

# Cumberland Continues its Investments in Rural Fire Departments



The Wallace Fire Department took delivery of a new fire truck from the Municipality of Cumberland and Fort Garry Fire Trucks of Winnipeg, Man., on Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025. (Darrell Cole Photo)

By Darrell Cole

The Wallace Fire Department has taken delivery of a new fire truck from the Municipality of Cumberland and Fort Garry Fire Trucks of Winnipeg, Man.

The new truck arrived at the Wallace fire station on Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025, where members had an opportunity to look at the truck and have training provided by Fort Garry on its use. Then that evening it had its first call to a structure fire.

This 2025 Freightliner will be Wallace Fire Department's first-out truck for everything and replaces a 1999 Sterling truck that will become the department's second-out vehicle.

The truck, that carries 800 imperial gallons of water and has a pump capacity of 1,040 imperial gallons per minute, will service the Wallace district and provide support for mutual aid calls. It's the latest investment by the municipal-

ity in its fire service.

A new pumper truck has been ordered for the Pugwash Fire Department, while a new rescue truck is also planned for the Tidnish Fire Department.

Combined with the new truck for Wallace, these pieces of apparatus represent \$2.5 million over two years. In addition to trucks, the municipality has invested \$250,000 in each of the last two years on replacing self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), as well as, a number of other shortcomings such as training and availability of The new SCBA will be standardized across all departments so that firefighters from one department will be familiar with the equipment from another.

Investment in new radios, pagers, bunker suits, hose testing equipment and gear washers as well as helmets, boots and other personal protective equipment amounts to more than \$250,000 per year.

A new fire station is also under construction in Springhill which will be a state of the art fire hall and training facility.

"The investment by the municipality in the fire service in Cumberland County represents more than 10 per cent of the municipal budget without counting the cost of the new fire station," Cole said. "Those are just the capital expenditures. The municipality also spends approximately \$2.7 million each year in operating and administrative costs for the 16 fire departments it operates."

These investments are a re-

flection and acknowledgment of the importance of the fire service to Cumberland County.

"Council identified early on that fire service is a priority. We did an extensive review of our fire service and received some great recommendations on training, equipment and locations," Mayor Rod Gilroy said.

The fire departments in Cumberland County are, along with policing and emergency management, an integral and important aspect of protective services, the mayor said, adding the role of the fire departments has evolved from mainly firefighting to being in many cases a primary medical first responder and attending motor vehicle accidents.

Indeed, as a percentage in Cumberland County, motor vehicle accidents and medical first response account for up to 70 per cent of all fire department calls, whereas fires are typically less than two per cent.

The municipality undertook an extensive review of the fire service a couple of years ago through a consulting firm that generated a 1,000-page report with more than 200 recommendations.

That report highlighted the aging equipment in most of the fire departments as well as a number of other shortcomings such as training and availability of new recruits.

The sixteen fire departments operated by the municipality are: Advocate, River Hebert, Joggins, FPW, Parrsboro, Southamptn, Springhill, Collingwood, Truemanville, Tidnish, Shinimicas, Leicester, Pugwash, Wallace, Wentworth and Westchester.



Members of the Wallace Fire Department are shown standing in front of the new fire truck with representatives from the municipality, including Coun. Kathy Redmond, protective services director Allen Cole and fire services manager Kendell Spence. (Darrell Cole Photo)

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