

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Timber-haul mission benefits National Forest, Sioux Tribe, Soldiers

Story by Sgt. Julieanne Morse
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CUSTER STATE PARK, S.D. – From the Soldier gaining experience, to having the forest cleaned, to Sioux Tribes receiving firewood, many gain from the Golden Coyote timber-haul mission.

The annual Golden Coyote training exercise, hosted by the South Dakota National Guard and conducted in cooperation with the National Forest Service and Custer State Park, provides a realistic training environment and valuable services to the public.

The 2113th Transportation Company, based in Paducah, Ky., transported timber from Custer State Park to Pine Ridge, S.D., June 12.

“It helps build their driving skills,” said 1st Lt. Kurt Fryberger, the officer-in-charge of the timber-haul mission with the 2113th Trans. Co. “It helps them with hauling loads on different types of terrain.”

Fryberger said their goal is to haul 70 truckloads of timber if the weather does not become a factor.

“This exercise is a great opportunity for units to tailor their training to their needs,” said Brig. Gen. Jeff Marlette, commander of forces for Golden Coyote.

The SDNG has partnered with the NFS and Custer State Park to give firewood to Sioux Tribes in South Dakota for the past six years.

The timber-haul mission helps the National Forest Service and Custer State Park.

“This mission cleans up the forest,” said Brent Foster, a timber program manager with the NFS who helps coordinate between the SDNG and the Oglala Sioux Tribe. “We don’t have to burn it up ourselves in order to clean up the forest; we can give it to them and fulfill their need for a heating source.”

Members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe benefit by receiving a heating source for the winter.

“A high percentage of homes here have wood stoves and utilize that wood as heat,” said Dennis Yellow Thunder, the natural resources technician for the Oglala Sioux Tribe. “That helps lower or eliminate the cost of propane or natural gas bills.”

Yellow Thunder oversees even and thorough distribution of the timber to all 10 districts on the reservation. The population on the Pine Ridge Reservation is approximately 18,000.

Tribal members use the timber for more than just firewood.

“Some wood is also used to build fences, corrals and shades,” said Yellow Thunder. “I used some last year to put up a fence.”

Marlette said, this exercise is a great testament to how we come together with the civilian public. It prepares our service members to meet homeland security missions and provide services to the public.

“The simple fact that this whole mission is about giving the tribe firewood, makes it special,” said Sgt. Alan Cruse, a truck driver with the 2113th Trans. Co. “We’re actually meeting the needs of somebody.”

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120612-A-QE403-020: Members of the 2113th Transportation Company, based in Paducah, Ky., strap down a load of timber at Custer State Park to travel to Pine Ridge, S.D. during the South Dakota National Guard’s Golden Coyote training exercise June 12, 2012. A partnership between the South Dakota National Guard and the National Forest Service provides timber for firewood for the Oglala Sioux Tribe. The Golden Coyote training exercise provides realistic training for service members and valuable services to the public. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Julieanne Morse)(RELEASED)



120612-A-QE403-048: Spc. Zac Herrmann, a horizontal construction engineer attached to the 340th Engineer Company based in New Kensington, Pa., grabs timber at Custer State Park using a hydraulic excavator to load onto a flatbed truck for transportation to Pine Ridge, S.D., during the South Dakota National Guard’s Golden Coyote training exercise June 12, 2012. The Golden Coyote timber-haul mission provides timber used for firewood to Sioux Tribes in South Dakota. The mission also helps clean up Custer State Park. The Golden Coyote training exercise provides realistic training for service members and valuable services to the public. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Julieanne Morse)(RELEASED)



120612-A-QE403-065: Spc. Zac Herrmann, a horizontal construction engineer attached to the 340th Engineer Company based in New Kensington, Pa., grabs timber at Custer State Park using a hydraulic excavator to load onto a flatbed truck for transportation to Pine Ridge, S.D., during the South Dakota National Guard’s Golden Coyote training exercise June 12, 2012. The Golden Coyote timber-haul mission provides timber used for firewood to Sioux Tribes in South Dakota. The mission also helps clean up Custer State Park. The Golden Coyote training exercise provides realistic training for service members and valuable services to the public. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Julieanne Morse)(RELEASED)



120612-A-QE403-143: Spc. Joshua Becker, an automated logistics specialist with the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, pushes timber off a flatbed truck using a forklift at Pine Ridge, S.D. June 12, 2012, during the South Dakota National Guard’s Golden Coyote training exercise. Members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe will use the timber for firewood in the winter among other things. The Golden Coyote training exercise provides realistic training for service members and valuable services to the public. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Julieanne Morse)(RELEASED)



120612-A-QE403-055: Spc. Zac Herrmann, a horizontal construction engineer attached to the 340th Engineer Company based in New Kensington, Pa., loads timber onto a flatbed truck at Custer State Park using a hydraulic excavator during the South Dakota National Guard's Golden Coyote training exercise June 12, 2012. The Golden Coyote timber-haul mission provides timber for firewood to the Oglala Sioux Tribe, and it helps clean up Custer State Park. The Golden Coyote training exercise provides realistic training for service members and valuable services to the public. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Julieanne Morse)(RELEASED)

FOR MORE INFORMATION please contact Maj. Anthony Deiss at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail pao@sd.ngb.army.mil.

Sgt. Alan Cruse

“This is my first trip to South Dakota.”

86 soldiers from the 2113

Mission

“Right now we are loading up timber. We are going to be Transporting it to an Indian reservation. Timber and firewood

“This is actually the first time we’ve hauled timber

“We’ve actually hauled timber before but it was more of straight logs, so this is kind of a different type of deal.”

“The roads have been the biggest challenge so far. Rain, off roads

The engineer company cleared the roads

“It’s not always easy when you work with another unit.”

“The driving experience on the different types of roads – his goal

“Anytime I can help out America period I feel grateful. The main reason I joined the guard.

“So far, with this being the first actual mission, we’ve got to go on. “The simple fact that the whole mission is giving them firewood, that makes it more special. We’re actually meeting the needs of somebody.”

“As horizontal engineers, we don’t do much timbering,” said Jones.

“It’s always good to have something new for Soldiers to train on,” said Fryberger.

“It has given me a lot of experience, said Spc. Kyle Jones, a 12N with the 340th Engineer Company.

“Some of this equipment, I’m new to. So, It’s given me good stick time.

“This mission cleans up the forest,” said Brent Foster, a timber program manager with the National Forest Service who helps coordinate between the SDNG and the Oglala Sioux Tribe. “We don’t have to burn it up ourselves in order to clean up the forest. We can give it to them and fulfill their need for a heating source.”