Fire Safety – In Case of Fire Fatality File

Man who died in Bennington barn fire remembered as ‘funny, smart, stubborn, loyal’

Aman described as free-spirited, talented and loyal has been identified as the person killed Thursday in a fire at a Bennington horse barn.

Nathan Dietrich, 32, died of smoke inhalation, the Nebraska State Fire Marshal Agency said.

Dietrich was an employee of Heartland Farms, 23203 Dutch Hall Road, where the fire occurred.

“Funny, smart, stubborn, loyal,” is how the staff at the Nebraska Equine Veterinary Clinic described Dietrich in a Facebook post.

“We loved him like a brother,” they wrote. “Nate’s death weighs heavily on our hearts, and we know that our grief is nothing to that of his family.”

Dietrich is survived by his parents, William and Esther Dietrich of Omaha, and a sister, Claire Kosmicki. His family listed “special friend Staci and family,” as additional survivors. The obituary also notes that he married Megan Stevenson in 2010.

Fire investigators determined that the fire, reported about 6:10 a.m. Thursday, was accidental.

According to the veterinary clinic, Dietrich died from injuries suffered while trying to rescue horses.

A gathering of friends and family will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday at the Braman Mortuary Southwest Chapel at 6505 S. 144th

St. Memorial donations can be made through Braman Mortuary or through the Paypal fund “Donate to William Dietrich.”

Dietrich is a 2008 graduate of Millard North High School. As a kid, he could be found climbing to the top of a streetlamp, playing in the river, skateboarding or building a neighborhood project, his family wrote in his obituary. He had an artistic streak and enjoyed drawing, painting, cooking and playing the guitar and banjo. He also enjoyed reading and discussing books.

His family wrote in their obituary that Nathan’s desire would be for people to celebrate his life by sitting around a campfire and sharing stories.

Heartland Farms is a noted horse facility that breeds, sells, trains and shows horses. It is owned by Blair and Karen Cudmore.

In addition to supporting Dietrich’s family, the horse community has come together to support the Cudmores.

The veterinary clinic has posted a list of items the farm needs at nebraskaequine.com

The Omaha Equestrian Foundation is taking tax-deductible donations on the farm’s behalf.