Sag Harbor VAC ambulance to Broad Channel VFD/Ambulance & Hooversville VFC, PA fire truck to West Hamilton Beach VFD/Ambulance

NOTE: Glendale VAC in Queens has also donated an ambulance to Broad Channel VFD/Ambulance

Southampton Patch

By Taylor K. Vecsey November 6, 2012

Sag Harbor Ambulance Headed to Queens

Broad Channel Fire Department lost its fleet during Hurricane Sandy, so Sag Harbor will donate an old ambulance.

In a sense, the timing could not have been better; The Sag Harbor Volunteer Ambulance Corps was trying to decide what to do with one of its older ambulances when another fire department was in desperate need.

Superstorm Sandy didn't spare the emergency services when it hit last week, devastating fire departments and ambulance barns all over the East Coast, including the Broad Channel Volunteer Fire Department in Queens.

A 2002 ambulance that Sag Harbor is no longer using will soon be a part of Broad Channel's fleet.

Eddie Downes, the Sag Harbor ambulance corps president, said he and the other officers made the decision after learning Broad Channel, whose department began in 1905, didn't have any trucks left. Located between Howard Beach and the Rockway Peninsula, most of its equipment was either lost or damaged responding to emergencies during the storm. Thousands are still without power.

On the department's Facebook page, updates were posted: "Although we lost our trucks and ambulances, our chief vehicles and our computer equipment and like most of the town, have extensive water damage... We can finally and officially report that each and every member of the BCVFD is accounted for."

Downes said he spoke to the Broad Channel chief. "He said they would gladly accept," Downes reported. "We're going to bring it to them — probably on Friday — because they said they would come out here, but they would have to take a taxi to get here."

The Sag Harbor Volunteer Ambulance Corps, which is separate from the Sag Harbor Fire Department, buys its ambulances through money raised through fund drives, not money raised by taxes, Downes said.
The 2002 ambulance was taken out of service at the end of October, and replaced with a new one. Downes said it was not economically feasible to trade in the older ambulance for the newer one. Ambulances are typically used for 10 years.

The Village of Sag Harbor registers and insures the vehicles, but the decision of what to do with the ambulances once they are out of service rests with the corps' officers. Nonetheless, Village Mayor Brian Gilbride said he was happy to see the generous donation being made. "It's the ambulance helping a greater community than our own. Here's a community that can desperately use it. How lucky are we that the ambulance is kind enough to give it to them?," he said on Tuesday.

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By Jacob Quinn Sanders

Somerset County [Pennsylvania] fire department to donate truck to Sandy-struck New York firefighters

The Hooversville Volunteer Fire Company in Somerset County plans to donate a pumper truck to a department in Queens, N.Y., that lost all of its vehicles when Hurricane Sandy slammed ashore.

The West Hamilton Beach Volunteer Fire Department near John F. Kennedy International Airport lost two ambulances, two pumper trucks and a brush truck in the storm, Hooversville president Richard Lohr said. "Let's face it, it's total devastation what they're dealing with," he said.

The Hooversville department has been trying to sell a pumper truck for more than a year. Mr. Lohr said the department had hoped to get $25,000 for its 1981 Mack pumper with a 500-gallon tank and pumping capacity of 1,000 gallons per minute as well as 1,800 of 4-inch hose, a portable generator, lights and a portable pump capable of handling another 250 gallons per minute.

"Collectors wanted to buy it but of course collectors don't want to pay what you think it's worth," Mr. Lohr said. "And money for us doesn't compare to what they've lost in New York."

He said he contacted the Pennsylvania fire commissioner's office to offer help after he saw what Sandy did. When a 1996 flood swept all of Hooversville's protective gear out its doors, help from other departments meant everything, Mr. Lohr said. He got a name of a UPMC surgeon who had trained in New York and worked with the West Hamilton Beach department.

"Of course there was a Pittsburgh connection," Mr. Lohr said.

He plans to make donation official tonight at 8 p.m.