

President's award for state BLM fire chief

Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller has presented the Presidential Management Improvement Award to Joseph P. Kastelic, 42, Chief of the Bureau of Land Management's, Division of Fire Management in Alaska, it was announced today. The award was presented at the White House.

The Presidential Management Improvement Award is given for improving the effectiveness and reducing the costs of government.

As Chief of Fire management Kastelic is responsible for the fire management of the 221 million acres of federal land under BLM's fire protection jurisdiction in Alaska.

Kastelic established a new fire attack policy for wildfires in Alaska that saved money by spending no more than the resources themselves are worth unburned. He adopted a unique wildfire detection system using radar to plot lightning

strikes in place of costly state-wide high-altitude fire detection by jet.

In fire research, Kastelic evaluated fire control techniques used by Canada and Russia to determine which techniques could be used in Alaska.

Kastelic was born in Ely, Minnesota. He was graduated from Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, in 1957 with a B.S. in forest management. His federal career began in 1955 as a fire control employee in Fairbanks, and continued with forestry and fire control positions in Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, and Alaska. He was selected Chief of BLM's Division of Fire Management in Alaska in 1972.

Kastelic has received other awards including BLM's awards for superior performance, meritorious performance, special achievement and special act awards.