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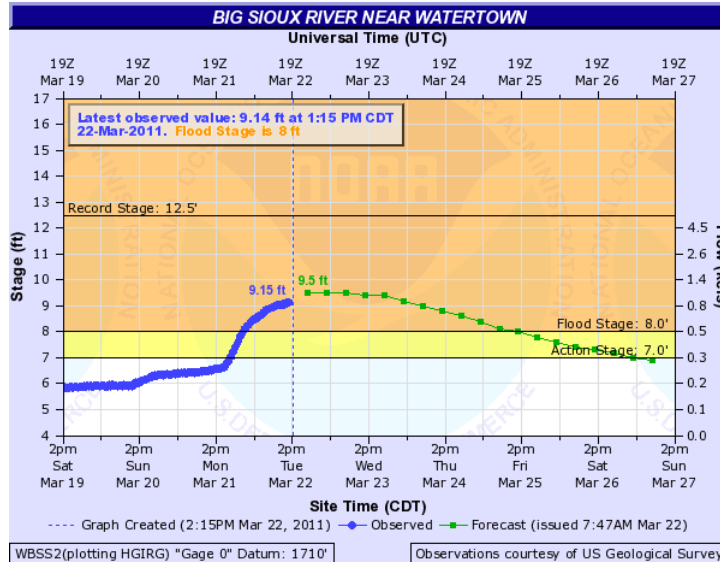
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### Flooding Returns to South Dakota

As we prepare this issue, the specter of spring flooding is facing many of us once again, especially those of us in East River. From the James River to the Big Sioux, saturated ground and record snowfall is creating a big headache for those of us in public safety and emergency management. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and FEMA have been a constant sight here in Watertown, as they have been in other communities. In Watertown, earthen berms are being reinforced as we speak in preparation for potential flooding. While the situation in your community may be different, we do have a concern in Watertown about the effect of images as shown above. This was pulled from the National Weather Service website and could give the community the false sense that the flooding event could be over soon. As the Corps of Engineers reminded us this morning, they are expecting a “double spike” with the flooding this spring. While this first event will likely taper off by the end of the week, a second (and potentially larger) event will be coming around the first week of April. Remind your citizens not to get complacent with flood protections until we are more certain that the spring floods are behind us.

### Business Meeting Scheduled for State Fire School

The SDFCA will be holding a business meeting on June 10, 2011, during State Fire School in Aberdeen. The meeting will be held at 12 noon at the Central High School in Aberdeen. Our organization usually only holds two business meetings per year, so we encourage all of you to attend. Among a variety of topics, we anticipate discussing the annual conference location and timing. For a number of years, the conference has been held in Chamberlain. We would like to discuss the possibility of holding the 2011 conference in Pierre. This might be more centrally located for our members and allow accompanying family members more things to do. Please come to the meeting to share your thoughts!



# SOUTH DAKOTA **FIRECHIEF**



Assistant Chief of Operations Doug Kranz and Fire Chief Nick Swinhart of Watertown (along with Mrs. Swinhart in the middle) participated in the recent Polar Plunge at the frozen Lake Kampeska to raise money for charity. The water was definitely cold, but the cause was good!

## Conference in Rapid

The 2nd annual Homeland Security Conference will be held in Rapid City May 10-11 at the Ramkota. The lineup of speakers looks great and everyone should try to attend. Please visit [sdhlsconference.com](http://sdhlsconference.com) for more information.

## State Fire School

State Fire School is coming up in June in Aberdeen. Please make sure to visit [sdfirefighters.org](http://sdfirefighters.org) for a full class listing, schedule, and online registration.

*Note from SDFCA President Nick Swinhart: The following article by noted public safety consultant Jay Fitch appeared in a recent issue of the International City/County Managers Association. It seemed an appropriate article for the chief officers of the state to familiarize themselves with. If the ICMA is encouraging their members to ask such questions, you can bet that many of us will be facing them in the near future.*

### Article

## 20 Tough Questions to Ask Your Fire Chief – When You’re Cutting Budgets

5 January 2011

Fire service leaders face difficult decisions, many on an unprecedented scale. Strategies that worked in the past may not be effective today. Traditionally, reducing expenses meant reducing training and travel, eliminating civilian positions, cutting back on the quality and quantity of office supplies and other nonessential materials, or delaying a new cadet academy or new stations. What happens now, when those tactics don't come close to closing the budget gap? How do fire service and civic leaders make the right choices not just to meet this year's budget, but for the long-term health and benefit of their department and the community?

Here are 20 tough questions that city managers and county administrators should be ready to ask their fire chief.

1. How does the performance and cost of our program objectively benchmark against others with similar volumes and demographics, and where can we get the data to answer questions?
2. Are stations in the right locations to optimize our response capabilities and resources?
3. How many response resources is the “right” amount for fire calls? For medical calls? What tells us that this is correct?
4. What is an acceptable productivity level to expect from EMS personnel?
5. What is an evidence-based and legally defensible response-time goal for our community, and how often do we reach critical response levels (i.e., too few units)?
6. Many communities use a 90th-percentile response time as a standard for first arriving units. What is our response time standard?
7. Do we need to send a fire apparatus to calls, including all medical requests from 911?
8. Do units need to respond with lights and sirens to all 911 calls, despite the nature of the complaint?
9. How much down time do our fire and EMS personnel have while waiting for calls? How do we evaluate the “right” number and schedules for staffing?
10. How does our department treat the standards that are published by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Insurance Services Office (ISO)—as requirements or as guidelines?
11. Fire-related responses are declining significantly. When are the numbers low enough to consider consolidating or contracting with another community? Are there other alternatives to having our own fire department?