



Hot Spots

Newsletter of the Friends of Creston Fire

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

Chief's Corner: Building a Need



Preliminary drawing for Creston Fire Department's planned Station 251 on Hwy 35.

By Gary Mahugh

I am often asked, "Are you building a new fire station?" Then I might get, "where?" and occasionally, "why?" The first question's answer is complex; the other questions are easier to answer.

I will start with the "are you building" question. We are in the planning and fund-raising stages of a new fire station. This project was identified long ago as a need for our fire district. Because we are self-described as being conservative and we have a reputation of being good stewards of our (your) dollars, the progression of such an undertaking is not on a fast track. We have a preliminary design that includes space for apparatus, offices, a training/community room, a kitchen, and future staff quarters. The design calls for a "not fancy but functional" building that will be low maintenance and here for years. It is a public building, so we must meet certain design and legal criteria. Things are moving methodically; we hope to soon be starting the process of having official engineered plans.

The question of where this station will be built has a more definitive answer. The station will be constructed on land just west of Creston School, on a 7-acre parcel purchased several years ago by the Creston Fire Fighter's Association through fund-raising efforts. This field is

now used for Creston Auction parking. An approximate 1-acre lot will be designated for the new station along Hwy 35.

The "why" question is fairly easy to answer. The existing Creston station was built in the early 1960s, with the later addition of a meeting room. The truck bays were built for much smaller trucks than we now have. With two apparatus in the bays, we can barely move around them; it is tight just to open doors, and we have no room for future temporary or permanent apparatus housing. The current building is not designed for expansion or to meet health and fire fighter safety criteria needed for today's fire service. After more than 50 years, it is time.

And now for the one question I don't get asked much but that we feel is important: "How will you pay for it?" This is multifaceted, but I, as fire chief, and our trustees are striving to fund the construction through a few avenues. One is fund-raising. This is a grassroots effort to find financial support in the community. The Station 251 Building Fund has been established and is growing with donations from community members and the fund-raising efforts of the Creston Fire Fighter's Association and Friends of Creston Fire, such as the annual Creston Auction and Soup for Supper events. I encourage you to

consider donating to this cause. The Creston Fire Fighter's Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so all donations are tax deductible.

Another funding source will be our fire district budget. We have deferred some purchases, and a capital improvement fund is in place. We will eventually sell the current station and property to help pay for the new station.

Finally, we are looking for alternate funding—grants, low-interest programs, etc. Ultimately, we intend to complete this project without adding to your taxes or asking for your vote on a special bond. Those might be easier solutions, but our history is not one of going the easy route.

To help with the financial picture of the new station, many local businesses are offering donated or discounted services. All will be recognized as the project is built. Services being offered include dirt work, fire suppression, plumbing, and wiring. This makes this new station a true community project, one that the entire east Flathead Valley can be proud of.

Meanwhile, our normal fire and emergency medical services continue. We were called for assistance 300 times in 2019. That number will not go down; rather, we expect continual increases into the future, making an improved primary station a real need.

You can be a big part of this project through your support. All donations are appreciated, as is your help at the Creston Auction and other Creston Fire events. There are also opportunities for estate planning and benevolent gifting—these are ways to be part of your Creston Fire Department, because such gifts have long-lasting, positive impact. One thing stands clear: YOUR fire department is community based, and there are many ways for you to be part of this winning team. Whether your role is as an active responding member, as a participant in the Friends of Creston Fire, as a donor, or all three—there is a place for you!

CRESTON FIREFIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION FUNDRAISER

**\$10 each
or 3/\$25**

SIX GREAT PRIZES!!

Proceeds go
directly to the Building Fund
for the **NEW CRESTON FIRE
STATION!!**

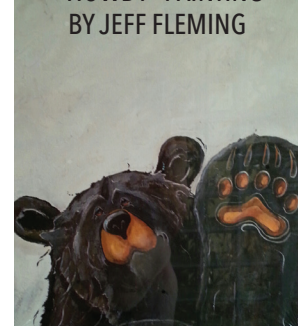
TRAEGER PRO SERIES 780 PELLET GRILL



DELUXE WEEKEND GETAWAY
AT QUINN'S HOT SPRINGS



"HOWDY" PAINTING
BY JEFF FLEMING



WHOLE HOG - SMOKED, CURED,
CUSTOM-CUT & PACKAGED



BIGFORK SUMMER PLAYHOUSE
2020 SEASON TICKETS FOR TWO



DOUBLE STATIONARY SETTEE



Hosted by Creston Fire Fighter's Association
Since 1966

DRAWING HELD:
NOON - SUNDAY - APRIL 5TH, 2020

at the **54th Annual**

CRESTON AUCTION

& Country Fair

One chance per ticket
Need not be present to win.

CALL 406-250-7396 OR CONTACT ANY MEMBER OF CRESTON FIRE FOR TICKETS

Yes! I Support Creston Fire

Your support is important to Creston and its dedicated volunteers. Please give to the building fund for a new fire station and help us 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)

Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

- ☐ Station 251 Building Fund donation
☐ Creston Fire Fighter's Association donation

Please make all checks 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!

Spring 2020

Auction Schedule

The 54th annual Creston Auction and Country Fair will be held April 2–5 at the Creston School, MT Hwy 35, 12 miles east of Kalispell. Proceeds benefit Creston Fire.

Thursday, April 2: Setup Day

10 am–: Help to set up the grounds.
1 pm–: Help to set up food stations and prepare soups.

Be a volunteer! No early dropoff of goods.

Friday, April 3: Consignment Day

7 am–7 pm: Purchase bid tickets early.
Drop off your donated and consigned items.
Bring rummage items and goods valued at \$5 or less to the Creston School gym.
Visit the food trailer all day.

Be a volunteer! Help to unload trucks and trailers on the auction grounds or with food preparations in the Creston Fire Station.

Saturday, April 4: General Auction

7 am: Buy your day's bid ticket early (\$5).
8 am–3 pm: Visit the Bake Sale on the auction grounds.
9 am: Attend opening ceremonies. General Auction begins.
9 am–4 pm: Visit the Arts & Crafts Sale in the Eastside Grange Hall.
11 am: Collectibles Sale begins.
All day: Visit food vendors and the heated dining tent on the north end of the grounds.
Buy your bid ticket.

Be a volunteer! At 6 am, help to cut, wrap and price baked goods. Throughout the day, report to the Staging Area to be assigned a volunteer session in the area with the greatest need. At the end of the auction, help to tear down the tented areas on the auction grounds.

Sunday, April 5: Equipment & Auto Sale

9 am: Buy your day's bid ticket early (\$10).
11 am: Equipment Sale begins.
All day: Visit food vendors and the heated dining tent on the north end of the auction grounds.
Buy your bid ticket.

Be a volunteer! Help to clean up the grounds or hold up items during the sale.

Volunteers Needed All Weekend at Auction



Volunteers are needed for the upcoming 2020 Creston Auction & Country Fair and the accompanying Equipment & Auto Sale, Saturday and Sunday, April 4 and 5. This is an opportunity to help your all-volunteer fire department pull off its primary fund-raising effort of the year.

Setup Day starts Thursday, April 2, at 10 am. Chalking lines, building auction wagons, and setting up tents are just a few tasks that need to be done to have the grounds ready for Friday morning.

On Consignment Day, Friday, April 3, come and help unload trucks and trailers or help with tagging all the treasures as items are dropped off at the sale site.

Intake runs 7 am to 7 pm, so you can join in for the morning, afternoon, or even just a couple of hours after work.

Volunteers are also needed Saturday, April 4, starting at 8 am and Sunday, April 5, starting at 11 am for the main event. Community members like you make this auction happen, so if you plan on attending the event, consider volunteering for part of the day. With the outdoor food area, indoor rummage sale, outdoor bake and clothing sale area, and raffle table, there are areas suited for everyone to help out. We particularly need people who

- have bookkeeping skills and are not easily distracted,
- can hold-up items being auctioned,
- like to work with food, and
- can help with kitchen and grounds clean-up.

Call Gloria at 250-7396 for more information, or go directly to Volunteer Staging area on Saturday to see where you are most needed.

You'll receive a bracelet for free food and drink throughout each day. Please dress warmly and for the weather; work gloves are also advisable, particularly if you plan to help on Friday. Thanks for helping Friends of Creston Fire to support your local fire department.

Creston Fire Fighter's Association
Friends of Creston Fire
4498 MT Highway 35
Kalispell, MT 59901

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
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59901
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ECRWSS

Postal Patron

We. Need. You.

Members of Friends of Creston Fire can be described in one word: supportive. We don't go on fire and medical calls. We go about our lives while the fire fighters are responding to calls for help in OUR neighborhood. Yet we also work behind the scenes to raise money and support for Creston Fire's active crews.

In the 12 years since our group formed, we have raised money for and designed the flagpole and memorial courtyard at Creston Station, organized the Target Golf and Community BBQ, provide you with this biannual newsletter, organized and run the annual Soup for Supper, and played a huge role in staffing the annual Creston Auction. The funds raised at these events are crucial to providing training and equipment for Creston Fire's volunteers, and they are cur-

On Call

Friends of Creston Fire Meeting

When: 7 pm, March 17

Where: Creston Fire Station,
4498 Hwy 35

More info: Contact Gloria
Graves at 250-4655.

crittermom10@hotmail.com or
Creston Auction on Facebook

rently being directed toward construction of the new fire station on Highway 35. Such training and improvements would not be possible within the current fire district budget.

The Friends of Creston Fire need your help in this year-round, supportive role, and we welcome fresh ideas. To join, you simply need to share a little of your time and energy on behalf of the volunteer fire fighters and EMTs who work so hard for you.

Please consider joining us at our next meeting, or contact Gloria Graves for more information.

April 2-5, 2020

54th Annual



Since 1966
Hosted by Creston Fire Fighter's Association

Thursday
Starting at 10 am

SETUP DAY: Start the weekend by being a volunteer!

Friday
7 am to 7 pm

DONATION & CONSIGNMENT DAY: Bring your items to sell

Saturday
Wagons start 9 am

GENERAL AUCTION:
\$5 bid tickets go on sale at 7 am

Sunday
Wagon starts 11 am

EQUIPMENT & AUTO SALE:
\$10 bid tickets go on sale at 9 am

Proceeds benefit the Creston Fire Department

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