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City of Duluth - Fire Department

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DATE: 10/16/2019

SUBJECT: Decades later, a historic fire truck will return home for good

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

NATURE OF INCIDENT:

CASE NO.:

INCIDENT DATE:

INCIDENT TIME:

INCIDENT LOCATION:

Decades later, a historic fire truck will return home for good

Through research by the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association a 1930 fire truck will return to its original home - the Village of Wausaukee Wisconsin

Duluth, MINN - On October 17, at 1:00 pm in Duluth Minnesota, at the Annual Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association (MSFCA) the keys to a 1930 REO Speed Wagon fire truck will be handed back to its original owner – the community of Wausaukee, Wisconsin.

MSFCA Board members led by Eagan, Minnesota Fire Chief Mike Scott will hand over the keys to Fire Chief Eric Edlebeck of Wausaukee, Wisconsin in a presentation to formally return the truck to its home.

Who: MSFCA Board members, regional fire chiefs, and members of the Wausaukee fire department and community

What: A 1930 REO Speed Wagon fire truck

When: Thursday, October 17, 1:00 pm

Where: Pioneer Hall South, Duluth Entertainment Convention Center, 350 Harbor Dr, Duluth, MN 55802

Visual:

Fire Chiefs from around the region will be present to witness the truck being handed over to the Wausaukee community; specifically Fire Chief Eric Edlebeck and other members of the fire department to return the truck home to Wausaukee, Wisconsin.

Background story of how the truck is returning home:

Earlier this year the Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association (MSFCA) Board of Directors voted unanimously to declare surplus an antique fire truck owned by the association and put it up for auction via sealed bids.

The MSFCA has owned this 1930 REO Speed Wagon Fire Truck since the early 1990's. The intent of the truck was to support the MSFCA through community outreach with the truck making public appearances throughout the State of Minnesota. Overtime the truck has not been used as the MSFCA Board had hoped, so the Board moved to sell the truck.

Once the truck was officially advertised for sale via a sealed bid process that would end on September 30th, 2019 Board members set out to find out where the truck originally had served in the fire service.

Eagan Fire Chief Mike Scott who is on the MSFCA Board stated "there is a strong sense of brotherhood and family within the fire service that extends across the Nation if not worldwide, we felt it was important to track down where this truck originally served in the fire service to at least reach out to that department and let them know the truck was up for auction."

Through research it was learned that this truck had originally served as the first motorized fire truck for the Village of Wausaukee Wisconsin. Wausaukee is a Village located about 60 miles north of Green Bay.

Chief Scott had recently sold a used fire truck to the Village of Crivitz Wisconsin and called the Crivitz Fire Chief to see if he knew anyone from the Wausaukee Fire Department. You can imagine Chief Scott's surprise when the Crivitz Chief stated that Wausaukee was the neighboring Village to them, and the Fire Chief was his friend.

Chief Scott contacted the Wausaukee Fire District Fire Chief Eric Edlebeck to tell him about the fire truck being available for sealed bid auction.

Chief Edlebeck stated that “they had no idea what had happened to their original fire truck”. It had proudly served their Village for many years and at some point, was sold to a meat packing company. Edlebeck stated, “The truck was last seen in the early 1990’s when a gentleman from Minnesota brought the truck to our 4th of July Parade and allowed some retired members to ride on the truck in the parade. The members at that time were so excited to see the truck that they donated some loose equipment to the owner of the truck with hopes this truck would return for future 4th of July Parades. This was the last time the truck had been seen by members of the department and the community”.

The MSFCA received two sealed bids at the time of the bid closing on September 30th and the high bid was the Wausaukee Fire District in the amount of \$7,500.

The Annual MSFCA Conference is in Duluth October 17-20th. Chief Edlebeck and some of his volunteers will be attending the vendor conference on October 17th. At approximately 1pm that day members of the MSFCA will officially “handover the keys” to the Wausaukee Fire District so that they can bring their truck home for good.

Contacts:

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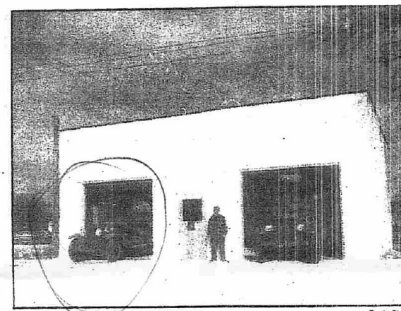
Wausaukee WI Fire Chief Eric Edlebeck

(715) 938-2105

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Photo of the truck as it looks today



The Wausaukee Fire Department building and engines are pictured in this photo taken in December 1955.

Image from 1955