

Our August meeting was held on Wednesday, August 5, 2020 at 6:30 pm at the Bass Lake Firehall on Mink Road. Our September meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 2, 6:30pm, at the Bass Lake Firehall. All are welcome to attend!

We had an interesting fire call in August. The rear tires of an Edwards Oil Fuel Tanker caught fire while transporting a load of fuel oil on Highway 53. Faulty bearings in the wheels were thought to be the cause. The northbound lane of Highway 53 needed to be closed for a while for safety. This was a call for the Cotton VFD, but they wisely called in for mutual aid from Ellsburg, Northland, Alborn, and the Air National Guard. Luckily, the fire was put out before it could compromise the tank. Thousands of gallons of water were used to douse the flames and keep the tank cool. Our Tanker 4, nicknamed the "Bulldog", provided 2500 gallons of water alone. In an area like ours, where there are no fire hydrants, it is necessary to call in several fire departments with their tankers full of water so that you have an adequate supply of water. Spraying foam on the fire finally put it out. The smell of burning rubber, oil, and asphalt from the road is not a pleasant or healthy one. That is why we are equipped with SCBA's (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus). We recently had training with our SCBA's and we have mandatory training in Hazardous Materials each year. It is important to know what resources our department has, as well as what resources the surrounding departments have, so you know who to call when you need help.

We want to congratulate Susan Carlsness! Susan joined our department last December. She attended EMR classes in Alborn twice a week until Covid 19 put an end to in person classes. She completed her training online, attended the EMR refresher course that CVFD offered, and then waited patiently for a solution to be found on how to test the newly trained students on their skills. Finally, she was able to get her EMR license at the end of July. Yay! Congratulations, Susan! Susan has been an active member of our team since she joined. She has assisted in several medical calls and she provided the medical standby in the tanker fire.

We usually do a big cleaning of our Bass Lake Firehall in August as we prepare for National Night Out. Unfortunately, there was no National Night Out this year, but our firehall still needs cleaning and organizing. This year we are doing a deep clean and reorganization. This firehall was built in the late 1980's. It is definitely time for fresh paint and going through all of our manuals, reference books, hoses, tools, and other possessions. Fortunately, we have a dedicated group of members who have stepped up to lend their skills and time. It would be nice if we could have a garage sale, but I don't think that there is much community interest in what we have to get rid of. Anyone need an extra firehose? We did find a home for our old SCBA's. They will go to an organization that refurbishes them and gets them to volunteer fire departments in need. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sets the standards in our country for equipment use and expiration. Other countries may not be as stringent. Areas destroyed by hurricanes, tornadoes, and wildfires may be glad to get any usable equipment.

Most people are terrified of the threat of a house fire. In 2018, 73 % of the 1,318,500 house fires in the USA happened in homes, leading to 3,655 deaths. There is an 85% decrease in house fire deaths when sprinklers are present in the home. Fire sprinklers are a requirement for all new home construction. They have been proven to protect lives and property. The lightweight construction materials used in new homes burn quicker and fail faster than the material used in older construction. Furnishings made of synthetic materials burn fast and emit a high amount of toxins as they burn. A fire in a newer home can become deadly in as little as 2 minutes.

A sprinkler fire protection system can be installed in older homes. In our area, we all have wells. A designated tank for fire events can be installed, but you could run a system attached to your main. In general, it costs \$1-\$2 per sprinklered square foot for new construction projects, and \$2-\$7 per sprinklered square foot for retrofitting existing homes. New sprinkler systems are unobtrusive, can be mounted flush with walls or ceilings, or hidden behind decorative covers. With proper installation and insulation, sprinklers will not freeze during our winters. Leaks are no more likely than those from your home's plumbing system. Sprinklers do not activate in response to smoke, cooking vapors, steam, or the sound of a smoke alarm. They are calibrated to activate when there is a significant heat change of 135-1650 degrees. If there is a fire, usually the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate and spray water directly on the fire. The remaining sprinklers will remain off unless activated by heat. In 9 out of 10 home fires, just one sprinkler activates while the rest of the house stays dry. Sprinklers can control flames, heat, and smoke quickly, usually before the fire engine has even left the firehall. Sprinklers use about 90% less water on a fire than a fire hose line would. This results in much less water damage to your house. Plus, a fire department could take up to 20 minutes to arrive, whereas a sprinkler starts fighting the fire immediately. Just something to think about while building or renovating your home or cabin.

With the increase in learning and working remotely, we have to consider the health issues that develop with extended computer use. Working on a computer for long periods of time each day can lead to physical strains and overuse injuries in both adults and children. Make sure that you have a good chair that supports the back and allows the feet to be flat on the floor. The computer screen should be about an arm's length away and your eyes should be level with the top of your monitor. Keep the shoulders relaxed and low. Your forearms should be parallel to the floor. Avoid reaching too far for your keyboard and mouse. Poor posture and inactivity can lead to chronic neck, back, and shoulder pain and tingling in the hands and fingers. Sitting for long periods of time (more than 3 hours a day in front of a screen) raises an adult's and child's risk of obesity, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Follow the 20/20/20 rule which says that for every 20 minutes spent looking at a screen, a person should look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Looking at a screen for extended periods can cause "computer vision syndrome". The symptoms of this include strained, dry eyes, blurred vision, fatigue, and headaches. Children may not be able to tell you that their vision is being affected. They should be taken for regular eye examinations starting at a young age. Studies have shown that continued exposure to the blue light of screens can damage cells of the retina in your eyes. This damage can lead to vision problems such as macular degeneration. A study in 2019 found that, on average, an adult spends 11 hours a day staring at some kind of screen, whether that be a computer, phone, tablet, TV, or another type of electronic device. Children ages 8-18 spend an average of 10 hours a day staring at a screen. And these studies were done before Covid forced many children and adults to work and learn remotely. Time spent in front of a screen is sedentary time. Adults and children should balance their screen time with activity time. The pixels in screens make it hard for adults and children to fall asleep. The eyes do not have a solid image to focus on like they do with the printed words. This stimulates the brain to work harder to focus. Trying to focus on pixels can also raise the risk for attention problems, behavioral changes, anxiety, and depression. Computers and other screen devices have become a necessary part of our lives. We must try to limit screen time to what is necessary. In this time of Covid, when children and adults cannot get together for activities like sports, it becomes necessary to plan physical activity in order to remain healthy. Future studies will show how the increased use of computers at this time will affect our health, as well as our children's health. Have a safe and healthy start to the fall season. Look for ways to spend time outdoors. Remember, if you need us, call 911 and we will be there to help.

