by my commitment to the fire service."

As part of the private sector, Pennavaria finds that he is able to spend more time doing what he enjoys; fighting fires. Being

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attached to a district as a Type 3 Engine Captain meant limited time on fires while, conversely, as a leader of a Type 2 IA National Handcrew, he has had the opportunity to be much more involved out in the field.

“When working for the agencies, I had many additional duties that took the place of time on the fire line,” says Pennavaria. “In six years, the number of fire line days I have accumulated in the private sector has far surpassed the number of fire days I

accumulated with the Forest Service over 14 years.”

Over the last 13 years, Pennavaria has been active as an instructor for entry level and many 100 level fire classes, as well as a facilitator of fire refreshers. This role has provided him with an incredible sense of worth that he is able to pass on his accumulated fire knowledge and experience to the next generation of fire fighters.

Sean Hendrix began his career with the Oregon Department of Forestry over 25 years ago, working as an engine crewman



Sean Hendrix, Grayback Forestry.

on a 500 gallon fire engine in his first season.

However, it was not long before he found himself moving into the private sector with **Grayback Forestry** in order to procure year-round employment as opposed to the seasonal work offered by an agency. Now in his 24th year with the company, Hendrix has moved his way up from crewman/fft2, to RxB1, and to Division Supervisor, before becoming the Base Manager at Grayback’s Merlin Base of operations near Grants Pass, Oregon.

The fire services are a dynamic job that always brings something fresh and unexpected to the workday. Along with this, Hendrix also appreciates the spirit and camaraderie that exists between those working on the line.

“I think our esprit de corps is higher, that we have exceptional overhead, our fiscal responsibility is rewarded, and that success and high performance is rewarding to all our employees.”

“You build bonds with people you would have never met otherwise,” says Hendrix. “You go through battles that are very tough and in extreme conditions but, when you get



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through it and look back, you never forget and always remember the people that were there with you."

Hendrix is now a Level 1 instructor, able to teach classes. He also has extensive prescribed burning experience throughout the United States, in many fuel types. In spite of this wealth of experience, Hendrix is fully aware that there is never an end to what you can learn as a firefighter.

"The training never stops," says Hendrix. "I am always looking to learn new things and advance in my career."

Through its networking, high standard of training, and sharing of information, Hendrix sees the NWSA as being important to the fire service industry in the support of a professional workforce through a myriad of incidents.

"Our line of work is unpredictable—based on weather or natural disasters—and we are there for when things happen and to provide top notch quality crews and workers to deal with any type of situation," says Hendrix. "With a lack of funding in the agencies, as the years go by, their staff have aged and many have retired. The agencies



Billy Smith, Diamond Fire.

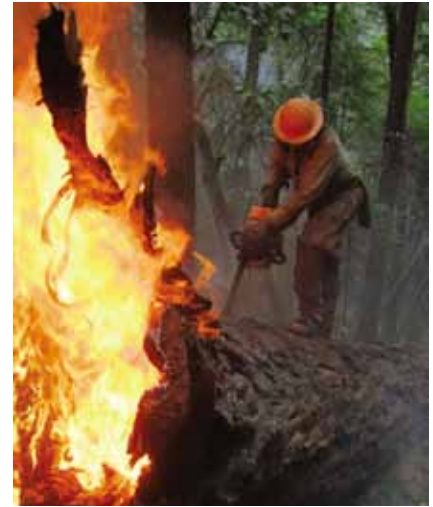
now cannot support a substantial workforce waiting around for things to happen. The NWSA helps by providing an experienced workforce in order to take care of things in a safe professional way."

At the age of 18, **Billy Smith** discovered an ad in Roseburg News Review featuring wildland firefighting jobs. A month later, he was on his first fire and, over the last 20 years, Smith has been with

Diamond Fire; a professional wildland firefighting and forestry contractor that serves the southern Oregon region. And although Smith is employed with a private company, he views the job to be the same whether you are a private contractor or invested with an agency. When you fight wildland fires, you are a firefighter.

"I started in the private sector," says Smith. "It's where I've stayed and it has been

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good to me. I have never worked on an agency crew, but I don't imagine that there's a large difference. Many of the rewards and challenges of the job are basically the same for all wildland firefighters."

Smith's qualifications are as a crew boss, an engine boss, taskforce leader trainee, and NWSA lead fire instructor. He has additional training in intermediate wildland fire behavior, wildland fire behavior calculations, advanced fire calculations fire behavior

analyst and facilitative Instructor training. With this training and experience, Smith knows full-well the demands faced by those who choose to go out and fight wildland fires.

"I must say it is a very hard career and it is not for everyone," says Smith. "The most challenging part of my job is being away from my wife and four-year-old daughter for weeks and even months on end; then keeping my mind clear so that my crew is getting the attention they need to be safe and productive."

That said, the rewards of being a wildland firefighter far outweigh the many challenges they face on the job. After 22 years of fighting fires throughout the country, it speaks to the nature of the industry that Smith still loves his job.

"The most rewarding part of the job has to be the stranger who shakes your hand and says, 'thank you,'" says Smith. "To them, we as firefighters are heroes and we sometimes forget this when it is our day to day job." 🙏

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Do you have a crew boss, engine boss, faller boss, ect. who should be interviewed and featured in our next Faces of NWSA? *FIRELINE* would like to include more stories like this one in future issues. If you have someone we should talk to, send their details to Deborah Miley, Executive Director of the NWSA, at info@nwsa.us. Make sure to include your company's name, and the person's name/email/phone.

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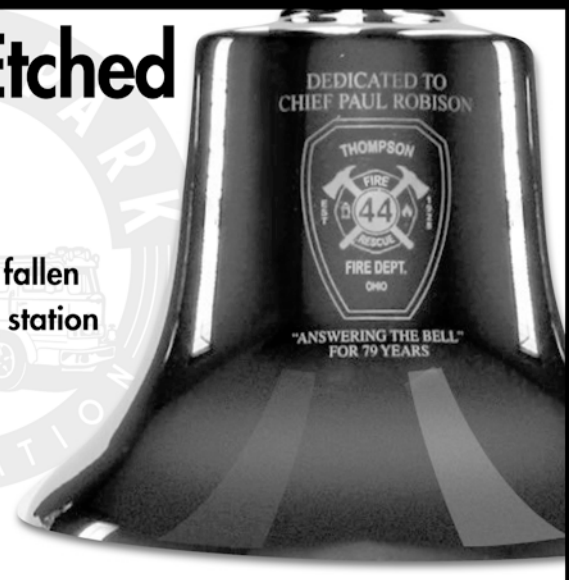
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Company Name: _____ Website URL: _____
 Name: _____ Email Address: _____
 Title: _____ USFS Region: _____
 Business Address: _____ Federal ID Number: _____
 City/State/Zip: _____ Referred by: _____
 Phone: _____ Date of Application: _____

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR COMPANY/ORGANIZATION

Suppression Contractor Sanitation Services Specialized Equipment
 Engine/Tender Contractor Training Other (Please Specify) _____
 Fallers Heavy Equipment _____
 Catering/Food Services Transportation Services _____

PLEASE INDICATE TYPE OF RESOURCES AND HOW MANY

Type _____ Number _____

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