

# Museum aims to bring city's fire fighting history back to life

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 By Frank Mathie

February 7, 2006 (WLS) -- The history of the Chicago Fire Department goes all the way back to 1832. That's when the first Chicago fire fighting company was formed. It's 174 years of fighting fires and saving lives. Now a small group is trying to bring some of that history back to life.

This is one of those top secret location stories. For security reasons we can only say it takes place in a North Side warehouse. this collection of wonderful old fire trucks and related apparatus. A group of retired firefighters

and fire buffs is putting together this Fire Museum of Greater Chicago.

"We've gathered or purchased or had donated to us a number of old apparatus that has a lot of history behind it, and we're in the process of rehabbing, getting them running, so we can take them out on public display," said Andy O'Donnell, Fire Museum of Greater Chicago treasurer.

This is their latest acquisition, a high pressure Chicago Fire Department pumper that was found recently near Indianapolis.

"This originally was purchased by the city in 1918 to replace the horses on the hook and ladder," said Frank McMenamin, Fire Museum of Greater Chicago vice president.

The museum has pictures of what it looked like then when it pulled the ladders and supplied the water pressure, just one part of our city's rich fire department history that is much more than the just great Chicago fire.

"The sliding pole was invented in Chicago. It was used universally in fire departments. The snorkel was invented here in Chicago. All this history needs to be preserved. We're one of the only cities that doesn't have a fire museum," said McMenamin.

The museum has 15 vehicles stored in a few secret different locations. so they have the apparatus, but they still need something else.

"The biggest thing we need is money and manpower. We have a good group of people but it costs a lot of money to restore apparatus. We're well on our way," said O'Donnell.

They're on their way, but they still have to light some fires in investors' hearts.

You can see the ABC7 report by clicking on the video icon above. You will need Windows Media Player 9 or higher to view this video. You can get it FREE by clicking here. **NOTE: Video clips will only be available for 5-days from the date they were created. ALSO: Video clips will play in a separate window on Mac OS X machines, you may also see a video help screen.**

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