

## Welcome 2021

It's finally 2021 and now we can officially say good riddance to 2020. Who would have ever predicted a year ago that we would be in the situation we have today with all the issues caused by a tiny virus - COVID-19. Our sympathies to those who have lost loved ones this past year. The virus by itself is quite the deal, but not being able to go to work and school every weekday? Not being able to attend your place of worship? Not being able to purchase an appliance for months? Most financial transactions being done online (and those without a computer or internet were left in the dust)? And especially not being able to visit family and friends? Even years ago when the daily necessities were not as readily available as they are today and you had to wait for a few things, at least you could still go visit family! Sure, you maybe only went to Green Bay once a year, and that was a trip that was planned way ahead of time, but you could always go to a relative's house or the neighbors to play a round or two of sheepshead or smear and have a couple drinks before heading home again! So...welcome again to 2021. May it be more like "the good old days" for all of us.

The one thing 2020 has taught all of us is to be ready for anything, no matter how bizarre it might seem. 2020 is kind of like the fire service. Just when you think you have it all figured out, you get a curve ball! We would like to assure you that we are always ready for that curve ball. There are plans to continue to provide fire protection even if every Green Valley – Morgan firefighter were to have COVID at the same time. If a tornado went through one township and a huge jumbo jet crashed in the other township at the same time, we have a plan for that. Is it likely to happen? No, but...we just had 2020! We have a plan for the *what ifs!*

So did anything good happen in 2020? YES! Even though we chose not to have the traditional annual firefighters' picnic in August, we were still able to raise enough funds to purchase 4 new breathing apparatus without using any money from the budgeted expenses! A sincere thank you to everyone that was able to donate to our fire company. We really do appreciate it! We are also still anticipating the delivery of our new pumper/tender in 2021 from Pierce. It has already been one year since we started that project, but of course COVID came along and here we are, but now we're moving forward again! Hopefully by the next newsletter, we'll be able to share the news of a brand new firetruck being delivered. As of now, we are planning to have our picnic again in August, so mark your calendars and get ready! We have a few new guys on our roster for you to meet – and a new truck to show you!

Winter is here once again and we'd like to remind you of a few things. Yes, they might seem repetitive, but they are very important to keep yourself and your loved ones safe during these colder months.

- If you burn wood, check your chimney(s) periodically throughout the winter months and clean out any creosote buildup and blockages.
- Allow fireplace and woodstove ashes to cool before disposing in a metal container.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home. Check the batteries periodically to insure they are working properly. Also, install and maintain carbon monoxide alarms to avoid the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning to occupants.
- Be sure to clear snow and ice away from any vents to the outside to prevent carbon monoxide from entering the home. This includes gas furnaces, gas water heaters, and gas clothes dryers.
- Please keep furnishings at least 3 feet away from all inside heating units. Remember that small children and animals may unintentionally knock things off of a table or shelf and onto a heating unit.
- Use candles with extreme caution – these can also be tipped over very easily by small children and animals. Keep burning candles at least 12 inches away from other flammables. Blow out all candles when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Keep matches, lighters, and sharp objects up high and out of children's reach.
- Please check on elderly or disabled relatives, neighbors, and friends that have a difficult time keeping their homes safe during the winter months. Also, they might be quite pleased to have someone help clear away snow or do a few errands for them during inclement weather!
- Please try to keep your driveway(s) clear of deep snow and ice. If we should have to come to your location, it is much easier for us to maneuver with our equipment when driveways are kept clear. It may save precious time when every second counts!

Daylight Saving Time will be on March 14 this year. Remember to "Change Your Clocks, Change Your Batteries"! Another common scene in the springtime is the burning of dead vegetation after the snow is melted. Please be careful when burning outside and always tend to the fire! If you plan on burning, please give the Sheriff's Department a call to let them know you are going to be burning. In the town of Green Valley, call the Shawano County Sheriff's Department at 715-526-3111, or in the Town of Morgan, call the Oconto County Sheriff's Department at 920-834-6900. Also, a reminder that in the Town of Morgan, a burning permit is required if there is no snow cover. Contact the DNR to obtain burning permits. Check our new Smokey Bear sign at the Morgan firehouse for current fire conditions! **Happy 2021 – Stay Safe!**