

NEWS FROM THE ELLSBURG VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT 2016.07.06

Our July meeting took place on July 6, 2016 at 7pm. Our department received several donations in memory of Stan Peterson. We have decided to purchase a generator/light combination that would greatly help us by illuminating an accident or fire scene to keep the responders safe. This way, Stan's light can always shine down upon us and give us guidance as we work. On a recent night fire scene that we responded to, both Northland and Cotton fire departments had such a light. Once the fire was extinguished, these lights became necessary tools to help us find and put away all of our equipment and gear.

Our department responded to 3 calls in June. One was a medical call, and the other two were fire calls involving trees down on power lines. Our township has weathered several strong wind storms over the past month. These winds toppled trees all over the county. Many of these trees fell on power poles and lines. This can result in sparking on the line, which can cause the tree to catch fire. If you see a tree on a power line, please call 911. Do not walk close to the area! The ground around the power line, pole, and tree can be energized even if you do not see any sparks. You could be electrocuted if you get too close. Be safe! Stay away and call 911.

Work will begin soon on the new dry hydrant that we will share with the Cotton VFD. A dry hydrant is a pipe that is installed in a lake, river, or pond that supplies water to fire departments in areas such as ours that have no municipal water system. This dry hydrant will be installed by Comstock Lake Road and Water Hen Road. Some trees need to be cut, and gravel needs to be hauled in. If you can help, please contact the fire department.

Our June training was a house burn in Central Lakes. The house was donated by the owners for training purposes because it was not inhabited. The fire program at the Mesabi Range Community and Technical College sponsored this burn. Instructors were on hand to teach our new firefighters, as well as firefighters from several other companies, how to fight a house fire. A section of the house was set on fire by the instructors. Then they took groups of the interior firefighter students into the house to teach them how to extinguish that fire. Eventually, the interior of the house was all burned out and the outside of the house was allowed to burn in order to teach the firefighter students how to extinguish that type of fire as well as keep the fire from spreading to the surrounding trees, vegetation, and structures. Fighting an interior fire is strenuous work. A firefighter must have confidence that his gear will keep him safe. His SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) must be functioning correctly to allow him to breathe in an area filled with smoke. Firefighters can only remain inside a burning building for about 15 minutes before their oxygen supply becomes depleted. Then another team goes in while the first team goes to rehab. The rehab station is an area set up by the medical responders. Firefighters exiting a burning building must report to rehab where they are cooled, rehydrated, and their blood pressure, pulse, and oxygen saturation are measured. Frequently, a firefighter's pulse rate is elevated when he arrives at the rehab station. They can not re-enter a building until these parameters are normal again. I am happy to report that all the firefighters safely passed this live burn test.

Does reading about this interest you? Do you enjoy an adrenaline rush? Please come and join our fire department. We are very grateful for the firefighters that we have, but we still need more. This is a volunteer organization, which means that no one is assigned to be on duty at any particular time. Members respond when they are available. However, many of our members have job responsibilities outside of our township or have family responsibilities that prevent them from being available at times. It would be tragic if you needed our services yet no one was available to respond. Without sufficient members, the fire department would have to close. This is happening in other small townships. Without a fire department close by, many insurers will refuse to insure your property. Don't let this happen in Ellsburg. Please join our department. Our next meeting is on August 3, at 7pm at the Bass Lake Firehall on Mink Rd.

Our fire department was in the Melrude parade and picnic on July 2. We were able to show off our equipment. We also had an informational table with brochures, coloring books, candy, games, and information about fire safety. We hope you stopped by our table to visit!

Heidi Yokel
Secretary, EVFD