



**MCKENZIE  
CLEARWATER  
FIRE DEPARTMENT**

# FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

## Mapping - Signage Project Update

The McKenzie Clearwater Fire Department is the last territory in the Kenora District to adopt the Bell 911 signage standard. Progress on this Project and community support has been tremendous! Read on for a summary of the work accomplished and future plans...



Rick Wright

In the fall of 2023, the Department kicked off sign installation with volunteers placing approximately 80 signs down McCallum Point Road. This work allowed Project Leaders to gauge the ease of installation and best placement of signs. The team recognized that thanks to the Canadian Shield, installation was going to be a time-consuming process and that the work would best be accomplished by a contractor.

In the Spring of 2024 local contractor Rick Wright was hired. Rick's family has been in the Kenora area for many generations and as a local, he

understands the importance of having proper signage.

From June to August 2024 Rick and the volunteers installed 1798 posts and signs. Another 490 more signs were designed and printed in September 2024 by Airmasters of Winnipeg. These were installed throughout October and November 2024. With a grand total of 2288 street signs, property signs and branch number signs, the properties accessible by road are complete.

Over the winter of 2024-25 leaders will be procuring signage for a total of 890 water access properties. How and where those signs are going to be placed has not yet been determined. McKenzie Clearwater Fire Department has two fire boats dedicated to properties that are not accessible by land.

Please spread the word on the new signage and start using your new address! Emergency services, alarm monitoring services and other agencies will be phasing in use of the addresses over 2025 and 2026. Please see our website for specific details.

Rick Wright has received very positive feedback to the installation of signs. He says the number of people who personally thank him while he's on the job is overwhelming.

Thank you to the community for your continued support and very generous donations. Please keep them coming as the project is not yet complete!

## Response report from MCFD

**New volunteers Fire Fighters are always needed!**

For more information contact Fire Chief Dale Charbonneau by email: [clearwaterrescue@bellnet.ca](mailto:clearwaterrescue@bellnet.ca).

SEPT. 1, 2023 -  
SEPT. 1, 2024

<b>11</b> ACTIVE FIRES	<b>1</b> WATER RESCUE	<b>12</b> FALSE ALARMS	<b>18</b> HWY/VEHICLE EXTRACTION
<b>34</b> MEDICAL CALLS	<b>1</b> DAY BURNING COMPLAINT	<b>1</b> ASSIST OTHER FD	

# Autumn Fire Safety

## Preventing Outdoor Fires

Never park your car or truck over a pile of leaves. The heat from the vehicle's catalytic converter or exhaust system can ignite the leaves below. The resulting fire could destroy your vehicle.

Flammable liquids should not be stored in inside the home or in an attached garage or shed. This includes any unused fuel still in the fuel tank. Store this equipment away from your home or drain excess fuel out of the tank before storing. This simple safety precaution will help prevent accidental fires from escaping fuel vapors.

Remove fuel from lawn mowers before storing them for winter.

Contact your utility company if trees or branches are not clear of power lines. Prune back trees, and rake up leaves and debris. If you live in an open area with a lot of natural vegetation, consider creating a defensible fire zone around your home. Prune the bottom branches from trees and remove shrubs and trees within 20 feet of your home.

Don't store cardboard boxes, paper or other flammable materials in the backyard. These materials provide ready fuel for a fire and all it takes is one spark.

## Heating your Home

### CENTRAL HEATING

- » Get your central heating system cleaned, inspected and serviced by a certified heating, venting and air conditioning (HVAC) contractor every year before using it.
- » If you have a gas heater, make sure that you have a sufficient quantity of fully functioning CO alarms installed in your home.
- » Keep all flammable materials away from your furnace. This includes, clothing, paint products, toxic materials, cardboard and more.



### FIREPLACES AND WOODSTOVES

- » Have heating appliances serviced and chimney flues examined for defects.
- » Have fireplaces and fireplace dampers checked.
- » Fireplaces should be equipped with an appropriate screen or glass enclosure to prevent sparks from flying out.
- » Wood burning stoves should be examined and the flue and chimney checked for creosote buildup. Creosote is a deposit from smoke that can build up in a chimney and can start a fire.
- » Use only seasoned woods, and avoid soft woods like Pine, etc.
- » Never use a flammable liquid to start a fireplace.
- » Never overload the hearth with wood or artificial logs, the resulting fire may be too large for the unit.
- » Put all ashes outdoors and away from the house in a metal container.

### SPACE HEATERS

- » Make sure that any space heaters are surrounded by at least three feet of empty space.
- » Never place clothing or any other objects on a space heater to dry.
- » Do not place space heaters near furniture or drapery.
- » Turn space heaters off when you leave the house or go to bed.
- » Avoid storing any combustible items near heaters.



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## The Evolution of Road Signs ... The Evolution of Safety



The fire road signs that you may still see posted to trees are part of a legacy system that dates to the 1960s. Although these signs served a purpose, they often left firefighters searching for locations like “the cottage with the red roof.”

One dedicated Firefighter remembers, “The plywood signs were put up by the McKenzie Fire Department in the 80s. They only went to Clearwater Bay and many

roads were not done. In the 90s, once we started the Clearwater Bay Fire Department, we bought metal signs and did the whole area.”

In the near future, each property in the Kenora District will have a unique address on new white-on-blue signs according to the Bell Canada Standard. Road names have been chosen based on legacy names and in consultation with property owners. The number is derived from the formula: Address = (Meters from Road Intersection) / 10 \* 2 + (1 for Right side or 2 for Left side).

The challenges for MCFD in emergencies are many including the sheer physical size of its service area with 2400 plus properties, 890 of which are water access only.

Positive outcomes from this project are evident, including

- » faster response times
- » saving lives and property
- » diminishing fire spread to neighboring properties and forest
- » reducing stress for owners, dispatchers and firefighters

### **In addition, the signage will address ALL TYPES OF EMERGENCIES.**

New addresses will be part of the Central Dispatch database and be used by OPP, EMS, MNRF Fire, EMO, OFM and more. Mapping will also support development of emergency preparedness plans, and in the event of a large-scale emergency, such as a forest fire, will allow emergency services to prepare accurate evacuation and protection plans.

The Mapping and Signage Project is ongoing and requires community donations to take it to completion.

## Firefighter Profile: Trevor Belair

The McKenzie Clearwater Fire Department has an enviable record of instilling dedication and long service in its 22 volunteer firefighters. Trevor Belair, 28, has been a member of the McKenzie-Clearwater Firefighters since 2018.

Trevor says he joined the MCFD because he wanted to be a firefighter since he was kid and found a passion for it through Clearwater Fire. “I have met so many people through the years who have become lifelong friends. I strive to make a difference in people’s lives for the good everyday.”

Trevor is father to a five-year-old daughter, Calliope, and the family recently moved to Niverville, Manitoba. Trevor’s day job is now at Fort Garry Firetrucks building firetrucks “with the same passion I have helping people day to day and making a difference in everyone’s lives.” He is looking forward to his new career and to knowing every truck they produce will serve its community and Fire Department well.

Despite relocation and a new career, Trevor is still looking forward to spending his weekends and summers in Kenora. Trevor says, “I will always be a part, of the McKenzie Clearwater Fire Department as it has helped me grow as a person and has opened new possibilities for me. I want to continue to support the community I have lived in for years and will continue to attend all events from the Christmas Parade and Pancake Breakfast to all the fundraisers and community events we do. I will always serve my hometown and community the rest of my life with the hopes to move back one day.” What a great example of dedication!



# McKenzie Clearwater Firehall Dinner

By Shannon Johnson

This past July 6th, 2024 the McKenzie Clearwater Firehall hosted its Annual Fundraising Dinner and Auction at Ash Rapids Lodge. Many cottagers came from all over the lake to help us raise funds to complete the Mapping Project, buy new motors for the two fire boats, purchase a new fire pump for one boat and fund other operational needs of the Firehall.

Ash Rapids Lodge welcomed guests with a craft cocktail "Firewater" and served a fantastic feast of pickerel and prime rib. Guests had a chance to catch up with old friends and to meet new lake neighbors. Several of our Firefighters spoke about their personal experiences with the Volunteer Fire Department and the importance of the equipment that can be obtained from fund raising. They described some of their most recent calls and how their need for up-to-date equipment and location signage is key to the success of their firefighting efforts.

As always, the Kenora, Keewatin, Clearwater and Winnipeg businesses came through with amazing prizes for both the Silent Auction and the Live Auction. A new addition this year was the Auctioneer Gregg Maidment, who helped up to raise a record \$146,500!

Thank you to our community for both your attendance as well as your very generous donations! Without your support our Firehall would not continue to operate and be able to rush to the aid of properties and motor vehicle accidents all the way from the Manitoba border to Keewatin.

Hope to see you at the McKenzie Clearwater Firehall Dinner and Auction next year on Saturday, July 5, 2025 at Ash Rapids!



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## 2024 Donation by Mail Form

Donations can be made at [mckenzieclearwaterfire.ca](http://mckenzieclearwaterfire.ca) or cheques payable to:

MCFPC can be mailed to MCFPC, P. O. Box 20, Clearwater Bay, ON P0X 1S0

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Water access only:  Yes  No

Donation for Rescue & Training: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation for Mapping signage: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Donation: \$** \_\_\_\_\_



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