



Lutsen Fire/EMS Department
PO Box 151
116 Caribou Trail Lutsen, MN
May 2026

Dear Property Owner,

Thank you for your continued support. Today, we are reaching out because we need your help.

Cook County Search and Rescue—supported by members of the Lutsen Fire Department—~~has~~ responded to **29 calls so far this year**. Lake County responded to **50 calls last year** with only one drone available. Each year, the North Shore welcomes an extraordinary number of visitors: **1.2 million in Cook County** (outnumbering residents **240 to 1**) and **over 8 million in Lake County**. Many of these visitors are unfamiliar with the terrain or unprepared for the activities they undertake, and when emergencies occur, search and rescue teams must respond quickly.

The Lutsen Fire Department serves all of Cook County under mutual aid agreements, and we will continue to provide county-wide support. We aim to purchase a drone capable of carrying emergency supplies—such as EpiPens, blankets, water, and other essentials—to lost or injured individuals until rescuers can reach them. The drone will be equipped with thermal imaging, high-resolution cameras, and other critical features, and it will be covered by a three-year bumper-to-bumper guarantee. We also have **three trained pilots who have completed the required certification**, ensuring that a qualified operator is always available.

Why is this drone so important?

- It can locate missing persons significantly faster—saving crucial time for both the individuals in distress and our rescue teams. Weather and terrain have made past searches long, difficult, and dangerous.
- It provides a 360-degree aerial view during major fire incidents, improving decision-making and safety.
- It can carry out strategic tasks not possible with current equipment. For example, during a Lake Superior rescue, a drone could have delivered a rope beyond the limits of our launcher. In another incident, a missing father could have been found within minutes instead of hours on a cold, wet night.

The cost of this drone, including a three-year comprehensive warranty, is **\$25,500 per year**, totaling **\$76,500**. After the second year, we receive a replacement drone at no additional cost. While we are actively pursuing grants, community support will significantly accelerate our ability to purchase this critical piece of equipment.

We are asking each ~~renter~~ property owner to consider a **donation**. Any amount is sincerely appreciated. Your support will directly enhance our ability to protect visitors, renters, and residents—something we know is important to all of us in Cook County.

If you have questions, please contact Lutsen Fire Chief **Steve Duclos** at **218-370-1779** or **lutsenfire@gmail.com**.

Donations can be sent to the **Lutsen Township**, with “**DRONE**” noted on the memo line.

Thank you for your time, your support, and your commitment to our community.

With gratitude,
The Lutsen Fire/EMS Team