

Brevard firefighters receive steel beams from World Trade Center

7:38 AM, Jun. 14, 2011



Aaron Reilly, firefighter/paramedic and Brandon Bailey, firefighter/EMT pose with the section of an I-beam from the World Trade Center in New York City. / Tim Shortt, FLORIDA TODAY

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By the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Brevard County Fire-Rescue plans to have a monument built at Station 48 to honor the memory of the 343 firefighters who died at the World Trade Center.

The centerpiece will be a 76-inch, 1-ton steel beam from the towers.

But first, the department has to get the piece home from Hangar 17 at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York.

"We actually are responsible for delivery or have it picked up," Brevard Lt. Jeff Taylor said. "Right now we're looking at picking it up, but we haven't made the final determination."

Brevard County Fire-Rescue is one of 1,100 fire departments, police stations, military bases and other groups that have been granted a piece of the World Trade Center from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Forty-four agencies in Florida, including four in Brevard, were selected to receive pieces of trade center steel. The other three are Rockledge Fire Department, Indian Harbour Beach Volunteer Fire Department and the Brevard Museum of History and Natural Science.

The steel is free, but the agencies have to pay for shipping or pick them up and use them in a public display.

Some pieces are small enough to ship, but others would require a flatbed truck. The largest piece is 43 feet long, Port Authority spokesman Steve Coleman said.

"Some towns are having a little difficulty getting transportation," Coleman said. "That's the one expense communities have to cover."

Two weeks ago, a pickup from the Napa Valley in California picked up its steel, and towns from Ohio and Michigan have driven to New York, Coleman said. About 40 percent of the agencies have either picked their pieces up or had them shipped.

116 pounds

At 116 pounds, Rockledge Fire Department's steel was small enough to ship. It cost the city \$60, said Tim Matson, the emergency management services training chief, whose office has become its temporary home.

City officials are working toward a pedestal and monument in a park -- hopefully before 10th anniversary of 9/11. The most likely place will be the park at Fiske Boulevard and Leavitt Parkway, Mattson said.

"We want to put it someplace open where people can sit and reflect on what happened that day, and remember the public safety people that lost their lives," he said.

Two weeks ago, Indian Harbour Beach Volunteer Fire Department got a 102-pound piece of steel with one end still encased in concrete where it was anchored to a floor, Fire Chief Todd Scaldo said. The department wants to build a display in its memorial garden in time for the 10th anniversary, he said.

The Brevard Museum of History and Natural Science also has asked for a piece of tower steel.

After Brevard County Fire-Rescue gets its steel beam, it will be incorporated into a memorial planned for the front lawn of its new Viera station.

"Station 48 was chosen as the site for the memorial due to its central location in the county, because it is a flagship station for our department. . .," Taylor said. He said the "Park & Ride" location there also offers parking for future events.

Donated

While displays are in the works, a piece of the World Trade Center and a chunk of the Pentagon already are visiting at the Liberty Bell Museum in Melbourne.

Retired Los Angeles Police Officer Art Greci, who lives in Viera, donated the pieces.

"He just has it on loan to us," said Jack Hisey, director of Honor America, the nonprofit that operates the museum.

Hisey said a letter is being drafted for Honor America to request its own piece of steel.

"We would love to get our own," he said. "Of course we would."