

GREER RURAL FIRE DISTRICT

Community Newsletter, Vol 5, Issue 1, March 2021

From the Fire Chief:

With the end of winter in sight, it is time to think of preparing for spring/summer. Here is an update on current issues .

Fire Station Site - The survey is now finished allowing for finalization of the site purchase contract. This gives us plenty of time to get on site when it dries out!

Fire Station Building Plans - We have obtained a mobile maintenance shelter (23' x 36', Metal frame) from government surplus. A special thanks to those that paid the \$410 shipping fee, we essentially have the structure for free. The 80 page assembly manual states it can be put up in 8 hrs by 12 Marines! Look for call out to volunteers in the structure's construction.

Volunteers/Insurance - Volunteers are covered through the workman's compensation insurance program while they are on fire fighting duty. However, volunteers are NOT covered when not performing fire fighting duties. Those that want to volunteer their services in the construction of the fire station site, the fire station buildings, or support structures will therefore be required to sign a "Volunteer Release and Waiver of Liability" document and take responsibility for their own safety and welfare.

Fire Fighting Engineers - There are 12 engineers trained to operate our original 6x6 fire truck (11-2). Winter training sessions have focused on reviewing and discussing the *Firefighting Essential Training Manual*. Five engineers have participated in part or all of these sessions. We will be meeting on Tuesdays: March 9, March 23, April 6 and April 20 at 6:30 pm in the upstairs of OFD. All are invited. Future training will focus on learning about our Crash Rescue Fire Truck (11-3) and on operator training to follow as the weather improves. This new truck is NOTHING like our old one and we have a lot of work ahead of us to train operators on its use.

Fire Assessment
The fire season will be here before we know it. Now is a good time to get started on getting your home defendable against wildfires.
Contact Ron Dwyer for free home and property assessment regarding things you can do and changes you can make. Leave a message for Ron at 208-435-4308.

A special thank you to Von Anderson-Berreth for her work in acquiring the COVID-19 State Grant. This provided our station with LCD TV and computer with software which will help greatly with our training purposes. Also a generous supply of face masks and hand sanitizer for the station. Now we just need the building to put it all in!

Thank you for all your continued support and help.
Matt Turner

About Greer Rural Fire District:

Commissioners:

District 3 & Chairperson:
Linda Beard (208) 660-6261

District 2: Joe Chamberlayne
(208) 790-8025

District 1: Bill Miller
(208) 816-1041

Fire Chief:

Matt Turner
(208) 582-2809

Secretary:

Connie Miller
(208) 553-0484

Treasurer:

Volunteer Needed (see page 4)

Call any of us with your questions or concerns.

Next Commissioners Meeting:

May 7 at 10 a.m.,
Orofino FS Meeting Room.

Annual Budget Meeting and Potluck will be **June 26, at 4 pm**
At the home of Joe and Kathryn Chamberlayne

All Community members and family are invited.

More information to follow as date gets closer.

Passing the Baton

As I end my tenure as Treasurer for GRFD, I'd like to offer some thoughts to my successor and a plea to our residents.

I joined the administration of GRFD 3 years ago. Seeing only an annual picnic for the budget hearing meeting, I had no real idea what this group was all about, what the plan was, and how my property taxes were being spent for the benefit of this community. I decided to jump in and see it from the inside. It's been a huge and valuable learning experience. I was able to bring my administration skills to the team to help kick-start this new phase of development.

GRFD started back in 1996. A few good people started a fire department with nothing, using their own properties and extra personal \$\$ contributions to make it work. It was not sustainable, mostly when there weren't enough people to keep it running, not to mention continued theft of equipment from the fire truck. How could anyone do that??

When you can see that it has taken 25 years to get to the point where we can afford about half a fire station, you can see how much this effort needs everyone's help! It's a whole lot less about the \$\$ though, than it is about the people. This phase of progress is happening because we can now find ways to put together the finances to make it work at a whole different scale. More importantly, it is happening because another good person – Matt Turner – stepped up to be our Fire Chief. He has started to gather a team of volunteers to run a fire truck out of the fire station that is currently being planned. Without these people, this building effort is a waste of time and money, however, AND it would mean that a fire that affects any one of our properties is almost certainly going to result in major damage, and probably total loss. An operational local fire station improves our chances of fire safety with faster response. It will also ensure we can continue to be able to insure our properties and even reduce the cost of that insurance. It's a real win for us but we all have to take part.

So, to my successor I say – your role is not just to bank money and write checks. Your job is to support the Commissioners as part of the Board of Greer Rural Fire District, to make the right decisions for this community. **We agreed on one key principle at the start of this project – “Plan pro-actively but act reactively – be responsible and prudent with tax dollars. It is better to carefully build for today and add on later. We will also only build when we are sure the volunteers are there to support the plan”.** You are responsible to manage income derived from 47 residence owners in the fire district, from donors and grant providers, and for managing expenses incurred in administering those funds. You must follow federal and state legislation in how you do this, including legislation relating to open meetings and open records. You must promote the balance of responsible spending on behalf of the residents of the fire district. Property tax income covers at least the operating costs of the fire district. You need to guide the fundraising committee and our designated grant writer to bring in funds required to complete the fire station and outfit our firefighters, so they are safe while keeping us safe. So, please, bring some accounting skills and community energy to this most important party. You will be an essential member of a team that is required to do immeasurable good for your fellow-residents in the Greer Rural Fire District.

To every resident, I say GET INVOLVED! Bring your skills and experience to bear. Help yourselves and your neighbors. Whether you make jam for a local fundraiser, have administration skills to bring to the Board, have building experience, or want to jump on the fire truck for an emergency, there is a role for you. PLEASE VOLUNTEER. We need our community to come together to make this dream a reality.

Regards,
Christine Betts

Treasurer's Report

It's all been quiet on the Treasury front since the last newsletter. We received our main check from Clearwater County for our share of the property taxes in the district, so we are in good shape to make the annual budget income.

The fire station project continues, one step at a time. I'm delighted to say we got some excellent legal advice for absolutely nothing – yes, \$0 - courtesy of our membership of the Idaho State Fire Commissioners Association (ISFCA). We qualify for one free hour of support. Bill Punkoney of White Peterson went above and beyond, donating an extra free hour to our very good cause. Bless you, Bill Punkoney! Every \$ saved, counts!

Fall Fund Raiser!

Fall Fund raiser gave us an extra \$185. I want to give a special thanks to the gals at Banner Bank. Not only did they sell all their tickets, but they allowed us to display our raffle items for people to view up close.

We weren't able to get pictures of all the winners, but here are the results from that event. Winner of the two Yeti Insulated Mugs was Michelle Gladhart (pictured here); The Holiday Gift Basket from Auntie M's was won by Joyce Peltier; and the 7' Big Foot Silhouette was won by Jenny Bryne. Thank you to our donors and congratulations to the winners.



We REALLY need your donations of time, labor, and materials for the building. If you have ideas or want to participate, please call Susan Turner at 208-512-3753, or email at sxturner80@gmail.com.

Getting ready for fire season

Idaho offers some of the most diverse landscape in the country and Idahoans have always embraced the unique opportunities to make our homes in these beautiful, unique lands. Since humidity is low and summer months can get quite warm, we are also faced with the very real threat of wildfires. The most crucial step in preparing your home for fire season, and it should be maintained throughout the year, is commonly known as “**defensible space**”: a perimeter around your home free of combustible materials or anything that can become fuel during a wildfire. Defensible space zones (**see flyer attached**) start with your home and move out into the landscape from there. In areas with homes that are close enough to each other, defensible spaces may overlap to provide added protection for the subdivision.

In addition to creating a property's defensible space, it's important to **provide firefighters easy access to your property**. When a wildfire threatens, the first few minutes are the most critical for saving your home. Firefighting personnel must be able to immediately locate and safely travel to your home in order to effectively protect it. Street signs and house addresses must be clearly posted, and roads must be clear. (From Idaho Farm Bureau)

Phone Tree Update

Short of knocking on doors, the easiest way to reach those in our community, and keep informed on emergency situations, is the phone tree. Cathy Bolon has offered to update the list. Please call her at 208-476-9807 with your current email and phone information. Is there any community interest in a phone directory of our community?

Help Wanted!

We are in need of a new Treasurer to join the Board of Greer Rural Fire District. This is a volunteer position, appointed by the Commissioners to support them in administering the affairs of the district, and requires some financial reporting to, local and State offices.

As we get farther along in our fire station building and team development, our financial affairs get more complicated with grants, donations, and other fundraising to be accounted for, alongside the property tax income we rely on to cover our operating costs. Experience in bookkeeping for a small business or non-profit would be beneficial. Skills with productivity software, such as Microsoft Office, are a bonus. Our previous Treasurer will be glad to answer any questions you may have regarding job description, duties, and processes. Contact any of the commissioners if you are interested.

Call Pam White at 208-435-4612 for more information.




Clearwater Valley Fire Districts Auxiliary

Members Needed! Lots To Do !!

FUNDRAISING! \$\$\$

Incident Support!

Monthly Meetings: 1st Thursday of each Month
 Time: 12:00 Noon
 Location: Mexican Restaurant

\$15 annual membership fee / \$25 per couple

Join Us Today, Help Us, Help Them!

Grant Writing!



PLEASE
 PLACE
 STAMP
 HERE