NEWS FROM THE ELLSBURG VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT 20190904

Our September meeting took place on Wednesday, September 4, at 6:30pm at the Bass Lake Firehall on Mink Road. Our October meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 2, at 6:30pm at the Bass Lake Firehall. All are welcome to attend. We responded to four pages in August. Two of these were ATV accidents, one was an allergic reaction, and one was a fire alarm. This is a wonderful time of the year to be out on an ATV. But please be careful! Stay off of the train tracks, and mind your speed so that you can stay in control of your vehicle. Please wear a helmet! We always discuss our response to our pages. Did we follow all of the protocols? Was there anything that could have been done differently? Each call is different, and each is a learning experience. The members of this department have been working together for several years now, and it shows. We really work as a team. I am proud to be a part of this team!

Our department joined the Cotton VFD, St. Louis County Rescue Squad, and Meadowlands ambulance service in extrication training on August 31. Mrs. Mack's towing company provided us with four vehicles. Jennifer Pechtold was our leader and provided us with several "victims". She described scenarios of vehicle accidents with the victims trapped inside. Our job was to use our jaws of life and other tools to cut apart the vehicles, stabilize them, and get the victims out. We have a new jaws of life thanks to the very generous donation of a member of our township. These hydraulic tools are used to ram, push, pull, cut, and spread the door and roof supports of vehicles with the purpose of prying open a vehicle to extricate a victim. Most jaws have a spreading force of about 16,000 pounds, and a pulling force of about 14,400 pounds. This tool was invented by George Hurst in 1963 to get race car drivers out of their wrecked cars. Since then, over 24,000 lives have been saved. The name "jaws of life" was coined because it was noted to pull people from the jaws of death. These tools work quickly, which is important to the survival of victims. I am happy to report that our new jaws popped open doors and peeled back roofs of cars like a hot knife through butter. We want to thank Jennifer and the Cotton VFD for sponsoring this vital training!

The EVFD hosted the September Community Meal at the Old School Lives. We served homemade potato sausage, mashed potatoes, cole slaw, corn, rye buns, apple cake, and other desserts. Thank-you to an anonymous person who donated 100 pounds of potatoes to our department for this meal! We served about 80 people. We were happy to receive numerous compliments such as "the best potato sausage ever". If you attended this meal, you can verify that it was delicious! We used Shauna Dulinski's recipes for the sausage, cole slaw, and buns. Thank-you, Shauna, for all of your work organizing this event for us! We always get a good feeling doing these types of events for our community.

Fire Prevention Week is October 6-12. This is a good time to check around your house for fire hazards, change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and test them by pushing the button, and practice your room and house escape plans. Remember to find two ways out of every room. Review and practice these plans with your family. Hold a family fire drill. Make sure that all windows and doors open easily, and that you can use them to get out. Identify an outside meeting place where family members can meet in case of a fire. This should be on the front side of your home. Make sure that your house or building number can be seen from the road. Can an ambulance or fire truck get down your driveway to your house, and get back out again? Check your fire extinguishers and make sure that they are charged. Inspect and clean your fireplace, chimney, furnace, and wood stoves. Furnaces are the leading cause of house fires. Clean or replace your furnace filter. Chimney fires occur frequently in our northland because many people heat with wood. Keep flammable materials such as clothing, paint, paper products, or toxic materials away from your furnace. Keep space heaters on hard, level, nonflammable surfaces such as tile, and place them away from bedding or drapes. Clean the dryer vent. Remove crumbs from your toaster. Clean your oven. Rake leaves away from your house and out of your gutters. Burning leaves produces cancer causing chemicals. Find another way to dispose of your leaves, such as taking them into the woods away from your home. Avoid parking your vehicle over a pile of leaves because the heat from the catalytic converter or exhaust system can ignite dry leaves. Check that power lines are clear of branches. The utility company can help clear the lines. Store firewood at least 30 feet away from your home.

Over 300,000 people a year are taken to the emergency room with injuries sustained by performing yard cleanup. Here are some suggestions for decreasing your chances of becoming one of these statistics. Wear long pants and long sleeved shirts to protect your arms and legs. Sturdy, closed toe footwear, with non-slip soles are

recommended. Consider steel-toe boots. Avoid loose clothing and jewelry which can get caught in machinery. Wear eye protection, heavy gloves, and hearing protection. Make sure that the tools that you are using are in good working order, and are the proper size for you. There were 64,000 ER visits in one year just due to hand-operated garden tools. Read the manuals and know how to use the tool. Avoid over-reaching which can cause back pain, strains, and falls. Thousands of people are injured every year by falling off of ladders while painting, cleaning gutters, washing windows, or hanging holiday decorations. Remove rocks, sticks, or other debris that could become projectiles when mowing or shredding leaves. Be aware that stored tension in jammed equipment such as chainsaws, mowers, or other power equipment can cause parts to move suddenly when the jam is cleared. Do not fill gas tanks if the equipment is running, or the tank is hot. Never smoke or light a flame around gasoline or flammable liquids. Do not use electric power tools around water. Make sure that extension cords are the right size for the equipment that you are using, and that they are not frayed. Cover sharp tools and keep them out of the reach of children. Shut down and store your equipment in such a way that children, or adults that have no business using your equipment, cannot start it. Children should never drive or ride on tractors or riding mowers. Teens can be allowed to operate outdoor power equipment if you are confident that they are mature enough to do so. No joy-riding! Young children are attracted to riding mowers and power equipment. Make sure that children are a safe distance away, and under the watch of another adult, while you are operating power equipment. It may make a pretty picture to see a father mowing his grass with his young son pushing his bubble mower beside him. However, child fatalities have occurred from this because of rocks being thrown out of the power mower. Remember to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated while working, and take regular rest breaks. Stop if you feel any pain or shortness of breath. Call 911 if an emergency happens. We will be there to help!