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Pierre Fire Department Obtains New Ice Rescue Equipment

Pierre, SD – With the cold winter months quickly approaching and ice beginning to form on area lakes and rivers, the Pierre Fire Department reminds everyone to be careful and always check the ice before venturing out on it. Because ice thickness and strength can vary greatly from one location to the next, a higher degree of caution must be used. Ian Paul, Captain of the Pierre Rescue Squad, stresses that “it is very important to never proceed onto a frozen lake or stream by yourself until you are confident the ice is safe. This ensures that if one of you falls through the ice, the other can contact emergency personnel as quickly as possible.”

For such calls, the Pierre Fire Department has recently purchased a new piece of ice rescue equipment called “Rescue Alive”. “Rescue Alive” enables rescuers to run over very thin ice by distributing their weight over a large surface or to paddle through open water to reach a victim quickly.

“The Rescue Squad determined a need in the community for a quicker mechanism to rescue a victim that has fallen through the ice”, said Paul. “The Rescue Alive was purchased to meet that need.”

“The unit is very light weight and provides up to 600 pounds of flotation”, said Paul. “The rescuer stays out of the water; so there is no need to crawl or swim to approach a victim. In the event that a dive rescue is necessary, this unit will support the weight of divers over thin ice so that water entry can be made at the exact location the victim submerged below the surface.”

This specialized piece of equipment was purchased with general funds from the City of Pierre, and monies donated by the Ethel Brandt Estate and the citizens of Pierre.

The Pierre Fire Department works safely and diligently to protect the lives and property of the citizens and visitors of Pierre, South Dakota from fire and other hazards. We utilize our available resources to deliver the highest possible quality of service through fire suppression and prevention, public education, rescue operations, and mitigation of the effects of natural and manmade disasters, while maintaining high standards of excellence and leadership with volunteer community services.