

## Our 1941 Parade Truck Renovation

Our parade truck restoration began several years prior to 2010 in a step by step process to turn an eyesore stored in an old garage into a nice commemorative vehicle that the firefighters of this Fire Company can be proud of.

Step one was to get the vehicle mechanically sound, beginning around 2005 we started a process that included winterizing at the end of each year, we also began changing simple out like spark plugs and wires, getting all the lights operational accompanied with an oil change and general lubrication as well as its first NYS inspection in over 10 years. We began taking the vehicle to parades that it had participated in years and years ago. A milestone was reached when it made the drive to the Erie County Fair Firemen's Day.

The following fall, estimates were received and presented to the membership for interior work which consisted mostly of seat recovering and a new headliner, but also added rubberized floor mats. Approval for that project was awarded to Bittermans Automotive on transit Rd. in East Amherst NY. A year later in February 2009, several collision Companies were contacted in an effort to see what it would cost to repaint the truck due to severe rust formation around the rear diamond plate.

Based upon the Board's decision and advice it was decided to refinish this truck the correct way instead of just doing a one-time spray over. At that point all quotes were modified to include complete removal of all four fenders, body strut side pieces such as hood and grill, doors and windshields. In June of 2010, the Board allocated funding from surplus funds to complete the project and based on bids and prior paint work,

decided to award Stevens Collision of Main Street in Clarence NY with the project.

The truck was used for the remainder of the parade season in 2009 and shortly after Labor Day the members of Harris Hill Fire Company worked together to slowly disassemble all the loose equipment from the truck, which included things such as lighting, ladders, mirrors and so on in an effort to preserve nostalgic pieces of the truck and to save money. Shortly after the truck was disassembled, it left in mid-October for the work to begin.

The committee worked throughout the winter with the Stevens collision on ensuring that the project was completed correctly the first time. During this time, hours were spent on EBay searching and bidding on items such as 6 volt lights etc. to preserve its antique look.

The initial date for completion was scheduled for early May 2010, however due to the fenders being removed and most of the truck being disassembled problems arose with new diamond plate that we had manufactured which prevented it from being finished on time.

The truck was received back partially unfinished in late June 2010, and several firefighters worked feverishly to mount all the loose equipment back into place.

Dimensions were taken for a cover which was purchased from Custom Canvas Mfg. on Seneca Street in Buffalo NY. The cover will be used to cover the truck at all times when it is not in use. It will prevent damage to the vehicle while it is stored inside the firehouse near our wash bay.

Due to the diamond plate not fitting correctly, it was apparent at this point that there was no chance of us making any parades until the Erie County Fair in early August. Work for lettering which included original encapsulated gold leaf painting was awarded to Mike Wittenrich of the Todd Hollow Studio in Hamburg NY. The truck was re-lettered identical to what the original pumper arrived with in 1941.

The Erie County Fair parade became our new goal for the debut of our restored truck.

The truck left one final touch up two weeks prior to Firemen's day and the diamond plate was painted and mounted. The best appearing antique judging at the Erie County Fair proved to be a disappointment as we only placed 4<sup>th</sup>, however at the end of the month we too back our pride when we placed 2<sup>nd</sup> for best appearing antique apparatus at the Clarence Center Labor Day Parade.

Without support from all the members, including several junior firefighters and Explorers, the final completion of the project would have not been possible. The board of directors were the heart and soul of this project could be completed.

Countless days were spent purchasing stainless steel hardware, polishing brass fire extinguishers, wiring all the lighting and making everything just right. A brass plaque was remade on the side of the truck and the year 2010 was added to the restoration list, as the vehicle was restored one prior time in 1976. The character of this truck is a true example of how well assembled the firefighters are in this company, it establishes an image of the pride that we take in our community and that image will represent us at local parades and shows for decades to come. Below is a list of names of firefighters who stand out with superior

effort in assisting the committee in any way possible with the project.

- Erie County Fire radio repair shop- radio repair and antenna install
- Bryan Lamphron
- Aaron Metzger
- Michael Hanley
- Corey Metzger
- Nick Radlich
- Dave Parezo
- Brandon Dettbarn
- All Board of Directors in 2009 and 2010 includes firematic and administrative sides
- John King
- Ron Hiegler- ladder restoration
- Main Transit Fire Dept.-ladder donation

