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WOODLAWN FIRE

[Nemaha County, Kansas, October 8th, 2024] – This past Saturday, October 5th, a large brush and farmland fire occurred near Woodlawn in Nemaha County. At approximately 1:40PM, Nemaha County Dispatch received a call to report a field on fire, likely caused by a combine which was harvesting grain. The Sabetha Fire Department was dispatched to the fire north of Woodlawn, and quickly requested mutual aid from surrounding fire departments as the fire was within a quarter mile of a residence.

Due to the already complex situation, Nemaha County Emergency Management and Bryce Haverkamp with the Kansas Forest Service responded to the scene to begin to coordinate the response. Command was quickly set up near the fire with Assistant Chief Gary Elliott of the Sabetha Fire Department taking command of the firefighting portion of the incident. Aerial firefighting was requested through the Kansas Forest Service, and two Heinen Brother's air tractors were quickly on scene to aid in firefighting operations.

Firefighting operations continued for the next six hours or so. The fire ended up burning over 150 acres of crop land. Zero structures were lost, including two homes and various sheds and grain bins. Also, there were zero injuries to responders and residents. Nine different fire departments were involved in the incident: Sabetha, Wetmore, Goff, Centralia, Seneca, Hiawatha, Fairview, Powhattan, and Morrill; including 79 fire fighters, the Nemaha County Sheriff and Dispatch, Sabetha Dispatch, Sabetha EMS, Kansas

Forest Service, Kansas State Firefighters Association, various ag-related businesses providing fuel and bulk water for firefighting, and local landowners/farmers providing farming equipment to create firebreaks to stop the fire.

During the Woodlawn Fire, two other large fires requiring mutual aid were affecting portions of the county in Bern and Corning's fire districts. With these three separate fires burning at the same time, all Nemaha County first responder agencies were working diligently to keep our county safe with heavily burdened personnel and equipment.

Nemaha County Emergency Management Director Eddie Aldrine wants to thank everyone involved in the response to the fires around the county on Saturday. Without their dedication to our county and their quick response to the incidents, all fires could have been much worse due to the Red Flag conditions.

Please direct any questions to the Nemaha County Emergency Management Office at (785)336-2135.

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