



"Where the Kid got his name"

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## Car thief hits community

By Jeff Moberg

Sundance Police Chief Todd Fritz reported a 1994 Ford pickup belonging to Sundance resident Mark Hughes was stolen during the early morning hours last Thursday.

Fritz reported the suspect(s) apparently entered Hughes's garage through an open door and removed the vehicle. Sundance officers also received a report from witnesses who observed what they believed to be Hughes's pickup near his home proceeding north through town earlier that morning.

According to Fritz the suspect appeared to have been working throughout the neighborhood early that morning in an attempt to steal a vehicle. He noted that a substantial amount of neighborhood vehicles had been rifled through as if the suspect were looking for vehicle keys. Evidence also seemed to indicate that the suspect had used bicycles belonging to local residents to move from house to house in the search for a vehicle that would prove to be an easy mark. Fritz noted that victims of the suspect's attempted theft checked their vehicles and found that nothing seemed to be missing.

The first report of foul play was reported at around 6:00 a.m. when police officers were called to the area to investigate suspicious circumstances in which an area resident noticed the dome light in his vehicle was on and the interior of the vehicle showed signs of having been searched through. Police department officers responded and began their investigation. As their investigation progressed they continued to receive more reports from local residents who were discovering that their vehicles appeared to have been ransacked.

Then, at approximately 8:00 a.m., Hughes reported that the pickup was missing from his

garage.

As the police stepped up their investigation, they found a strange, white, four-door passenger car near the scene. A subsequent investigation revealed the car had been reported stolen from Boxelder, South Dakota. Officers also noted fluids underneath the car, leading them to surmise that the stolen vehicle met with mechanical difficulties, forcing the suspect to begin looking for another vehicle in order to continue the journey.

Police departments from Spearfish and Boxelder were contacted and have entered the investigation as they assist the Sundance department in chasing down leads produced from the stolen car find.

The local investigation continued to open up new leads as a suspect was arrested in Moorcroft after stealing a car from Buffalo, Wyoming later the same day. Sundance police continue to investigate this suspect with assistance from the Buffalo Police Department as possibly being connected to the local theft as well.

Officers with the Pennington County Sheriff's Office reportedly recovered the stolen pickup Monday, October 13 in Rapid City. According to Fritz, the pickup appeared to be in good condition.

Along with the obviously criminal activity centering around the vehicles, officers also removed the body of what appeared to be a dismembered dog carcass from the street in the theft area. Fritz noted that officers have not yet made a concrete connection between the carcass and the theft.

Chief Fritz stated that "I don't want people to be in fear or panic but it's always a good idea to lock vehicles and homes." Fritz also advises that people need to continue to report suspicious activity to the authorities.



## After school program highlighted

Sundance Elementary joined with schools across the state and throughout the nation as they celebrated Lights On After School Day, Thursday October 9.

Parents, students and staff involved with the Sundance Elementary After School Study Skills program shared in an evening of sub sandwiches, games and an informative presentation as part of the nationwide celebration.

Lights On After School celebrations took place at over 5000 locations across the nation on Thursday. The aim of the event is to bring attention to the need for after school programs that keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement. According to the Wyoming Department of Education, after school activities have been shown to improve a student's achievement in the classroom during the regular school day. Ninety-two percent of parents with kids in after school programs say their kids are doing better in reading and math, by up to three grade levels. "After school programs support the Wyoming Department of Education's goal of raising student achievement in a fun and safe environment," Dr. Trent Blankenship, Wyoming State Superintendent of Public Instruction

said. "I commend those communities who have taken the initiative to look out for their children during all hours and not just during the regular school day."

Sundance After School Study Skills Supervisor Tami Baron noted that the Sundance program currently has 14 full time students participating who range between fourth and sixth grade. Students are recommended by their teachers for placement in the program based on their need to develop specific skills. Kids who participate in the program are given additional instruction in study skills and time management in an entertaining and enjoyable atmosphere.

Lights On After School started in October 2000 with 1200 participants nationwide. The event has grown each year, reaching just over 5000 participants last year. Lights On After School is a project of the After School Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all children have access to after school programs by the year 2010.

The Sundance Elementary program is supported through the Crook County School District while the celebration party was through the Crook County Cares organization.



## Fall decorations . . .



Fall brings out the artistic talent in many of our Sundance residents. Driving around the community you can see a variety of the fall decorations placed in the yards. It's a great way to welcome in the lazy days of fall. This display is in the yard of and Jim Clark.

## Weekend fires keep crews active

Local rancher loses large haystack in one blaze.

By Jeff Moberg

Fire season has still not come to an end around the area. Thanks to the return of warmer and dry weather over the last two weeks, conditions again started to ripen for the return of an active fire time. Local fire fighters were kept busy over last weekend with two blazes popping up around the county.

Local fire fighters were called to a fire in "The Rocks" area, west of Sundance Sunday afternoon which burned approximately one acre of

timber and grass. Joining the local fire fighters were two trucks from the Forest Service who helped get the fire under control relatively quickly. Local officials felt the cause of the fire was likely caused by a spark from logging activity a day earlier which likely smoldered for some time until it was brought to flames with Sunday's winds.

Later Sunday afternoon, the same fire fighters were called to a haystack that was on fire approxi-

mately three miles west of Sundance on the Chatfield Ranch. Spontaneous combustion is thought to be the cause of the fire. The ninety-two bale haystack which belonged to Eddie Chatfield was considered a complete loss. Quick response from area neighbors and fireman were credited with saving an adjacent haystack as they worked to move it out of harm's way.

Cooler weather and a shot of rain helped regional fire crews gain the upper hand on the Elkhorn fire in the Black Elk Wilderness approximately three miles west of Mount Rushmore. Fire officials reported Monday that the fire, burning precariously close to Mount Rushmore burned a little over 30 acres and was brought under control over the weekend. The cause of the fire which was first discovered Thursday evening, is yet unknown. Officials plan to keep the fire contained while using minimal mop up until the fire is declared out later in the fall.

## Pine Haven receives grant

The town of Pine Haven is set to receive federal funding to better prepare its fire department, according to U.S. Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo.

The Pine Haven Volunteer Fire Department will receive \$63,000 in federal funding to purchase a firefighting vehicle. The funding comes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program to help provide for training, firefighter wellness and fitness, firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment and modifications to fire stations and facilities.

"Disaster strikes even in small communities and the local fire firefighters are there for residents. This funding is there for the firefighters so they can be better prepared to help the people in their communities," said Enzi.

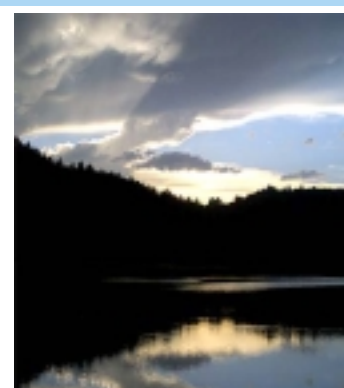
The Assistance to Firefighters Grant program awards one-year grants directly to local fire departments to enhance their abilities to respond to fire and fire-related hazards in their communities. For fiscal year 2003, the Department of Homeland Security is distributing \$750 million nationwide in firefighter grants. This is up \$360 million from fiscal year 2002.

Grantees share in the cost of the funded project at a percentage based on the population of their respective jurisdiction. Grantees that serve jurisdictions of 50,000 or fewer residents are required to provide a non-federal cost-share of 10 percent, while grantees that serve jurisdictions of over 50,000 provide a 30 percent cost-share.

A complete state-by-state listing of applications, financial information and known data from the fire service requests can be found at [www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/03requests.cfm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/03requests.cfm).

Fire departments with questions regarding the grant program can reach the Emergency Preparedness and Response Grant Program staff at 1-866-274-0960, or by writing to [usfagrants@fema.gov](mailto:usfagrants@fema.gov).

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