

## News From The Ellsburg Volunteer Fire Department

Our January meeting took place on Wednesday, January 2, at 6:30pm at the Bass Lake Firehall. Our February meeting will be on Wednesday, February 6, at 6:30pm at the Bass Lake Firehall on Mink Road. All are welcome to come. Our annual elections took place. The 2019 officers are: President Ray Privett, Vice-President Loren Dean Mesedahl, Secretary Heidi Yokel, Treasurer Sharron McKechnie, Safety Officer Bill McKechnie, Fire Chief Jeff Dulinski, Assistant Chief Justus Peterson, and Assistant Chief Bob Skafte. Congratulations to all officers, and may you enjoy a productive year!

Our department was paged 28 times in 2018, and we had a 100% response rate. We provided mutual aid to other departments 12 times, and received aid twice. Our fire calls included 2 structure fires, 2 wildland fires, 1 semi on fire, 1 power line, 1 railroad heater on fire, and 3 calls for fire at a peat farm. We responded to medical pages for abdominal pain, fight, chest pain, fall, hypothermia, stroke, cardiac arrest, blurred vision, confusion, and a fall from a horse. There were 6 vehicle accidents. Of these, 3 were car rollovers, and 1 was a 4-wheeler accident. Our department was also involved in 2 search and rescue calls. One of these was for a plane, and the other was for a person. The EVFD was also involved in the Melrude Winter Frolic, the Melrude Parade and Picnic, and National Night Out. We participated in serving 2 Community Meals, 2 Big Truck Nights, and taught fire safety at 5 sessions of Early Childhood Family Education at the Southridge School. We have also installed 155 smoke detectors. Quite a productive year!

We have received several donations this year from our residents. It means so much to our department to know that our efforts to protect, help, and be a part of the Ellsburg community are appreciated. Our most recent donation was an extremely generous one from Michael and Lori Luukkonen on East Bass Lake. Thank-you so much, Mike and Lori! We are very grateful for your generosity. You can be sure that this money will be used to benefit the residents and visitors of our community.

The Minnesota State Fire Marshal reported that 36 people were killed by fire in our state in 2018. This number is about half of the 68 people that were killed in 2017. In 2009, there were 35 deaths. 2018's total is the second lowest fatality rate from fire in the past 48 years. What is making the difference? The State Fire Marshal attributes this decrease in fatalities to the efforts of local fire departments teaching fire prevention and fire safety. We have certainly done our best to keep our residents informed of fire prevention and fire safety. Let us hope that this downward trend continues in 2019!

The causes of 2018's fatal fires include careless smoking, cooking, and portable heaters. 50% of home heating fires occur in the months of December, January, and February. Obey the 3 foot rule! Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from a heat source such as a furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater. Keep children at least 3 feet away from open fires, space heaters, stoves, and ovens. Clean and inspect your chimney and heating equipment at least once a year. Place a sturdy screen in front of your fireplace to keep sparks from flying into a room. Allow ashes to cool, and then place them in a metal container with a lid and store them outside at least 10 feet away from the house. Don't forget about installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and test them regularly. A home can become engulfed in flames in five minutes. That is not much time. Be prepared by knowing two ways out of each room. If you can't get out of a room, close the door and seal the cracks and vents with clothing or tape to keep the smoke out. Tell 911 where you are. Teach your children not to hide in a fire. Practice home fire drills regularly so that children and adults know how to get out quickly and safely. Practice stop, drop, cover your face, and roll if your clothes catch fire. People become trapped in a burning residence when they stop their escape to retrieve important documents. Make digital copies of house deeds, financial accounts, birth certificates... The best time to do this is now as you review your papers to prepare your taxes. Be prepared and you won't become another fire statistic.

The annual Melrude Winter Frolic will take place on Saturday, February 9, from 11am - 2pm, at the public access on Arizona Road. This is always an entertaining event for our township. It is a time to

visit with each other and enjoy a fun family activity. There will be free brats, chips, coffee, and hot chocolate. A fire will be built for warming and making s'mores. There will be a money raffle and a sled raffle. Of course, the big attraction is seeing who can get the farthest down that hill, which group will have the longest chain of sleds, which sled is the fastest, and how many times can you walk back up that hill before you drop from exhaustion. Sledding down that hill is fun, but there is some risk involved. The most common injuries associated with sledding are fractures, strains, and sprains. Children ages 4 and under are four times more likely to suffer a head injury. Children ages 10-14 sustain the most injuries. Boys are 60% more likely to be injured than girls. Collisions are responsible for most of the injuries, and are more likely to result in traumatic brain injuries and hospitalizations. Although 90% of sledding injuries happen with traditional sleds, snow tubes are associated with the highest rate of traumatic brain injuries. This is because they are fast and can't be controlled. Sled riders being pulled by a motorized vehicle such as an ATV or snowmobile incur frequent injuries. To decrease the risk of injury while sledding, sit facing forward, pick a safe hill away from roads and obstacles such as trees, don't ride after dark, avoid icy areas, dress warmly, and wear a helmet. Bones can heal, but a brain injury can be disabling or fatal. Protect your brain with a helmet. Our department will be present at the Frolic in case there is an injury. We are also there to have fun! We will bring some of our winter rescue equipment, vacuum splints, and s'mores fixings. Come check us out! Stop by to chat. If you need our help at any time, call 911. We will be there!