



Print Version

Print Page

FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2007 4:43 PM EST

Fire station planned as Claymont continues turnaround

Demolition paved the way for a new and completely updated \$3.9 million Claymont Fire Co. station, replacing an antiquated structure with the latest in fire fighting technology. The expanded new station will include numerous updates and upgrades in order to better serve the local community.

Over 1/3 of the old station has already fallen to the wrecking ball, with completion slated for later in the week. Once demolition of the old structure is complete, the new station will be situated on the existing site, a familiar landmark to longtime residents of northern New Castle County.

The original firehouse was built by the company's membership with the help of community volunteers over a period of several years, from 1952 to 1954. "Although high-tech for the 1950's, the systems -- such as electrical, plumbing, and air conditioning -- were all hopelessly outdated," says Tom DiChristifaro, president of the Claymont Fire Company. "In addition, the old building was not equipped with sprinklers or wired for modern technology."

The new \$3.9 million dollar facility will have the latest in fire station technology and will move the volunteer organization into the 21st century. "The feed back we've received has been overwhelmingly positive," says DiChristifaro. "Our building has served the community well for over fifty years, but with many new residents and business coming to Claymont, we need to meet a new challenge."

The construction of the new station will increase the fire company's available space to over 37,000 square feet, a dramatic increase over the existing 25,000 square feet. The station will also house eight apparatus bays and will increase the equipment storage for the fire company's numerous vehicles. The extensive unit includes four large engines, one rescue truck, one ladder truck, two ambulances, and two special operations units for emergencies (such as building collapses), as well as a multitude of smaller vehicles.

In addition, a second floor community room will be available to local civic and service organizations for meetings and events. This community room, as well as the rest of the station, will provide important handicapped access and will be constructed according to stringent ADA requirements.

As well, the new station will provide dormitory space, which was not available in the old station due to space constraints. "This is an important addition, because it provides the community with a much quicker response to emergencies," says DiChristifaro. "Six members will receive free room and board in exchange for on-call volunteering."

The all-volunteer company boasts 120 members, with approximately 50 active at any

one time. "We have a diverse make-up," says DiChristifaro. "Active members range in age from 16 to 88. And we are also fortunate to count many talented women among our members."

Those members were instrumental in making the construction project a reality.

In addition to state and county funds, the company undertook the fundraising efforts necessary to complete a project of this size.

"My hat is off to the members of the Claymont Fire Company who have worked hard to get the financing for this new firehouse. It will be one of the showpieces of Claymont's Renaissance," says Councilman John Cartier (D) Brandywine - East.

The construction is estimated for completion in approximately two years with a completion date of June 2008 expected.

[Close Window](#)