



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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Inmate refurbished vehicles helping fire departments

Pierre, S.D. – While spring rains have helped lower the risk of a wildland fire in the Black Hills, state prison inmates continue to help fire departments across South Dakota be ready to respond to their next fire call.

Inmates at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield are working with the Department of Agriculture's Fire Equipment Shop to refurbish federal surplus vehicles for use by local fire departments across the state. Since 1996, inmates have refurbished 132 trucks. Approximately half of those vehicles have been sent to fire departments in western South Dakota, where the greatest risk of a wildland fire exists.

The state obtains Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) such as military trucks and other surplus vehicles from the federal government. The vehicles are taken to the Springfield facility where inmates are involved with everything from mounting tanks and pumps and installing railings and light bars to repainting the vehicles.

Inmates have also helped refurbish a trailer and 27 slip-on units, where a tank, pump and reel is added to the back of a truck for fire suppression efforts.

A number of inmates and correctional staff members are wildland fire trained and certified firefighters who are often called to assist with fire suppression efforts across South Dakota. Inmates also assist with fire suppression efforts throughout the year by helping thin timber in the Black Hills.

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A picture of inmates working in the Fire Equipment Shop is available on the DOC website at http://www.state.sd.us/corrections/durfee_work_projects.htm.

The Department of Agriculture features before and after pictures of the refurbished vehicles on their website at:

http://www.state.sd.us/doa/Wildland_Fire/Rural_Fire_Assistance/FireEquipShop.htm