

Charter Donates Historic Building to Missoula Rural Fire District (MRFD)

A piece of Montana's firefighting history is back in the hands of Missoula County firefighters, thanks to a donation from Charter Communications. The original Lolo fire station will soon become home to a vintage fire engine and other historical items from the Missoula Rural Fire District's past. Charter is donating the old station to MRFD. It will be a place to house our recently restored vintage fire engine as well as the many photos, scrapbooks and relics we've collected over the years.

The single bay, 716-square-foot garage was constructed in the late 1950s to house the fledgling Lolo Volunteer Fire Department, which was officially organized in 1959. In September 1973, the volunteer department petitioned to become part of the Missoula Rural Fire District. The station is believed to have remained in service until 1985 when a new, modern fire station was constructed nearby.

The aging building located on Old Highway 93 became a storage facility for the area's earliest cable television operation, eventually passing to Charter Communications in 2013. Charter discontinued use of the building and, upon learning of the District's interest, decided to give it back to the firefighters and the community at no cost.



"Charter is pleased to return this building to its original purpose," said Christopher Fulton, area vice

president of Charter's Mountain States market. "It's exciting to see this station, after so many years, housing its own fire engine and serving as a symbol of protection for the community once again." Charter is a leading broadband communications company and the fourth-largest cable operator in the United States. More information about Charter can be found at www.charter.com.

Like the restoration of the vintage fire engine, any improvements or renovations to the old Lolo station will be done with private funding. The fire truck project and consideration for this project were made possible by memorial donations from the Richard Bertlin, John Jirsa and Albert Dufresne families, along with contributions from the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 2457 and the Missoula Rural Volunteer Fire Fighter's Association.

There are several essential projects that need attention before the Old Lolo Station can house MRFD's Engine #1:

Short Term Essential Projects

Security:

- Window replacement
38 3/4 x 80 1/4 inches
39 x 81 1/4 inches openings
- Overhead door repair
- Re-key existing locks (overhead door, man door)
- Chain link fence repair

Maintenance:

- Heater check
- Electrical check
- Yard cleanup to allow mowing
- Chinking removal (asbestos)
- Pest control

Long Term Projects— Historical Lolo Station

- Overhead door replacement
- Walk in entry stairs or cut out foundation and replace man door
- Heater before winter
- Replace chinking
- Refinish logs?? Oil??

Charter Communications' generous donation of the property and old log fire station is a wonderful opportunity for MRFD. The location and facility have great potential and offers a place to house Engine #1 and build and display the collection of photographs and memorabilia from MRFD's history. Members of the Board of Trustees, the Volunteer Association, Local 2457 and the Administration look forward to working on this project. Voluntary work parties are in the planning stages. Please Station 1 Headquarters at 549-6172 if you have resources, time available, or would like to donate to assist with this project.



50:50 Raffle for Historical Lolo Fire Station Restoration Project

**\$1.00 per ticket,
or 6 tickets for \$5.00.
Thank you!**