

# CITY OF NEW BRITAIN



Office of the Mayor

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Officials dedicate new \$1.2 million Ladder Truck**

**NEW BRITAIN**—Mayor Erin E. Stewart, Fire Chief Thomas Ronalter, Rep. Elizabeth Esty, and other officials dedicated the city's newest fire truck on Monday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> during a dedication ceremony at the Fire Department's Headquarters on Beaver Street.

The \$1.2 million fire truck will phase out a reserve ladder truck that dates to 1981 and move a fire truck from 1991 to a reserve status—meaning it will be used if the main apparatus is out of service for repairs. The new Ladder 1 responds to emergencies in all areas of the city as needed.

The last time the city purchased a fire truck was in 2008.

“In New Britain, we are extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated group of firefighters who have taken the oath to enter harm's way in order to keep our City safe,” said Mayor Erin E. Stewart. “It is only deserving then that these brave men and women have access to the safest, most reliable, and most advanced firefighting equipment that's available. When an emergency strikes, it is essential that our firefighters can act with precision and this state of the art ladder truck is a tool to help with doing just that.”

The fire truck cost \$1.2 million, with 80 percent funding (\$965,000) coming from the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency, while the remaining portion (\$241,000) came from the city.

The grant process was extremely competitive as more than 4,000 requests were submitted for fire equipment and only several hundred ultimately received funding. The city of New Britain was one of the largest federal grant recipients in New England at nearly \$1 million.

“Our New Britain firefighters do an excellent job in fighting fires and protecting our citizens,” said Chief Thomas Ronalter. “This new ladder truck will help them do that. However, the best way to avoid a fire is prevention.”

The Fire Department wants to once again remind residents to be vigilant this winter season—a time that traditionally sees a spike in fires. The top three causes are:

- Improperly discarded cigarettes
- Unattended candles
- Cooking accidents

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With the holiday season and colder weather now here, decorations, Christmas trees, and space heaters also add to the risk of fires. Helpful tips to keep your family safe include:

- Turn space heaters off at night
- Keep personal items at least three feet away from any heating device
- Be aware of any frayed wires when putting up Christmas lights
- Use battery operated candles
- Don't leave the kitchen while you are cooking
- Make sure you have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors

“Our residents are reminded to follow these safety precautions to prevent home fires,” said Chief Ronalter. “Everyone should also make sure to have working smoke alarms on each floor and know 2 ways out from your home. Installing working smoke alarms for our loved ones is one of the best holiday gifts available.”

In recent weeks, the City has experienced several major residential fires:

- On Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> an accidental fire occurred at 756 East St., killing Cade Townsend IV, age 11.
- On Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> a fire occurred at 412 South Main St., displacing 11 people. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.
- On Nov. 27<sup>th</sup> a fire occurred at 2134 Stanley St., resulting in serious burns for the occupant. The cause of the fire was accidental and due to an unattended candle.
- On Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> an accidental fire occurred at a single story house at 50 Schultz St. due to improperly discarded smoking materials, killing Michael P. Tocoinis, age 56.

For additional details on the new fire truck contact Fire Chief Thomas Ronalter at 860-826-4301.

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