

Project History Here are some milestones of The New Jersey Fire Museum:

1960's

The Department of Environmental Protection began accepting donations of fire equipment and related material from Mr. Ernest N. Day of Dunellen, a collector of fire equipment and memorabilia. The material was to be preserved and exhibited in a 'future fire museum'. The division continued to accept donations until 1986, by which time Mr. Day had transferred essentially his entire collection. At that time, the appraised value of the collection was approximately \$1 million.

1970's

Governor William Cahill signed legislation authorizing the establishment of a State Fire Engine and Equipment Museum to house and display fire apparatus, equipment and memorabilia donated to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) by Mr. Ernest N. Day of Dunellen, New Jersey. The legislation also provided for an Advisory Commission to select an appropriate site for the museum. A nine-member commission was appointed by Governor Brendan Byrne in March 1975 and after considerable study, a site in Allaire State Park, in southeastern Monmouth County, was chosen as the site for the museum.

1980's

At the request of the Fire Safety Bureau of the Department of Community Affairs, a monument dedicated to New Jersey firefighters who have fallen in the line of duty was added to the museum plan and endorsed by the NJ State Firemen's Relief Association.

In 1983, the State appropriated \$1 million for the design and construction of the museum. The New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry (NJDPF) commissioned a design of the proposed facility. A private not-for-profit corporation, the New Jersey Fire Engine and Equipment Museum at Allaire, Inc. was established to operate and maintain the proposed museum.

In 1984, the division hired an architectural firm to design the proposed facility. During the design effort, it was determined that a suitable facility could not be built with the available funds. The project would be delayed until additional funds could be obtained. The non-profit corporation lobbied for the necessary funds and in 1988 Governor Kean signed into law an additional appropriation of \$2 million.

In 1989, the architectural firm of Kehrt Shatken Sharon of Princeton was hired to prepare plans and specifications for a larger facility with the additional appropriated funds.

1990's

The design of the new larger facility, a minimum of 18,000 square feet, proved to be too large to fit the original site within Allaire State Park. Rather than encroach on the Allaire Village National Register Historic District, the state DEP identified a 14 acre site across County Route 524 from Allaire State Park as a new location. The planning for the new facility was completed in 1991 with an estimated construction cost of \$2.5 million.

A contingency placed upon expenditure of the \$2 million required the non-profit corporation to demonstrate financial ability by commitments and other means that it could generate sufficient non-public funds to operate the museum. Lacking evidence of such commitments, the DEP Commissioner declined to certify the financial ability of the corporation. The funds subsequently lapsed into the General Treasury.

1999

After the project lay dormant for a time, the non-profit corporation was conveyed to a new Board of Directors. Executive and Volunteer committees were established. The project's scope was expanded to include the interactive fire safety learning experience. A Development Study was prepared and the fund-raising plan was expanded to include an appeal for both public and private support.

2000

Efforts to provide private funds began in June 2000. The membership campaign generates "grass roots" support from firefighters. Individuals and fire departments purchase memberships ranging from \$20 to \$500. Articles detailing our efforts appeared August 2000 in Fire Apparatus Journal, September 2000 in Firefighter News, and October 2000 in 1ST Responder.

Petitions generated thousands of signatures of support.

A website and a quarterly newsletter were established. The first newsletter was mailed in December 2000 to all our supporters, and to all that signed petitions. (The newsletter was mailed to all fire departments in February 2001.)

A professional fund raiser was hired to prepare a development study to update the museum strategic plan and fund raising plan.

2001

Legislative bills were not released for a floor vote during 2001. The events of September 11th, pushed the museum aside and subsequent state budget deficits further damaged prospects for financing. The non-profit corporation was designated an "Officially Recognized Friends Organization (ORFO)" by the state of New Jersey. The Fallen Firefighter's Memorial is given a more prominent place in all our presentations.

In December, members of the Volunteer Committee conducted an inventory visit at the storage site. We begin selling patches and T-shirts to assist with fundraising.

2002

In May, members of the Volunteer Committee performed maintenance at the storage site.

In June, Honorary Board invitations were sent out, inviting leaders of civic, political, and educational institutions to endorse our project.

In August, a new sign was erected at the site, courtesy of T&M Associates and the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

In October, we began the memorial paver campaign, providing the opportunity for personalized participation in the memorial. The pavers generate funds for construction of the memorial with paver prices ranging from \$100 to \$500.

The Museum formed a working relationship with the New Jersey State Safety Council to produce and distribute a family fire safety program to New Jersey residents.

Mr. Larry Petrillo, Director of the Division of Fire Safety, designated the Museum as the state-sanctioned agency to operate a family fire safety education center.

2003

We continued the *Membership Campaign* and selected a new operating title and website, "FireWorks-USA" to paint a broader picture of who and what we are.

An Honorary Board of Directors was established with Governor Thomas Kean as Chairman to cultivate interest and support for the project among leaders of NJ organizations and corporations sharing an interest in family fire safety education and an appreciation for the sacrifices of firefighters.

We were contacted by Richard Hunneman, a direct descendant of William Hunneman, builder of one of the pieces of apparatus. Richard found us thru our website.

We selected an experienced fund-raiser to organize the "*Light the Flame*" campaign but were unable to hire the fund-raiser. Later in the year, we laid the ground work for a capital fund drive, "*Spark the Flame*", targeting corporate sponsors.

In October, we held our first Family Fire Safety Muster at Allaire State Park.

2004

The Board of Directors shifted the target for construction funding to corporate sponsorship. Although the Center was originally conceived as a state-funded project to be operated by a non-profit, it was now realized that state funding was unlikely. In order to move forward, the project would promote the interactive educational aspects over the museum element to attract corporate sponsorship. Further changes in organizational title and image may be necessary to foster non-governmental investment.

In early May, in cooperation with the National Park Service and the Sandy Hook Foundation, the volunteer committee placed a hose reel and a chemical cart on display at the historic fire station at Fort Hancock, Sandy Hook.

New members named to the Board of Directors include: Helen Burns, Robert Burns, Roy Cross, Roger Demareski, David W. Horsnall, David Napier, Tim Smith, Robert Kane, and Whitey Swartz.

2005

Helen Burns took on the job of membership secretary during August, and in November Fred Richart became treasurer. We expanded the Honorary Board of Directors and reached out for corporate support beginning with Fire Service vendors.

We attended the Spirit of the Jerseys History Fair at Washington Crossing State Park, and displayed the 1898 Simpson double deck engine from the state owned Ernie Day collection. The Volunteer Committee performed maintenance on the Day collection, and an expert in the subject matter appraised the Day collection.

Several board members were involved in collecting historic materials from the Ernie Day estate.

In October, our second Family Fire Safety Muster at Allaire State Park was rained out. We decided the muster would become an annual event.

We began reviewing all expenses. Letters were sent to those on the mailing list that had signed petitions, notifying them they would be dropped if they did not join as members. The number of newsletters sent out was reduced from 3600 to 1420, resulting in a significant savings per mailing. Credit card processing was discontinued, due to the monthly costs.

2006

Cathy Coursen was introduced as Chairperson for the NJ Fallen Firefighter's Memorial.

The Trenton piece was loaned to the Meredith Havens Fire Museum in Trenton. The Rumsey was displayed at the State History Fair in May, at Washington Crossing State Park.

We changed the paver material from clay brick to granite pavers, and had two sample pavers made.

To ensure our newsletters were being delivered, we asked our mailing house to verify the names and addresses in our mailing list. Their report indicated nearly one third of our list was invalid. Various sources were used to determine correct addresses prior to mailing out further newsletters.

We began sending out annual dues notices to all members, as well as the board of directors.

2007

In January, Dale Bennett and Dave C. Horsnall joined the Board. Several Board members attended a press event at the Meredith Havens Fire Museum in Trenton, for the unveiling of the Trenton piece.

During the year, the museum and memorial project experienced slow but steady growth. We solidified our organization and our phase one business plan. Memorial fundraising events were held at the Newark Bears, Camden Riversharks, and at Monmouth Park Racetrack.

We began using the more definitive title "NJ Fire Museum and Fallen Firefighter's Memorial" and expanded our memorial benefit activities.

In November, we lost our free storage building in Tinton Falls, and moved all our apparatus to NY with help from Bill Duckworth at Red Bank Recycling.

2008

We began using two new websites to reflect our new titles: www.njfallenfirefightersmemorial.org, and www.njfiremuseum.org, and redesigned our paver acknowledgement certificates. Building our new image, we also purchased tables, a tent, banners for the tent, and indoor banners for expo use. The 1960 Mack (ex-Somerville) has been licensed, registered, and insured to promote our project.

Memorial fundraising events were held at the Nets, Newark Bears, Phillies, and Somerset Patriots. Donations and T-shirt sales at Wildwood exceeded \$10,000. T-shirts were also sold at several different musters and flea markets throughout the year.

We signed up at www.ShopForMuseums.com to help with fundraising.

At the current time:

The Ernest Day collection remains in storage on state property in Monmouth County. Since the DEP has declined further donations of apparatus for the collection, the non-profit accepted donations of apparatus and equipment that would be otherwise lost to the future museum. The non-profit collection is stored in donated space, and further donations will most likely be declined due to storage limitations. The various fundraising campaigns cover minor operating costs of the non-profit, primarily the newsletter, and provide a modest growing reserve for construction.

Legislature

Efforts to provide public funds have been made in each legislature since 2000. In 2002, legislation for \$7 million in capital construction came close to passage. In 2005 legislation for \$2 million for Phase One construction was submitted but not passed. In 2006, the same legislation was re-introduced but again it was not passed. Also in 2006, legislation was introduced to create special fallen firefighter license plates. To date, none of the legislative efforts have been enacted to law.