

NEWS FROM THE ELLSBURG VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT 2017.12.06

Our December meeting took place on December 6, 2017 at the Bass Lake Firehall. It is the end of the year, so it is time to reflect back on our activities as a department in 2017. We had vehicle issues earlier in the year. You can't have unreliable vehicles when you respond to emergencies. Luckily, we were able to purchase a new engine and medical rig. Actually, these vehicles are not new, just new to us. We have been able to stock up on many of the medical and firefighting supplies that are necessary for us to do our job. We enjoyed participating in the Melrude parade and picnic in July, and hosting our first National Night Out in August. We were able to begin the years long process of replacing our outdated SCBA's a few units at a time. There will always be overwhelming piles of paperwork to complete and grants to apply for. We are fortunate that one of our members, Laurie, has promised to get us organized and (gasp!) put our paperwork on a computer. Good luck, Laurie! We have newly licensed EMRs and some members who will begin firefighting training classes in January. Our department is growing stronger. We have very dedicated members. We are proud to boast a 100% response rate this year, and we are committed to continue that in 2018!

On December 9, we had a department Christmas party at the home of the Mesedahls. What fun! Why haven't we done this before? We enjoyed a delicious dinner and guests brought an assortment of dessert goodies. It was nice to talk about things not fire or medical related - though these topics did surface occasionally. Thank - you Laurie, Loren, and Loren for hosting this party. It will become an annual event!

There have been several calls throughout the county for carbon monoxide poisoning. It is a silent killer gas that is released when appliances and engines are not properly ventilated. Early symptoms of poisoning include headache, weakness, dizziness, and nausea followed by vomiting, shortness of breath, confusion, blurry vision, and loss of consciousness. Brain damage and death will follow if left untreated. Obviously these symptoms can be signs of many other maladies. It is possible for someone to die from CO poisoning because they just felt that they were coming down with the flu and did not realize that they were being poisoned. Also, if the CO leak occurs while you are sleeping, how will you know? Please get a carbon monoxide detector! When it sounds, get outside fast!

There are those in our community who are elderly and nearing the end of their life, or who have a severe or terminal illness. Perhaps they wish to die a natural, peaceful death. This means that they do not want to be resuscitated by CPR or other lifesaving measures if their heart or breathing stops. They have spoken to their doctors and obtained a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) order or a POLST (Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment). They have notified their family members and maybe their friends. But do the local first responders know? First responders are legally required to initiate resuscitative measures unless they are shown a DNR or POLST. Family or friends who know your wishes may not always be present. Please post your wishes where they can be found easily. Some people post these forms on their bedroom wall, if that is where they spend most of their time. Some make copies and post them in several rooms. Some request that 911 make a notation by their address in their computer system that states a DNR/POLST is present and where it can be found. This information can be passed on when the responders are paged out. Some people even have Do Not Resuscitate tattooed on their chest. Responders will not perform CPR in these cases but they can still come and help you be comfortable and not alone.

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