

Saturday's fire hall re-naming will honour late Chief Laing



Aurora fire station 4-5 will be dedicated Saturday in honour of late fire chief Ian Laing, who died suddenly last November at the age of 71.

Station 4-5, located on Earl Stewart Drive near St. John's Sideroad, will be named ?Ian Laing Headquarters? in honour of the man who dedicated 48 years of his life to public service.

The tribute will be a poignant moment amid a day of fun as the Central York Fire Services (CYFS) hosts its annual Open House. The event is a chance for members of the public to get to know their local firefighters and fire educators, learn more about simple steps people can take to prevent fires at home, and take part in interactive fire safety activities and demonstrations.

The event will include coffee and donuts, a barbecue featuring hot dogs, the Tim Hortons Express Train, arts and crafts, an appearance by Sparky the Fire Dog, and much more.

The open house runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., with live firefighter demonstrations at 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The tribute to Laing at the Open House is fitting as it was always a highlight on the Chief's annual calendar, with the completion of Station 4-5 being a particularly proud milestone in his long career.

?Ian Laing took on the leadership role of Fire Chief at CYFS in 2010 after working his way through the ranks from firefighter to Assistant Deputy Chief at Mississauga Fire (from 1975 to 2009),? said the CYFS. ?In addition to Fire Chief, Laing was the Community Emergency Management Coordinator from 2010-2016 for the Towns of Aurora and Newmarket. He was then appointed Regional Fire Coordinator.

?For more than 20 years, Central York Fire Services has been providing fire protection, prevention and emergency services in Newmarket and Aurora. This event marks the two-year anniversary of the opening of Fire Station 4-5, which houses two fire crews, the administrative offices and CYFS' Training Division. This is the first fire station jointly built by the Town of Aurora and the Town of Newmarket since the Towns consolidated their fire services in 2002.?

The decision to dedicate Station 4-5 was announced by Mayor Tom Mrakas last December at Laing's funeral service, a tribute held at Newmarket's Ray Twinney Complex attended by Ontario Premier Doug Ford and a host of other dignitaries.

?In his years with the CYFS, (Laing) accomplished so much, strengthening the fire service and helping solidify it as the world-class

organization it is today,? said Mayor Mrakas at the time, joined on at the dais by Newmarket Mayor John Taylor. ?As many of us know, one of his proudest moments was the opening of Fire Station 4 ? 5 in Aurora, the first jointly built fire station by Aurora and Newmarket.

?Station 4 ? 5 will officially be named after Chief Laing to honour the lasting contributions he made to our communities. Of course, we all know that educating and mentoring both new and veteran members of the fire service was something Chief Laing was incredibly passionate about as well. His courage and work ethic inspired so many. His boundless knowledge of the profession helped prepare hundreds of firefighters to safely perform their duties. He embodied that selfless spirit that all members of the fire service have.?

By Brock Weir