



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.

Puppets Talk Fire Safety



Each year, Creston firefighters visit schools in the fire district during Fire Prevention Week. Using puppets (left), live demonstrations (above) and other tools, they teach students about fire prevention and safety.

A few new faces appeared at the Creston Fire Department's school presentations during National Fire Prevention Week. They were faces made of cloth, felt and yarn.

With the help of "Fireman Frank" and his puppet friends, Creston firefighters and medical responders explained fire prevention and safety to nearly 250 students in the Creston Fire District.

"The kids just loved the puppets," said Creston Fire Marshal Rich Lapp, who organized the presentations. "They just lost their little minds."

Lapp said the puppets were the most effective part of the presentation and that he hopes to make the puppet shows an annual event. Firefighter/paramedic Jessica Kinzer from the Kalispell Fire Department, who ran the puppet shows, arranged for the loan of the puppets and their "stage" from Kalispell this year.

"I asked my kids what they remembered most about Fire Prevention Week, and they said, 'Oh yeah, the puppet shows were the coolest, Dad,'" Lapp recalled.

This year's presentations stressed the necessity of smoke alarms. Lapp explained how alarms help save lives.

"When you go to sleep, the part of your brain that smells goes to sleep as well. But the part of your brain that hears doesn't go as deeply to sleep," he said. "That's why we have alarm clocks: Noises will wake you up, but smells don't."

If you live in the Creston fire district but are unable to afford smoke detectors for your home, you can contact the fire

department for assistance in buying one.

The presenters encouraged students to talk with their parents about going one step further this year and installing carbon monoxide detectors (see the Spotlight on Safety, p. 3).

The presentations also showed students the technique of stop, drop and roll; how to set up a fire drill at home; and how to stay low under smoke if a fire occurs. Students also faced a firefighter in full gear and a breathing apparatus.

"Some kids were a little frightened [of the firefighter]," said Lapp, "but that's our whole point.... They need to learn not to be afraid of the guy who sounds like Darth Vader, because that's the guy who's going to drag them out of a fire."

Eat Soup for Supper on Election Day

Fall is here, and the soup's on. Or it will be Nov. 2.

CFFAM will host its annual Soup for Supper fundraiser for the Creston Fire Department on Election Day. From 4 to 8 p.m., volunteers will serve homemade soup at the Creston fire hall on Hwy 35. You can eat at the hall on your way to or from the polls or stop in for supper to go.

Last year's Soup for Supper raised \$2200. CFFAM members hope to serve

more soup this year—45 gallons, more than twice the amount made last year—and bring in even more money for the all-volunteer rural fire department.

On the menu this year will be homemade soups, salads, rolls, desserts and beverages. Donations will be accepted for supper. Whole pies and handcrafted pie plates from Mountain Brook Studio will also be on sale. Assistant Fire Chief Bob Kun will give a brief talk around 6 p.m.

Think Like a Farmer: Plan Now for Spring

Do you think it's too early to plan for the Creston Auction? We don't. Fall is the perfect time to set aside items for donation or consignment at the auction, now entering its 45th year.

When auction time rolls around, "it might rain, it might snow, it might be sunny," said Creston Fire Captain John Klippel, who will oversee the 2011 auction, set to be held April 2 and 3. "It could be any one of those things."

In past years, snow piled against storage sheds and trailers and prevented people from bringing items to the Creston School grounds on Consignment Day. Even if auction day dawns bright and clear, the sale is only as good as the items that arrive the day before.

Klippel advised consignors to prepare by storing auction items where they will be accessible in any weather and to bring a disposable plastic tarp to the outdoor auction grounds to cover their items.

For Creston Fire Department volunteers, auction planning cannot begin early enough. The fundraiser is the largest spring event in Montana and provides crucial funding for the all-volunteer rural fire department.

The Creston Auction & Country Fair

We're on Facebook

Your rural fire department is finding new ways to keep you up-to-date on auction planning, volunteer opportunities and news about Montana's largest spring event.

Check out our new **Creston Auction** page on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/>). Simply click the "Like" button at the top of the page to make sure our updates are added to your news feed. Even better, click the "Suggest to Friends" link under the top-left photo and help us spread the word.

If you're not a Facebook user, don't worry: Go to our website or leave a message on the auction hotline to get answers to your auction-related questions:

<http://www.crestonfire.org>
(406) 250-7396

is a consignment-based event, which means the fire department only receives a percentage of the amount for which each item is sold. The remaining money goes to the person who brought the item to the auction. With money raised at the

auction going to the fire department and into community members' pockets, and with buyers acquiring needed items at a great price, everyone wins.

"If we had people donate things entirely, we wouldn't have much of an auction," Klippel said. "People want to get rid of stuff and make some money."

Last year's event raised about \$35,000 for the Creston Fire Department, up from \$28,300 in 2009. The auction brought in almost \$230,000 overall, with nearly 70% of that total paid to consignors.

Increased donations played a role in the amount raised at the 2010 auction. Goods and services were donated by a range of local businesses, and many items were brought in by community members. Donations are crucial to the department's net because it receives the total sale amount of any donated item. The donor can benefit as well, using the value of the item as an income tax deduction.

Ultimately, every dollar spent at the auction goes back to the community. The money raised for the fire department is used to purchase equipment, train fire-fighters and medical responders and maintain the Creston Fire Department's high standard of service.

Sellers and Buyers Perfect the Auction Experience

Tips for Sellers

- Bring all items to the sale grounds Friday, April 1, 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 in early March, we will advertise your larger items for free throughout northwest Montana.
- Donations are appreciated and are tax deductible. Consider donating one or more items from your load to the Creston Fire Department for the sale.
- Tag each item or item type 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 your favorite organization (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 is no buyer's premium. 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.

Yes! I Support the Creston Fire Department

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 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:

On Call

As the valley's population grows, the Creston Fire Department's volunteers responded to more incidents and devote more time to the community:

CFD responders on call: 32

Hours on call: 24 per day

Days on call: 365 per year

Training hours: 150–350 per year per responder

Size of fire district: 83 square miles

Fire calls expected in 2010: 60

Medical calls expected in 2010: 160

**Total calls expected in 2010:
260**

Spotlight on Safety: Keep the "Invisible" Killer at Bay with a CO Alarm

Even schoolchildren know that smoke detectors should be installed outside their bedrooms (see p. 1). But are carbon monoxide detectors really all they're hyped up to be? Are they worth the extra expense? Will they save your life? Yes, yes and yes.

CO is a deadly gas. It's colorless, odorless and poisonous. People are unlikely to smell smoke in their sleep, said Creston Fire Marshal Rich Lapp. But no human sense can detect CO. That's why the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission calls it the "invisible" killer.

Although many people put off purchasing CO detectors because they are more expensive than smoke detectors, prices are dropping and quality is improving.

"There's better technology than [CO alarms] had in the past so that they don't have too many false positives," Lapp said.

He added that he has seen CO alarms in local stores for as little as \$20. That price may be attractive, but Creston Fire Chief Gary Mahugh said homeowners should still purchase the best-quality alarm that they can afford.

"All CO alarms are not created equal, and ... the lower end are just that, lower end," Mahugh said.

In particular, people who are elderly, are very young, or have a chronic health

conditions are more sensitive to CO. If such people live in your home, purchase a more expensive alarm that detects lower levels of the toxic gas, Mahugh suggested.

When buying a CO detector, choose one that meets Underwriters Laboratories standards. Most CO alarm sensors have a 5-year life span. The alarm will indicate when it needs to be replaced.

Local awareness of the need for CO alarms increased following the death of a Creston-area boy in December 2008 from accidental CO poisoning. In a home, a hot water heater, furnace, space heater, stove or fireplace that isn't vented or functioning correctly can release CO. In a closed garage, a running vehicle, gas-powered tool, generator or camp stove can produce dangerous levels of the gas.

But a CO alarm is only the first step. Mahugh emphasized that an alarm is no substitute for proper use and upkeep of appliances that can produce CO. The U.S. CPSC recommends the following:

- Only use nonelectrical space heaters in well-ventilated areas.
- Open the garage door before you start a car, truck or other vehicle.
- Schedule a furnace or woodstove inspection before each heating season.
- Test combustion appliances yearly.



If your CO alarm goes off but you have no symptoms of CO poisoning, follow U.S. CPSC's advice for homeowners:

1. Check and reset your CO detector.
2. Get fresh air into the building.
3. Turn off any suspicious or malfunctioning appliances or sources of combustion.
4. Contact a qualified service company that can professionally test for CO.

Mild CO poisoning symptoms are easily confused with those of common illnesses, as they include headaches, dizziness and nausea. If you have symptoms and do not have a CO detector, follow these steps:

1. Get everyone outside into fresh air.
2. Call 911 from your cell phone or a neighbor's phone.
3. Take a head count and let emergency responders know if anyone is missing.
4. Wait until responders give you permission to reenter your home.

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

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Mark Your Calendar

Nov. 26: "City of the North" Parade, 6 p.m., Kalispell.

Come help cover a Creston Fire engine with holiday lights and decorations for this annual parade. The lineup begins at 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.
Early March 2011: Auction Meeting, 7 p.m., Creston Fire Station.
Watch the readerboard in front of the fire hall on Hwy 35 or follow us on Facebook to join in the planning meetings for the auction.

April 2–3, 2011: Creston

On Call

CFFAM Meeting
When: 6:30 p.m., Nov. 16
Where: Creston Fire Station,
4498 Hwy 35
What to bring: A dish to share
More info: Contact Gloria Graves,
250-4655, crittermom10@hotmail.com

Auction & Country Fair.

Volunteers will be needed for the 2011 Creston Auction. To help on Friday, April 1, as items are dropped off at the sale site, call Rich Lapp at 253-5263. If you have book-keeping skills and can help Saturday, call or email Kari Carter at 250-8242 or kari-lynn1962@gmail.com. For all other volunteer opportunities, leave a message on the auction hotline (250-7396), at crittermom10@hotmail.com or on the Creston Auction page on Facebook.

Friday, April 1 • 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 2 • 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 or used household items, sports equipment, tack, tools, building supplies, antiques 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 3 • 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%