

Diana: What is your name?

Kim: Kim Hazen.

Stan: Stan Hazen.

Diana: And where do you live?

Stan: Our address is Protection but we live seventeen miles southeast of Ashland.

Diana: What is your occupation?

Kim: I work here in town for the Home Lumber and Supply and I am the office manager.

Diana: Okay, and Stan?

Stan: Farming, ranching, and tree trimming.

Diana: And how old are you?

Kim: I am fifty-seven.

Stan: Sixty.

Diana: When did you first become aware of the Starbuck Fire, hereafter referred to as the fire that occurred on March 6th?

Kim: I was in Wichita. March 6th is my birthday, and I had to take my brother to Wichita, and he was to have surgery, and that didn't work out, they had canceled it. So Stan called me probably around 1:30 or 2:00 and said that there was a fire down south of Minneola and down in Oklahoma. Not to worry about it because it probably wasn't going to make it up here, but to just be aware of it. Because when I was coming home, there was a fire over there by Cullison. So we kind of knew about that fire and the wind was coming up, so that's when I knew that the fire had started down there.

Diana: When did you know, Stan?

Stan: Well, I saw the smoke coming from the southwest, and I had been over here at Ashland earlier, and I saw the fire trucks getting ready to leave town. That was in the morning, and I asked Bill Neier, who drives a tanker for Ashland, and I asked him where the fire was, and he said it was quite a ways south of Englewood, somewhere over in there, and I said, "You guys be careful," and that was the beginning of that day. I went on about my business and then later on the smoke started coming closer toward Ashland. I hooked up my 1,000 gallon water tank and had my hired man helping me. Well, he wasn't with me then, but I came over to Ashland and set at the Ashland Feed and Seed. The smoke was real heavy southwest of Ashland, and mainly I was just going to be a nurse tank to help the fire trucks. Anyway, the fire was... the smoke just rolled, and rolled, and rolled. Then Kim called and said that the smoke was getting heavy at home, and I thought, "How could it be

getting heavy at home when it's southwest of Ashland?" Well apparently the fire from the north was coming south, the wind was already in the motion of changing, and she said that the smoke was really getting heavy at home. So I turned around at Ashland Feed and Seed and started home.

Diana: Do you know about what time it was.

Stan: Wasn't that around 4:30 or 5?

Kim: Yeah.

Stan: I think. I've got pictures and kind of documented it that way. But I started home and the smoke was rolling pretty fast in front of me as I was headed east out of... about four miles east on the dirt road from Ashland to Sitka. Anyways, I had met a vehicle or two, and I had that 1,000 gallon water tank on, I couldn't just turn around anywhere, but I was hell bent for election that I was going to get home because she said the smoke was getting heavy there. I drove through the smoke thinking I'd be through it within a hundred yards. Well, at a hundred yards, I still couldn't hardly see the front hood of the pickup, and I was really, really concerned, and worried for my own life at that point. I couldn't turn around, I couldn't go forward very fast, not knowing if I was going to run off the road and into the ditch. I knew that there was a culvert.

Diana: Were you seeing any flames, or were you just seeing smoke?

Stan: It was all just smoke at that time, but I guess there was a flame coming off of our pasture on the north side of the road, as I came to what we call the Underwood place west of Sitka a couple miles, and so that's where I thought, "I can go a hundred yards and I'll be past it, I'll beat it." Well, with seventy plus mile an hour winds and sand blowing, I couldn't see past the hood of the pickup. I slowed down to probably five or ten mph, thinking, "Just keep in the middle of the road, stay steady." With the wind blowing from the north to the southeast, I kept trying to keep straight and it was hard to do.

Diana: Was your trailer moving around?

Stan: No, I mean I wasn't going very fast, but I saw a creosote post on my left side about three foot from my door, and I thought, "Well, I'm about to run into my fence on the north side of the road." So I tried to correct and I turned to the south a little bit, and at the same time I thought, "I don't have any creosote posts, I've got hedge posts." So I was really confused of where I was at. I had no clue where I was at that time. Well, it ended up that I drove through the neighbor's fence on the south side of the road at an angle. I drove through his fence and out of his fence and hit I don't know how many bales of grass hay there of Jim Browns. They were already on fire but I didn't see that they were on fire until I hit them. When I hit those, the flames and the ashes and the embers went forty or fifty feet in the air. I felt like I was inside of an oven. If you can just imagine the heat on the side windows. I couldn't roll down the window to see, I was gasping somewhat for air, but I just could do nothing. I was in the Lord's hands. When I hit those grass bales that were already probably halfway burnt up, which dry grass burns fast, but with the momentum of the water trailer behind me, I bulldozed through, I don't know, thirty or forty bales of grass hay.

Diana: Were these big bales?

Stan: Big round bales. I thought then, “Don't let this pickup...” it was a 2015 Dodge pickup flatbed, I thought, “Don't let the computer bog me down,” so many of them will just shut down. That pickup did a great job, it just kept going. I got through and apparently drove through another fence, still couldn't see. But I got through the grass bales and got out into the pasture, which was south of our property, three or four hundred yards to the south. I realized that the fire had already gone through and I was safe other than some of those grass bales stuck in the grill guard, and my pickup was on fire. I was like, “Oh gosh, what do I do?” I stopped after I got out there a ways and took the hose off of my trailer, started my motor, but I didn't have enough hose to get in front of my pickup, all I could do was just squirt water over the hood. But with the wind still blowing, gusty winds you know, it didn't take long before... I had the door open and I was trying to get everything salvaged that I could out of my pickup. I opened the door and I could see fire coming up through the floorboard of my pickup; I knew it was too late, I couldn't do anything about it. I got everything that I could off of the back of my pickup, and what upset me more than anything, after it was all said and done, is I had my bookkeeping for my cows and calves for the last ten years, of what calf they had, what cow had this calf, you know, bull or a heifer. All that was gone in just a matter of seconds. That hurt me more than anything else that I could have lost on that pickup.

Diana: So did you save the trailer, the water tank?

Stan: The water trailer was fine. The bed of the pickup, it just barely singed the front headache rack on the pickup bed. Tool boxes were fine, didn't burn the paint at all, but from the cab forward, it got so hot that it melted the glass. They say that it takes 2,200 degrees of heat to melt glass. Well, I guarantee you it melted it. It was hot.

Diana: So did somebody come along and find you?

Kim: When did you call me? He called me when... he called me and said, “Call 911, my pickup is on fire.” So I hung up and called Ashland, of course, and Lindsey says, “Well Kim, we don't have any fire trucks.” So I said, “I'm not concerned about the truck itself, I just need somebody to go find him.” She said, “We'll do what we can.” I called Trent Hazen, who was behind Stan there at Sitka, and he was in his big water truck, and I said...

Stan: Tank truck.

Kim: And I said, “Trent can you get to Stan?” He said “I can't. The flame are so high that I can't go through it.”

Diana: So he was on the east side of Sitka?

Stan: No,

Kim: No, he was coming from Ashland, he was in Ashland also.

Stan: He was behind me.

Diana: He was behind you, okay.

Kim: So I said, “Okay,” and I just hung up with him because I thought, “Well, he can't help me.” So I called Jule, who I knew would be on the other side. I called Jule and told him what the deal was. I said, “There is

nobody in Ashland that can get to him. Can you go?" He goes "Well, we'll get it taken care of." So that's how that started, and then Steve was there on his Polaris, so Jule said, "He left, but I'll find him."

Stan: Tell them what Jule said.

Kim: I'm about to cry. Jule said he was going to call Jeremy until Jeremy said, "We're never going to see our dad again, because he said he could see the fire, and he could hear..." Stan was out there in it, and his dad was going to go through it to find him. He said he just knew they would both be dead, he said there was just... you know.

Diana: So do you have any idea of how long it took Steve to get there?

Stan: Well, the thing is, the fire was already past me. It was just the smoke, the different fence posts and things, but Steve... I saw Steve go by me on the road, which I was south of the road 300 yards out there, kind of over a little ridge. Steve went on past me and I don't know whether I called him, but anyways he turned around and came back east and I was waving. It was clear, because it was buffalo grass where I was at, and it just burnt through and that was it, but where he was driving, the ashes, he couldn't see. His eyes were full of smoke and embers and dust and everything else.

Diana: So the smoke you were driving through, was it grey, or was it that black smoke?

Stan: It was mostly grey the way I remember it.

Diana: So once he found you, what did you do? I mean how did you feel about them actually...

Stan: Well, I said, "Let's get the hell outta here. There's nothing left here for us." I had taken a saw or two and a few tools off the bed of my pickup and set them out in the open. I knew I still wasn't home and I knew his house was in danger. He took me to my house, to my farm.

Kim: First you went to his house to get the pickup, his pickup, wasn't it? Because you were on the Polaris. He went by Wilson's house when it just started on fire and took a picture of it just starting on fire on the back side of the house, Matt's house. His parent's house, had it burned yet?

Stan: No, it was on fire too.

Kim: So then you went to Steve and Kelly's and got the pickup and then he drove you down to...

Stan: And he drove off the road. We couldn't see on the highway. I could see the yellow line on the pasture side and I knew he was too far on the north side. But he got me to the farm and helped me... I started my tractor and it might have been a little low on hydraulic fluid because it wasn't wanting to steer at first, it's a four wheel drive Versatile. I mean, I knew that was my only opportunity. Finally the tractor started steering and everything, and we hooked up to my disk. At that time, I do believe he went back to his house, but thank God he helped me hook it up. At that point I went up, which is three quarter of a mile from our farm there where we live, the fire was coming... it had already went through once, but there was a wheat field that belonged to my neighbor Sam Mosshart, and it had burnt past that, but just about the time that I got there, it started flaming up. It was Old World Bluestem, so it was like three foot tall fuel out there. The wind was still blowing hard. Well, that thing

just kept shooting fire and I couldn't see with my tractor. I ran through the fence a few times. I ran through it and backed up sometimes and I ran into a ditch on the neighbor's trying to disk the fire and the flames down, but I just about couldn't take it with all the smoke in my tractor.

Diana: So how close was it to your house?

Stan: It got within thirty or forty feet of the house. But it had already shot through there, and apparently there was... I just learned this the other day that the firemen or some fire truck had been there.

Kim: Oh really?

Stan: Yeah.

Kim: I didn't know that.

Stan: But it followed the trail. I mean it stayed on the west, southwest side of our house, and it was burning equipment and tires and things south of the house. That was just... the good Lord was watching over everybody.

Diana: So were you in the house? Or where had you gone?

Kim: I came home and I was meeting all the people from Ashland that were headed to Coldwater. So I wondered why everybody... I didn't even know at that time that people were being evacuated. And I thought they kept looking at me when they met me on the highway like, "You're crazy girl, where are you going?" So I thought, "I'll get to the house," and by that time maybe was when... I don't know, did you leave to go then to Ashland? I was mad because I thought, "Why is he going?" because I thought it might get bad here because it was all with the wind coming up. And so I started carrying stuff. We have a...

Stan: Storm shelter.

Kim: Yes, storm shelter, so I carried a few of our personal things. Pictures, that kind of stuff. Oh I was so exhausted. About five times down there and then I came in the house. It was light out and I came in and I thought, "That's all I can do. I'm going to video a little bit on my phone." By that time I had talked to the kids, and Jeremy had said, "Mom, video the house." So I thought "Okay." I turned around and it was pitch dark, and I thought, "My God, it's nine o'clock. I've been here for six hours." Then I looked up and it was 5:30. I live on a dead end road, so I thought, "Man, if I don't get out of here, what am I going to do?" So I called him and I thought I could just go down into the tornado shelter. He said, "No, you can't do that, the smoke will get you." So I thought, "Okay." I never thought about going... I did think about going to the pond if I couldn't get down the road. I never really thought about a wheat field. But I ended up... I kept my door open and I could see the dirt where I was and I made it into Protection. I didn't drive real fast. There were several people that were out on the road. I didn't know if there were going to be cattle out that I would hit, but I did make it into town.

Diana: Did you get evacuated from there?

Kim: From Protection? Yes, I had just got to Protection to the folks that were at Teresa and Gary Jellison's, and that's when the cops came by and said everybody needed to go to Coldwater. So we loaded everything up and went and I spent the night in Coldwater.

Diana: So where did you go?

Kim: We went... actually Roy Hoffman has a little house over there, a little rental that he uses, so we all stayed there. The Hazens all came, Kelly and the kids and Heidi and Amy and so we all stayed there. The Humphreys came.

Diana: So at your house, do you have any cattle, or anything like that that you had to make...

Kim: No, the cattle were down on the wheat that was west of us.

Diana: So they were far enough away?

Kim: Yeah, east of the house. So they were far enough, they were okay.

Diana: So was this the first time you had ever heard about wheat fields being safe?

Kim: Yeah, I never even thought... I didn't think about it. I really didn't. I guess I was in the mode that I needed to get gone, although, somebody when I got to Coldwater, they said "Well have you talked to Stan?" And I said "No, I was too afraid to call him back." I called the sheriff's station and I asked, "Did anybody find Stan?" At that time they told me your brother did. They said, "David has him." So I knew he was safe that way. Well, then when I called Jule back and I said, "You don't need to go look for Stan, they found him." Then he goes, "Yeah I know, Dad found him." So that got a little messed up. I think David and the cop was down there and saw Steve and Stan when they came back out.

Diana: So up there where the trucker...

Kim: Oh were they? Oh, okay.

Stan: At 2:20 of March 6, I was to Ashland and I saw the real heavy smoke. My next picture was at 5:45 and my pickup was on fire. So in that time frame, somewhere around 4.

Diana: So when did you find out that there were two different fires? Did you ever find that out?

Stan: No. Other than they were investigating and they asked me what direction the smoke was, and I said that everything that I encountered was coming from the north, and that I had no idea if that was the Starbuck that had crossed the road and then back, but I don't know that that was the case. I think ours came from up north of Ashland to begin with.

Kim: That's what Millie... I didn't know that until Millie Fudge was doing a program on it and she said that the Starbuck never even went across the highway, it was all coming from the north, so no I didn't. At that time I had heard how many people had lost their homes and that kind of stuff, and still not knowing for sure if we had ours or not.

Diana: So did you stay out all night?

Stan: Well, I got home and put out the fire there with my tractor and disk until I felt comfortable, whatever comfortable is, but then I stayed at my house, and I did not get much sleep that night.

Kim: You had a couple of guys from Bucklin come, that showed up.

Stan: There was. I talked with Brian Harris, who is the fire chief from Protection, and he sent me a couple of guys from the Co-op. They came and all they had was a 1500 gallon water tank; they didn't have any way to spray it. It was just like a two inch line. We put quite a bit of fire out that was back burning, but we couldn't quite reach the nozzle... We ended up, the three of us, we stomped the fire out, and our feet... In fact, I had shoes on and it melted my shoe strings. I didn't know that until the next morning, but we were all so tired we couldn't see straight. I know I did not get much sleep, there was tires, lots of tires and equipment and things still smoldering, and flames. But I knew it couldn't go nowhere because everything was burnt around it.

Diana: Did you ever find out where Kim was, or how she was doing? Did you talk to her?

Stan: Somewhere, somehow I talked with you, I guess.

Kim: I think it was after it was all... I knew that Steve had found him and took him back. Then he called and he said, "Can you come back out here and help?" Well, I couldn't leave Coldwater because they wouldn't let you, and then by that time I thought maybe I could take some back roads, but that was silly because I didn't know where the fire was, or how far it was going east. So I just said, "No, I can't, I'd be in trouble if I tried to leave." After talking to people, even if I had tried to have gone like that back road between Protection and Coldwater, that was bad because people got caught in it too.

Diana: So when did you find out about how Steve was doing? Did you check back with him during the night?

Stan: That whole evening I stayed pretty much right at the house and we talked back and forth on the phone. Then the next day, it was all chaos again because the hotspots flared up. We had some north of our house that hadn't burnt yet, so I was going between our house and Jule and Heidi's and Steve and Kelly's, and then Eldora McMinimy's. I had two or three of us on the back. I got my trailer unhooked and put it to a different pickup and we fought fire, it was back burning. I knew firemen were still doing everything that they could and there was still head fires, but everybody had to fend for themselves.

Kim: Jeremy ended up coming down. He was able to make it through and come down and help.

Stan: I don't know how many gallons of water we went through, but I got it to where we could spray and then we still walked it with shovels, some of us, and saved... You know, if the fire had changed direction, the wind, there would have been a lot more houses that were lost.

Diana: So when did you come back from Coldwater?

Kim: The next morning. Roy Hoffman and I ended up going south out of Coldwater on the river road, 7-14. We went down that road and then made our way back up onto the highway.

Diana: Did you run into any fire on the way home?

Kim: No, it was just all smoke.

Diana: So what did you do once you got back? Did you go to your house?

Kim: No, I actually went to work because it was payroll and I had to get the payroll done. I got it finished and by the time I got that done, I think Roy took me home. Then I just stayed the rest of the day there at the house. So we set out, I did, Teresa came out too and we set out and just watched for fires, because the wind was still going.

Stan: And I was so tired I couldn't do much.

Kim: Yeah, well and you were up at Steve and Kelly's. In fact, at one point we were looking up there, and we could see the fire kind of going towards Steve and Kelly's house, so we called the fire department and Brian said, "We'll have somebody come; there's going to be somebody there." So we went up and helped with that one too.

Stan: Amy called David one time and said...

Diana: How did that work?

Stan: Well, I said, "David, the fire is getting closer to your house," and he said, "I can't do nothing about it." That means he was obligated someplace. So I said, "Well, we're doing what we can, but if the wind changes, it'll be at your front doorstep in a heartbeat." The good Lord was watching us that day too.

Diana: So did you ever get any food? Anybody bring you food? Did you eat anything from Monday till...

Stan: No.

Diana: When was your first meal that you remember?

Stan: I don't know. I wasn't hungry, we drank a lot of water. I know that.

Kim: A lot of water.

Stan: My eyes was full of ashes and so was everybody's. I know two or three days later, we was in there at the church camp and they had some goggles and that made a difference. But you know the ashes, if we had had those that first day, man that would have saved my eyes. They were itchy.

Diana: Did you get the eye wash?

Stan: Oh yeah. But it just... everything was complete chaos. You just helped wherever you could and everybody fended for themselves.

Diana: Did you see any of the strike teams that showed up Tuesday?

Stan: There wasn't really much of anything left to burn around here. But I did see the helicopters come in and dip in the water, but mainly they was going south because there was fire flare-ups down south.

Kim: That made us nervous too because it did start down south. It could've come with the winds the way they were because we still had grass on the east side of the house that could burn. I mean there was still a lot of fuel over there.

Diana: It was like Tuesday afternoon that it came across the south part of the county and came into Comanche county.

Kim: Yes, that's where we thought maybe.

Diana: What is your most vivid memory of the fire?

Stan: Driving through those grass bales. I will never get it out of my mind. I've always thought that when I died, it would be nice and cool. Things weren't looking real cool. It was pretty hot, but I remember thinking that I didn't have time to call Kim or the kids. I thought "Lord, don't let this pickup bog down here." That is my biggest memory.

Kim: Mine probably is when he called to tell me to call 911, because Stan does not get excited about anything. Storms, I go to the tornado shelter, he stays out and watches them, or we used to go to the basement and he would stay upstairs. He just doesn't get excited. But his voice, I could tell it was bad, and of course at that time, I hadn't even thought about the smoke being bad. It being his lungs, or he wouldn't be able to get out of the pickup or anything like that. I guess I was just thinking about the fire and how much further it would go, but for him to tell me to call 911, that was something.

Diana: So do you have any other experiences with wildfires? Have you been involved with wildfires?

Stan: Oh yeah. My brother and I, we've burnt CRP I would say professionally. So I am not a rookie at it, I know what can happen and I've got some equipment, but I didn't have near enough for this.

Diana: So did your previous experiences really prepare you for this? Or was this just so different?

Stan: Oh yeah, but I mean this was beyond repairing. It was so enormous, and you wanted to have anybody and everybody and everything. You felt sorry for the livestock because you knew that they were going to get pinned with the fences and I don't know. But there wasn't a dull moment. I do know that. I mean there was things happening all the time.

Diana: Did you have any physical ailment after this?

Stan: Well, I farted smoke for three days later.

Diana: And your eyes.

Stan: Yeah.

Diana: But what about muscles or anything like that? Did you burn anything, did you you get burns?

Stan: No, other than I was just red and hot. I mean yeah, it's was kind of like a burn. That was the least of my worries I guess.

Diana: So did you lose fences?

Stan: I lost 90+ % of my fence.

Diana: And your pasture.

Stan: Yes. All that. We were right on the east side of... because the fire burnt south of our house and east, but it split the pasture. Probably burnt two thirds of it or better, but we are very fortunate that we didn't lose our house.

Kim: I know Kathy Willems told me a couple of days later, she said, "They live south of us, and I looked up there and the flames were so high that I just knew that your house was gone. There was just no way that it could have gone through there like that and not hit it." But it just stayed on that one side and went south.

Stan: Like I say, God was looking over us.

Diana: Wind kept changing.

Stan: He looked over a lot of people.

Diana: I think you are right.

Stan: I am surprised we didn't have several funerals.

Diana: Do you perceive of anything positive that resulted from this fire?

Stan: You know, you find out that we do have friends and other farmers that care. Not just farmers, my God there was republicans and democrats and everybody else come together and furnished, donated fence supplies and it helped out tremendously because of the cost of the supplies. You know it's not like you are getting rich farming and ranching anyhow. Therefore I'm thankful to I don't know how many states helped out, and then all we can do is pay it forward, which since I've tried to help what we could, and the Montana fires that are going on as we speak.

Diana: Ok, so let's talk a little bit about the volunteering that came about after the fire, or even during the fire. When was your first recollection of people coming to help?

Kim: I got a phone call from Jan Endicott saying that Holly was going to be gone for a week and she said, "You would love to organize stuff, would you help"? When these guys were coming in I thought it couldn't be that big a deal. So I said I would help and Kelly McCarty and Nicole, and so after the meeting they had at the high

school I gave my phone number thinking I might have two or three people call. The next four days it never stopped, and you know how that go's. Just people calling from everywhere wanting to help, and driving for fifteen hours to work. It was just unreal that they could do that.

Diana: What is the biggest thing that surprised you out of that?

Kim: My biggest thrill was when I saw the trucks coming down Main Street, all the hay trucks. We took cinnamon rolls out to them and they just said, "Oh you don't have to do that, save it" and it was like people just giving you cash and saying, "Here, it's not much, it's a hundred bucks but it can go towards something". It was like they just kept giving, and the older people that came knowing they couldn't do work, but they brought stuff, whatever it would be. It was just unreal the difference stuff that they could bring.

Stan: Ashland Feed and Seed was one of my biggest memories and I'll never forget them, besides Spotts Lumber. They bent over backwards to help, and Neil Kay, Feed and Seed, They put up X amount of dollars at Spotts for the first so many people, so many dollars' worth and it was a generous... don't want to call it a hand out, but a generous thing that anybody could do and for that I can't thank him enough, but I have tried to thank him, and did personally. But those guys went over and beyond the moon and back to help accommodate and I appreciate the heck out of them.

Kim: I don't feel like, I mean you will probably hear stories from now on, but even those first couple of weeks, it just didn't seem like anybody was real greedy about stuff. You know you just kind of took it. Of course nobody wants to take anything because you are not used to that and so you almost had to shove it into people's hands, you know, please come and eat, or please take this, please take a case of water. That was just a cool thing.

Stan: Take help.

Kim: Yeah, take help.

Diana: So did you have any of the volunteers help you personally?

Stan: We did, we had a group...

Kim: We had a group from Emporia.

Stan: Yes, an FFA group, and they were really neat kids and told a story or two and how it affected them and they felt obliged to come and help and they did a good job.

Kim: We had a man and a wife from Wichita, they were probably in their seventies, eighties.

Stan: Eighties I bet.

Kim: And they came out and walked the pastures...

Stan: With their sweatshirts on, it was a little cool and I had them picking up wire.

Kim: Yeah, they picked up wire and did whatever they could. She wrote on a back of a napkin to us telling us thank you for letting them come out. She was thanking us, which was weird. Then we had another... what was it, a son and mother?

Stan: Yes.

Kim: They came from... where were they from?

Stan: Some place in Missouri wasn't it?

Kim: Yeah, so they came and they helped build fence. Jeremy had some friends come out from Satanta.

Stan: That was an FFA group kinda deal. Then I also had a couple from... where were they from? They gave me the old pickup.

Kim: Oh, yeah, from up in northern Kansas. They heard Stan had... they called the city hall and they said, "Did anybody lose a pickup"? So they said, "Well Stan Hazen did". So they called and brought the pickup down on a trailer and gave it to us. It was an older Ford, which Stan finally has a Ford which my dad loves but... it's just unreal what people gave. Just everything that they could.

Diana: So are you still rebuilding or do you have most everything...

Stan: I've got most everything. The only thing that I haven't done yet, is that I've got some corrals to rebuild. But I got so tired of building fence, had others things to do besides my business and it's been a heck of a summer, I know that. It's been long but it's been short. My help is fixing to go back to school.

Diana: So what can you do yourselves to prepare for something like this, or what can the community do for next time, or for any kind of a disaster? What would you take, or what was the things that you talked about like, "If this happens again, this is what we are going to do". Did you have those kind of talks? \

Stan: Well I can tell you that I leave my water tank full regardless, and it was full this time, but in this kind of fire, that's not going to do you a whole lot of good. But I think, honest to God that if the Wildlife and Parks and the FSA or whoever's involved would let a lot of this CRP grazed or hayed and a lot of these hunters that have come in and bought hunting ground and they want this tall grass for cover. All it is is fuel for us hometown folk to worry about and fight, and I think there should be rules, if you would, I really do. I think that helped contribute. They like to say that the... the Wildlife and Parks likes to save the cover for pheasants and they don't want you to graze until after September something. Well, there's still lots of fuel out there. I promise you they lost a lot more pheasants in this one fire than they would have if they had let a farmer hay and graze every other year or every year so long. But I think there needs to be some changes right there. That would help tremendously as far as preparedness.

Diana: So any agency that came and helped or was here that stands out in your mind that did a good job?

Stan: Well, I think that the Christian Church camp, we owe them way more than we could ever begin... for having a building that would house the volunteers.

Kim: I mean that's not going to happen in a lot of communities at all...

Stan: Plus feed them, and the donations of Tyson food and different people donating meat and cupcakes and bread and cakes and what have you. Donuts that came from Wichita on a regular basis.

Kim: Get up at 4 o'clock in the morning to bring us donuts.

Stan: I mean, my gosh! How could you pinpoint any sort of thing?

Diana: Did you ever see so many piles of water?

Stan: Well, that was good. And all I can say as far as being ready is hopefully we never see another one like it. But be prepared to pay it forward.

Diana: So do you have any other thoughts about this experience that you would like to share, or anything that we didn't talk about?

Kim: It was nice of the people in Ashland, like my boss or anybody that gave you the time off, and told you to come help. Everybody just worked well together I think. I think your hospital did, I think the clinic did. It just seemed like everybody was asking about you and how you were doing.

Stan: Everywhere you looked every day, there was somebody that was doing something for someone else. It was a... I mean we all got along. Nobody...

Kim: Again, most people talk about the T.V., that we weren't covered as much. I think as far as down here, that our local stations did a pretty good job. They were here. I know a lot of times the Hutch fire happened about the same time, we all felt like they got more coverage, just a little bitty fire then us. But social media is the best thing that helped. Everybody has a story still, and will continue to have one.

Stan: Thank God for the wheat fields. Ashland and Protection probably wouldn't have been here if it wasn't for the wheat fields.

Kim: The next morning when we came over the hill and saw the burn, I thought... I just don't think anybody realizes what we could have lost in Ashland. Businesses, our hometown could have been gone.

Diana: How did you feel when you were driving down the highway and seeing all of the places that were gone?

Stan: Pretty sad.

Kim: I still have a hard time, because I'm used to... when I pull out on the highway, I check to see Cohens, if everything was ok there, I'd see their light on in the morning. Then I'd look at Edmonstons and I'd get to Wilsons and I'd see if the school bus had been there yet, and if the kids were out. Even the old houses in between, not Haydocks but Milligan's. I'd look around to see if I saw something out of place. So it is weird.

Stan: The landscape is sure changed.

Kim: Yeah, the dead trees. People come into town and say, “Well you can't even see that there was a fire”, and I’m like, “Really? Are you not looking at trees”?

Stan: Just last week I had somebody ask me, said, “Well is everything pretty well back to normal over there at Clark County”? I said, “Well, for one thing, define normal”. So I said, “No, not really and it will be several years before it is.

Kim: And I’m sure I’m not the only person, but the hair just goes up on your back when you hear the sirens go off. That first time the siren went off...

Diana: For noon?

Kim: Yes, for noon.

Diana: Just for noon.

Stan: There’s still lots of fences to be fixed. People have pretty much depleted their funds and even with all of the volunteer help and all the stuff donated, people try to get their perimeter, but my goodness there is lots of miles of cross fences to be built yet, and it's just hard work. We’ve encountered hundred plus degree weather and lots of rattlesnake. We’ve seen way more rattlesnakes than we have in the past, it's just been tough on everybody.

Kim: I think one of the things that you asked earlier about remembering something is the relationship for Stan and Steve. But Joslin that night, she says, “Aunt Kim, my grandpas a hero, he saved Uncle Stan”. I was like that's true. He was a hero. And so you think about those little guys and what they did and how they remember the fire and they will say, “Well I know where I was”, or, “I know what I did” and “My mommy was really scared” or “I’ve never heard my Grammy be so scared”. So they are going to remember it after we are long gone. I think of Bessie Seacat and she’s in her nineties and she said it was the worst thing that she ever saw, and I’m like, “Wow”. She went through a lot of hard stuff, more than we’ve ever been through.

Stan: I hope we never see anything like this again.

Kim: Oh, me neither.

Stan: But I think our government needs to help work with us on the control of our grass.

Kim: Especially with the drought, we’ve been in the drought for so long. It would be different if it had been raining, we wouldn't have had this probably.

Stan: And we are kind of set up in places again.

Kim: To do it again, no moisture is here.

Stan: As we speak, you look at... I’m scared of a lightning storm right now. That it could happen again. I mean what do you do to prepare for it? You just keep your water tanks full and try not to get too far from home when it is storming.

Diana: Anything else?

Kim: I don't think so.

Stan: Thank you.

Kim: Yeah, thank you, I think this is nice. I really do.

Stan: I hope that Cara can put into a book for me.

Diana: I hope so to. So thank you for your time, and for sharing your experiences with us.

Stan: Thank you for yours.