

## NEWS FROM THE ELLSBURG VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT 20180705

Our July meeting took place on Thursday, July 5, at 1830, at the Bass Lake Firehall. Our main topic of discussion was planning our participation in the annual Melrude Parade and Picnic which was held on July 7. We put four of our vehicles in the parade, and the rest were on display by the Melrude Firehall. Each of our parade vehicles had a driver and a candy thrower. We had plenty of candy this year! Thank-you to Lee Leighton who donated six huge bags of chocolate candy to us! Thank-you to Kady Stokes and the Kloss kids for being our candy throwers! We had a table set up with lots of things to give away. As always, our stuffed Dalmatian fire pups, backpacks, and activity books were very popular. We had 11 baskets, a fire pit, and a child's desk that were raffled off. Thank-you to Linda Skiba who donated Polaris thermoses and Polaris computer bags! Thank-you to Gordy's Hi-Hat who donated T-shirts, caps, mugs, and gift certificates! Thank-you to the Thies family who donated 5 baskets to be raffled with the proceeds going to our department! There was plenty of food donated for the picnic. Thank-you to all who brought a dish to share! What a feast! Thank-you to Keith Vollbrecht who donated to make sure that we had enough brats this year! Thank-you to all who donated money to our department! The funding that we get from the township pays our bills, repairs and replaces our vehicles, purchases necessary equipment, and pays for the mandated training. It is nice to have "play money" so that we can give back to the community with fun events like this. Give us a call, or write us a note if you have any suggestions for the parade and picnic next year.

Our next community event will be National Night Out. This will be held at the Bass Lake Firehall on Mink Road on Tuesday, August 7, from 5pm-8pm. We will provide food, display our equipment, and have demonstrations. North Air Care, the air medical service from Eveleth, will fly in about 5pm (if they are not called out on a transport) and demonstrate their ship and the services that they offer. There will also be some games and giveaways. I promise to have water balloons and plush Dalmatian pups! Come and enjoy an evening with us and a chance to mingle with your neighbors. It's free! Of course, landing a helicopter requires good communication between the pilot and those of us on the ground. We will have a training night with North Memorial Air Care prior to National Night Out to ensure that everything goes smoothly.

On July 14, our department hosted GPS (Global Positioning System) training. The GPS is a navigation system which uses satellites to provide location information based on latitudes and longitudes. Our instructor was Jon Olsen who teaches through the Advanced Minnesota program and is also a member of the St. Louis County Rescue Squad. This system is very useful in search and rescue missions. There are many trails in our township that are used by snowmobilers, 4-wheelers, other all-terrain vehicles, hikers, and hunters. These trails are not necessarily nearby, or accessible by, roads. They are truly in the middle of nowhere. Yet, people use these trails and so incidents happen on or around these trails. These incidents can involve a medical emergency, a vehicle that has broken down, a lost person, a fire from a campfire or lightning strike.... When someone calls 911 from a cellphone, the dispatcher can sometimes determine the longitude and latitude from "pinging" that phone. It is also beneficial to know where the victim entered the trail system and where they were planning on going. Searchers can then follow on the trail until they find the victim and radio back the coordinates. Victims can be found from the air also, and coordinates can be determined so that a rescue can occur. When searching a larger area, each searcher can be given the coordinates of an area that is their responsibility so that searchers are not duplicating areas already searched. The GPS system is the fastest and most precise way of locating an incident. It is imperative that the EVFD be familiar with this system.

We began our training with a classroom portion where we learned to use our GPS devices and enter coordinates. For instance, the coordinates of the Bass Lake Firehall are latitude 47.1988244 and longitude of -92.3661636. This is in the decimal system. Coordinates can also be found in the degrees, minutes, and seconds system. In this system, our firehall is at latitude 47°11' 55" N and longitude -92° 21' 55" W. Different services use different grid systems so we learned how to convert from decimals to degrees and vice versa. The conversion is 1 degree=60 minutes=3600 seconds. We were then given coordinates to places marked in our township and instructed to find them using

our GPS devices. We used 4 wheelers and side by sides for transportation. We also travelled on many of those trails and recorded coordinates for intersecting trails and areas that may work as landing zones for the air medical services. Be prepared is our motto. There is some rough terrain out there! We discovered which 4 wheelers float, which ones get stuck easily, which winches work best, and which side by side can fill up with the most water and still run. There were 10 of us and our instructor, and we all made it back. Our training started at 8am and we returned at 2pm caked in mud, covered in bug bites, and with grit in our mouths. Was it training or just an excuse for a wild ride? Probably both. We are a close group of people and we like to have fun!

A big Thank-you to Deborah Feth! Deb provided a delicious breakfast and lunch for us on this training day. There were also fruits, snacks, desserts, and lots of fluids. The Ellsburg VFD is known among the local fire departments for providing good food and desserts on training events. Deb is the reason that we have this reputation. That is why Bruce from the Cotton VFD and Reid from the Central Lakes VFD joined us for this training. It is also why Jon Olsen never turns down our request for a training instructor!

Be safe when riding the trails in our township. Wear a helmet, goggles, long sleeves, long pants, boots, and gloves. Never ride under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Ride an ATV that is right for your age. Supervise young riders. Ride at a safe speed that you are comfortable with. There are no seatbelts and these vehicles can flip over and trap the rider. Do not ride alone. If you run out of gas, get lost, or crash when you are by yourself, the consequences can be fatal. Riding an ATV for long periods requires strength and mental alertness. The bumps, jumps, puddles, and tight corners can tire you out. Take a break, eat a snack, and rehydrate. Let someone know where you are going and when you will be back. Look at a map and become familiar with the area and terrain that you expect to cross. Take emergency supplies and plan for the weather. Make sure that you have a fully charged phone and maybe an extra battery. Get a GPS and know how to use it. There are apps for your phone that can help you find your location such as "Where Am I At?". If you do a lot of backwoods, off the beaten track recreation or hunting, consider getting an app called

"Motion X GPS". This is used by the Rescue Squad and our department. There is a small charge to get this app but it is very helpful in finding your way in, around, and out of the area. Be safe! Call 911 if you get in trouble. We will be there to help you.



GPS Training



Fourth of July 2018 Parade