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## Town's new aerial ladder truck arrives

by Carlye Malchuk  
Sep 19, 2007



Aerial Ladder Truck

The Town of Huntsville's shiny new aerial ladder fire truck is at the station and ready to roll.

The truck, with a ladder that can extend 100 feet in the air, was made by American LaFrance out of Pennsylvania.

The truck took about one year to build and cost the municipality just under one million dollars.

Assistant fire chief Terry Joiner says the old ladder truck was 27 years old and was not as safe to work on as the new one will be.

"(A firefighter) would be balancing on the end of a ladder 75 feet in the air," he said. "Now, in the new bucket we can put four firefighters, go 100 feet in the air, go right out to the edge of the roof and they're tethered in."



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The new truck also has double the water-pumping capacity as the old truck, he said.

Joiner explained the new truck will keep Huntsville's firefighters safe in many ways.

"New building construction, building codes and building practices have changed," he said. "Older buildings, they will burn for hours and still stand up. New buildings now, because construction materials have changed so much. . . there's a lot of glues and aluminums and stuff like this. Under high heat conditions these materials fall apart, so now you have the fear of building collapse."

Last weekend, Huntsville firefighters underwent training on the new truck, learning about what the truck can do and how to use it properly, as well as maintenance techniques and routines.

The truck will be operated only by Huntsville firefighters, but officers from Lake of Bays and Port Sydney will have an understanding of what the truck can do so that they know when to call Huntsville for assistance if they need it, explained Joiner.

The aerial ladder truck was bought as part of the fire department's truck replacement program.

A master plan, containing the program, lays out capital investments for the department for several years and how those items can be paid for on an annual basis.

Recently, the town approved a 2008 purchase of a new pumper/tanker truck, which will replace a 26-year-old vehicle currently in the fleet.

Approval of fire truck purchases are done about a year in advance because of the length of time required between ordering a truck and delivery.

The new truck is expected to cost about \$250,000. It and the new aerial truck are paid for out of the fire department's capital reserves, which are invested in every year from the tax levy, explained corporate services director Libby Boucher.

According to the master plan, in 2009 an expenditure for a training facility is scheduled to begin.

Joiner explained that firefighters need hands-on training to get an idea of what they will be faced with in the field.

Currently, the department uses old buildings about to be torn down to practise fighting fires, but Joiner says sooner or later, the donation of abandoned buildings may run out.

A training facility would be a concrete structure away from the fire hall where the department could safely light and extinguish fires without disrupting the public, he explained.

"So far it's been good (using abandoned buildings), but those days are going to run out soon," said Joiner. "If we had a guaranteed facility then we know we can do this."

For now, the department is busy getting acquainted with all the workings of the new truck.

As for the old ladder truck, it is now up for sale.

"It is fully operational, fully certified, fully tested and so it would do another municipality or small town. If that's their first ladder truck, it would make a startup truck for them," said Joiner.

If there is no interest from anyone in purchasing the truck, it will be sold for scrap, he said.

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