

## NEWS FROM THE ELLSBURG VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT 20200902

Our September meeting took place on Wednesday, September 2, 2020, at 6:30pm, at the Bass Lake Firehall on Mink Road. Our October meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 7, 6:30pm, at the Bass Lake Firehall. All are welcome to attend!

We are happy to report that the dry hydrant has been built in the area of Comstock Lake Road and Waterhen Road on the bank of the Whiteface River. This project has been years in the planning. Finally, with the help of Lee Leighton as consultant and Jeff Dulinski as project manager, and the support of the Cotton and Ellsburg Town Boards, the hydrant is in place. There was a lot of prep work to prepare the area. On Tuesday, August 25, Lee, Jeff, and EVFD members Ray Privett, Bob Skafte, and Bill McKechnie glued together the sections of the pipe. On Wednesday, Gordy Gafke and Rick Ness pressure tested the pipe. On Thursday, Matt Woods brought his excavator and dug an eight foot deep trench from the Whiteface River 120 feet out to where the standpipe would sit. We spread the word in the township that help was needed to place the pipe in the trench. 20 people showed up! The youngest was Charlie Carlson in his teens, and the oldest was Rodney King in his nineties! We all grabbed a strap, lifted the more than 120 foot length of PVC pipe, walked it several feet over to the edge of the trench, and then very, very carefully lowered it down to the bottom of the trench. Success! It didn't break! The trench was then backfilled, and styrofoam and rock was placed. Rick McRae donated and delivered 10 yards of sand. Bryan Tracy delivered several loads of pit run and Class 5 gravel. Grass mats and grass seed was the final covering. SuAnn and Cody Anderson brought us burgers and chicken sandwiches from the Wilbert Cafe. As always, when you ask this community for help, people respond! We are so thankful for everyone's help in this project. It would not be completed without the tireless efforts of Jeff and Lee!

This hydrant will serve both the Ellsburg and Cotton communities. It gives both fire departments a year-round water supply in an area away from the firehalls. The area leading up to the hydrant has been leveled out. This area would be an ideal place to land a medical helicopter if needed. The land here is public land. It gives access to the Whiteface River. However, we must ask you not to park here. It might be needed at any moment for water or a medical emergency. It would be a shame to have this all set up, but then not be able to use it in an emergency because someone parked a vehicle there.

Last month, I reported that we were embarking on a cleaning and reorganization of our Bass Lake Firehall. We decided to start with the office. We were happy with the fresh coat of paint, but then Tyler Swor, an Ellsburg resident, offered to donate his talents in putting down an epoxy floor. Thank-you, Tyler! Now we have a beautiful office floor! Bruce Degan, another Ellsburgian, stopped by and helped move desks and file cabinets and gave his professional advice on some of our plans. He also offered to create our office "window" for us. Thank-you, Bruce! We really appreciate your help! Our good friends, Charlie and Nancy Thies, generously contributed to our "cleaning project". Thank-you so much, Charlie and Nancy! We can always count on your support!

In August, we did training with our Engines. We need to review regularly how to get the water from the tank to the pump to the hose. This involves pulling on the levers, turning the dials, and reading the gauges to make sure that the firefighter at the nozzle end of the hose has the water that he needs, and that the water has the pressure that he needs. His life may be dependent on what the person running the engine is doing. Scott Christopherson, an Ellsburg summer resident, offered to donate his talents in teaching us. Scott is retired from several decades working for the Pike-Sandy-Britt Fire Department. We all felt much more comfortable running our engines after the excellent teaching and anecdotal stories that Scott shared with us. Thank-you, Scott! We are fortunate to have you in our township!

In this time of Covid, everyone is familiar with the benefits of using hand sanitizer. It is important to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or ethyl alcohol. Do not use hand sanitizers that contain methanol or wood alcohol. This type of alcohol is used in making fuel and antifreeze. Methanol can produce toxicity by being absorbed through the skin or inhaled into the lungs. The elderly and young children are especially susceptible to this because of their thin skin. Symptoms of methanol poisoning include nausea, vomiting, dizziness, headaches, weakness, visual disturbances including blindness, and loss of consciousness. The hand sanitizer business is very prolific now. Many new companies have been formed to manufacture hand sanitizers. But not all of these companies are trustworthy. Unfortunately, there are hand sanitizers that are labeled as containing ethanol, but they actually contain methanol. The FDA has published a list of these potentially toxic hand sanitizers. They suggest purchasing brand names that you are familiar with, and checking in which country the sanitizer was manufactured. Many of the toxic brands have come from Mexico.

The main ingredient in hand sanitizer is alcohol. This alcohol, whether ethanol or methanol, is flammable. The fumes can ignite if a flame is present. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are Class 1 Flammable Liquid substances. This means that

they have a flash point of less than 100 degrees. You must make sure that the sanitizer on your hands has completely dried before lighting anything or handling fire. People have suffered severe burns from lighting a candle, a gas stove, or a cigarette immediately after using hand sanitizer. The most dangerous time is when the hands are still wet, or even damp. If hand sanitizer is spilled, all ignition sources must be immediately removed, and the sanitizer must be quickly cleaned up with water. Store hand sanitizers away from heat, open flames, and electrical outlets, switches or equipment. Hand sanitizer is good, but so is soap and water.

Fall is a good time to check your chimney and get it cleaned out before the heating season is in full swing. Creosote, the byproduct of wood combustion that sticks to the inside of your chimney, is highly combustible. A fire in the chimney can spark a fire on your roof, in your walls, and back in the room where the fireplace or wood stove is located. Take the time to clean your chimney now.

Fire Prevention Week this year is October 4-10. This year's theme is "Serve up Fire Safety in the Kitchen". Cooking is the main cause of home fires. MN has recorded 37 fire fatalities so far this year. Last year, there were 28 fatalities. It has been suggested that the coronavirus and stay-at-home mandates have encouraged more people to cook at home and that this is the cause of the increase in fires and fatalities. The main cause of kitchen fires is people forgetting that they have something cooking on the stove or in the oven. They walk out of the kitchen for "just a minute". Then they get distracted by something or someone and that minute turns into 10 minutes. By the time they return, the pot has boiled over, or the grease in the pan has overheated and the stove is now on fire. Turn the burner off if you need to leave the kitchen while cooking. Make sure that the handles of your pots and pans are turned inward so that your child can not reach up and grab it off of the stove.

Preventing home fires is a 24/7/365 responsibility. Be aware of dangers associated with what you are doing. Be aware of where your children are, and what they are doing. Install smoke alarms inside and outside of all sleeping areas, and on every level of the home. Check them monthly. Change batteries twice a year. Fall is a good time to do this. Replace any smoke alarm that is over 8 years old. Be fire safe, but if you need us call 911. We will be there to help!

Thank-you to these volunteers for helping with the dry hydrant project:

Jeff Dulinski  
Lee Leighton  
Gordy Gafke  
Larry Anderson  
Arrlette Krog  
Charlie Carlson  
Arnold Carlson  
Constance Johnston  
Bob Skaft  
Ray Privett  
Bill McKechnie  
Loren D. Mesedahl  
Rodney King  
Heidi Yokel  
Debbie Holmgron  
Kevin Holmgron  
Nick Anderson  
Bob DeRoche Jr.  
Jeff Bachke  
SuAnn Anderson  
Cody Anderson  
Matt Woods  
Rick McRae



