

Cunningham Fire Protection District Opens New Fire Station

Centennial, CO – The Cunningham Fire Protection District will have a grand opening ceremony on Friday August 11, 2006 to celebrate the completion of its newest fire station. The event will take place at 16756 East Smoky Hill Road. The fire station is located within the Piney Creek Shopping Center at the intersection of East Smoky Hill Road and South Buckley Road. The ceremony will begin at 4:00pm.

The grand opening will mark the completion of the station which began in October of 2005. Although the station is complete, response out of the station will not occur until early September after testing of the various systems in the building and final move-in is completed. Once the station is deemed ready, transition to responding from the new station from responding at the current station will only take a few hours to complete.

The new station will replace an existing station currently located at 5600 South Tower Road. The need to construct a new fire station was identified as part of a long range planning process that the Fire District implemented in 2005. A new station was necessary due to space limitations of the living quarters, design constraints, and age of the existing station. The existing station was constructed in 1979 and was originally designed as a volunteer fire station. A remodel of that station occurred in 1987 to provide living quarters for firefighters when the Fire District transitioned from volunteer staffing to career staffing.

The location of the new station was chosen based upon data collected from actual responses and identifying where calls for service occur. This data was viewed not only as a statistical tool to evaluate past responses, but also to predict future trends for service needs of the community with the goal of providing the best level of service coverage to the community. State of the art computer software and modeling programs were also used to select the location and ensure that the site was strategically compatible and would improve response times to all of the areas served by the station.

The parcel of land chosen for the new station is located within a community shopping center where a grocery store and several other businesses vital to the community are also located. The concept of placing a fire station within a community business center is a concept that is not common in the Western United States.

The design phase of the station took approximately two-years to complete and involved a design team that included firefighters working closely with the Architects to design a facility that will serve the needs of the of the community and responders for at least the next two decades. Input from the neighbors and the surrounding businesses located in the immediate area of the station was a vital component in the design of the facility. The opportunity for the neighbors and businesses in the area to voice concerns and provide input on design details and operational procedures related to the unique location of the new fire station was provided by meeting with stakeholders in the area on numerous occasions; and implementing measures to address the needs and concerns of the fire stations neighbors. The design and construction of the new facility has been accomplished on-time and under budget.

The design of the new facility also incorporates technological features that enhance the operation of the station. In addition to an advanced surveillance system and a voice over IP phone system, the station is equipped with a Smart Station™ system. The Smart Station™ system is the alerting system that alerts the station for an emergency response. Alerting the on-duty firefighters for a response is an area of fire station technology that has greatly improved over the past several years. Improvements with station alerting include such things as human voice pre-announcement; individual dorm remotes; and text-message indicators. These features are designed to reduce stress levels of responders that are inherent of being alerted for an emergency response and improve response times by providing clear transmission of alarm information and response details.

The current fire station that the new facility is replacing will now primarily be used for storage of reserve fire apparatus and equipment. The existing facility will also be maintained in a ready state; which will provide an additional fire station that can be activated and staffed if the need arises due to the occurrence of major storms or other large scale emergencies.

Cunningham Fire Rescue is a Fire Protection District serving approximately 67,000 citizens by providing fire and Emergency Medical Services to urban portions of central Unincorporated Arapahoe County which includes portions of the City of Centennial. Cunningham Fire provides these services from three fire stations, with 73 uniformed firefighters and an administrative staff of six. For more information on the District please visit our web-site at www.cfpd.org.