

Fire Department to Dedicate Steel Beam from World Trade Center

Ceremony will take place at 8 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 11.

By Natalie Stevens
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On Sept. 11, 2001, nearly 3,000 people died during the attacks on the World Trade Center, Pentagon and in a rural field in Pennsylvania. Of that number, 343 were firefighters from New York City and the Port Authority.

Ten years from that date, the Oswego Fire Protection District will hold a dedication and remembrance ceremony to honor their fellow firefighters and all the others who lost their lives.

“We knew we wanted to have a memorial dedicated to the fallen firemen from New York in the lobby,” said Oswego Fire Chief Rick Neither. “It was just a matter of getting the memorial piece.”

According to Neitzer, the Oswego Fire Protection District contacted the New York Fire Department “years ago” to submit a request to obtain a piece of the World Trade Center — specifically a steel beam. They were directed to the New Jersey and New York Port Authority where they were put on a waiting list.

“Originally (the Port Authority) didn’t want to release any pieces of it,” said Neitzer. “But now they have. And the timing is kind of nice — just in time for the 10th anniversary.”

Lt. John Cornish said the steel beam is about 6 feet long. It’s also bent, which Neitzer said they requested.

“It tells more of a story than a perfectly straight piece,” said the fire chief. It “tugs more at the heartstrings.”

The dedication will take place at 8 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 11, at Fire Station One, 3511 Woolley Road.

“It’s a privilege to have something from the World Trade Center here — a privilege for the community,” said Cornish. “It’s something for us to always remember what occurred.”

Oswego Fire Protection District Station One will be the beam’s permanent home. The beam can be viewed during the station’s normal visiting hours. On Sept. 11, it will be open to the public until 2 p.m.

A special case is being commissioned to house the beam and it will be the prominent feature among other items from the fire station's history.

"The room displays a lot of our traditions and a lot of our history," Cornish said of the museum-like room at the station. Items inside include an old fire truck, hose cart, hoses and attachments.

While the display case still is being put together, Neitzer assured that it would be finished in time for the ceremony.

"This is going to be a beautiful memorial. I'm very honored to have it be a part of our community."