

# Steel from World Trade Center towers arrives in Prince William

By [Jennifer Buske](#)

Some people cried and others looked on in awe as a truck carrying nearly 60,000 pounds of wreckage from the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center pulled up to the Prince William County government center Thursday.

The [four steel beams](#) arrived from New York City around 9 a.m., making a brief stop at the government center before heading to the Public Safety Training Center in Nokesville. Prince William police escorted the steel to the government center where almost 100 people waited for its arrival. Some, including local firefighters and elected officials, climbed aboard the flatbed truck to touch a piece of history.

“It was a moving experience for a lot of people,” said Prince William Board Chairman Corey A. Stewart (R-At Large). “This is a piece of American history. The citizens of Prince William County for generations to come will have an opportunity to reach out and touch the steel and reflect on how Sept. 11, 2001 changed our world forever.”

Stewart and five other county officials [piled](#) into a fire and rescue vehicle last month for a rare road trip to New York. Accompanied by members of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, the officials entered an abandoned hangar at John F. Kennedy International Airport and got a glimpse of the countless artifacts that remain from a day Americans will never forget.

Although planned for months, the trip came days after the death of Osama bin Laden, the leader of the al-Qaeda terrorist group that carried out the Sept. 11 attacks.

“When I went into the warehouse it was like someone had punched me in the gut,” Stewart said. “We all remember Sept. 11.”

Port Authority spokesman Steve Coleman said that members of an architectural firm went through the wreckage at Ground Zero and tagged the items they thought would best represent to future generations what happened on Sept. 11, 2001. The Port Authority received about 1,100 artifacts from the trade center to distribute across the country, Coleman said. Prince William made a request for steel beams in a letter sent to the Port Authority in August.

Prince William lost 22 residents, including a volunteer firefighter, in the attacks at the Pentagon and the trade center. County firefighter Jeff Simpson happened to be in New York that day and volunteered when the call for help went out. He was seen helping evacuate people from the scene. His body was found in the wreckage.

The four steel beams will be placed near Freedom Park at the government center. Originally created to honor those who have lost their lives defending the country, Freedom Park was expanded following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to recognize all who perished that day.

The park includes a reflecting pool in the shape of a pentagon and two fountains that represent the Twin Towers. Pennsylvania flagstone encircles the plaza to commemorate those killed on United Flight 93.

County officials want the public to share their ideas on how to display the steel. Ideally, Stewart said, the steel will stand vertical so it can be seen from the Prince William County Parkway.

“Anyone from around the world is welcome to submit their ideas on how to best display these artifacts,” Stewart said. “We’ll see what kind of ideas come in, but I’m confident we will ultimately have a striking, lasting memorial that will proudly honor the men and women who serve our nation and our communities.”