

New Six Nations Fire Hall construction begins

By Jim Windle

OHSWEKEN – Ground breaking for the new Six Nations Fire Hall took place Thursday morning at the site where the construction is to soon begin. The new Fire Hall will be in the same location as the old one on Veterans Lane in downtown Ohsweken.

The former building that served the Six Nations community was built almost 40 years ago but in recent years was condemned due to an infestation of mold throughout the building making it unsafe to work in. That building was torn down along with the old Police station, which was connected to it, leaving no central Fire Hall, only satellite stations located around the community, and a temporary office located at Public Works.

Knowing the situation, Grand River Enterprises made a huge \$2 million donation to go towards the new Fire Hall. The Elected Council chipped in with \$600,000 to build the site at a cost of \$2.6 million.

A target date for completion of the new Hall is set for this coming fall.

Many thanks were given by all speakers to the GRE donation, which made the new facility possible. GRE has given several mil-

lions back into the Six Nations over the years with equipment donations to the Six Nations Police Services and many other community needs, not counting the millions of dollars in grants given to individuals and sports teams through the Dreamcatcher Fund.

Elected Chief Ava Hill thanked former Fire Chief Mike Seth and the new Chief Matthew Miller for fighting for Six Nations Fire Services for years.

She reminded the community that Friday, May 1st, is the province wide First Responders Day.

"Often we don't give as much recognition to our fire, police and ambulance services as we should," said Chief Hill. "We are going to have a breakfast at the community hall from 9-11, and honour our first responders. Council will serve the breakfast and all community members are invited."

She also revealed a fundraising event with proceeds to go towards these very important services.

"We all know there is not enough money for our Fire Services and we as community need to come together and that's why the GRE donation was so important," she said. "We are looking at a number of fundraising events. One

event we'd like to start this year is a Firemens' Ball on November 19th.

Former Fire Chief Mike Seth was on hand to see the culmination of years of lobbying council for a new fire station as well. He has since moved on to take a position as Fire Chief in Thorold.

"It's good to see Council is carrying on well after I left to help get this project through," said Seth. "It's a very important step in the growth of this community.

"In a movie they said 'if you build it they will come,' and over the last few years there has been a lot of other things the Council has been investing in, like the water plant and the police station and now the fire station. The more infrastructure

that is being developed the more you are going to be seeing people come to the community. It is an excellent step forward and I hope to be here for the grand opening as well."

New fire chief Matt Miller will be reaping the rewards as the new Six Nations Fire Chief after several years as a Six Nations firefighter.

"I don't even know where to begin with the level of excitement that is involved with this project and moving it forward," he said. "The donation from GRE and the work of the Elected Band Council will impact our fire services for generations to come.



Pictured here are members for the Six Nations Fire Services along with Elected Chief Ava Hill, New Fire Chief Matthew Miller, outgoing Chief Michael Seth, who fought long and hard for the new Hall. PHOTO BY JIM WINDLE