

Lake Valley firefighters ready to dance up a storm at 50th ball

By Leona Allen

Members of the Lake Valley Volunteer Firefighter's Association are gearing up for the 50th annual Firefighter's Ball on March 2 at MontBleu in Stateline starting at 8pm.

Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. They can be obtained at Lake Valley Fire Station 6 (Golden Bear and Pioneer Trail), Station 7 (2211 Keetak St., Meyers), Raley's or Lira's Market.



Pat Doyle and
Ed Fischer
dance at the
second
Firefighter's
Ball at the
American
Legion Hall on
Feb. 4, 1962.
Photos/Lake
Valley Fire

The first ball was Feb. 4, 1961. It was initiated by the Lake Valley Ladies Auxiliary to assist in raising money for the

district's training and equipment needs. The first band to play at the ball was the Don Keller Band, and the event was at the American Legion Hall. In subsequent years, local bands such as George Worth, Mal and the Movers, and The Riptides entertained dancers throughout the evening.

If you're doing the math and counting the years from 1961, this should be the 51st annual event. In 1964, however, part of the American Legion Hall collapsed under the snow load and the ball was canceled for that year.

Starting in 1965 the ball was at the Elk's Club Lodge in Meyers. During those years, dinner was cooked and served to attendees by the firefighters and the ball became the area's premier event. Many times the crowd exceeded the capacity of the hall.

Extra outhouses had to be brought in and outfitted with heat and lights.



On April 21, 1961, Lake Valley personnel test three new American La France fire engines. At the time, Lake valley had 17 paid

firefighters
and 19
volunteers.
Current
staffing is 25
paid
firefighters
and 20
volunteers.

Due to the large crowds, the ball was moved to the casinos.

Proceeds from the ball have assisted the district as well as the community in many ways. Necessary equipment has been purchased for the firefighters and paramedics, including defibrillators, extrication equipment ("Jaws of Life"), ice rescue suits, and wildland fire gear. The funds also allow Lake Valley personnel to provide community CPR classes and, most recently, scholarships for South Tahoe High School students to attend the Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Academy.

Leona Allen is an employee of Lake Valley Fire District.