

News From the Ellsburg Volunteer Fire Department.2016.02

Our monthly meeting took place on February 3, 2016 at 7pm. We welcomed two new members, Justus and Calla Peterson, to our department. Thank-you, Justus and Calla, for volunteering your time to serve the people of this township! Ellsburg is a double township of 72 square miles. Our department also has a contract to take care of 13 square miles of the unorganized township by Comstock Lake. The 85 square miles that our department covers also includes about 7 miles of Highway 53. This means that we provide fire and emergency medical care for not only our township residents but also for anyone who travels on Highway 53 between Porky's on the north and Gray Road on the south end. This is a great responsibility for our department and it demands dedication from our members. In January, we responded to 3 medical emergencies. Two of these occurred on Highway 53. On one emergency, our department was asked to mutual aid the Cotton VFD. On that call, the CVFD, EVFD, Meadowlands ambulance, and Gold Cross ambulance all worked together. In early February, our department was asked to mutual aid the Central Lakes Fire Department at a fire in their area. This brought together the Central Lakes, Ellsburg, Fayal, and Makinen departments. We have an obligation to help our neighboring communities just like they would help us when needed. Working together requires teamwork and knowing what equipment, personnel, and strengths each department has. This is why it is so important to train often within our department and also with other departments. The EVFD is a very active department. We have been hosting firefighter training classes 2-3 times a week since November. These classes will be completed at the end of March. These final classes include training about scene safety, personal protective equipment, decontamination, terrorism awareness, and hazardous material. We also attended the training class that Cotton VFD held on January 26 on hazardous materials. Although the trains that travel through our township are not passenger trains, they could carry material that is hazardous to our residents. Our department must be prepared to respond. We have an obligation to protect the people and property of this township and surrounding area. To do this, we need training, equipment, and people. Since we can't predict what the next emergency will be, we must be ready for everything. Do we have what we need to respond to accidents on the highway? How about a fire? What if someone is having a heart attack? Snowmobile accident? Fell through the ice on a lake? Train derailment? Our department was present at the annual Melrude Winter Frolic. We made sure we had the equipment that we might need in case of an injury on the hill or by the fire. Thankfully, there was none but we were prepared. The annual EMS conference took place at the DECC on Jan. 22-24. Members of our department attended various classes related to providing emergency medical care. The fact that our "patients" are so far from a hospital means we need extra equipment and training to provide the best care for them. We are also learning about the new protocols from our medical directors, OSHA, and NFPA that we must follow. We are a volunteer non-profit department but we still need to adhere to the same standards as our paid, professional counterparts. We welcome anyone who would like to become a member of the EVFD. You must live in Ellsburg Township or Cotton. If you are interested in fighting fires or providing medical care, that is great. We can train you if needed. However, there are many other ways to belong and help. Like working on trucks? We have 6. Filing? Organizing? Computers? Writing grants? Traffic control? Cleaning? Be an active part of your community. Come join our family. Call Heidi at 218-591-9228.

Heidi Yokel, Secretary, EVFD