



St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

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NEWS RELEASE

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One-of-a-Kind Aerial Fire Truck Delivered to Akwesasne

Akwesasne N.Y. - On the sixty-year anniversary of the Hogsburg-Akwesasne Volunteer Fire Department (HAVFD), a crowd of active and retired firefighters accepted delivery of "Tower 94" ladder truck. Tuesday, February 11, 2014 marked a momentous day for the HAVFD. Tower 94 is a 2013 Rosenbauer Cobra aerial fire truck with a 101' rear-mount platform, with capabilities of accommodating the seven-story hotel at the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino. This life-saving rescue vehicle was purchased through financing made possible through the United States Department of Agriculture. Representatives Brian Murray and Renee Hotte, USDA, were thanked and recognized for their diligent efforts to ensure financing for Tower 94 was possible.

Tower 94, explained Jason McDonald, HAVFD Treasurer, is a one-of-a-kind prototype built to the HAVFD specifications. The total investment was \$974,070.00. The Akwesasne Mohawk Casino has committed payment of \$852,800 towards the USDA loan used to make the Tower 94 purchase. The gaming enterprise of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe is committed to the safety of Akwesasne, our surrounding communities and our guests who visit our incredible facility. Pat Bassney, General Manager of the gaming enterprise spoke to the firefighters at the event, "on behalf of the 950 employees and 1.5 million guests who enter the casino each year, we thank the Hogsburg-Akwesasne Volunteer Fire Department for their commitment to the safety of our facility. We are excited to be able to provide them funding to purchase the tools that they need, to protect the assets of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and handle fire emergencies as they arise."

Chief Ron LaFrance shared a personal reference to the commitment he has to supporting the HAVFD, and reflected on the many lives this brave group of men and women have impacted in our community. Chief LaFrance commented on the importance of the mutual aid agreements our first responders have in place with the surrounding fire departments. It is a testament to the significance of the investment in life-saving equipment. Additional equipment and tools were purchased in the amount of \$62,807, including jaws-of-life.

HAVFD Chief Derek Comins states how fortunate our fire department is to have the capacity to haul so many tools and six firefighters to the scene. "It's a big tool box hauling equipment that will save our friends, family and neighbors." Statistically, the aerial extension will not be deployed in ninety percent of all runs.

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Chief Beverly Cook spoke to the crowd of firefighters and community members present, sharing gratitude for the volunteerism that makes the HAVFD possible. She expressed a thank you to everyone who spends time away from their families to make Akwesasne a better community. In the audience was a special guest, ten-year old Tyren Square. Tyren was present because of his actions earlier this winter. Brought to the event by his proud family, Tyren was surprised to learn he was about to be recognized by the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council, the Intensive Preventive Program and the HAVFD.

In early January, Tyren looked out his grandmother's window and quickly responded to smoke coming out of a neighbor's home. He thought to ask his grandmother if the neighbors had a wood-stove, and then ran to bang on the door, waking a sleeping family whose home was on fire. The family escaped, and Akwesasne was spared familial loss, though the house was badly damaged. Tyren's courageous actions were recognized in front of a full house of firefighters, and Fire Chief Comins honored the young man with the first ride in Tower 94. Chief Cook told Tyren he did "what courageous people do, thinking of others and acting on their concerns." Racine Johnson, from the Tribe's Intensive Preventive Program felt compelled to honor his brave actions and beaded a medallion for him, which she graciously presented to the young hero.

The HAVFD, the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe extend sincere appreciation to our partners who have made it possible for our territory, our gaming enterprises and our surrounding counties to have state-of-the-art rescue equipment

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The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the Saint Regis Mohawk People.