

Piece of World Trade Center Twin Towers arrives in Sherrill

Published: Friday, May 25, 2012

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SHERRILL -- New York's smallest city will forever be connected to its largest by a scarred, rusted 11-inch section of a steel I-beam.

The City of Sherrill has secured a World Trade Center artifact from a dwindling list of remnants from the site of what has been regarded as the worst terrorist attack on American soil.

A 113-pound steel I-beam, 19 inches wide and 12 inches tall, is now the city's possession and will, for the first time, publicly displayed at Monday's Memorial Day parade. It will then be on exhibit at City Hall until an already-formed ad hoc committee can work with residents to plan a more permanent location for the artifact, City Manager Bob Comis said.

Sherrill initially applied for ownership of a Twin Towers artifact after Resident Barry VanDreason expressed interest, spurred by the smallest city's flag tribute to the 10th anniversary of 9/11 last year. The city drafted a letter of application, working with state Senator Joseph Griffo's office, to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which controls and

distributes the remaining artifacts. In recent years it has set more stringent requirements, limiting recipients to communities, non-profit organizations, American Legion posts and fire associations in New York and New Jersey.

“There is a lot of demand,” Comis said. There are pieces in memorials across America, including one in Canastota.

About three months ago the city was notified that its application was successful. The city wasn’t charged for the artifact but it did have to pay for shipping, which cost about \$100 through UPS. As required by the Port Authority, the steel beam will be publicly displayed and won’t be altered in any way.

A 10-member committee has already met twice to start planning how to display the beam, which was cut from a much larger beam, Comis said. There’s no way to know what part of the buildings it is from, he said.

“It’s a piece of this country’s history,” Comis noted. “We were all impacted by the tragic events of that day. This is something from the largest city to the smallest city, a connection between the communities and connection between all Americans. We thought it would be fitting that we have and be able to display it.”

Sherrill Mayor Bill Vineall said the small section of beam will serve as a remembrance of 9/11. Vineall, also owner of Vineall Ambulance in Oneida, sent two ambulances and eight of EMTs, including his wife Renee, to Ground Zero the day after 9/11. The crews served a 24-hour shift before returning and another two crews were sent down to volunteer.

“It was a matter of helping when someone’s in need,” Vineall said. “That’s what it’s all about, I guess. When it comes down to it, everyone pitches in and you do what you have to do.”

Several Vineall crewmember are also Sherrill volunteer firefighters.

“That was a devastating time in our history and there were so many lives lost so to have a piece of it is a great remembrance of that I think,” Vineall said.

A meeting will be held June 11 at 7:30 p.m. at Sherrill City Hall to gather input from the public about where and how the artifact should be displayed. Comis said Memorial Park is one potential location.

The Sherrill Merchants Association will sell flags again this year for a 9/11 memorial display and proceeds will start a fund toward the erection of a home for the steel beam, Comis said.

The beam will ride on a platform in the bed of a DPW truck, driven by a firefighter, in the city’s Memorial Day Parade on Monday. The parade begins at 8:45 a.m. Members of the fire department will march alongside it. After the parade it will be placed on a lit pedestal in the lobby of City Hall.

“This is an opportunity in our community to memorialize that day and those times in our history,” Comis said.