

News From The Ellsburg Volunteer Fire Department 2017.04.05

Our April meeting took place on April 5, 2017 at 7pm at the Bass Lake Firehall. Those members on our department who enjoy working with trucks were kept busy. Our old Rescue 4 vehicle was stripped of all fire, rescue, and utility boxes in preparation for its return to the DNR. The skis were taken off of our Orion sled and replaced with tires. Our grass rig was picked up from Lavelle Township and needed ball valves and radio installation. We also had to install all of the pumps, water tanks, hoses, and other gear that is necessary to fight grass fires. Finally it was put into service! Unfortunately, it had to be taken out of service a week later due to a broken starter and gas line. It was quickly repaired and put back in service. Wildfire season is upon us! There is still the Freightliner that needs to become a tanker. Anyone in the township that is interested in vehicle work come and join us!

Our department is still promoting the Red Cross Smoke Detector program. If you are an Ellsburg resident, you can receive as many free smoke detectors as you need to be in compliance with the smoke detector fire codes. If your current smoke detectors are more than 5 years old, you can get them replaced for free. Just give me a call, (218) 591-9228, and I can give you the information you need.

We continue to work on the mountain of paperwork that is necessary to win a grant. We need a grant to help offset the cost of purchasing new SCBA equipment for our firefighters. Our current SCBA units are about 10 years old and considered obsolete and not up to current NFPA code. All of our equipment has to be inventoried and the worth of our assets determined. We also need to write a narrative describing our organization and community, financial distress, fundraising efforts, budget justification, community benefits, and an impact statement. This would all be much easier for our department if someone would just donate \$80,000 to us. Anyone?

We responded to a call for a person lost in the woods. We were able to use our 4-wheeler and Orion sled to find the lost victim, treat him, and bring him to safety. This is why it is important to always be prepared and have our equipment ready. We had just recently taken the skis off of that sled and replaced them with wheels. If we hadn't, the outcome might have been different. Incidentally, if you find yourself lost in the woods, stay in one place. When you call 911 from your cell phone, they are able in most cases to pinpoint the GPS coordinates of where that call came from. If you hang up and move, it will take us longer to find you. If you are hiking by yourself, let someone know which trail or in which direction you plan to go, and when you plan to return. Our victim was in the woods for two days until he was reported missing.

We responded to another call for an overturned boat spotted on a lake. Luckily, we found no victims. The boat had broken free of its moorings and turned over with the wind. We were able to use our Zodiac boat and Mustang ice suits for this call. Our ropes, pulleys, and carabiners were ready and accessible. Even though there were no victims, we had an excellent opportunity to train as if there were. After we respond to a call, we always review our response and equipment to see if there was anything we could have done differently, or additional training or equipment that would have been helpful.

Since the boating season is now here, we remind our residents and visitors about the importance of wearing Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs). Now is a good time to check your PFD for rips, tears, and holes. Check that the seams, fabric straps, and hardware are intact. Also look for signs of waterlogging, a mildew odor, or shrinking of the buoyant materials. Squeeze it and look for air leaks. Check for color fading, as this can mean weakening of the material. If your PFD fails any of these tests, cut it up and throw it away.

A PFD needs some care to prolong its useful life. Do not put heavy objects on your PFD, use it for a kneeling pad, or a boat fender. Buoyancy is lost when it is crushed. Allow your PFD to drip dry completely. Do not dry it on a radiator, heater, or other direct heat source. Stow your PFD in a well ventilated area.

Your weight is not the only factor to take into consideration when choosing a PFD. Buoyancy is affected by body fat, lung size, clothing, and whether the water is rough or calm. Adults usually need

an extra seven to twelve pounds of buoyancy to keep their heads above water until help comes. There are charts available that list the types of PFDs and the pounds of buoyancy they provide. The US Coast Guard is a good place to check for this information as well as the papers that come with new PFDs.

Make sure your PFD fits comfortably snug. It should not ride up on your body, but if your stomach is larger than your chest it may be unavoidable. Put your PFD on, get in the water, relax, and let your head tilt back. If your chin stays above the water and you can breathe easily, your PFD is a good fit for you. PFDs today are designed to fit better, look better, and offer more mobility. The important thing is that everyone in a boat WEARS one. This includes babies, children, teens, and adults! Even Michael Phelps!

Heidi Yokel
Secretary, EVFD



EVFD uses it's 4-wheeler and Orion sled for a lost person



EVFD launches its Zodiac for a water emergency