

News From the Ellsburg Volunteer Fire Department 2016.09

Our September meeting took place on September 7, 2016 at 7pm. We had 0 calls in the month of August. It was a safe month for our township, and our department members had time for vacations and summer fun. The new turn-out gear and boots have arrived for our firefighters. It is time to apply for various grants that we might qualify for to update our equipment. Our SCBA's (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus) will expire over the next year. These are expensive but vital components of a firefighter's gear. They provide the air that an interior firefighter needs to breathe when battling a fire in an enclosed area. They also provide air that an exterior firefighter or first responder can breathe when working in an area that has toxic fumes or high carbon monoxide. We are hoping to qualify for a grant that will help with obtaining a vehicle to replace our medical truck that was totaled during the July storms.

Life Link, our air medical service in Hibbing, hosted an open house and training for area departments on September 15. We met in their hangar at the Hibbing airport. They provided a delicious dinner and introduced us to the members of their team. It was nice to get to know the pilots, flight nurses, flight paramedics, and support staff. We could also tour their facility and look over their equipment and helicopter. Since our township lies between Virginia and Duluth, where the hospitals are, we rely on air medical services to provide rapid transport when necessary.

Canine units from the sheriff's departments of Virginia and Duluth also gave a demonstration at the open house. These units do patrol through our township. The officers presented situations that could occur involving first responders. What if a squad is involved in an accident and extrication is needed? What if an officer is injured and needs medical help? These dogs are very protective of their human team mates and may not understand that the first responders are trying to help their partners. Methods of restraining these dogs were demonstrated and discussed. But what if it is the canine that is injured? Again, the dog may not understand that we are trying to help. There are medics on the Virginia and Duluth fire departments that are trained in the medical care and resuscitation of these dogs. However, if the canines need help while they are in our township, we must be prepared to render aid. We were shown how to administer oxygen, open an airway, find a pulse, and give CPR to a dog. In case you are interested, a dog's pulse can be found on the inside of a back leg, up near the abdomen. A dog must be placed on it's right side when performing CPR. The heart can be found by pulling the front leg back to the chest and noting where the elbow touches the chest. The heart is located at this spot. Perform compressions like you do with a human, just a little faster. Interesting stuff, isn't it? Join our fire department! You will be amazed at what you can learn.

Summer is ending and the mosquito populations are diminishing. Autumn is a beautiful time to be in the woods. Our department will be focusing on getting our four - wheeler and rescue sled ready. We need to replace our GPS unit. Please practice safety when driving four wheelers, hunting, and walking in the woods. Wear helmets and bright clothing. Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return. Remember that it gets dark earlier now. Carry water, matches, and a warm blanket in case you must spend the night in the woods. Bring a GPS. If you get lost or injured, stay where you are and call 911. We are ready to help!

Heidi Yokel
Secretary, EVFD