



From the Mayor's Desk

BY RON TOYOTA
Mayor - Town of Creston

Our First Responders in the Creston Valley

In January, I was invited to the Royal Canadian Legion's (Branch 29) canteen for a "Salute to First Responders". I was honoured to have been asked to take part in this event - a potluck dinner evening with about 70 attending. Thank you so much to the organizers of this first time event for the opportunity to celebrate some of the Creston Valley's finest!

We are so very fortunate here in the Creston Valley to have a network of first responders of over 140 individuals. This includes BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS), Creston Valley Search and Rescue, our local RCMP Detachment, and Creston Fire Rescue. Coupled with our amazing nurses, hospital staff and physicians, the count of people who support us in emergencies is much higher.

Our local BCEHS unit has 18 qualified Primary Care Providers (paramedics) and Emergency Medical Responders (EMR) staff with two ambulances based in Creston. They provide service to over 13,000 citizens in the Creston Valley from the Kootenay Pass Summit, to the US Border, to Irishmen Creek on Highway #3 East and to Riondel when requested. In 2019, the BCEHS Air Ambulances frequented our

Creston Valley Airport about 80 times to transport patients to major hospitals in Kelowna, Vancouver and elsewhere.

We also have two extremely valuable volunteer Search and Rescue organizations serving our Creston Valley, Creston Valley Search and Rescue (SAR) and Civil Air Search & Rescue Association (CASARA). Creston Valley Search & Rescue has 16 active members and specializes

"Happy Birthday to Creston Fire Rescue, which is 121 years old this year!"

in ground searches. If needed, Creston Valley SAR can also utilize the resources of CASARA which has 23 air search members in the Creston Valley and the Provincial Emergency Program air search (PEPAIR).

Happy Birthday to Creston Fire Rescue, which is 121 years old this year! On Feb. 21, 1899, the Village of Creston established, by a motion of committee, to form a Fire Department, with another motion made to appoint Mr. Joseph Wilson as the first Fire Chief of the Department. The Fire Bell that was purchased

in October 1931 for \$116.17 is still on display at our current Fire Hall and will make the move to the new Creston Emergency Services Building when it is completed!

The first Fire Department volunteers list contained 29 names. Today, we have 49 active firefighters on our roster which is comprised of 10 females and 39 males. In addition to providing firefighting services, they also provide first responder services - which includes responding to motor vehicle incidents, medical callouts, and numerous rescue and safety operations - often in tandem with other Creston Valley Fire Departments, BC Emergency Health Services (BC Ambulance) and Search & Rescue. They respond directly to calls in the Town of Creston, the contracted service areas of Erickson, Wynndel-Lakeview Arrow Creek and West Creston and work in close partnership with the fire departments of Canyon-Lister, Yahk-Kingsgate and Riondel.

We all hope that we will never need the services of our first responders but, (speaking from firsthand experience) I am so grateful to all of these individuals who are incredibly professional and caring, especially at a time when we are so vulnerable. Our first responders will always have my support and appreciation - THANK YOU for all that you do!



Don't hesitate to contact me by: Visiting me at my office in Town Hall, email at ron.toyota@creston.ca or call 250 428 2214 (extension 227)