

# Claymont building new firehouse

## Company adjusts to continuing services without old station

By TERRI SANGINITI, The News Journal  
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A \$7,500 grant to buy two new air packs and a semiautomated external defibrillator for Claymont firefighters came as a welcome gift to Station 13.

But instead of presenting the items inside a fire hall, Jim Gow, Fireman's Fund Insurance Co. territory executive, and John Curtis, CEO of Commerce Banc Insurance Services, had to do it in the fire company's banquet hall.

That's because the 53-year-old firehouse was demolished earlier this month to make way for a new state-of-the-art structure to go up on the site of the former station at 3223 Philadelphia Pike.

Construction of the \$5.6 million Station 13 -- to be outfitted with eight bays, instead of the five in the old fire station -- is expected to be completed by next January, the company's past president Charles Emerson said.

In the meantime, the fire company's office has been relocated to the storage area of the company's banquet hall, which has been temporarily out of business since June, and most of the company's bright-yellow fire trucks are sheltered inside a vinyl, hangar-like structure in the rear parking lot.

The remainder of the equipment is stored at Substation 31, at Marsh and Naamans roads.

Remaining in the community throughout the construction process, although it poses challenges, enables fire company personnel to maintain their fire, rescue and medical response services to the more than 15,000 residents they serve within a 9-square-mile area, officials said.

Emerson said firefighters last year responded to 1,218 fire and rescue calls.

In presenting the grant check to Claymont Fire Chief Mark Harris on Wednesday, Curtis said it was rewarding for his company to be able to give back to the community.

"Today, we're not only able to give back to the Claymont Fire Company directly," he said, "but through this purchase of new equipment we'll be able to give back to all the members of the Claymont community."

The grant helped offset the purchase of 45 new air packs to replace outdated and broken equipment.

The company now also has 14 upgraded defibrillators that can be used on children as well as adults.

"It's fairly new technology and it was a definite help to be able to purchase that equipment," former Chief Eric Haley said. "It allows us to defibrillate small children if needed."

"Hopefully, that need will never arise that we have to shock a child," he added, "but if it does, we'll be able to provide that service to the community."



An architect's rendering depicts the Claymont Fire Company's new Station 13. The \$5.6 million, state-of-the-art firehouse, to be completed by next January, will be outfitted with eight bays, instead of the five in the old fire station. Courtesy of Claymont Fire Company