



Sula Rural Fire District
P.O. Box 7
Sula, MT 59871

RECEIVED

JUL 07 2014

County Commissioners

--	--	--	--	--

June 23rd 2014

Billie Springer Memorial Park, Inc.
1415 Springer Memorial Road
Sula, MT 59871

Dear Mr. Skinner - Board Chairman

This letter is in response to your letter of June 2014. Not all of the trustees received your letter dated April 26th. If you would like to send any correspondence to the Sula Rural Fire Department our address is as follows: P.O. Box 7 Sula, MT 59871

We will not be attending your board meeting on July 13, 2014, but you are welcome to attend one of our Sula Fire Trustee Board meetings. If you are unable to attend please provide a list of your needs or concerns and the trustees can research ways and ideas to assist you.

We have spent much time and effort trying to address the needs at Station 2. You stated that half of the structures in the Sula Rural Fire District are located in the Springer Memorial area. The Sula Rural Fire District has approximately 1,310 structures from Robbins Gulch up the East Fork and including those heading up Lost Trail Pass. According to the last census Springer Memorial has approximately 75 structures.

We are a small fire district in regards to population and volunteers. We have a lot of miles to cover and strive to provide everyone in our district fire protection.

When we met with members of Springer Memorial Board last May 2013 the following concerns were voiced:

- Lack of volunteers. Last August we made a full effort to run a volunteer drive for your specific area. We provided a pancake breakfast at Springer Memorial to get your particular area interested in volunteering and make them aware of the need for volunteers.
- Additional beepers and radios were purchased for the Springer Memorial area. This station now has more radios and beepers than our other three stations. We only ask that when a volunteer leaves for the season or quits that they return them so we could provide others that would be there year round with adequate communications.
- A concern was accessibility to the Fire Hall in the winter months due to snow. We contracted out an individual to keep this area plowed.

- We went through the list of equipment needed and upgrades to our existing equipment. We provided the upgrades and maintenance, but this is an ongoing issue and will continue to be addressed.
- Due to the fact we are a small district with limited volunteers we have done some training at the various stations after work hours. We have coordinated with the Darby Fire District for additional training. The schedule is posted at the Fire Hall for anyone *interested in attending*. It is unfortunate that the volunteers in Springer have not taken full advantage of that opportunity, but the training has been offered.
- We have provided the majority of the fire trucks and equipment on your end of the district.
- An unfortunate accident occurred in your area early in the fire season. We were notified of your concerns and the suggestion that a helipad was needed. This issue was discussed and we provided a check to help with a possible landing pad for Lifeflight.
- Electricity was provided for a wood cutter in your area to do thinning from May or early June to October. We did receive a donation from him which was appreciated due to the rising costs.

You stated in your letter there is only one full time fireman in your area while ten years ago there were ten. We will continue our efforts to seek volunteers however it is the responsibility of people to volunteer to help in their specific areas.

Our goal is to provide more volunteers and a safe environment to everyone on the district. We appreciate the time and effort they give out of their daily lives from their families and jobs. We are grateful for their dedication and they should be commended for all of their efforts.

There have been some personal attacks against some of our volunteers by one or two people in your particular area. Our volunteers have continued to be professional and ignore the negativity. *It would be a travesty to lose a volunteer due to negative actions or words for unjust reasons.* We are in grave need of volunteers and this attitude is a deterrent.

Sincerely,

Bob Wetzsteon - Fire Chief
Gary Palmer- Chairman
Shirley Ehmann - Trustee
Roger Friend - Trustee
Nick Kormanik - Trustee

cc: Copy

Ravalli County Commissioners

Greg Chilcott - Chairman