



CRESTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
4498 Hwy 35, Kalispell, MT 59901

Hot Spots

The Newsletter of the Creston Fire Fighter Associate Membership

Learn more about your fire department and the efforts of its dedicated, hardworking volunteers.

CFD Expands and Enhances Its Fleet



Engine 8, Creston Fire's new rescue-and-ambulance vehicle, will be housed at the Lake Blaine Station.

Creston Fire has added a new vehicle to its ranks—a multipurpose rescue-and-ambulance unit.

Although the department does not routinely provide transportation to hospitals, its responders usually arrive first at car accidents and scenes of other outdoor injuries within the Creston Fire District. The new Engine 8 can shelter patients when the conditions are wet and cold.

The multipurpose unit also allows Creston Fire to back up area ambulance services and transport patients to ALERT. It can even act as a warm command center for firefighters during winter operations. Engine 8 thus

brings a new dimension to the fire department's capabilities, said Chief Gary Mahugh, and allows it to better serve the local community.

"Our level of service has always been considered high, and that is the result of the people of Creston Fire—the appropriate 'tools' just make us more efficient at what we do," he said. "This project is a great example of what can be accomplished as the result of the support of the people who live in our community."

Creston Fire is now raising funds to supply Engine 8 with an array of rescue equipment and set it up for mass casualty incidents. Still needed is an internal intercom so

that medical responders caring for a patient can talk with the vehicle's driver. Deputy Chief Bill Tidwell said he also would like a heart monitor that can take blood pressure and other measurements and then electronically send them to the hospital while Engine 8 is en route. *If you would like to help outfit this vehicle, please see the donation form on page 3.*

In addition, Creston Fire purchased a set of extrication tools (Jaws) and Res-Q Jacks for Engine 8, which will often be the first response unit on scene at motor vehicle crashes. Res-Q Jacks help stabilize the vehicle, and the Jaws are designed to tackle current technology by cutting through

many of the hardened metals found on today's cars and trucks. The Jaws extrication tools cost nearly \$17,000 and were paid for by fundraising events such as the annual Creston Auction.

The vehicle went into operation earlier this year. To save money, the department bought a 1996 Freightliner with low mileage, a four-wheel-drive chassis, and high clearance, ideal for conditions in the Creston Fire District. It came with a patient care and transport area, a 300-gallon water tank, and a power take-off (PTO) pump, equipment that makes the unit flexible in its rescue and fire capabilities.

The purchase fulfills a long-held vision and adds a much-needed unit to the department fleet. Call volume has been increasing annually, with just under 250 dispatches last year. Approximately 60–70% of the calls are for medical or rescue emergencies. Vehicle crashes, sick calls, traumatic injuries, and environmental rescues make up most of these nonfire calls.

Chief Mahugh said that most calls find a patient and the volunteer responders out in the weather waiting for an ambulance in at least one of the following: the dead of night; below freezing temperatures; deep snow, mud, or rain; and strong winds.

The new vehicle allows Creston medical responders to focus on rapid intervention at the scene. As Chief Mahugh put it, "We think of it as neighbors helping neighbors."



“We’ll Never Forget”

A Message from Creston Fire Chief Gary Mahugh

The date 9/11 will long be remembered by Creston firefighters. On that day in 2001, 343 of our brethren were killed as they responded to the World Trade Center Towers in New York. While we may not have personally known the responders who died that day, our firefighter family felt the loss. Most of us remember what we were doing that day: fighting the North Fork’s Moose Fire.

To memorialize that day, each year on September 11 firefighters stand vigil in front of the Creston Station, holding an American flag. Thirteen shifts were filled this year. The volunteer firefighters from Creston took time from their jobs and families because they wanted to be part of this tribute.

During this year’s vigil, hundreds of drivers sounded their horns and waved. Some stopped to take pictures, and some brought flowers and snacks. One visitor said her photo would be posted in Station 14 in New York City, a station hit particularly hard by loss in 2001. The photographer had tears in her eyes as she thanked the Creston firefighters for not forgetting the events of that day.

In the days following September 11, 2001, it was thought that no one would ever forget. But several people did stop this year to ask why we were standing in front of one of our stations holding a flag. It was a reminder that time does dull our memories. Creston Fire is committed to not forgetting what happened 8 years ago. To all who honked, waved, or stopped by, we say thanks for remembering!

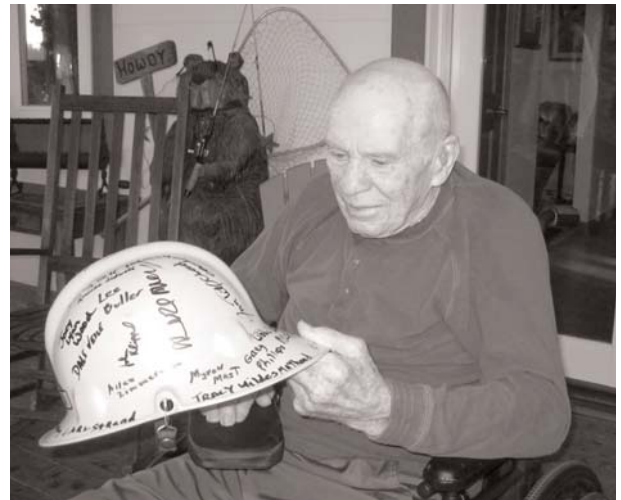
Dedicated Trustee shows life- long commitment

Firefighters recently honored Trustee Bill Ambrose for his unflinching commitment to the department. Bill suffered a stroke in April, but it has not dampened his spirit and support for Creston Fire.

Bill was a charter member of the department in the late 1950s. A group of neighbors built a fire truck from a worn-out logging truck and then trained themselves in its use.

Being a farmer, like many charter members, Bill was skilled at using something designed for the farm to fight fire.

Chief Gary Mahugh remembers growing up with his own father in the fire department and seeing Bill at all hours fixing something and getting ready for the next call. Bill is always someone you can count on, Mahugh said. “Bill is a humble man who has tremendous pride in being part of Creston Fire. He does not talk of himself; rather, he speaks of the



Creston Fire presented Trustee Bill Ambrose with a vintage helmet in recognition of his commitment to the department.

group, of the team that may have changing members but has never lost sight of the mission of helping others.”

Being a volunteer firefighter is a family deal, and Bill was never alone; his wife Louise was by his side as he performed his duties. Bill and Louise, who presented the American flag for raising above the auction grounds at the 2009 Creston Auction, are shining examples of community members who often put others before themselves, Mahugh said.

Take the initiative: Help responders help you

Creston Fire’s volunteers face many challenges when they respond to a fire or medical emergency. But two of the greatest are finding a house and gathering medications and medical history. You can help responders help you. Here’s how.

The Address Mystery

Response time can increase 10-fold when poor directions, unmarked driveways, and dark houses thwart efforts to provide help quickly. But solutions are relatively quick and easy to implement: —Post clear directions to the house by each phone so that anyone can pass them on to 911 dispatchers.

—After calling 911, turn on all house lights. A brightly lit house can be a beacon in a dark neighborhood.

—Make sure the house number on your mailbox, driveway, and house is current and does not have missing digits.

—Are the house numbers easy to read in all seasons? Luminous numbers 3 inches in height are best. Check to ensure snow berms do not block the digits in winter.

—If several mailboxes are at the end of

your road or if your driveway splits, place an address marker and arrow at the fork. —Test it. Ask a new visitor to find your place using the directions you have by the phone. Where your friend gets lost, clarify your directions and post a marker.

At Soup for Supper (*see the calendar on page 4*), CFFAM will offer supplies and instructions for posting house numbers. For help putting up address markers, contact Gloria Graves at 250-4655.

Piles of Pills

Area hospitals now require medical responders to bring all prescription medications to the hospital with a patient. Make it easy on them and you. —Keep all medications in one place, including over-the-counter drugs prescribed by a physician. A basket for each member of the household can be easiest. —With each basket, keep a current list of medications, medical history, and allergy and other pertinent medical information. —Add to your medical history when you have a major medical change, and review it annually to make sure it is complete.

Yes! I Support Creston Fire

Your support is important to Creston Fire and its dedicated volunteers. Please help us in our efforts to be the first on scene to help you!

All donations are tax deductible, and your canceled check can serve as your receipt. If you would like a written tax receipt, please indicate this on the back of this coupon. For our records, please provide the following information:

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Organization _____
(if the donation is on behalf of an organization)

Address _____

- Please contact me about CFFAM and becoming an associate member.
 Please contact me about becoming a volunteer firefighter or medical responder.

Phone _____ Email _____

Please make your check payable to the Creston Fire Fighter's Association and mail it with this coupon to:

Creston Fire Fighter's Association, 4498 Hwy 35, Kalispell, MT 59901

Thank you for your support!

By the Numbers:

Equipping an Engine

What does it take to put a new rescue unit and the equipment to run it into operation? A lot of money...

\$145,000	Vehicle
\$ 35,000	Water tank & pump
\$ 20,000	Res-Q Jacks
\$ 17,000	Jaws
\$ 20,000	Medical equipment

\$237,000 Total cost

This is what it would have cost Creston Fire to purchase a new rescue-and-ambulance unit. Fortunately, the department found a used vehicle that could be outfitted with new equipment to fit its needs, drastically reducing the overall cost.

Because We Care

CFFAM started in an effort to support the all-volunteer Creston Fire Department. But over the last year, it has become more: a chance to show commitment to the Creston community, an opportunity to get to know neighbors, and a venue for giving back to those of our community who give the most.

"My husband and I like being associate members ... because numbers of people help add strength to our community," said one CFFAM member. "It is a great feeling that you have, knowing you are working with such a supportive group."

As another associate member said, "It's a fun bunch of people that get things done and have a good time doing it."

Ultimately, it comes back to supporting Creston Fire. "I can't jump from bed for a 2 a.m. call. But I can be there to serve a hot meal to a tired firefighter, post flyers about an upcoming event, and give up a weekend each year to help at the Creston Auction."

Many CFFAM members have found the friendships and connections formed through the group to be invaluable in their own lives. As one associate said of others in the group, "They are always there when you need them."

Spotlight on Safety: CO Dangers

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly, colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. It can kill you before you are aware it is in your home. The gas comes from sources including gas-fired appliances, charcoal grills, wood-burning stoves, and vehicles.

The initial symptoms of low-level or slowly developing CO poisoning are similar to those of the flu (but without the fever). High-level or rapidly developing CO poisoning results in progressively more severe symptoms, including mental confusion, vomiting, loss of muscular coordination, loss of consciousness, and ultimately death.

If you think you are experiencing symptoms of CO poisoning, get yourself and anyone else in the building outside to fresh air immediately. From a neighbor's home or your cell phone, call 911. DO NOT re-enter the premises until the emergency responders have given you permission. Be sure a qualified professional repairs the source of the CO.

To prevent CO poisoning,
—Install and operate appliances according to the manufacturer's instructions and local building codes.

—Have the heating system, chimney, and flue inspected and serviced annually.

—Never operate a portable generator in or near a house, garage, or other building. Open doors and windows will not prevent these spaces from trapping CO.

—Never use a portable camp stove inside a building, vehicle, or tent unless it is designed for use in an enclosed space.

—Never burn charcoal in enclosed areas.
—Do not leave a car running in a garage, even with an open garage door.

—Never use gas appliances such as ovens or clothes dryers to heat your home.

—Never operate unvented fuel-burning appliances where people are sleeping.

—Do not cover the bottom of natural gas or propane ovens with aluminum foil.

Doing so blocks air flow through the appliance and can produce CO.

—During renovations, do not block vents and chimneys with tarps or debris.

You can also install a CO alarm that meets current safety standards. An alarm provides added protection but is no substitute for proper use and upkeep of appliances. Install alarms between any sleeping person and the rest of the house, boat, or RV. Make sure the alarm cannot be covered by furniture or draperies.

Sources: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, U.S. Fire Administration.

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Making a Difference

CFFAM has a lot to cheer about after its first year, thanks to community members offering time, energy, and donations for Creston Fire.

In just 1 year, CFFAM has developed into a strong corps of volunteers in the Creston community. Last year's Soup for Supper event was so popular that we will repeat it this fall (*see the calendar information on this page for details*). Our early sellout of lefse at the Creston Auction has everyone hungering for another lefse-making session. We hope more participants will allow us to make and sell an even larger batch of the Norwegian flatbread at

On Call
CFFAM Meeting
When: 6:30 p.m., Oct. 20
Where: Creston Fire Station,
4498 Hwy 35
What to bring: A dish to share
More info: Contact Gloria Graves,
250-4655, crittermom10@hotmail.com

next April's auction.

Volunteer turnout for the auction itself was unprecedented. The feedback from the firefighters and community was tremendous, and we hope to see an even stronger turnout as we start planning the 44th auction in January.

Finally, the landscaping for the flagpole project spearheaded by CFFAM has filled in nicely over the summer.

Please join us at our next meeting as we continue our work to support Creston Fire and our community.

Mark Your Calendar Soup for Supper; Holiday Parade

Oct. 4–10: National Fire Prevention Week.

Creston firefighters and Sparky the Fire Dog visit schools in the Creston Fire District to share fire prevention tips with the students.

Oct. 6: Soup for Supper, 4–8 p.m., Creston Fire Station.

Join your neighbors for dinner at the Creston Fire Station. Supper features homemade soups, salad, rolls, and desserts. Donations are welcome! We are also selling whole pies in handcrafted pie plates from Mountain Brook Studio. Chief Gary Mahugh will give a short presentation at 6 p.m. If you are unable to stay for dinner, stop in for a takeaway container.

Nov. 27: "City of the North" Parade, 6 p.m., Kalispell.

A Creston Fire engine will again enter this annual parade. To help cover the engine with holiday lights and decorations, come to 8th Street and 1st Avenue West at 6 p.m.—just walk down the line of entries until you find our engine. The parade heads to Main Street at 7 p.m.

Jan. 25: Auction Meeting, 7 p.m., Creston Fire Station.

Join us for the first planning meeting for the 44th Creston Auction & Country Fair, to be held April 10–11, 2010.

For more information about any of these activities, contact Gloria Graves at 250-4655 or crittermom10@hotmail.com.