



**U.S. Forest Service
Modoc National Forest
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Firefighter Update

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Fallen Firefighter Update

Alturas, Calif. – The cause of death of Black Hills National Forest Engine Captain David Ruhl was announced today following an autopsy. Ruhl's death was attributed to carbon monoxide poisoning and smoke inhalation.

Forest Supervisor Amanda McAdams said, "The Modoc National Forest is extremely appreciative of the cooperation of the Sheriff's Office, and especially Undersheriff Ken Richardson, during this process. The Sheriff's Office has been side-by-side with Forest employees from the beginning of the search through the arrangement of the procession to honor his service, and to the planning for his return to the Black Hills. The actions and professionalism of the Sheriff's Office that honors Dave and his family makes me realize how lucky we are to have them as partners. We are glad we are now able to return Dave home."

Ruhl went missing the evening of July 30 while engaged in initial attack on the Frog Fire. The Modoc County Sheriff's Office was called for assistance in searching for the missing firefighter. Search and rescue personnel started the initial search at approximately 8 p.m. The initial search effort continued until about midnight when it was halted because of hazardous fire conditions. Efforts began again at 6 a.m., July 31 and the victim's body was discovered at 9:17 a.m.

The U.S. Forest Service is using a tool known as a Coordinated Response Protocol (CRP) to review and learn from tragic events. It is a tool the Forest Service uses to ensure that we learn everything possible from serious incidents to reduce the chances of recurrence. The CRP includes a Learning Review. The Learning Review (LR) is a phased approach designed to help thoroughly study the accident with the focus on helping prevent future accidents.

A Forest Service CRP team has been assigned to the Frog Fire fatality. The team is comprised of staff with technical expertise in specialty areas such as fire management, fire behavior, proper protective equipment and human factors/performance. The CRP process started August 3. When completed the final report will be available to the public.

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