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5225 W. Massingale Rd. | Tucson, AZ 85743

(520) 887-1010 | www.NorthwestFire.org

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NORTHWEST FIRE DISTRICT MOURNS SUDDEN DEATH OF RETIRED FIRE CHIEF

The Northwest Fire District is heartbroken to share retired Northwest Fire Chief Jeff Piechura was one of the individuals who died in a plane crash near Wikieup, Arizona while battling the Cedar Basin Fire. Piechura was working for the U.S. Forest Service at the time of the tragic incident.

Jeff Piechura became the District's first Fire Chief in November of 1988 and served in that position for 24 years. During his time as Fire Chief, Piechura led the expansion of the District to serve our growing community. Piechura retired from the Northwest Fire District in 2012, yet continued his career in service with the Stockton, CA Fire Department and Sedona, AZ Fire District before returning to Pima County.

During the decades of professional achievement and service, Jeff was never far from his passion of wildland firefighting. He tragically died doing a job he loved and excelled at. Jeff has flown air tactical group supervisor "Air Attack" missions over Arizona and several other states for decades and his actions helped saved countless homes, unknown acres of natural habitat, and protected the lives of thousands of wildland firefighters working on the front lines. In this role he had command and control of all aircraft working within the vicinity of a fire.

Piechura's passing leaves a tremendous void in the lives of his beloved family, friends, and the thousands of firefighters across the country he worked with. His professional accomplishments are far too many to be captured in a single document and his personal impact on those who knew him is too immense to comprehend. For those of us fortunate enough to work with Jeff, or 'Chief Pie,' we will forever miss his warm smile, firm handshake, and endearing embrace he gave those around him.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Jeff's wife, Donna, and five children. We stand ready to serve his family during this difficult time just as Jeff stood ready to serve the families of so many during their time of need.

Thank you, Jeff, for your service, your commitment to a greater good, and for all you have taught us over the years.

Information about memorial services will be released at a later date. We ask that you respect the privacy of the Piechura family during this tragic and difficult time.

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CONTACT:

Melissa Egan, Community Relations Supervisor: megan@nwfdaz.gov

Chief Brian Keeley, Administrative Services: bkeeley@nwfdaz.gov