

## **RDEK Rural Fire Service Expands**

The Regional District of East Kootenay will soon be adding a new fire protection service area as it continues to work to improve public safety and provide fire service to unprotected areas.

Fire protection service in the Upper Elk Valley is expected to begin within the next few months after a petition for service was successful. "Expanding fire protection service to the Upper Elk Valley fire area provides service to 116 properties and will give them access not only to structural protection, but also vehicle fire, vehicle extrication and interface fire support," says Electoral Area A Director, Mike Sosnowski.

The RDEK has a volunteer Fire Department in Hosmer. Fernie Rural Fire Protection, which extends to Fernie Alpine Resort, is provided through a contract with the City of Fernie.

The Upper Elk Valley Fire Petition was signed by 50% of the property owners representing 53% of the assessed value of land and improvements within the proposed service area. The service establishment bylaw has been given three readings by the Board and has been forwarded to the Ministry of Community and Rural Development for review before coming back to the RDEK Board for adoption. The fire service is expected to begin early in the New Year.

As the RDEK's rural fire protection services increase, so too does the need for adequate fire fighting resources and vehicles to protect the service areas. After two years of research and planning, the Hosmer Fire Department acquired a new tender truck this month and the Fernie Fire Department also received a new truck. The Fernie Fire Truck, which will help provide service to the rural Fernie area, will be paid for using funds from Electoral Area A's portion of the Elk Valley Tax Sharing Agreement.

Pictured: the new Hosmer fire truck (foreground) and Fernie Fire Truck (background).  
Pictured: left to right Fernie Fire Chief, Shawn Ivany; Fernie Mayor Cindy Corrigan; Electoral Area A Director, Mike Sosnowski; Hosmer Fire Chief, Craig Follett.