



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.

It's All for Sale

Keep your fingers crossed that the good weather holds: The Creston Auction is on its way.

This year's event will be held Saturday and Sunday, April 10 and 11, at the Creston School and Eastside Grange Hall. This fundraiser for the all-volunteer Creston Fire Department is the largest spring event in Montana.

Last year's event raised more than \$28,300 for the department, a slightly lower figure than that of prior years. Lingering snow, a poor economy and high costs affected that total, and the department is hoping to see a recovery this year.

"Tax dollars don't cut it," said Creston firefighter John Klippel, who is in charge of organizing this year's auction. "We don't get enough money to do the things we need to do."

This includes training and equipping the 30-plus members of the fire department. These local community members give hours every week to training, in addition to the time spent responding to fire, medical and other emergency calls. They pride themselves on learning how to use the best emergency equipment available as efficiently as possible.

"We're one of the cutting-edge departments in the state," said Klippel. "We're not a little country fire department in how we do things."

But that equipment costs money, and with property tax levies holding steady in the fire district, the department relies more each year on donations and money raised from the auction.

Still, every penny spent at the auction does not end up back with the fire department and thus helping the community. An event the size of the Creston Auction, now in its 44th year and drawing more than 7000 people annually, takes a lot of money to organize and run (see the By the Numbers feature).



Each year, the Creston Fire Department relies more on funds raised at the Creston Auction.

"We don't get much donated anymore," said Fire Chief Gary Mahugh. "Porta-potties, advertising, and so on—we're paying for most of it."

That's why auction organizers have been working harder than ever to reach out to community businesses and members for support. Last year's auction was a success on both counts: More than 30 local businesses donated goods, and more than 200 community members volunteered their time to put on the event.

"Having the community support is awesome," said Creston firefighter Rich Lapp, who oversees Consignment Day, when all items come to the Creston School grounds, the Friday before the auction. "It makes a big difference."

By the Numbers:

2009 Auction Accounting

Auction sales:	\$ 166,900
Food sales:	\$ 9,200
Rummage sale:	\$ 2,700
Total Auction Income:	\$ 178,800
Expenses:	\$ 150,500
Payment to consignors:	80%
Food:	5%
Advertising & printing:	5%
Posse, ALERT, etc.:	4%
Sanitation:	2%
Other expenses:	4%
Net for CFD:	\$ 28,300

Creston Auction: It Just Keeps Getting Better



Saturday's Rummage Sale in the Creston School gym has grown larger and more popular with each year.



Creston firefighters and medical responders not only put on the auction but also handle their emergency response duties that weekend.



Above: SOLD! An auctioneer sells an item from one of the five wagons that circle the auction grounds throughout Saturday, clearing the grounds of every item consigned or donated to the general merchandise sale by the end of the day.

Left: Last year's auction kicked off with a flag-raising ceremony. A barbershop quartet performed the national anthem during the ceremony. This popular opening event will be repeated this year on Saturday at 9 a.m. in the Creston School grounds.

Photos by Janet Szabo, CFD

Seller and Buyer Tips: Make This Your Best Auction

Tips for Sellers

- Bring all items to the sale grounds Friday, April 9, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- At Saturday's auction, no items will be sold with minimum bids attached.
- At Sunday's equipment sale, a minimum bid can be set at \$1500 or more. Call 250-7396 for more information.
- If you contact us early, we will advertise your larger items for free throughout northwest Montana.
- Donations are appreciated and are tax deductible. Consider donating an item or more from your load to the Creston Fire Department for the sale.
- Each item must be tagged individually. For example, rather than handing over a miscellaneous box with books, canning jars and videos, consider making one box for each type of item or donating such small items to the Rummage Sale.

- Rummage is accepted only as a donation. Please take these items to the Creston School gym's west door.
- You can consign items for sale and specify that the proceeds (minus the consignment fee) be given to an organization that you designate (church, school, etc.).
- PLEASE, no junk, tires, hazardous chemicals, ammunition or livestock.
- Bring your own disposable tarps to place under and to cover your items.
- For faster service and to insure you are paid in full, bring a list of items you will be consigning on Consignment Day.
- We provide security for all consigned items Friday and Saturday nights.

Tips for Buyers

- There will be no buyer's premium this year. Your winning bid on an item is what you will pay for that item.

- There is a \$5 charge per bid ticket on Saturday. Bid tickets go on sale at 8 a.m. the day of the sale.
- There is a \$10 charge per bid ticket on Sunday. Bid tickets go on sale at 9 a.m. that day. Note that bid ticket fees directly pay for security at this year's auction.
- ID is required to obtain a bid ticket.
- Hot food will be available throughout Saturday and Sunday.
- The Rummage & Bake Sale will be held in the Creston School gym on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Donations of items are always needed and appreciated! Please call 250-7396 for information.
- The Arts & Crafts Sale will be held Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Eastside Grange Hall.
- We accept MasterCard and Visa for auction purchases only; bring cash or checks for other purchases.
- Please leave your dogs at home.

Spotlight on Safety: Be Prepared When Wildfires Come Calling

As gardeners and snowbirds celebrate an early start to spring, fire forecasters are worried about wildfire season. They note needle-heavy forest floors and standing dead trees throughout the Flathead Valley. The National Resources Conservation Service reports snowpack in the Flathead River Basin is currently 71% of normal, and some fire models show conditions similar to those of 2003, the last major burn year in the area.

Wildfire prevention and safety start with you: the homeowner, the recreationalist and the community member. You can assess and prepare your property and home to reduce the risk of wildfires reaching them and improve their accessibility to the Creston Fire Department.

Property Assessment

Consider the features of your property. Grasses burn less intensely but more quickly than trees. Any growth 2 to 6 feet tall can spread a ground fire into treetops, where it can move more quickly.

Sloped areas can be preheated by gases and thus burn more quickly than flatlands. According to the Institute for Business & Home Safety, a sloped grass fire can create flames twice the height moving up to four times faster than those on level ground.

Burn Schedule

March 1 to April 30

Open burning. No burning permit required. Air quality compliance is required (call 751-8144).

May 1 to June 30

Burning permit is required. Air quality compliance is required.

July 1 to September 30

No burning in Flathead County.

October 1 to November 30

Open burning. No burning permit required. Air quality compliance is required.

December 1 to February 28

No open burning (season closed).

Property Preparation

Consider the layout of your property. Within 30 to 50 feet of your house,

- Limit plantings. Choose native species when possible.
- Remove tree limbs within 10 feet of your house.
- Move woodpiles and fuel tanks beyond this boundary.
- Keep the area well irrigated.

Farther from your house (up to 200 feet),

- Space trees at least 10 feet apart and remove all dead and dying limbs. Prune branches from the lowest 6 feet of trunks.
- Remove dead trees and shrubs.

Home Preparation

Consider the materials used in the construction of your home.

- Examine attached features: porch, deck and garage. Treat these as part of your house, and include them in your cleared perimeter. Make sure fences do not attach directly to your house.

- Check the fire-resistance of the siding, roof and windows. If you plan upgrades, consider noncombustible exterior materials, Class A roofing and tempered glass.

Accessibility

Creston firefighters cannot try to defend your home if they cannot reach it.

- Install signs with the house number, particularly at splits in the road or if multiple mailboxes are at the end of the drive. Make the noncombustible, reflective numbers visible from the road.
- Make sure your driveway can accommodate firefighting equipment. The Creston Fire Department recommends 15 feet of vertical clearance and a 14-foot width for driveways of less than 150 feet, with a 20-foot width for longer drives.

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

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Volunteers Needed All Weekend

Volunteers are needed for the 2010 Creston Auction. This is your opportunity to participate in this year's primary fundraising effort for the rural, all-volunteer Creston Fire Department.

Come to help unload trucks and trailers on Consignment Day, Friday, April 9, as items are dropped off at the sale site. Intake begins at 7 a.m. and continues until 7 p.m., so you can join in for the morning, afternoon or even just a couple of hours after work. To volunteer Friday, call Rich Lapp at 253-5263.

Volunteers are also needed Saturday starting at 8 a.m. and Sunday starting at noon. Community members like you make this auction happen, so

if you plan to attend the auction, consider volunteering for part of the day. With indoor and outdoor food areas, the indoor rummage sale, and the outdoor auction, 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 auction items,
- like to work with food, and
- can help with kitchen and grounds cleanup.

Call Gloria at 250-7396 for more information.

Food and drink will be available to all volunteers throughout each day. Please dress warmly and for the weather; work gloves are also advisable, particularly if you plan to help Friday.

Friday, April 9 • 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Come before or after work!

DONATION AND CONSIGNMENT DAY
Bring items for sale to the sale grounds at Creston School,
MT Hwy 35, 12 miles east of Kalispell

Saturday, April 10 • 9 a.m. until all items are sold

\$5 bid tickets go on sale at 8 a.m.

CRESTON AUCTION

Acres of items for sale: new and household items, antiques, sports equipment, tack, tools, building materials and more

Commission rate: 25%

Single items selling for more than \$1000: 18%

Items selling for \$5 or less: Proceeds donated to the
Creston Fire Department

No Buyer's Premium

Sunday, April 11 • Noon until all items are sold

\$10 bid tickets go on sale at 9 a.m.

AUTO, MARINE, RV & EQUIPMENT SALE

Call for info on reserves and titles

Commission rates *per item* are as follows:

\$1000 or less: 25%; \$1001 to \$10,000: 10%;

More than \$10,000: 5%