

Monday, July 26, 2021

Dear Reno Fire Antique and Classic Apparatus (RFACA) members, supporters, and friends,

I have some disappointing news to share with you. We have been notified that the City of Reno has sold the warehouse where we have the Reno Fire Museum Collection stored. Apparently by linking this sale to an affordable housing project the City can get around the public notice and surplus property disposal regulations. One City Councilperson told me they were unaware, at the time of the vote to sell, that this building was currently occupied and being used by the Reno Fire Department. I have been told that no one in the Reno Fire Administration was aware the building was going to be sold until after the fact. I was hoping that RFACA might have the chance to bid on the building if it went up for auction.

I am president of Reno Fire Antique and Classic Apparatus (RFACA) Inc. We are a Nevada non-profit corporation and a federal 501(c)3 charitable organization. I am also a retired Reno firefighter. The Reno Fire Department Museum collection was once housed at the old Central Fire Station at 200 Evans Ave. This building was torn down in 2008 to make room for the Aces ballpark. Everything in the Reno FD Museum collection was moved to the current warehouse location at 260 B Winter St. at the time the old Central Fire Station was torn down. There are now eight (8) historical Reno FD apparatus stored in the warehouse at 260 B Winter St. They range in age from 1904 to 1972. The Reno FD owns four (4) of the vehicles and most of the artifacts that are part of this collection. RFACA owns the other four (4) vehicles. RFACA was sharing the warehouse space with the Reno FD Museum collection. We very much appreciate the City's generosity in being allowed to share this space for the last 13 years. Having this space available has allowed us to complete the frame-off restoration of our 1917 American LaFrance tractor drawn aerial ladder (Reno's first motorized aerial ladder) and purchase the 1916 Seagrave Chemical Engine (Reno's first motorized engine.) We believe preserving this collection of Reno's history is of value to the citizens of Reno in understanding our past and local government's role in the development and protection of the City of Reno.

Since at least one Councilperson was not aware this warehouse was being used by the Reno FD, I don't think the City Council considered what is going to happen to the material and vehicles owned by the Reno FD that are currently in the collection in the warehouse. If there were ever an opportunity to have a Reno History Museum, this collection could help make it a world class museum. It also ties in very closely with the Hot August Nights classic vehicle theme that is an integral part of Reno's future. Obviously, this issue is very personal to RFACA. We have spent the last 15 years trying to preserve this collection. The Reno City Council, the Reno Historic Resources Commission and the Historic Reno Preservation Society have each generously supported us over the years.

I do not know what the future holds for the Reno Fire Museum Collection. At this time the city appears to be working with us to try and find replacement space, but it is going slowly. I wanted to get the word out about what is going on now. If you believe the City should help try and preserve this collection of Reno heritage, please call or email your City Council representatives and let them know. Please feel free to share this email. I will try and keep everyone updated on any developments.

Sincerely,

Jon Wagner
President, RFACA
Reno FD, retired