



4498 Hwy 35, Kalispell, MT 59901

Hot Spots

Newsletter of the Creston Fire Fighter Associate Membership

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



The Chief's Corner: Sometimes It Is in the Numbers

As a fire chief I am often asked questions about the Creston Fire Department, including about how we are funded, how much money it takes to operate, how many members we have, how much a fire engine costs, how many trustees there are and many other things that come down to “the numbers.” Here are the answers to some of the questions that I am most often asked, as well as a couple of more obscure costs related to providing fire protection in a rural area. (See p. 3 for an overview of some of these numbers.)

Probably the most common question is, How many times a year are you called for assistance, and is that number growing? In 2013 Creston Fire was dispatched 302 times for assistance. This works out to an average of a call every 1.2 days. If the calls came in that way, our fire lives would be simpler, but it is not unusual to go a few days with no calls only to have three or more in a single day. This number is growing. For example, in 2010 we were dispatched 202 times, in 2011 it was 228 times and in 2012 the number

was 261. Is this a trend that will continue? I don't see the numbers getting smaller. The trend tells us we need volunteer members who can respond at various times of the day and night. Many of our members work outside the fire district and often cannot respond during working hours; this is part of the challenge for daytime response. Another part of that challenge is the number of responders it takes to safely conduct operations. On a medical call that number might be 2 to 6 responders, but on a structure fire the minimum number is closer to 19 and on a larger fire it could be double that. We have 34 members who respond to calls when they can, so you can see the workload we have and the challenge in meeting the need. One way we do this is through mutual aid and automatic aid agreements with neighboring departments.

Other numbers that are of interest are as follows: Five trustees make up our governing body—a fire district is a subdivision of the state overseen by these trustees. Creston Fire operates out of four

stations: Creston, Lake Blaine, Foothill and Fair-Mont. The Creston Fire District is approximately 83 square miles. Each fire fighter is issued equipment costing more than \$4,000. A new type 1 engine costs well over \$300,000, so we often purchase preowned apparatus at a lower cost. Creston Fire has eight pieces of apparatus. Tax revenue is approximately \$200,000. The Creston Auction brings in an average of \$25,000–\$30,000 annually, which helps the community overall. This is the 48th annual auction. It takes approximately 200 people to host the auction, and nearly 7,000 people attend the Creston Auction annually.

There are a lot of other numbers that you would probably find interesting, but the ones I've listed give you a little closer look at Creston Fire. We know our call volume will not decrease, and we know prices for equipment will not go down—so it is critical that we ask for the support of the community. That support can come in donations, in supporting the Creston Auction and our other fund-raisers and in volunteering to be an active member of Creston Fire. We currently have positions open, and your commitment to serve would greatly benefit your community. We are all volunteers—our responders give freely of their time when someone dials 9-1-1. Are you willing to become one of our numbers by becoming a member and/or a supporter of Creston Fire?





The needs of people who call 9-1-1 vary widely. Creston Fire responders are active in the 83 square miles of the Creston Fire District and beyond as they are called upon to put out field and structure fires, provide medical assistance and serve members of the community in a variety of other ways. These pictures show the volunteer members of the Creston Fire Department in different aspects of their jobs and responsibilities.

Yes! I Support the Creston Fire

Your support is important to the Creston Fire Department 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 fire fighter 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:

The Chief's List

Chief Gary Mahugh provides some recent numbers related to Creston Fire. For the full story, see p. 1.

Calls received in 2013: 302

Calls received in 2010: 202

Average annual call increase: 10.6%

Average calls per day: 1.2

Current Creston Fire responders: 34

Responders needed per call: 2-6 per medical call, 19+ per structure fire call

Equipment: \$4,000 per fire fighter, \$300,000+ per new type 1 fire engine

The winner of the quilt raffle was
Doe Carroll of Kalispell.
Congratulations!

Getting the Best out of the 2014 Creston Auction

Tips for Sellers

- **Advertise your treasures:** Contact us in early March to include your larger items for free in our ads throughout northwest Montana.
- **List it:** For faster service and to ensure you are paid in full, bring a list of the items in your load on Consignment Day.
- **Consign and donate:** Bring all items to the sale grounds Friday, April 4, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- **Give your best:** Donations are welcome and tax deductible. Consider donating one or more items from your load to Creston Fire for the sale.
- **Think like a buyer:** If you wouldn't spend \$5 on an item, please donate it to the Rummage Sale. All proceeds from items that sell for \$5 or less in the auction are donated to the fire department, so improve the sale by taking these items to the Creston School gym's west door.
- **Organize your load:** Rather than handing over a box with books, canning jars and videos, make one box for each type of item so that it is easy to sell.
- **Form a group:** Collect items at your church, school, etc., and bring them as one load to the sale. We'll send the

proceeds (minus the fire department's commission) to your organization.

- **Take junk to the dump:** We also cannot accept tires, hazardous chemicals, ammunition or livestock.
- **Prepare for weather:** Bring disposable tarps to cover your items. We regret that we cannot guarantee their return.
- **Sleep soundly:** We provide security for all consigned items from Friday, April 4, through the sale Sunday, April 6.
- **Note this:** At Saturday's auction, no items are sold with minimum bids attached. At Sunday's equipment sale, a minimum bid can be set at \$1,500 or more. Call 250-7396 for more information on reserves and titles.

Tips for Buyers

- **Pack cash:** We accept MasterCard and Visa for auction purchases only, so also bring cash, checks or your ATM card.
- **Buy your ticket:** The auction's \$5 bid tickets go on sale at 8 a.m. Saturday. Get \$10 bid tickets for the equipment sale at 9 a.m. Sunday. These fees pay for security.
- **Carry ID:** Show it to buy a bid ticket.
- **Bid away:** There is no buyer's premium. Your winning bid is what you pay.
- **Stay warm:** Hot food is available

throughout Saturday and Sunday.

- **Treat your sweet tooth:** Visit the Bake Sale in the Creston School gym on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Even better, donate your favorite goodie! Call 250-7396 for drop-off times.
- **Get artsy:** The Arts & Crafts Sale is held Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Eastside Grange Hall.
- **Keep it clean:** Federal rules prohibit smoking on the school grounds. And please leave your dogs at home.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers make the Creston Auction happen, and we could use your help:

- **In advance:** Attend the CFFAM meetings, typically held the third Tuesday of each month (see p. 4).
- **With promotions:** If you have a flair for writing, graphics or photography, you can help us behind the scenes. Call Gloria: 250-4655.
- **On Consignment Day:** Help on April 4 as items are dropped off. Call the auction hotline: 250-7396.
- **At the auction:** Call the auction hotline: 250-7396.

Creston Fire Department
 Creston Fire Fighter Associate Membership
 4498 Hwy 35
 Kalispell, MT 59901



Postal Patron

More Than a Fundraiser

CFFAM's 6th annual Soup for Supper last October warmed more than 300 tummies.

The fundraiser for Creston Fire has become quite a highlight of the fall season. We had 21 roasters of 14 kinds of soups and chowders, along with salad, desserts and beverages. People could dine in or take out. There were raffle tickets for a queen-sized scrappy quilt that was handmade by Gertie Weaver and donated by Arlene Johnson. We also had more than 20 whole homemade pies for sale.

Community members saw the fire hall after it had fresh coats of paint and new carpet installed. We had additional

On Call
 CFFAM Meeting
When: 7 p.m., March 18
Where: Creston Fire Station,
 4498 Hwy 35
More info: Contact Gloria Graves,
 250-4655, crittermom10@hotmail.com

tables and chairs set up in the truck bay area. Not only did this provide extra seating needed for the event, but attendees didn't feel the rush to "eat and run." Everybody enjoyed the time to sit for a spell and visit with their friends and neighbors and the event allowed the opportunity to visit with the department's fire and medical responders in a non-emergent setting.

More than \$5,500 was collected this year. We thank you for your generous donations and your ongoing support of YOUR fire department!



48th ANNUAL

Sell your gently used items and support a good cause.

Join us for
**A FUNDRAISER TO
 BENEFIT THE
 CRESTON FIRE
 DEPARTMENT**

Friday, April 4	Saturday, April 5	Sunday, April 6
DONATION & CONSIGNMENT DAY	CRESTON AUCTION & COUNTRY FAIR	AUTO, RV, BOAT & EQUIPMENT SALE
7 A.M. to 7 P.M. Volunteers needed!	Starts at 9 A.M. \$5 bid tickets	Starts at noon \$10 bid tickets

Arts & Crafts Sale • Rummage Sale • Bake Sale • Local Food

Bring your items to sell to the Creston School, MT Hwy 35, 12 miles east of Kalispell, and we'll take care of the rest. Then come to browse and buy from the acres of items for sale during the auction. Proceeds benefit the Creston Fire Department.

250-7396 • crestonfire.org • Creston Auction on Facebook