

Mark Neuzil -- Professor of Communication in Journalism at the University of Saint Thomas, in Minnesota *Changing Historical Perspectives With the Nature of Media Coverage: Two Minnesota Fires.*

Thanks to Steve and Lisa for inviting a journalist, and a journalism historian, here today, amongst all these really smart people. I'll just introduce myself. My name is Mark Neuzil. I teach at the University of St. Thomas, which, I used to say [and] leave it at that. And in fact, when I ran for the Board of Directors of the Society of Environmental Journalism, that was my platform: if you vote for me, come to visit in January. [Laughter] Everybody thought I was St. Thomas, and I let them think it was the Virgin Islands. [General laughter] And only after I won did I mention it was in St. Paul, Minnesota. So, that was why I was only elected once. No, I'm just kidding.

I teach in the journalism department at the University, and I also work as a journalist as well. I write a weekly environmental column for an outfit called MinnPost, which is a new experiment in journalism, based on the National Public Radio model. You may have read about it in the Times or elsewhere, where the idea being that MinnPost is organized as non-profit 501c3. We take members, like public radio does. We have membership drives; fundraisers; we take donations from corporations and their foundations and so on. And that's how the journalism is funded. It was started by the former publisher of the Star Tribune. And we've been up and running since I think about November 8<sup>th</sup> if I'm not mistaken. And it's MinnPost dot com. Its mostly upper Midwest news, but it does have some national reach occasionally.

And it's an attempt to figure out what's next. And I don't know if this is next or not, because they're not paying us like it's next. And my wife keeps saying 'are we going to ... you know, is this like going to be at the ground floor of Google or something like that' and I said 'naw, probably not.' [Laughter] But, it's a, you know, how they got us all to come work for them, and there's been so many layoffs in the journalism business lately, there's no shortage of labor. There are people, you know, lined up to work there -- even part time. So, it's interesting.

If you a chance to go to the website... I'll probably write about this session and feature Jack prominently -- since he is so controversial a, you know ,character -- tonight, and maybe it'll be posted by tomorrow, depending on how much I enjoy myself at the reception later. [General laughter]

Anyway ... when I got up this morning to come over, and I turned on the television ... you know, when you're a journalist and you travel, the first two ... the two things you do in every town are -- you buy the paper ... buy the local paper, and you watch the local TV news. That's what you do. So when I got up this morning, I turned on the local news, and I'm not sure, I don't think it was your station, but correct me if I'm wrong .....

[Rocky Barker?] -- My station's in Bozeman.

Wow. Okay. It wasn't your station and there were not one, but two fire stories this morning. Anybody else watch the 7:00 am news and see those stories? Two fire stories this morning: one was a carport burnt; ...

[Indecipherable]

... and the other was a cat got rescued. The house burned, but damn it, that fireman went in there and got that cat. And we had visual scene of the Fire Chief ... slow day for fires apparently, in Boise yesterday, 'cause the Chief went to the rescue of the cat. Or the other thing is, the Chief is smart enough to know -- and I don't know the Chief -- he's smart enough to know that a fire is going to be news. And I don't even care if it's a carport -- it's going to be news. Or a cat rescue -- it's going to be news. And so he went there to get on TV. Is he smart enough to do that? He is!? Yeah, Rocky says he is smart enough to do that. So that's what happened.

Here's why that's news: I mean, you think about it from as an objective a position as you can take, and you think a carport -- it's not even a fricking whole garage. [Laughter] It's just the roof, and, you know, some four by fours. Okay.

And then a cat. I'm not, you know, a cat person necessarily, but my understanding of pets ... you know the beauty of a pet is, if you lose one, you can get another one just like it. You know, you can even name it the same thing. Right? You just go and say give me another ... tabby, and name it 'Tabby' and then you've lost nothing. But anyway, the rest of you can.

So, from an objective standpoint, you think 'why is this taking up space on the 7:00 news? Isn't anything else going on that deserves attention? Why are fires, especially like this, why are they news?'

Well, they're news for several reasons. And in the news business, and in the scholars that study the news business, there are several criteria that have been established about what makes news and what doesn't make news. One of them is conflict. And firefighters fighting fire is conflict. Man versus nature kind of conflict, which is as old as Adam and Eve. You know, Martin Luther said 'before the Fall we all got along, and then after the Fall -- we didn't so much.' But, I'm kind of losing my train of thought here, but, anyway, the idea is TV viewers can recognize a red fire engine, they can recognize a guy in a dirty yellow firefighter suit, they can recognize charred wood -- or better yet, flames, and a captain standing there with hat with the [indecipherable] and the badge. And in 20 seconds you can tell the story. Boom! A fire. Ahh, cat saved. Thank god. And you're done. It's easy. And it's inexpensive. Right? It's inexpensive. You can go out there with one person, a hand held camera. That person can shoot the footage, get the chief ... get the audio from the chief. Come back. Edit it. Bang. Done. Easy. Cheap. People recognize it. It's news. Or so they say.

Now I would say that: it's lazy, to a certain extent; and also, partly built into this system, because all newsrooms have somebody listen to the police radio, somebody listen to the fire radio. And when it goes off, there's a process in place by which the story gets covered. Here's the address. I'll send a photographer. I'll send a reporter and a photographer. Off you go. There's an infrastructure in place

that's expensive. Paying somebody to sit there and listen to the radio. First of all, you have to have the radio equipment. Somebody listens to the radio. Cars to dispatch. Cameras and so on. That's all set into place. So, the system is set up to cover stuff like this. You can't not use it. Right? If you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail. And that's the case with the coverage of stuff like fires.

Now, what I wanted to do today was to look to see if the coverage of a fire from 2007 was any different than the coverage of a fire from 1894 -- in the newspaper. So, that's what I did.

Now, in my own work at the University, one of the things I look at is the history of reporting about the environment. And, this is condensing a whole bunch of stuff, but one of the things I've looked at, and sort of figured out, is that in the period prior to about 1968, you had a certain kind of coverage. After about 1968, it changes.

And probably the biggest thing that changes is that it is put into the beat system. In other words, somebody in the newsroom is assigned, full time usually, to write about it. Prior to 1968, there was not that. There was not that. A newspaper here and there, but, for the most part, no. Okay? So, as it gets into the beat system, you've got resources devoted to covering it, you've got sources, sometimes dedicated space, and so on. And that makes a big difference. Prior to 1968, not so much.

And one of the things we look at from the journalism side is how news gets covered, or how an issue gets defined. One way is through media attention of course. And journalism scholars sometimes call this a news frame. What's the frame of this story? What's ... how is this story defined in the coverage? And so, Steve said 'we're going to do WUI.' I said 'Steve, I don't really know you that well, but, ...' [general laughter] I didn't really know what that meant exactly. Okay? And so I looked it up. And I ... okay, wildland / urban interface. So that was what I was looking for in the coverage. One of the frames I thought I might find, especially in the 2007 coverage, was evidence of this. It's been around 20 years. Right? It's established, certainly in the scientific ... the fire science community. Right? It's legitimate. Let's see if it's in the paper. And so, off we go.

So the two fires I decided to take a look at were 1984 fire ... both of these are Minnesota -- partly because I'm lazy and I could just go down to the Minnesota Historical Society and look everything up at once -- but, 1894, Hinckley Fire, in Minnesota, killed at least 418 people ... hundreds hurt ... 480 square miles ... five counties ... all in one day. And then, last year, the Ham Lake Fire. And you guys [have] never heard of the Ham Lake Fire because it happens right before the big fires in the West. And so it was on CBS Evening News once. And then the next day, everything west of the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian burns, [light laughter] and Ham Lake goes away. Right? That's what happens. Nobody died ... which is good for us, bad for the journalism ... 11 injuries, almost all minor smoke inhalation -- that kind of thing ... 120 square miles. Thank god, most of that was in Canada. Don't have to worry about that. And then, most importantly perhaps, 140 buildings lost.

This is Ham Lake, which is in the US / Canada border, in -- or near -- the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. No structures allowed in there. Right? You can't ... no roads, no structures. So this was on the edge, on this interface. Ten year round homes, the rest are cabins ... pretty much ... cabins, and

some garages. A few outbuildings. But mostly summer cabins. Ten year round homes. Burned for 18 days. So you had plenty of chance, if you're a reporter, to cover it. You had at least 18 news cycles to write about it. And one of the problems of course, is going to be -- by about day 15 you're out of ideas. It's still burning. The Pope is still Catholic. There's a correlation here, right? [Light laughter] What am I going to say? What am I going to say?

The Hinckley Fire ... to start with, Hinckley is in east central Minnesota, in the St. Croix River Valley. And it's in a county called Pine County, which used to be covered with pine trees and was part of the Northern Forest -- thus the name Pine County. And I can dumb that down for you if you need it, but [general laughter] By the ... 1894 the pines are gone. It's been logged. It's done. Right? It's done. And you can see it is starting to look a lot like prairie in the background, right?

But, Hinckley is actually only one of the communities that catches on fire. And there are five or six other small towns. Hinckley has about a thousand people. And of that thousand, in Hinckley itself, about 250 are burned, and killed. So, about 25% of the population of the town dies. And it ... similar circumstances for other communities in that area.

So what I did was ... the fire was September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1894, and I went and started looking for newspaper coverage starting on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, and just followed it all the way through, to see what we could come up with.

And a couple things that I thought were interesting ... there were two railroads that served Hinckley, so you could get there if you were a journalist, right? Now, this is important. You got to have access. And the railroads ... [whoops sorry] let me take that back. There are three railroads that got there. One of them became inoperable, with tracks twisted in the flames and melted. There were two railroads that worked after the fire, so journalists could get there to see it for themselves, right? That's important. One of them was the St. Paul /Duluth.

Now the fire ... this is Hinckley itself right here ... the fire comes to Hinckley two ways. And maybe Steve, or Jack, or somebody, can tell me if this was typical. I don't know that much about the history of fire. But the ... in both cases, the fire traveled along the railroad tracks. Would that be ... possibly typical, or not? And it came from the south. So down here. So, a smaller fire came up this way, along these tracks. And a smaller fire came this way along these tracks. and they met right here, where theses tracks, unfortunately for Hinckley, combined right in Hinckley, right on the edge of town. And they turn into one big, big fire, and burned. And it ends up being parts of five counties that burned.

The fire ends up traveling this way, right through town, this way. And the people that lived, of the few that survived in Hinckley, ran and jumped in this gravel pit -- over here. And there were somewhere in the neighborhood of 100 people in this gravel pit, right here. About the other half of the town that tried to get away, ran into this swamp, along the Grindstone River, here. And that turned out to be not a good choice. The swamp burned over, and those 100 ... 127 bodies recovered from that swamp. And then everybody else flees north, along the tracks, because that's kind of like a road, but that's the path the fire took as well. There was a huge lumber yard here -- Brennan Lumber Mills, that burned. The

whole town, essentially, was ... you can see a few structures left, but not all that many. Whole town was gone. The lumber mills ... this is the lumber mill in winter beforehand. You can see ... 28 million board feet burned ... lumber mill burnt to the ground ... 28 million board feet burnt. There was another 8 million board ... cut timber but not milled yet, in the holding pond, and that burned as well. So, we had a ... pretty close to 40 million board feet burned in the Brennan Mill.

The watchman at the Brennan Mill, who also died .... I went through the list of people who died, and he was the only name that I thought I sort of recognized. And his name was Boston Corbett. Does anybody know that name? He was the guy who claimed to have killed John Wilkes Booth. And the only reason I even knew that was because my wife and kids went to Washington a couple of months before I did this work, and they went to the Ford Theater and they came back with all this information about the ... about Lincoln. And so I said 'I think I've seen that name somewhere.' I think this is the same guy ... and it may have been, may not have been. But he's listed among the dead. And his age would have been about right, so it's possible. Anyway, he was the watchman here.

That's what the ... that's what the mill looked like.

Now, first frame that I saw was prominent in the coverage was that of 'forest fire.' This was mentioned as a 'forest fire' from every place ... from the New York Times to London newspaper, Chicago, everywhere else. It's always 'forest fire', 'forest fire', 'forest ....' The towns are not mentioned very much. The villages are not mentioned very much. It's all about the forest. Even though, in this case, the 'forest' is pretty much gone from this area. It had already been logged off. The peak lumber production from this part of the state had passed. This has [been] logged over already. It's being ready ... made for agriculture. But the reporters who came, and those that wrote about it, continued to call it a 'forest fire.' I just thought that was interesting. I'm not sure what that means, but we'll bring that up again in a second.

The cities and the towns and the villages, and even the farms, are pretty much ignored. And ignored most of all of course, were the Native Americans. The Chippewa had a settlement there, and a Chippewa had a hunting lodge down that railroad track. And there were 28 Chippewa males in that hunting lodge and they all died in the fire. And you would not even know that until long time later. They didn't get mentioned at all, which is not all that surprising actually.

The second frame ... and this relates to what we were talking about before a little bit with Mark, was that there's a 'hero.' In a fire like this there's going to be a 'hero.' There's got to be a 'hero.' This is an old, old newspaper idea, old media idea actually, and there's a guy at Lehigh University named Jack Lule, who's identified master myths in the news, and the 'hero' as a continuing - call it stereotype, iconic type, whatever you might call it -- appears all the time. We know how to write about that. Rocky knows how to write about 'heroes.' I do too. That's what we've been trained to do. And in the case of this fire the 'hero' is one of the engineers, James Root, who was just making his regular run from Duluth to St. Paul. He drives right into the fire. Passenger train drives right into it. Thinks 'oh' darn it!' [General laughter] stops the train at the depot at Hinckley. And the town is, by now, ablaze. He opens the doors.

Everybody who's at the depot piles in. He puts the train in reverse, and he drives it backwards -- as far as he can get. And everybody on the train -- not everybody -- but almost everybody on the train lives.

So, in the coverage following, James Root is the 'hero.' He is such a hero that somebody writes a play about him. They take it to vaudeville. He appears for one week and one week only, on vaudeville. He gets 500 bucks. He retires. [General laughter] He's also, by the way, he was the chief engineer on General Sherman's advance train through Georgia. So, he had a ... he had an interesting life.

He backed his train up to a lake called Skunk Lake, and that was as far as he could get it. And he opened the doors and people jumped into the lake. And most of them made it. Not all -- but most of them lived after jumping into the lake. This was a prominent part of the coverage. This is his heroic act. And usually, you know, the deer don't stand there idly by watching the burning train, [great general laughter] so there's a little artistic rendition going on here. But, you can kind of get the idea.

Now there was another 'hero,' too. And I was absolutely flabbergasted by this. The porter, his name was John Blair, and he was a black man, is covered as a 'hero,' although there were plenty of racial stereotypes in the coverage. He was on the train and helped people either on or off, and is prominently mentioned also. And, I was surprised by that. I was surprised by that. And now somebody's written a children's book about it, which is kind of interesting. But a 'hero's story' you see commonly.

And in the third frame I wanted to mention was one of 'order restoration.' This is sort of an idea of mine. That the media ... one of the ways the media supports the social structure, among many ways, the existing social power structure, is to make sure the citizens know everything is going to be okay. Right? We'll fix it if it's broken. We'll make it happy if it's sad. We'll help. And that was a big part of the story of the Hinckley Fire. The Red Cross is coming. Second day -- Red Cross on the scene. Rescue trains coming from Duluth and St. Paul with supplies, blankets, and so on. We'll help you. We'll rebuild. We'll be better. That theme runs throughout these stories.

New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, Twin Cities, doesn't matter. Somewhere in there, somebody is quoted as saying 'we will rebuild.' How many times do you see that? Right? You see that all the time. Nelly Bly was probably the most famous journalist to cover the Hinckley Fire. She came from the New York Tribune. It took her about six days to get there. But, her stories ... even her stories prominently feature this theme -- 'order restoration.' The Red Cross builds a house in Hinckley for [] can hold about four people, but ... I guess they did what they could. That's the Red Cross, homes for victims in Hinckley. And then, Hinckley is rebuilt.

And the 'order restoration' theme often has an economic component, and it did in the case of Hinckley. And my favorite was, if I could read you the quote, and this is speaks to exactly what folks were talking about already. This is from the Hinckley paper itself. Not only was order restored but forest fires can actually have an upside. What might that be? We've cleared the land for farming! Hey! We're ahead of the game here; 418 dead -- ehh. So, here's the editor of the Hinckley paper: "the ground is almost ready for the plow. [General laughter] Fire on September 1, did in 15 minutes, what it would take the

husband to man, 15 years to accomplish. All nature is with us. Its seemingly knows our needs, and came to clear the land.” Nice!

And this is part of a transition period for the state of Minnesota, you know, once white pine production built Kansas City, built Des Moines, you know, all the lumbering, it’s in a transition period to agriculture. And Hinckley’s no exception to that.

Now, compare that to the coverage of Ham Lake Fire. This is Ham Lake -- the dotted ... you’re probably not going to be able to see ... the gray line is the US/Canada border, the red is the Ham Lake Fire, the green are prescribed burns previously, the black is the only road to the area. There’s only one road in and one road out. These are last year’s fires -- **Tabby Lake**, over here, and over here. These would have been 2006.

Now, what happens is -- fire starts right here. The winds blowing this way, blows across these narrows; turns this way, runs into last year’s burn. Whoops, no fuel there. Heads to Canada. Whooh, thank god. Off it goes to Canada, runs into this big lake. Turns this way. The wind shifts. Burns back down. Uh oh, we got another problem Houston. Here it comes back across the border. This lake’s the border here. Hops the border right here. They were ready for it, but the prescribed burn didn’t matter. Kept going. Burns all through here. Back across the road, back into the boundary waters. Eighteen days later it’s out. Okay.

Now, the problem is of course, this check line is the Boundary Waters border, and [\[indecipherable\]](#) border, you cannot have any structures in here, you can’t have any motors in here or anything. So there’s nothing in here to burn but trees and brush. But, along this road here, what’ve we got? Big homes. Summer cabins and resorts. And a lot of them. And some of them are really expensive, okay? So, there’s where it started. It goes this way. See ... kind of little bits ... some of the ... here’s a big old place right there. Off it goes.

Now, reading the coverage of this, I found no mention of the word ‘forest fire’ -- ever. I looked two places. I read all the Associated Press coverage and all the St. Paul Pioneer Press coverage. And, nobody ever called it a ‘forest fire.’ It was called a ‘wildfire’, always. Never a ‘forest fire.’ So I called Steve, and I said ‘Steve, how come, 100 years ago we called them ‘forest fires’ and in 2007, that term isn’t used any more, it’s always ‘wildfires’?’ And Steve said ‘I’duno.’ [\[General laughter\]](#) And so, it was a lot of help, but .... So I don’t know.

Now, there weren’t any ‘heroes.’ None of the coverage had ‘heroes.’ Only once in the coverage, and this 18 plus days from two news sources, two guys were called a ‘hero’ -- one day. And these were two guys who were on the Gunflint Trail, ran over to the neighbor’s house and turned on his sprinkler system. And then got the hell out of there. That was it. And they’re called ‘heroes’, and they were the only ‘heroes.’ Now, there was no lives saved; there’s no drama there. Nothing would naturally fit into that news frame, so maybe that’s not so surprising. But, plenty of firefighters, flames, and so on. No deaths, [\[only\]](#) minor injuries. So I’m thinking that might have something to do with it ... even though it burned 18 days and cost several million dollars to put out.



'Order restoration' is still there however. And in this case it's not about clearing the land for agriculture, 'cause you can't farm it anyway. What's it about? It's about tourism. All the stories are about 'gosh, I hope people decide to still come here for vacation this summer, even though there's no trees left.' All the stories had something to do with tourism. Keeping tourist coming. Keeping the economic restoration going. and the quotes, of which I will read you one, reflect that. For example ... oh, let's find a good one here ... "Business As Usual" was one headline. They need more people than ever to come up, "but as a community we've always been strong and stuck by each other. We will rebuild." "But how, oh how, to explain that to potential tourists." So, they're worried about ... 'order restoration' is a theme, but ....

One thing I didn't find, I thought I would, was something relate specifically to this wildland / urban interface, now you guys have talked about already, and that is the story about 'what are these idiots doing building a house up here.' Right? That whole idea about 'what is this house doing in the wilderness.' Which, apparently, is a western theme all the time, right? It is not here. It's not here. And I looked for it. And I could not find it. There was no mention of that ... 'why are these people building a house in the forest?' Or 'why are we wasting tax payer's money, and a lot of it, saving somebody's barn?' Those stories didn't show up. Why not? I can only speculate. One thing I might say is that, because Minnesota had such a strong history of that 'cabin up north,' that that never really occurred to anybody. It's your birthright, if you live in Minnesota, to have a second property, on a lake, in the woods, preferably in Wisconsin, where the taxes are lower .... [General laughter] Nonetheless, it is your birthright to have that. And so that's not even a question. That does not come up in this coverage. And I was surprised by that. I really was.

So, as we said, we compare the eras -- economic restoration in both. I realize this is not a complete comparison, because the eras are different, and so on. Fire death rate has been dropping. Number of wildfires stays the same. The effectiveness of the firemen and the firewomen are clearly here. And then I have a shameless plug for my next book, which doesn't relate to this issue that much at all except it's a history of environmental journalism, and Steve said I could put that up. So, time for questions. Anybody got any?

Applause

?? -- Yeah a question on the Ham Lake Fire, I can contend that [indecipherable] six fires were the most scientifically to happen in this country, because they occurred in the area where we had 1999....

BN -- [indecipherable], that's right.

?? -- ... and various fuel treatments [indecipherable] and all of the issues of the fire community [indecipherable] satellite sensing over the area. I assume that never came up in any of the news stories?

BN -- I'm sorry. I should have mentioned that, and I did. I was remiss. One of the things I wanted to mention, related to your point exactly, was that, one of the things I thought was interesting about the coverage was, these fires, to me, were treated almost like a sports story, in that there was data and



statistics every single day. And it was number of acres burned, number of hours the fire's been burning. There was data galore, you know, and photographs ... satellite ... all that stuff was available to the press, and was used. And I'm wondering ... even at the exclusion of other stories. Right? So you had ... you had number of structures burned, number of structures not burned, number of structures still in the way .... A lot of that data, you know, how many acres in the blow down was on fire versus how many outside the blow down ... here's what we ... all that stuff was there, almost like a sports story. Like the political writers always write about polls and nothing else, that kind of thing.

?? -- I was in California when the [indecipherable] Fire was going on, around Thanksgiving. If what you're just referring to, a difference between having ... the video media seem to do those kinds of stories now.

BN -- Yeah.

?? -- The print media are kind of documenting the day by day statistics stuff, but the news guys with the cameras sticking in the face of the guy watching his house burn up, or taking up those human interest stories and running with it .... I mean that's almost all their coverage was.

BN -- I ... I would agree. And I would also mention, too, that the limitation here is that this is on the edge of cell phone territory, ladies and gentlemen. You ... you've got about a one out of ten chance of getting hooked up with your cell phone. If you have a satellite phone, and AP did, but I mean ... and most of the people that were prepared ... reporters that were prepared did, but if you didn't -- your chances of actually getting through were small. And so, the TV stations ... not to pick on TV, but the TV stations that went up there without the proper equipment, had to turn around and go get it. And so, that slowed things down somewhat, and you didn't get .... A fire in Malibu is like across the street from NBC. Right? So the guy ... you just roll up the window and stick a camera out and then I got it. Reminds me of when I was at Quad City Times in Davenport, Iowa, and Cary Grant died across the street from the newspaper, at the hotel. And the old photographer, who had a serious drinking problem, who we left in the newsroom only to develop film, was the only guy around, and so he kind of stumbles out the front door, somebody swings the door open for him, click click click. He gets Cary Grant's body being wheeled out on the gurney. He didn't leave our building. And there's Cary Grant coming out on the stretcher into the ambulance. He goes back up and develops the film, and ... his whole career was made. [laughter]

?? -- In line with that I had a similar comment about the [indecipherable] issues in the Forest Service [indecipherable]

BN -- Yes.

?? -- [indecipherable], and I was just wondering, what I see happening in, certainly the Missoula area where I live, is that the longer a fire goes on the more interesting the media coverage gets, because they're forced to go deeper, and find some of the really interesting issues that [indecipherable] in 2000, in the Bitterroot Valley area ...

BN -- Yes.

?? -- Did you see that even [indecipherable] any increase in the complexity of kinds of ...

BN -- I'd like to say ...

[indecipherable]

BN -- I'd like to say yes, but I don't think I saw it as much as I would have liked, because ... and I should say, I didn't cover this at all myself. I only looked at ... one of the reasons I picked this one is because I didn't do any of the reporting on it. So I wanted to have that. But ... I would have liked to see more of that complexity, and I didn't really see it. I saw a heck of a ... it happened right before the wall eye fishing opened, I should point out, [laughter] so I saw lots of stories about how this is going to affect the fishing, which is an economic story as well, right? I would have liked to have seen more stories about what happens after the fire is gone. What comes next? The blow down ... you know, that kind of stuff. And I'm sorry to say, I didn't get a lot of that.

?? -- One more.

?? -- Okay.

?? -- How successful was anybody in getting public education messages out -- how to protect your home ...?

BN -- About the same as usual.

?? -- Okay.

BN -- You know, we're going to have a fire up there again this year. We ... since the blow down ... '99, there's been a fire every year. Now, this was more newsworthy, quote unquote, because it's on the Gunflint Trail, burning structures. But there's no ... people are still, you know, putting their cabins up. and the only public education piece that I saw, was interesting, was somebody from the Forest Service one day provided data about how many structures didn't burn versus how many did, and what did they have. And the variable that was stressed was the sprinkler system. The ones that didn't burn. So if I was running a hardware store in Gran Marie, I sold every damn sprinkler I had. Because everybody wanted one. But as Jack said, you've got to be there to turn it on. And then you've got to have fuel for it -- or it doesn't work very well. And so, what guys were doing was putting little propane tanks full of fuel there and running them. Well, I guess that's flammable. Is that right? I don't know. And when you get ... and firefighters, they like that. Don't they? Where they run up to a place and all of a sudden -- BOOM -- propane tank goes up. What was that? That was for my ... for my sprinklers. Thank you very much. Yeah. Anyway ....

I guess that's all.

?? -- All right, thank you.

Applause