

## **News from the Ellsburg Volunteer Fire Department 20180606**

Our June meeting took place on Wednesday, June 6, at 6:30pm at the Bass Lake Firehall. There is always plenty of vehicle and equipment maintenance needed. We are lucky to have several members who can help with this work. We are planning our participation in the Melrude Parade and Picnic on July 7. We plan to have a lot of stuff to give away. The fireman's water games will be fun. We are gathering some older turnout gear that can be worn by people who want to participate in the games but do not want to get wet. In these games, a rope with a keg is strung up high. One participant is at each end of the rope with a fire hose and nozzle. The goal is to aim your water stream at the keg and push it towards your opponent's side. This is somewhat like a tug-of-war game. Last year, we had some husbands compete against wives, parent against child, or friend against friend. Pick a partner and join in! Of course, there will also be the regular tug-of-war game as well as sack races, egg and spoon races, three-legged races, wheelbarrow races, water balloon toss, and pudding pie-eating contest. There will be plenty of nice things in the raffles. This event only lasts 2 hours - from the parade which starts at 12 noon to the raffle at 2pm - but it sure takes many hours of preparation!

We are also planning our National Night Out celebration which will be on Tuesday, August 7, beginning at 6pm at the Bass Lake Firehall. Last year was the first time that we hosted this. We had about 200 people attend. We are already planning a menu for the cookout. Our refrigerator broke down at the firehall this winter but Joe Keough donated one to us. Thanks, Joe! We also received a donation of a microwave oven from the DNR. We really appreciate it when we get donations. Most of our budget goes into equipment, vehicles, and gear. It is nice to have some extra "play money" so that we can provide fun activities for the community for events such as the Picnic and Community Night Out. If you have any donations or suggestions for us for Community Night Out, you can let someone on the department know or call our Bass Lake Firehall at (218) 482-3777. We have an answering machine now!

Our department was paged out 4 times in May. Two of these calls were for grass fires, one was for a semi on fire on the highway, and one was a medical call. In June, we were paged out for a fire started by a tree that fell on a power line back in the area across the railroad tracks where Melrude Road becomes West Melrude Road. Of course, no vehicle can be driven there. We had to park on this side of the tracks and carry our pumps, hoses, and tools over the tracks. We put 2 floating pumps into a small branch of the Paleface River that ran there. These pumps could pump water through the 1 inch hoses that we attached to them. We laid a ladder across this waterway so that we could cross over the water with our hoses and tools. The fire was about a quarter mile past there and was burning about 2 acres. We put Y connectors on our 1 inch hoses so that we could attach several 1/2 inch hoses. Over the river and through the woods, with half inch hose we go.... We were glad to have the help of the Central Lakes Fire Department and the DNR. The DNR had a spotter plane in the air to let us know where to go. They also launched a plane and two helicopters to drop water on this fire. These helicopters use a basket to get water out of a lake - Dinham Lake for this event - and drop the water on the fire. Of course, you have to be away from the fire when the water gets dropped or you will be injured. Lake Country Power came to turn off the power to the power lines there in case the water drop breaks a line. CN had to stop the train from coming through the area while we were working. After several hours, the fire was out and all the hoses and gear had to be returned to the vehicles. The power was back on, the train could run again, and we hauled our miles of hoses to the Bass Lake Firehall to wash them and restock our vehicles. A skunk had visited our firehall and left a "donation". We did not appreciate this!

At this time of year, we must be careful about thunderstorms. It is a good idea to have a weather radio in your home and on your boat. There are also smart phone notifications that you can sign up for that will alert you to severe weather in the area. Create a plan with your family for a weather emergency. Pick a safe room in your home such as a basement, storm cellar, or an interior room on the lowest floor that has no windows. Keep some provisions on hand, such as water, canned food, and paper towels that can help you through a power outage. Take any medications that you need with you. Have a phone available to call 911 for help if you need it.

Thunder travels 750 mph. Lightning travels at 220,000 mph and can heat to 50,000 degrees. Lightning produces 30,000 amps and 300 million volts of electricity. In comparison, an electrical outlet in your home has 15 amps and 120 volts. Do not wait to hear the thunder or see the lightning before you seek safe shelter. If you can hear thunder, you are already in striking range of the lightning. Get indoors or in a vehicle with the windows closed. Do not lie on concrete floors or lean against concrete walls. If you are caught outdoors, and there is no shelter available, stay away from trees. Spread yourself out flat and remove your backpack. Avoid sheds, picnic areas, baseball dugouts, and bleachers. Also avoid hilltops, open fields, the beach, or a boat in the water. You never want to be the highest point around you. Lightning is attracted to the highest point. Swimming is dangerous because your head protrudes from the water, making you the highest point. Not only that, but water is a good conductor of electricity. In 2012, a family came ashore with their boat at Minnesota Point during a thunderstorm to seek shelter. It began hailing, so they returned to their boat. Lightning hit the boat and the 9 year old boy was killed.

When you are in your home during a thunderstorm, it is okay to watch television. However, do not hold on to a corded phone or appliance plugged into an outlet. If lightning strikes your house, it will tend to follow paths to the ground including electrical wiring, plumbing, cable or telephone lines, antennas, or steel framework. You do not want to be in this path, which is why you should not shower, bathe, or wash dishes or hands. Using cellphones is okay because there is no physical connection to a power source - unless you have it plugged in. A window shatters when it gets hit by lightning because of the speed and the heat of the lightning strike. This is why you should stay away from windows. Glass will not conduct the electricity, but the shattered glass can cause injuries. Also, the now open window can allow lightning to come through.

The odds of getting hit by lightning are about 1 in 12,000. On average, 500 people are struck by lightning each year. 90% of them survive. Lightning will strike your body and exit your body. The path it takes through your body will be marked by deep wounds and third degree burns. One victim described the pain of being hit by lightning as "a thousand wasps stinging from within." Your hair and clothes may be singed or catch fire. The explosive force of the lightning can shred clothing and knock shoes off your feet. Metal objects such as rings, necklaces, and piercings, will sear the skin where they touch. Blood vessels and eardrums will rupture. Your heart's electrical rhythm can be disrupted, which can result in cardiac arrest. You may also suffer respiratory arrest, seizures, brain damage, and paralysis. The amount of damage that is done, and your survival, is dependent on the path of the bolt through your body. You may end up with burns, scars, and deafness. You may have personality changes, mood swings, memory loss, chronic pain, and muscle twitches. You will not be electrocuted by touching someone who has been hit by lightning. Begin CPR if necessary and administer first aid. Call 911 immediately. We will be there to help!

