



# The Cedar Post

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## Summer Activities and then some...

*by Roger Debenham*

June was an active month. Lightning struck Alexander Mountain on June 20. The smoke was first reported by a homeowner and phoned in to one of our dispatchers. Strawberry did the reconnaissance and the smoke report via radio to the 911 operator. Bill Powers was one of the firefighters that hiked in to contain that fire.

June 22, we were working at the chipper site. We heard a dispatch on the scanner to the Two Eagles Resort (old Palisades Motel) in the canyon. It was a lightning caused grass fire. Before we got to our driveway, a report of another grass fire in Jug Gulch caught our attention. We knew what we had to do. Karen started calling "responders", while I grabbed my tools and ready-pack and ran up the forest access road. I did the smoke report via radio to the 911 operator.

Three of us went through the Sylvan Dale gate to search for the source. It was a wild and crazy ride up and down ridges until

we found the half acre fire . A voice mail left by the telephone tree provided a fourth responder. The fire was mostly confined to low ground cover with flames no larger than 18". Since our crew was small, we attacked the more dangerous areas first, then worked on a fire line for two hours until the pro's arrived. We were tired and really ready to leave by then. They told us our efforts were impressive, words we were glad to hear. After it was all over, I wondered, "What IF?". What if there were no telephone tree, no fast acting strike team with tools and ATV's and, more importantly, a mind set that was prepared to deal with wildfire on our mountain.

June 27 and 28 we received false alarm smoke reports which turned out to be water well drilling. June 29, we were asked by the Big Thompson Canyon Volunteer Fire Department to utilize our phone tree to call everyone—sort of a Reverse 911—to explain the smoke was coming from the Pingree Park fire more than 20 miles to our northwest and we were not in any danger.

Since the question has, so often been asked, here's my answer to the what and how of S.M.E.R.T.

Shortly after last winter's fires some folks came to realize that because of our location emergency help was over an hour away. The only way to get faster response time was to provide it ourselves. Thus S.M.E.R.T. was born. In the beginning, we wanted no name and no structure. We just wanted to be neighbors helping neighbors, that's all. As we came together and pooled our thoughts, we realized we needed equipment. This necessitated raising funds. So we called ourselves S.M.E.R.T and incorporated as a

## FROM THE PREZ...

*by Roger Debenham*

Colorado Non Profit company to own the fire truck. The fact that all donations are tax deductible was an added bonus.

In the few short months of our existence we have dealt with fire and have come to know much more about making our mountain safer. We need folks to help and money to do it with. To that end, we'll always need donations and our thanks will be endless for your support. Dollars, muscle and brains, we need it all. And regardless of our long name and corporate standing, we are still neighbors helping neighbors. That's how I see it.

Last season wildfires blackened 600,000 acres in the west. That's over twice the yearly average. The TV-dude said it just might be a preview of next season. So what are we going to do? And what have we learned that we may do better?

A uniform mapping system, communication procedures, well marked and identified water sources, identified lookout locations, water delivery equipment, mapping jeep trails, etc. Considering all that should and could be done before next season, I just wonder when we should begin?

# HOLIDAY POTLUCK DINNER

On November 23, we are holding a Holiday Potluck Dinner at the Miller's shop, 121 Bobcat Place. Please bring a dish to pass, your own plates, utensils and beverage. Also, bring an inexpensive wrapped gift to "put under the tree". In order to have an idea of how many tables and chairs we will need, please call Kathy at 669-8587 telling her how many will attend and whether your dish is an entrée, side, or dessert.

## Winter Precautions

Last January we lost two homes to fire. One was faulty wiring and the other was a chimney fire. While the explosive danger of the summer fire season seems past, please pay attention to the smell of smoke in the air.

Before calling us or 911 to report smoke make sure it isn't a low cloud. It could just be the smoke from someone's wood stove in the air.

We may not be able to save a structure should there be a fire, but we'll sure try to keep it out of the trees. If you need to call 911, please remember to also call one of our dispatchers;

**Kathy Miller 669-8587**  
**Patti Stetson 667-9475**  
**Karen Debenham 593-1091**  
**Shirley Miller 663-4801.**

## SMERT Business

As this year draws to an end, I wish to thank all of you for your kind donations. We all hope this winter passes without incident but I think our first responders have practiced and learned a lot this year.

I wish you all the merriest of Holidays and the best New Year.

*Chris Brock, Secretary/Treasurer.*



## Words of Praise

We have received many kind and encouraging words from you.

"Thanks to all of you for your concern and dedication to keeping our mountain safe."

"It is comforting to know that Cedar

## Births



Belated congratulations to Brian and Dina Rank on the birth of their son, Chance, January 25, 2002. He weighed 7 lbs 3 oz and was 22" tall.

## THANK YOU!

I marvel at how our mountain community has pulled together since the fires began in 2000. I would like to personally thank everyone who simply helps their neighbor on a day to day basis. Sometimes what is given seems like a small effort, but in actuality, means more to the receiver than is hardly imagined. Thank you to all who have helped and still are helping us during Carl's illness.

*Kathy Miller*

## Mile High Telecom

Are you tired of paying the \$20 per line for distance service on your Qwest bill monthly?

Well, check out Mile High Telecom.

There is no distance fee and they use the existing Qwest lines. Your phone bill can be cut in half or even more. Some of us have 2 (or more) separate phone lines and this company gives you a great offer!

Call them at 1-800-437-5580 or go online at [www.milehigh.ws](http://www.milehigh.ws).

*Elaine McGee*

## Directory??

Are you interested in offering your services to folks that live on the mountain? You can buy an ad on the back of this newsletter or, the Cedar Post is considering compiling a directory of the many fine craftsmen and "local businesses" that live in our community.

Did you ever wish you knew who cleaned houses? Or who was the closest plumber? Mail us your information to be added to this list.



## Notices

If you have any announcements that you'd like to share, send them to P. O. Box 73, Drake, CO 80515 or email at [Rhdebenham@debenham.com](mailto:Rhdebenham@debenham.com).

## Are You Prepared?

Thousands of Colorado residents faced tough decisions this year — what to take when they flee their homes because of wildfire threat.

Have a plan before the need arises so you don't have to make decisions when danger looms. Have a list of medications, important papers and other special items as well as emergency supplies. Consider what photos, heirlooms or other items are important to you.

What are the irreplaceable things you can put quickly in the car and run? While some items are a personal choice, officials recommend that everyone take certain things.

The suggested list includes: Insurance papers, birth and marriage certificates, mortgage papers, vehicle ownership papers and other financial documents. Medications, first-aid kit and extra glasses or con-

tact lenses. Extra clothes. A 72-hour kit containing everything one might need to be self-sufficient for 72 hours, including nonperishable food. A battery powered radio with extra batteries. Sleeping bags and blankets. Personal hygiene items. Addresses and phone numbers. Flashlight and batteries

Close all the doors inside your home, turn on a light in each room, shut off gas valves, take down drapes and move furniture away from windows and glass doors. Move combustible yard furniture away from the house. Cover windows, attic openings and vents with fire-resistant material; attach garden hoses to spigots and fill trash cans and buckets with water and place these where firefighters can find them.

If you have no time to do any of the above, just grab your pets and your neighbors pets and get the \*\*LL out.

## 2003 Chipper Program

Thanks to everyone who helped make the 2002 program a success, especially our land owner, Ray Berg.

Providing our mountain community with this program is not within the scope of what SMERT is all about but we feel the fuel reduction project important enough to provide our support.

Many of you were disappointed that the site filled up and was closed as quickly as it did. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you.



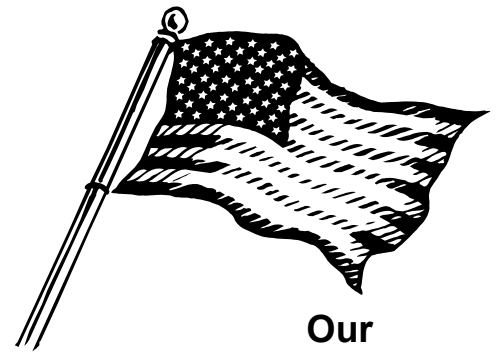
After discussion with Tony Simons, Larimer County's wildfire safety specialist, we will be

able to participate in the program again in 2003.

Based upon this year's cost (\$3800), we need your signed pledge to contribute if you plan to take advantage of the site. We also need to know how many truckloads of chips you will take.

Please let us know either by writing us at P.O. Box 73, or emailing us at Rhdebenham@debenham.com. We'd appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible, so that we can determine if it is feasible to do again.

Everyone owes a real big thank you to Tony Simons and Larimer County for allowing us to participate again next spring..



## Our Servicemen!

Kyle Barton and Jeremiah Garcia, (and their unit, the 519) are fighting the war against terrorism!

They would love to receive a package from home. Some of the many things they would enjoy receiving would be...warm socks, warm gloves (Govt. regulation - black only), toiletries, snacks (not homemade), candy (wrapped), Wet Wipes, Tums, newspapers, pocket board games, cards. *NO PORK PRODUCTS, NO LIQUIDS*

The 519 is a high security clearance unit, therefore we can't give you an address but Steve & Theresa Murdock will package up anything we collect and see that it gets to them. (The 519 was one of the army units sent to help us during the Bobcat Gulch fire.)

You can drop off your "gift" (with your name FROM :) at the Murdock's (502 Snow Top), or at Rich Miller's (772 Snow Top).

## Vehicle Stickers

We will be placing another order for CPCS stickers.

Many people like the idea of being able to see that a vehicle "belongs" on the mountain.

If you would like one, please call Carl or Kathy Miller at 669-8587.

**A Newsletter for the Storm  
Mountain Community**

S.M.E.R.T. Inc.  
P O Box 73  
Drake, CO 80515

Phone: 970-593-1091  
Fax: 970-593-1244  
Email:  
Rhdebenham@debenham.com

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