

Fire Commissioners Column.....

Bill Madison

A friend asked me this week what the fire district was doing with the funding provided by the levy lid lift approved by the voters last August. My reply was “exactly what we told the voters we planned to do”. Our actions in 2010 are following the budget that was adopted at our public hearing held last October. Probably the most visible action taken was that the district was not forced to close several of our less active fire stations. Although we are still short of volunteers for the stations in Ford, Twin Mountain and Deer Lake, we continue to operate out of these locations while searching for additional volunteers.

The fire district has hired a full time fire mechanic to service the 40 vehicles we operate. Having a full time mechanic has already proven to be a great asset. Our “to do” list has been considerably reduced and trucks are being returned to service quicker now as we do not have to take vehicles out of our district for repairs.

Most people who are not familiar with taxing district budgets forget that the fire district doesn't receive significant tax money for the year until the county collects the first half of the property taxes for 2010. Property taxes are due on April 30th so we won't actually receive any “new money” until May 2010. In the meantime, we operate on what is called “carry-over” from the previous year's tax collections.

Once the funds are received from Stevens County, we'll continue with the budget plan. The largest expenditure we face this year is the replacement of our Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBAs). You may remember from the information supplied last year that our present units are so old that the manufacturer no longer supports them. Without replacement parts, the old units will not function safely. These are the air tanks you see on the firefighters backs that supply breathing air to enable them to enter smoky and hazardous environments. The cost to replace these SCBAs will be about \$200,000.

If you have any questions or concerns about our operations remember we begin each fire commissioners meeting with a “public comments” session. Members of the audience are asked if they have questions/comments they'd like the commissioners to discuss or address. The meetings are held the first and third Monday of each month. The first Monday meeting is at the Tum Tum fire station and the third Monday meeting is at Clayton. Meetings begin at 7 PM.

Another friend sent me a really interesting and informative video I'd like to suggest you take a look at. It shows what to do and what **not** to do if you have a grease fire in the kitchen. Remember that oil and grease float on water and if you put water on a grease fire, the water sinks, turns to steam, and then explodes. Covering the burning pan with a lid or wet towel after turning off the heat is your best bet. Check out the video at: www.scfpd1.com/prevention/prevention.htm AKitchenOilFire1.wmv.

