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NEW FIRE TRUCK ARRIVES IN TWENTYNINE PALMS

The long-awaited Fire Truck 421 rolled into Twentynine Palms on Friday, March 4, accompanied by Mayor Jim Harris, who rode in the new engine all the way from the City of Ontario. The celebrated ladder truck is a 1997 Pierce 75-foot Aerial Quint, purchased for the Twentynine Palms Fire Department by the City of Twentynine Palms.

Approved by the City Council back in November 2009, the \$250,000 “used” truck hails from Kern County and was purchased through the South Coast Fire Equipment Company in Ontario. According to Twentynine Palms Fire Chief Jim Thompson, the truck was a perfect match. The Kern County Fire Department had traded it in because they needed a larger truck, with a ladder taller than 75 feet, “and the timing was such that we needed a larger one exactly that size,” he said. “It also helped that it was white, so that we could make it compatible with our other apparatus in the fleet and not have to spend the money for a paint job.”

The new truck arrived on March 4 with the fire department’s logo on the doors, a green stripe and a matching banner with “29 Palms Fire” on the 75-foot ladder.

“[The truck] is what we commonly refer to as a Quint,” Thompson said. “The common ones you see running around town have three elements: a pump, a water tank, and a hose. The Quint has all three, plus an aerial ladder and a large complement of ground ladders. It also has a 1500-gallon-per-minute pump and a 300-gallon water tank.”

When will the ladder truck be put into action? “It will take us a good month to get the radios installed, to mount equipment, and to train our personnel on the new engine, so it’s being stored at the Lear Avenue Fire Station right now while it’s being worked on,” he said, adding that, yes, there is plenty of room for it at the Adobe Road Fire Station, and it does fit. He measured it.

“With the growth of the City, this was a needed piece of equipment,” Thompson said, referring in part to his concern over the construction of larger hotels in recent years and being able to provide fire service to new development and to

facilities such as the Fairfield Marriott, the four-story Holiday Inn, and a proposed Hampton Inn & Suites.

Fire Chief Thompson said he planned to park the ladder truck in front of City Hall on Tuesday, March 8, so that City Council members and the public could see it before the City Council meeting at 6 p.m. Money for the fire truck purchase came from the City's General Fund, he added, and the funds were meant to be paid back by future Fire Impact Fees on new development, a subject that happened to be on the agenda for the March 8 City Council meeting.

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