

Size, location of substations praised

26 Feb 2010 — Bucks County Courier Times

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A new building allows fire trucks and ambulances to respond to calls in the township's northern end much quicker.

Saving time is everything for emergency responders, so it's no surprise to see that members of the Langhorne-Middletown Fire Company and Penn-del-Middletown Emergency Squad are so happy about the opening of their new building.

The 12,758-square-foot structure, called the North Station, sits on a 3-acre piece of the township-owned Styer property on Langhorne-Yardley Road in the northern part of Middletown. One side of the building houses a 7,158-square-foot substation for the fire company and the other side a 5,600 square-foot substation for the emergency squad.

Chiefs at both said the new substations have significantly improved their response times in that end of Middletown.

"We haven't done a study on our response times, but before, we were responding to calls in the northern end from our main station in Langhorne, which is three miles farther away," said Langhorne-Middletown Chief Frank Farry, who's also a state representative.

"We now have an engine truck stationed a quarter-mile away from the Maple Point development as compared to 3 1/4 miles away. That's especially important during rush hours, when you have congested roadways up in the northern end and no shoulders on some of the roads so our trucks can get by," Farry added. "Our goal is always to provide the best public safety we can and this new substation certainly enhances that."

The \$2.79 million substations building was paid for by Middletown out of a \$10 million bond issue approved by the township supervisors in 2006. The emergency squad had already been operating from the site in a temporary structure for about five years and moved into the permanent building in November. It was joined by the fire company earlier this month. Penn-del-Middletown has two ambulances at the North Station and two members there at all times, said emergency squad Chief Brent McLaughlin.

Before setting up operations on the Styer property, emergency squad members were responding to calls in the northern end from three miles farther away, at their main station on Business Route 1 in Middletown.

"We've reduced our response times up in this end from an average of around six to seven minutes down to around three to four minutes," McLaughlin said. "It's been a long time coming, so it's nice to see this facility finally done. We had been trying since about 1996 to get a North Station and went through several different possible sites with the township before finally settling on this one."

The emergency squad side of the two-story substations building has a garage for the vehicles, a relaxation room with a television for down time, a full kitchen, men's and women's bunkrooms and bathrooms with showers, a training room, conference room, offices and other amenities.

On the fire company side is a garage for the trucks, men's and women's bunkrooms and bathrooms with showers, a kitchen, conference room, training room, offices and other rooms.

"It's a beautiful facility and was built with an eye toward the future," said Charlie Berk, a 35-year member of the Langhorne-Middletown Fire Company and also a member of the company's board of trustees. "It's so spacious. We'll be growing into it for years."

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