

NEWS FROM THE ELLSBURG VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT 20200603

Our June meeting was held on Wednesday, June 3, at 6:30pm at the Bass Lake Firehall on Mink Road. Our July meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 1, at 6:30pm at the Bass Lake Firehall. All of our members, except three, were able to attend our last meeting. It sure is nice having everyone together again! I don't know if we will ever meet in our smaller meeting room again, but we have plenty of room out in the bays with a vehicle or two pulled out. We make a nice big circle with our chairs, so that everyone can see everyone. There is always a cake or bars or snack available in the middle of our circle, because who can have a meeting without food? Unheard of in our department!

We are sad to report that the Melrude July 4th parade and picnic is cancelled this year. We will miss seeing everyone! We will also miss the food, games, raffles, candy, water balloons, and fun. It is sad, but there is nothing we could do. Hopefully, we can be back next year. This event is very important to our community because it is a good time to see our neighbors and summer residents, and share what the fire department does for the community. It is also a good time for us to hand out information that teaches our community members about fire safety and healthcare.

The Coronavirus has impacted so much in our lives. Many things are changed, probably for forever. Our township may have some positive cases of the virus, but we have no surge. We want to thank those that have come forward to let us know that they are positive and quarantining, just in case we would need to respond to their home. This makes it safe for them, for us, and for the community. These days, we always respond assuming the patient is Covid positive. We will wear our protective gloves, masks, goggles, and gowns. This protects us from you and protects you from us. We limit what we will bring into your home. Again, this protects us from you, and protects you from us. It wouldn't work if we brought everything from house to house. You still get the best care that we can give you. Those that have needed our help can attest to the fact that we provide excellent service. We have high standards, good equipment, and most importantly, a very dedicated team of volunteers. Yes, I am bragging! I am very proud of our team and their skills!

Lee Leighton is back in town! Now you know that it is summer. Lee and his merry band of "Friends of the Ellsburg VFD" spent a lot of time at our firehall last summer. They painted trailers, organized tools, filled our storage shed, and hosted fundraisers. This summer, Lee has pledged to help us obtain permits and construct a dry hydrant in the Whiteface River at Water Hen and Comstock Lake Road. There are no fire hydrants in our township since everyone has a well. A dry hydrant allows our department to have a year round source of water with which to fill our trucks. A dry hydrant is a pipe that has one end below the water level and one end above. The end that is in the water is installed deep enough so that it won't freeze in the winter. It has a strainer on the end to avoid debris getting into the system. The end that is above the water will have a fitting that allows it to be attached to the suction hose on our trucks. Thank-you, Lee, for volunteering to spearhead this project for us!

Our department did Emergency Vehicle Operator Driver's (EVOC) Training in June. This involves a three hour classroom portion and then the driving test. Our engines and tankers are big trucks that hold up to 2500 gallons of water. Outside of the fire department world, a person would be required to get a commercial driver's license (CDL) to drive vehicles of this size. As volunteer firefighters, we are not required to get a CDL license. So, we watch the videos of overturned fire trucks and fire truck accidents. We learn the "rules of the road" from the instructor. These rules include always chock the wheels when parked, always have a spotter for when you are backing up, angle your wheels correctly depending on whether you are facing uphill, downhill, or are using the vehicle as a block on the highway, give traffic plenty of warning of an incident ahead by using cones, arrows, and signs, watch the traffic before getting out of your vehicle, wear reflective, high visibility clothing, stop at all stop signs and red lights before proceeding, drive at a safe speed, know your truck's braking distance, and use lights carefully. A fire truck full of water can flip easily if it takes a curve too fast. A full fire truck also takes several feet to stop because of the weight of the sloshing water. Lights on a fire truck can blind oncoming vehicles and obscure the presence of the emergency personnel. The flashing lights on a vehicle can also be a deadly attraction to those impaired by alcohol, drugs, or sleepiness. The lights will draw these drivers in like a moth is drawn to a light. Every year, firefighters are killed in vehicle accidents, struck by vehicles, or fall from moving vehicles. We don't intend to be a statistic! We were thankful that Judy Weber, owner of the old ICO building in Cotton, gave us permission to use that property to drive our vehicles. The instructor set up cones so that we could drive forward, backward, and in a serpentine pattern. I am sure that the patrons of the Wilbert had a wonderful show! I am happy to report that everyone in the department that wants to drive passed the test! WooHoo! Go Ellsburg!! So proud of this department!

Four-wheeling is a fun activity at this time of the year, but it is also the second leading cause of recreational accidents. Every summer, we are paged to an accident involving a 4-wheeler in our township. Speed is usually the cause of the accident. Operators come upon a bend or obstacle in the road, but are traveling too fast to successfully negotiate

around. This results in crashing into a tree or rock, and the operator is flung over the handlebars. Driving up a steep embankment can result in the 4-wheeler flipping over backwards. Driving along too steep of a hill can result in the machine flipping over sideways. In any case, the victim risks getting run over by their own machine or having their machine flip on top of them. This results in head injuries, broken limbs, and crush injuries. These injuries can be fatal or leave lifelong disabilities. Please wear helmets, goggles, long sleeves, long pants, gloves, and over the ankle boots. Slow down, know the trail conditions, make good decisions, and be responsible! Our township has many trails that can be used. Please stay off of private property unless you have been invited to ride there. Tempers can flare, and the outcome is never good. Is it necessary to spin donuts in the fire department parking lots? Apparently, some think it is. These parking lots, as well as selected other places around the township, are maintained and used as landing zones for the medical helicopters. Ruts create a dangerous situation for the helicopters. Please slow down and stay on the trails!

July 4th is Independence Day! Traditionally, this is celebrated with fireworks. You will probably light off a few sparklers for the children. Please don't let children hold these fireworks! Sparklers can burn at 2000 degrees F. You wouldn't give your child a blow torch to hold, would you? Always have some water handy -whether a hose or a bucketful- when you have fireworks. Our township has experienced very dry weather conditions, and grass can ignite easily. Soak used and "dud" fireworks in water for a few hours before putting them in the trash. Do not try to relight fireworks that did not explode. Keep a safe distance away. Children ages 5-9 are more than twice as likely to be injured by fireworks. Adults ages 25-44 have the highest injury rate. Hands and fingers are the most common place to be injured, followed very closely by the face and head. Most fireworks injuries involve burns. However, there can also be a loss of a finger, or a piece of shrapnel in the eye. If the burn is small, you can use soap and lukewarm water to clean it and then gently pat dry. If the burn is around the eyes, nose, ears, toes, or fingers, or is 2 inches or larger in size in an adult, seek medical help. You do not want to risk amputation! All burns in children should be evaluated by a medical professional immediately. Remove clothing from the burned area and run cool, not cold, water over the burn. Do not flush an injured eye! Cut out the bottom of a paper cup and put the cup around the eye to protect it. Seek medical help immediately for any fireworks related injury, especially in children and the elderly. Their skin is much thinner, and nerves, veins, and arteries are affected sooner. Enjoy the holidays! But if an injury or a fire happens, call 911! We will be there to help!



