

Fire station marks its 60th anniversary

By Mark Pavilons

King Township has a long history of serving and protecting its residents.

The local firefighters are a dedicated bunch of local heroes. They're inviting the public to help them celebrate the 60th anniversary of the King City Fire Station.

The open house will be held Nov. 1, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the station on King Road in King City.

Driving around King City, you'll notice streets that have the names Walkington, Way, Scott Crescent, Crossley Court, McBride Crescent, Chuck Ormsby Crescent, Austin Rumble Court, Langdon Drive, Dennis Drive and Stan Roots Street. They may not mean much to many of us, but in fact many of those names honour the pioneers who developed the small hamlet of Springhill into our present day village of King City.

Many of these names belong to the first firefighters of King City. Others belong to the residents who were strong supporters of the firefighters.

Sixty years ago there was no such thing as a fire department in King City. Fire protection for the village was provided by the Town of Aurora.

A group of local businessmen petitioned the township and were authorized to form a fire department. One fire truck, a 1940 pumper with a front mount pump, was procured and housed at the rear of Frank Unterlander's Service Centre on Keele Street just south of the King Road. This accommodation was necessary because there was no fire station in the town.

The property for the new fire station was donated by Pat McBride. The town built the fire station for King City at the corner of Keele Street and Elizabeth Grove taking about 6 to 8 months. The original building was shared by the water works and hydro, both of which were run locally at that time.

The small, hardy group of volunteers held many fundraisers in order to purchase equipment from [PPE equipment suppliers](#), hoses and turnout gear for the firemen. The firefighters held dances, turkey shoots, card nights, horseshoe tournaments, dinners, etc. The wives and families of the firefighters worked tirelessly in support of their husbands' passion, the fire department and the safety of King City residents. These functions were widely supported by the residents.

Later on, the fire Department acquired a 1955 pumper and a tanker truck to meet the needs of the growing town.

When regional government was introduced in 1972, the utilities were taken over regionally or provincially and the fire department became the sole occupant of the fire station. The town was growing and the need for more equipment became quite obvious.

The fire department inherited a van from the hydro operation and converted it into a rescue van for auto accidents and medical calls. Harold Kirby was one of those cornerstones of King City. He was very active in the community as well as the fire department. You don't get a nickname like "King" Kirby by sitting home and watching TV. Kirby Sideroad is named for the Kirby family.

The story goes the local Sears delivery man gave the road that name and it stuck. The Kirby homestead is on the north side of Kirby Road just west of the driving range which is located to the west of Keele Street.

Harold's son Wayne was also a member of the King City fire department as were the sons of many of the early members.

That tradition continues to this date in all three of King's stations. Sons love what their dads do and dads love to see their sons enjoying the same passions in the fire service.

In August of 1999, King Fire and Emergency Services was formed by joining the fire departments of King City, Schomberg and Nobleton. Plans were under way at that time to construct a new fire station in King City. That fire station, located at 2045 King Road was officially opened on Oct. 13, 2001.

The volume of calls has risen over the years requiring the purchase of more sophisticated equipment. In addition, the level of training has increased to the point where King Fire and Emergency Services now provide a wide variety of services (no longer just fire calls).

Your fire department meets and trains to a high standard for structural firefighting operations. Other services include and are not limited to; emergency medical response, auto extrication for motor vehicle collisions, trench rescue, ice-water rescue, and carbon monoxide incidents. In short, if there is an emergency in your village you will likely see a King Fire and Emergency response to it. Public education has proven to be an integral part of what the Fire Service provides for the public. Your fire department is very active in the Township with Public Education and Fire Prevention.

Currently, fire station in King City houses one rescue pumper, one pumper, one aerial device, two tankers, and two utility vehicles. The personal protective equipment ([PPE](#)) the firefighters wear is top of the line. The first aid and rescue equipment is top grade. The volume of training that the fire department undertakes is impressive. The dedication, the pride, and the professionalism in the firefighters is priceless!

The fire service has come a long way in King City. Fire station alumni and all residents of King Township are invited to attend the Nov. 1 open house.

Under the direction of Fire Chief James Wall, King Fire and Emergency Services protects an area of approximately 333 square kilometers (129 square miles) and a population of 21,000 residents. The municipality is served by three fire stations and a complement of 120 dedicated volunteer firefighters.

With a submission from Captain Gerry Binsfeld, King Fire & Emergency Services.