



# 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 *By Gary Mahugh* WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE REPLACEMENT FIRE STATION

So, what is going on with the replacement fire station? I am asked this question regularly, and rightly so, since we started on the journey to replace Station 251 at Creston.

It really started with the Creston Firefighters Association purchasing the 7 acres of ground just west of Creston School in 2012, all with fund-raised dollars, and ultimately gifting the property to the Creston Fire District. We knew we had outgrown our current station at Creston and that the small parcel of land it sits on would not accommodate building expansion, so the gift was important—for us to meet the growing needs of the Creston Fire District and thus for everyone who lives in the district.

A project like this is not something that just happens, with a building appearing one day and engines backing in and meeting and office areas ready to use the next. It sure would be nice if it worked that way, but this little thing called funding tends to slow things down. Then there was Covid, and then building material costs skyrocketed. Now here we are, ready for that new home, but the “world” got in the way. To answer what is going on with the replacement fire station, many moving parts have to come together before a scoop of dirt is moved and walls go up. Most of these things go unnoticed, but I can assure you progress is being made.

We are working our way through the final design process. While that is going on, there are encroachment permits to obtain, geotechnical engineering to undertake, Department of Environmental Quality testing and permissions to acquire, utility companies to coordinate with, and meetings with several parties who have committed to helping with various aspects of the construction—all of those things are happening right now. Of course, throughout all of this, we are continuing our fund-raising efforts, and all of our volunteers are training and responding to emergencies, too.

Whew, it does make one tired, but what a tremendous community project. When we talk about doing this project without special levies or bonds, that means you and I, the taxpayers in the Creston Fire District, see our tax dollars going toward things other than a new building, essentials like engines, medical equipment, and safety gear. Keeping this replacement station off the tax rolls will be an unbelievable accomplishment, one that most people would consider inconceivable. Creston Fire is a “can do” outfit, and you are part of our success!

Maybe you have never had to call 9-1-1 for assistance, but nearly 400 times a year, someone does so in our district and you might be next. I have been on something close to 6000 calls in my “career” as a volunteer fire fighter, and no one needing assistance on one of those calls has said, I figured it was my day to have a fire, or to be hit by a vehicle, or to have a heart attack, or to fall down the stairs. You just never know when it might be you or a loved one.

I think all of us would like to know that those responding have what they need to do the job effectively and safely. Knowing that assistance comes from your neighbors who are giving their time and doing so without question, and with a commitment to do so while keeping an eye on dollars spent (I would rather say invested), means the “bang for the buck” is incredible.



We have a ways to go when it comes to our fund-raising, and I can't think of a better year-end place to donate than your local Creston Fire Department. If you are involved with charitable organizations and/or benevolent groups, please think about Creston Fire. Donations can be made to Creston Firefighters Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, making all gifts tax deductible.

It takes a while to get to our \$3 million-plus goal, but we are well on our way. *You can help make this happen!*



## FIRE CHIEF REMEMBERS BILLY By Gary Mahugh



On May 25, 2023, our Creston Fire Family lost one of our own. Fire Fighter Billy Harron fought valiantly as the ravages of cancer took him from us way too soon. Billy was not only one of ours; we also shared him with so many in the Flathead Valley. His work with Dream Adaptive Recreation in all seasons, along with his commitment to educating young people about fire safety year in and year out, just made Billy, Billy.

You see, Billy was kind of a unique individual. I remember the day he came to Creston Fire to volunteer shortly after moving to Montana—I wondered just who this Boston-speaking oddity was. It took us all a while to learn his language (at least that is what we told him), and in this, we got to know Billy as someone who cared a lot about others and in particular about his family. He committed so much of his time to helping people have a better life, living life to the fullest, and leaving a little bit of himself with everyone he touched.

While Fire Fighter Harron may not be physically here, the results of his efforts will be long admired and a certain legacy will endure. His energy continued right up to that day he told me he had been diagnosed with cancer. Even during those few weeks before he was hospitalized, Billy was there, assisting others. I never heard Billy say “woe is me”; rather, he just kept on doing Billy stuff. *Rest in peace Fire Fighter Harron. We miss you!*

### CHALLENGE PROVES TO BE ANOTHER SUCCESS!

Creston Firefighters Assoc. (CFA), the nonprofit organization for Creston Fire, was thrilled to participate for the second time in the Great Fish Community Challenge. This year, between Aug. 10 and Sept. 15, more than \$5.2 million were donated to 78 Flat. Valley nonprofit organizations before the Great Fish Match Fund.



Rachel Bodick, Creston FF, EMT, at the Great Fish Challenge Fun Run

The Whitefish Community Foundation will award a percentage-matching grant on the first \$20,000 raised by each participating organization. The match and the final total raised will be announced at the 2023 Great Fish Awards Ceremony, held on Oct. 24, 5 pm, at the Wachholz College Center. Creston Fire members supported the challenge’s marketing and fundraising activities throughout the campaign by sending out mailers announcing the challenge and by participating in pop-up station campaigns, a radiothon, and the Fun Run.

CFA received \$23,031 in donations from 99 donors and is eligible for a maximum percentage-matching grant on \$20,000 of those donations. Funds raised in the challenge will go toward the new replacement fire station’s architectural, engineering and groundwork construction expenses.

Participation in the challenge is helping to raise awareness of Creston Fire’s all-volunteer firefighter and medical services, which are provided not only to the Creston Fire District but also valleywide on a mutual aid basis. CFA’s participation in the Great Fish Community Challenge was a win-win for Creston Fire and the community.

Fundraising is an important part of what we do to serve our community. In 2024, CFA plans to apply again to participate in the Great Fish Community Challenge. Creston Fire sends a huge “thank you” to everyone who donated during the challenge and to the community for continued support of Creston Fire.



WE ALWAYS REMEMBER, WE’LL NEVER FORGET



September 11 is a date that will be long remembered by the Creston Fire Department. On that day in 2001, 343 of our brethren gave their all as they responded to the World Trade Center Towers in New York. While we may not have personally known the Fire Fighters who died that day, we felt the loss from our Fire Fighter Family.

To memorialize and remember the events of September 11, 2001, Creston Fire Fighters annually stand vigil in front of Creston Station 251 with an American flag while we reflect on the occurrences of that day. Thirteen shifts were filled this year, with the assignment calling for at least one Fire Fighter to be on duty throughout the day. Often, two or three Fire Fighters could be seen at any given time as we honored those Fire Fighters who lost their lives. Creston Fire Fighters took time from their jobs and family to be a part of this tribute, not because they had to but because they wanted to.

As we were concluding our tribute this year, we performed a flag raising at the site of the future home of Creston Fire Station 251. September 11 is such a special day to us as Fire Fighters, and it seemed appropriate that we memorialize that day more deeply by raising a new flag where our station will be in the future.

Outside of our ongoing fund-raising efforts for the construction, this was our first formal “ground enhancement” on the edge of what is currently a hayfield and what many think of as our Creston Auction parking lot. To raise the American flag on this site for the entire community and all who pass to see is an extreme honor. We did so with a bell-ringing ceremony in remembrance of all fallen Fire Fighters, which brought an extreme feeling of pride for who we are and the job we do.

We hope that as you drive by the future home of Creston Fire Station 251, you will take a moment to think about those who serve to keep you and your community safe. Think about your role in this effort: whether it be through financial support or by volunteering as a responder, you can make a difference in others’ lives!

## FALL IS HERE AND THAT MEANS SOUP TIME!

There is a definite chill in the air which calls for the Friends of Creston Fire to get the soup going! Soup for Supper has grown into such a wonderful and much-anticipated event for our little community. We served over 650 people 1250 containers of hot soup last year and netted over \$13,000!

We will continue having it as drive thru/take away at Lake Blaine Fire Station on Tuesday, October 17th from 3:30-7 PM. For orders of 6 or more, you are welcome to call 406-250-7396 beginning on Friday, Oct. 13th and a pick-up time will be arranged beginning at 4 PM. The cost is a much-appreciated donation with all proceeds going directly into the Building Fund for Replacement Station 251 on Highway 35.

Once you are on the apron, a Fire Fighter will hand you a menu with your choices. You mark which soup (s) you would like along with a breadstick, a brownie, cookie, or cupcake. A different Fire Fighter will meet you at the north door, then fill your order, and deliver it to you on the west side. You never exit your vehicle. **Soups this year are: Baked Potato Chowder w/Bacon; Beef Veg w/Barley; Broccoli w/Cheese; Chicken Noodle; Chicken Poblano; Italian Sausage; Lobster Bisque; New England Clam Chowder; Taco Soup; and Tomato Basil.**

Come out, grab your supper on the way home and support YOUR Creston Fire as well.

## Bakers, We Need You!

While the Friends of Creston Fire busily prepare for Soup for Supper, we depend on the community to help us by donating homemade cookies and brownies. If you can bring some yummys, please take note of some guidelines that will be a lot of help to us: *no nuts; bake your brownies in a disposable pan, and don't frost them or cut into servings; and we need the cookies to be large in size.* These can be dropped off at either Creston or Lake Blaine Stations any time after 8 AM on Tuesday, the 17th. Thank you so much ahead of time. Let's work together to make the 16th the best one yet!

### Yes! Make Us a 2023 Soup Sponsor

We would like to sponsor a soup for the 2023 Soup for Supper, benefiting Creston Fire.

Business/Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

We would like to sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ soups. We understand sponsorships are \$100 per soup and have enclosed a check for the appropriate amount. For our records, please provide the following info.:

Business/Organization Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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**

The Creston Fire Fighter's Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization registered with the State of MT. Our tax ID number is 81-0457369.

All donations are tax deductible, and your canceled check can serve as your receipt.

**16TH ANNUAL**  
**Soup for Supper**  
 AT THE  
**LAKE BLAINE FIRE STATION**  
 595 LAKE BLAINE ROAD

**TUESDAY**  
**OCTOBER 17TH**  
 FROM 3:30 - 7:00 PM

**Choose from 10 different soups!**  
 Dinner includes Soup, Roll and DESSERT!

**We are doing DRIVE THRU & CURBSIDE PICKUP ONLY this year...**  
 Orders of more than 6 may be called in to 406-250-7396 beginning on Friday, Oct. 13th to arrange a pickup time.

Hosted by the Friends of Creston Fire and the Creston Fire Fighter's Association

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE BUILDING FUND FOR THE REPLACEMENT CRESTON FIRE STATION 251 ON HWY 35



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

FRIENDS OF CRESTON FIRE @ LAKE BLAINE

MONDAY OCT. 11 6PM

SOUP FOR SUPPER

TUESDAY OCT. 17 3:30-7PM

COMMUNITY CPR @ CRESTON

TUESDAY NOV. 14 6-10 PM

58TH ANNUAL CRESTON AUCTION

APRIL 4-7, 2024



CRESTON FIRE FIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION  
 Friends of Creston Fire  
 4498 Hwy 35  
 Kalispell, MT 59901

NON PROFIT  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 KALISPELL MT  
 PERMIT #93

ECRWSEDDM  
 POSTAL PATRON



**NEW LAW IN EFFECT** On October 1st, the new  
**"YIELD/SLOW DOWN/MOVE OVER" Law** went active.

This law was enacted to protect Fire Fighters, Law Enforcement,  
 Tow Operators, Utility Works and others. You can read the entire law at this link:  
<https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2023/BillHtml/HB0470.htm>. You can also see the actions that drivers  
 are to adhere to when approaching and driving through emergency scenes.

**FIRE PREVENTION STARTS WITH YOU!**

With Fire Prevention Week soon approaching, it's time to take stock in  
 what you can do in your own home. *Did you know that cooking fires are the leading  
 cause of home fires and home fire injuries?* Creston Fire Fighters will be visiting our  
 local schools on Wednesday, October 11, to talk about this danger.



**DID YOU KNOW?** The Pork Shoulder net income was **\$21,582.57!**  
 Last year's Soup for Supper netted **\$13,180!**

**CPR & FIRST AID CLASSES  
 COMING IN NOVEMBER**

Creston Fire is offering a CPR class for the  
 public and AHA Healthcare Providers (HCP) on  
 Nov. 14th, 6-10 pm. Bill Tidwell will be teaching  
 scene safety, Bloodborne Pathogens, CPR and  
 obstructed airway (adult, infant, and child),  
 and automatic external defibrillator (AED) with  
 practice stations.

Participants will receive a CPR/AED completion  
 card. If a person needs an AHA BLS Healthcare  
 Provider card, they need to take the online Heart  
 Code BLS portion (available at <https://shopcpr.heart.org/heartcode-bls>) and bring their online  
 CPR completion certificate to class. The CPR class  
 is \$60/person and \$70/person if an AHA BLS HCP  
 card is required. To register and receive further  
 class details, call Louise at 406-250-2808.

**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!  
 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 participating in the Friends of Creston Fire.
- 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 MT Highway 35, Kalispell, MT 59901  
 The Creston Fire Fighter's Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit  
 organization registered with the State of Montana.  
 Our tax ID number is 81-0457369.  
 All donations are tax deductible, and your canceled check  
 can serve as your receipt.

Thank you for your support! FALL 2023

**Required - Open Burn Permit  
 for Flathead County**

- Yearly Burn Permit. Renew Annually
- No Cost
- Activate Permit each day of Burn
- System will prevent activation when conditions are unfavorable

To get your permit, visit:  
<https://app.egovmt.com/burnpermit/>