



The Fireside Chat

A Semi-Annual Publication of the Custer County Rural Volunteer Fire Company

Editor's Corner

Recently, I unfortunately had to get myself a new MP3 player due to an accident with the old one. (For those of you who don't know, MP3 is a digital music format.) I was forced to spend some money I wasn't planning on, but in the long run it will be cheaper than the old one. (No dead batteries to worry about or having them fall out.)

How this relates to the CCRVFC is this: While I really didn't want to spend the money, it was needed. (It is my way to unwind after work.) This need also goes to our Capital Purchases Fund. While we have had many people who have donated to that fund, we can always use more. (And how many of us have said that we can use more money!?) Remember, any donations are tax deductible as we are a 501(c)3 organization.

Under The Chief's Helmet

Greeting, Friends and Neighbors. It has grieved me to hear and read the statements I have over the last few months. But, this is America and we all the right to express our feelings and beliefs. That is good and must be encouraged. However, the personal attacks along with the confusion created from this is not what a neighbor should be doing. I have served my country since 1982 (starting with my Naval career and up to now), I have always believed it's the right thing to do: serving my country and local community. We at the CCRVFC and Custer County Fire Department will continue to do everything possible to help you, our friends and neighbors in your time of need because "It's the right thing to do!"

New Board Members

Mr. Bill Ellis and Mr. Jack Larson have recently joined the Board of Directors. They were nominated & unanimously approved during our May Board meeting. We are still looking for two directors. If you decide that you are interested in being a board member, please contact any of our current board members or leave a message for us at 234-4015. (Reminder, this is **NOT** an emergency number. For a fire emergency, please dial **911**.)

The Confusing Fire Protection Service

Since January of this year, due to a few changes in the way fire protection is provided, many residents are confused as to what is going on. Thus, we will try to shed some light on the subject.

First, this has not changed the structure of the CCRVFC. We are **NOT** a county government organization. We still provide structural fire protection. However, we now cover all of Custer County (other than the city of Miles City and the Ismay Fire District) under a contract for services with Custer County. We still have a mutual aid agreement with the Ismay Fire District and a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Miles City (to provide assistance upon request in a life-threatening situation).

What has changed is that we provide vehicle fire protection on all county roads, state highways, and the interstate outside the city of Miles City. We perform hazardous materials response in the same area. We also provide limited wildland fire response with manpower and equipment upon request from the county. The contract is in effect from Jan 1, 2008 to Dec 31, 2008. The cost of the fire protection contract is **up to \$70,000**. As always, we will do our best to not spend the total amount. Our goal is be at or below \$50,000.

Second is the structure of wildland fire for Custer County: The County Commissioners formally established the Custer County Fire Department in January of this year. The department is charged with providing wildland fire protection for Custer County (with exclusions as mentioned earlier) and is staffed with one paid position and all the rest are volunteer and has 3 engines and 2 tenders.

All county co-op engines are out (local ranchers have them). We have built two additional units (new skid units installed) and one of these has been placed at Moon Creek and we are in the process of getting the second unit out. We are still waiting on parts and equipment for the second unit.

Several of our volunteers have previous wildland training from other departments & organizations and have signed up to be on the county department. We have also had training with the DNRC which continues on an ongoing basis. As a neighbor should, we are doing what we can to help our neighbors in any way possible.

The numbers of volunteers continues to increase along with the number of ranchers and farmers who are operating the county co-operator engines. It goes to show that all of neighbors working together can make a difference and better our community.

Support your local firefighter

We Salute Local Businesses for Their Support

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the local business for their understanding and support in letting their employees leave when there is a fire call or by allowing scheduling accommodations to attend drills and meetings. For some businesses this can be a major inconvenience, but this allows them to be "Neighbors Helping Neighbors." This is what we have done since 1951.

A-1 Quality Transmission: Jake Toennis	Deluxe Motors: Buddy LaBree Joe Sprayberry	Rod Lee: James "Tiny" Williams	United Building Center: Chance Krausz
Automatic Transmission: Tim Hatcher	BLM: Don Jones	MT Dept of Labor, Safety Bureau: Mike Preller	Wal-Mart: Rick Schwartzenberger
Boardwalk Restaurant: Craig Dalakow	Evergreen Landscaping: Terry James	Muggli Brothers: Mike Toennis	Sandy Hatcher
City of Miles City: Dan Decker	Gabel Farms: Floyd Gable	Ntbohm Motors: Tanner Harbaugh	Douglas Ochsner
	Jack's Body Shop: Logan Bartholomew	Ochsner Equipment Sales: Jay Ochsner	

Fundraising Notes

Recently we have gained funds from two events. The first of those was the Annual Hog Roast held after the Bucking Horse Sale parade in which we raised \$1,000. The second of these comes from a \$5,000 grant from the Nibs & Edna Allen Foundation. This grant will be used to help us purchase a new tender. This fund currently sits at \$13,000 and we have applied for several other grants. The goal is to raise enough funds to purchase a new tender to replace R-4, which was scrapped earlier this year. We would also like to thank all of you who joined us for our annual Hog Roast which also raised much needed funds for the Capital Purchases Fund.

**Do you have questions about the CCRVFC?
Contact any of the people listed below.**

President:	Mike Toennis	232-5659
Vice-President:	Edmund Heinle	234-4462
Secretary/Editor/Webmaster:	Douglas Ochsner	234-8007
Board Members:	Lee Akers	234-2635
	Tim Hatcher	234-5816
	Jay Ochsner	232-0233
	Bill Ellis	234-3308
	Jack Larson	234-2531
Fire Chief:	Mike Preller	234-7691

Protect Your Home From Wildland Fire Encroachment

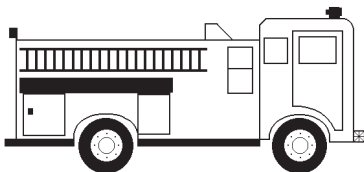
While we have been unusually wet as of late; hot, dry weather can hit us at any time. During hot, dry weather, wildland fires are more prevalent. Whether you live close in, or way out in the country, there are some things you can do to help protect your home and outbuildings from burning in case there is a grass or brush fire in your area.

Among the most effective things to do is create safety zones around your home and outbuildings to reduce the risk from a wildland fire spreading to buildings, eliminate brush, trees and other vegetation near them. The greater the distance between buildings and vegetation, the greater the protection against wildland fires.

Create a 30 foot safety zone around the house. Keep the volume of vegetation in this zone to a minimum. If you live on a hill, extend the zone on the downhill side. In this zone, you should also do the following:

1. Remove vines from the walls of the house.
2. Move shrubs and other landscaping away from the sides of the house.
3. Prune branches and shrubs within 15 feet of chimneys and stove pipes.
4. Remove tree limbs within 15 feet of the ground.
5. Thin a 15 foot space between tree crowns.
6. Replace highly flammable vegetation such as pine, junipers, and fir trees with lower growing, less flammable species. Check with your local garden store or nursery for suggestions.
7. Replace vegetation that has living or dead branches at ground level.
8. Cut the lawn often keeping the grass at a maximum of 2 inches. Reduce grass and other vegetation near driveways.
9. Clear the area of dry grass, leaves, brush, evergreen cones, dead limbs and fallen trees.
10. Create a second zone at least 100 feet around the house. Begin at the boundary of the 30 foot zone, and extend to at least 100 feet. In this zone, reduce or replace as much of the most flammable vegetation as possible. If you live on a hill, extend the zone for several hundred feet on the downhill side to provide an effective safe zone.
11. Clear all combustibles within 30 feet of any structure.
12. Install electrical lines underground. If that's not possible, ask the power company to clear branches away from power lines.
13. Avoid using bark and wood chip mulch
14. Stack firewood 100 feet away and uphill from any structure. Store combustible or flammable materials in approved safety containers and keep them away from the house.
15. Keep propane tanks at least 15 feet from any structure.

CUSTER COUNTY RURAL VOLUNTEER
FIRE COMPANY
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MILES CITY, MT 59301



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