

IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

The Story of the New Indian Hill Fire Station

As Indian Hill has grown in the 21st century, the needs of the community have changed. Fire departments have expanded roles in recent decades, with more emphasis on emergency medical care and disastrous situations. The firehouse at 6475 Drake Road was built in the 1940s, and renovations occurred in 1983 and 1994. In the Eighties, bays were added, the Chief's office was relocated, a small conference room was constructed, and living quarters were built upstairs. The Nineties refurbishing included a larger conference/training room, increased administrative offices, a more spacious living area for firefighters, and additional sleeping quarters and parking spots.

By 2012, the Madeira-Indian Hill Joint Fire District identified specific needs for the two aging stations in Madeira and Indian Hill. Studies were conducted which pinpointed problems at both structures. The Indian Hill Building had insufficient heating, air conditioning and plumbing systems. Lighting was obsolete, and the dormitory area and living space needed updating. There was no locker room or storage room for records. And the roof leaked. Also, the width of the bay doors barely accommodated modern fire trucks. The Board of the MIHJFD investigated options for the two firehouses, and whether they should be renovated, rebuilt, or scrapped for a new central firehouse. A recommendation was made to construct two new stations on the existing sites at a cost of about \$7,500,000. After local newspapers publicized the studies and recommendations, Harold and Margaret Thomas made an extraordinarily large donation to fund both new buildings.



**Firehouse Entrance on
Shawnee Run Rd.**



**Emergency Vehicle Bay Doors
Exiting to Drake Rd.**

MSA Architects and Oswald Co. were engaged for plans and construction. After the Madeira firehouse was completed, work on the Indian Hill station started in July 2016. The old building was demolished, and the site was cleared and leveled. The cupola from the old station was saved and donated to a Village resident, assuring that a local historical fixture would be preserved. An underground run off retention system was installed. Footers and concrete pads followed, and then the structural elements and roof were erected. Electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems were installed. The process continued as the interior and exterior spaces were built to plan.

The new station has a public front entrance located on Shawnee Run Road (north side), and the emergency vehicles will exit the bay door on Drake Road (east side). This design reflects a change from the old station when the public entered on the south side, and the fire trucks emerged from the north side. The new station is one story with a mezzanine; the old one was two stories. The station contains areas for administrative work, classroom space, a firefighter kitchen/living space and sleeping quarters as well as larger bays to accommodate newer model fire trucks and modern day ambulances. Additionally there are areas for logistics, meetings, fitness, and hose-drying. Another focal point is a training tower which is adjacent to Drake Park. The building complements the Village's residential character as well as the architecture of the Village Administration Office across the street. The classic architecture, gabled roof with turret, and brick façade are eye-appealing facets of the structure.

The new Indian Hill Fire Station completes Phase II of a two station project. During construction of each building, members of the joint fire department worked out of one station, and though conditions were crowded at times, the department continued to function with its normal excellent effectiveness. Mr. & Mrs. Harold Thomas graciously paid for all expenses after final design modifications. This summer's unveiling of the new firehouse will allow residents to view the state-of-the-art facility. Due to the generous support of the Thomas family, the concept of two new fire stations was transformed into reality. Their pictures will be displayed in the lobby of the new station as a tribute.



**Interior View of Training Tower
with Hose Drying Hooks**