

Fire Chief Lehr remembered at packed firefighter's funeral in Medora

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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A brotherhood of firefighters, emergency service workers, law enforcement officers, family and friends said goodbye to Medora Fire Chief Kenny Lehr Saturday morning at a packed Southwestern High School.

The funeral service started at 10 a.m. The public was seated first, then fellow firefighters and others in emergency service and law enforcement filed in one by one in moving fashion.

Outside it was blustery and cold with a small amount of snowfall, but inside there were warm but emotional feelings about a man who meant so much to the community of Medora and the fire department.

Lehr, 59, of Fidelity, died in an accident that involved a Medora fire truck. Firefighters were in the process of shutting down Highway 111 for a medical helicopter could land when the incident happened.

Lehr had been fire chief since 2006 and served with the fire department and emergency services for 22 years.

Earl Nixon, president of the board of trustees for the Medora Fire District, said Lehr's loss had been a sad situation for the firefighters.

"I had worked with him at Olin Winchester for a number of years and he retired at the end of December this past year and had about 40 years of service," he said. "I worked with him for a lot of years. I was in maintenance and when he had problems with his machine I was there to work with him. He was looking forward to retiring."

Nixon described Lehr as a person dedicated to his community and helping others.

"He was a good friend and a great guy," he said. "He was always willing to help others."

Nixon said there had been an outpouring of condolences for Lehr from not only local people but from those throughout the country.

"Gov. Rauner called his widow," Nixon said. "His situation has been given a lot of support through community."

Father William Kessler, who officiated the funeral, said Lehr would be remembered for his work as a chief, his time at Olin, his family and much more.

"Everything he did speaks of what we have heard in the Gospel," he said.

Kessler added that death is not the end but merely a moment and each of us who believe in God will be raised to the heavens.

Firemen wrote some fond memories of Lehr and those were read on his behalf. One fireman said: "He always looked out first for everyone else."

Another said: "He was my friend as well as the chief. I will miss my friend."

One fireman mentioned at fire department meetings, his wife, Janelle, would be there and always make the other firefighters smile at how much he cared about her and his family and other firefighters. He said Kenny and Janelle's love and concern for one another was a solid example for other firefighters to follow.

Brad Bott, a Brighton firefighter, said his comrade did a lot for the Medora community and had been with the fire department for many years.

“His attitude was to do his best for the community,” Bott said.

One firefighter said it best about the fire chief: “He always got the job done and kept us tied together and because of him we are better people and firefighters under his tutelage.”

Fire Chief Prays

**You have called me to many duties Lord
and now You, might call me home.
And I will be ready,
For I know, I will not walk it alone
For you are with me always.**

**I knew one day, I would have to leave
the ones I love alone
To stand before your throne.**

**I'll not complain, its not my way
But there are some things, I'll ask this day.
Lord, if it be your will,
please grant these to me**

**For the loved ones I hold dear.
I ask for them the best, with no fear
I dare to ask this because I know
How you've blessed us in the past.
and how you stood by us so true and so fast.**

**I've learned to trust in your grace, O Lord,
That's how I've come this far.
So now, O God, I humbly pray
Please Hear this Fire Chief's prayer.**

**If you must end my life
Please Bless my Family and my wife**

**They're so often left alone,
and sitting there at home
They know about what I do,
The pain I seen and where I've been
In you, O Lord they've Trust
For me to return home again.**

**And Lord if I must go be with you
and have to wait for them
Please Keep them within the faith
so that one day, Someday,
we'll be together in your place.**

**And O dear God, bless my men
I'll trained them to give their best.
I tried to do your will with them
and lead them though all their test.
I know you will be with them Lord
Or else how can I go to enjoy
that place Eternal in the Heaven in that Fire Station Not made by hands and of
endless day.**

**To a place called heaven, where there is no night
No fires to burn or kill, only joy delight**

**I guess that's why when it's my turn to rest,
I'll know that they'll give their best**

**And Lord, be with my community
And keep it safe as it can be
For all its folks they are special,
and very dear to me.**

**They are all my friends,
and by your grace I serve them**

**So hear this Fire Chief's prayer, O Lord
And if your will, grant it please if you would
-- Just as I already knew, that you always could.**

Amen





