



**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
ADMINISTRATION**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** June 28, 2006

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**Inmates training to help fight fires**

Pierre, S.D. - When the next major fire strikes the Black Hills, more people will be prepared to help battle the blaze.

Twenty-eight state prison inmates are training this week to become certified firefighters at the Rapid City Minimum Unit. Staff from Wildland Fire Suppression Division is conducting the training.

Typically, the training consists of the S-130 Basic Wildland Firefighter and S-190 Intro to Wildland Fire Behavior courses as well as experience in the field working with the equipment and tools they would utilize on a fire line.

In order to help protect the state from the ravages of wildfire, the Department of Corrections (DOC) maintains a wildfire-fighting handcrew. Inmates and correctional staff have passed the physical requirements and completed the training necessary to become certified fire fighters.

Inmates and staff have been deployed to six fires so far this year.

Even when they aren't on the fire lines, the inmate fire fighters continue to work to help prevent potential forest fires throughout the year. Inmates have been engaged for several years in fuel reduction activities in Custer State Park and on U.S. Forest Service lands in the Black Hills. The inmate crews cut dead, dying and broken trees, create new fire lines, thin overgrown stands of brush pine and eliminate the potential in the area for large devastating wild fires.

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Media Note: On Thursday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, the inmates in the training class will be field training at Edelweiss Mountain near Pactola Reservoir. If media wish to send someone to cover the training, please have them at the Rapid City Minimum Unit at 2317 Creek Drive by 9:00 a.m. MT to follow the crew to the training site.