

West Sayville Fire Department, Inc.

80 MAIN STREET, WEST SAYVILLE, N.Y. 11796

Organized 1891

Chief.....Kelly M. Barnes
 1st Assistant Chief.....Joseph Schroeder
 2nd Assistant Chief.....Robert Doucet
 3rd Assistant Chief.....Lucus Domingo
 Recording Secty.....Larry Weiss
 Corresponding Secty.....Brian D'Onofrio
 Treasurer.....William Lang ..



Financial Secretary...Jeffrey Houghtalen
 Sergeant-at-Arms.....David Banks
 Drill Team Captain.....Gary A. Schaum
 Trustee.....Frank R. Miller, Jr.
 Trustee.....Richard Bronson
 Trustee.....William Golly
 Medical Officer....Jorge L. Gardyn, M.D.

Proudly serving the communities of West Sayville & Oakdale

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Immediate Release
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WEST SAYVILLE FIREFIGHTERS CELEBRATE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY OF OAKDALE FIRE STATION

West Sayville volunteer firefighters and their families gathered mid-afternoon on Saturday, October 2, 2010 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the West Sayville-Oakdale Fire District's Station 1 on Montauk Highway in Oakdale. Following a brief ceremony during which both Chief Kelly M. Barnes and Commissioner Thomas G. McNamara acknowledged the building's half-century of service to the community for fire protection as well as its role as a meeting place for local organizations and recognized the local resident firefighters who made it possible, the assemblage enjoyed a barbecue and musical entertainment that continued into the evening hours. But when all of the festivities subsided the fire station continued its vigilant watch over the hamlet of Oakdale as it had done for the past fifty years of its life.

The impetus for a firehouse in Oakdale arose in the late 1950s when rapid residential and commercial development in the area outpaced the ability for the fire department to provide timely responses due to the long distances that needed to be traveled from the sole firehouse in West Sayville. This caused fire insurance costs to escalate which, in turn, motivated the Oakdale Lions Club to vocalize the need for improved fire protection in the community and a push for Oakdale residents to join the West Sayville Fire Department. The recruitment effort increased the fire department rolls by thirty men.

The fire district responded to the concerns by first purchasing a plot of land on the north side of Montauk Highway just west of the Suffolk County Water Authority pump station at the cost of \$8,300.00 in June of 1958. Nearly eighteen months later construction of a 4,650 square foot, single story cement block building which would house up to four fire trucks in its two original bays was begun at a cost just over \$100,000.00. The design of the building was unique in that the west half of the firehouse could be transformed into an additional two apparatus bays if needed although the space was initially used for and continues to function as a meeting room, equipment room and part of a kitchen. Sandwiched between the two sides were a lobby, offices, a radio room, a janitor's closet and bathrooms. The new structure was the first substation to be built among the surrounding fire districts and afforded the opportunity for the fire department to place its apparatus and equipment so as not to be concentrated all in one building.

Construction on the original firehouse was substantially completed by late summer 1960 although not used until January 1961 and officially dedicated on May 13, 1961. A formal ceremony on that date at the site featured dedication remarks by then Islip Town Supervisor Thomas J. Harwood, the presentation of an American flag for the building by the Oakdale Lions Club and the handing over of the building keys to Chief John Van Wyen, Jr. by Commissioner Clarence Hoek, Sr. Once the ceremony was completed the new facility was opened to the public for inspection. The day's activities were then relocated to the West Sayville firehouse where refreshments and dancing followed.

Just before Station 1 was completed the fire department took steps to ensure it would be properly staffed. One of those steps was the formation of Oakdale Engine Company No. 1 with Kenneth M. Zegel serving as its first captain and Robert Suckow and C. Rodgers Broad as the initial lieutenants. Although the original Oakdale company, like the remainder of the companies formed at the time, was disbanded only a few years later, it did enjoy a membership of thirty plus members. Of those, only Richard "Dick" Wolfe, remains a member of the West Sayville Fire Department today. Dick is an Ex-Captain of a subsequent company formed at the Oakdale fire station, now has more than fifty years of service in the department and still is an active responder. Regretfully, Robert Suckow's opportunity to continue on in the department was eclipsed by a fatal heart attack following a brush fire on February 25, 1968. His supreme sacrifice in the line of duty is memorialized in the form of a bronze plaque adorning the wall of the station's meeting room.

Oakdale's fire station has endured several changes in its name, size, interior configuration and appearance over its fifty year lifespan. The building was originally called and bore the name Oakdale Station to the left of the front entrance and was dedicated as the Oakdale Fire Station. On March 10, 1964 the Board of Fire Commissioners designated Station No. 1 as the building's official name although it was commonly called the sub-station for many years after that and, more recently, just simply Station 1. Today, Oakdale Station One appears just above the front entrance door.

The building grew substantially in size in 1986 when two bays were added to the back of the building – one for storage purposes and the other as a mechanic's shop – and the east bay was extended out in the rear nearly twenty feet. All of this work came at a cost of over two and one-half times greater than the original price tag for the structure. Improvements were also made in 2000 when the men's and ladies bathrooms were completely renovated and a firefighter show-er was added and again in 2003 as the east bay was extended rearward for a second time to square off the back of the building and a facelift - sort to speak - with significant changes being made to the front façade. An automatic fire sprinkler system has also been installed in recent years that, in concert with the new automatic fire detection system, will help protect the building that protects the community. The last upgrade came in the form of a ten kilowatt photovoltaic system in 2008 which, according to the New York State Energy Research and Development Au-thority, made it the first solar powered firehouse in New York State. In the immediate future this system will be augmented by an additional ten kilowatts of photovoltaic capacity.

Station No. 1 has housed a variety of fire apparatus in its five decades of use starting with a 1947 Ward LaFrance pumper in its initial years that was joined by a 1954 Chevrolet brush truck in 1964. The first brand new truck to call the building home was a 1967 Seagrave 1,000 gpm engine. Since then a number of changes have occurred as apparatus has been put in and tak-en out of service. Today a visit to the building will reveal the apparatus room is completely full and being shared by a 1991 Ford/Becker brush truck, a 1994 Pierce Lance 1,500 gpm engine, a 2001 American LaFrance/Freightliner 93-foot telescopic elevating platform and a 2008 Ferrara Inferno 1,500 gpm engine

As the firefighters enjoyed the festivities of the fifty-year celebration its likely much more of the history and stories surrounding the West Sayville Fire Department's Station No. 1 at 1201 Montauk Highway in Oakdale were discussed and debated at length. But one thing is cer-tain; the building – despite its growth and changes in appearance – has withstood the challenges of time and served the communities of Oakdale and West Sayville admirably. If the first fifty years are any indication, the next fifty can only be better for this silent sentinel that comes to life every time its volunteer responders answer a call.



West Sayville Fire Department Station One as it appears today in its fiftieth year of existence.



West Sayville Fire Department Chief Kelly M. Barnes is joined at the podium by Chaplain George Munkenbeck, Assistant Chiefs Lucus Domingo and Robert Doucet and West Sayville-Oakdale Fire District Commissioners William J. Savino, Sr., Gary A. Schaum, James McNamara and Thomas G. McNamara (behind Chief Barnes) as he addresses the volunteer responders from Oakdale and West Sayville at the golden anniversary celebration for the department's Station One on Montauk Highway in Oakdale.