

Oregon Builds Memorial to Honor Our Fallen Fire Fighters

The idea to construct a memorial which honors Oregon's fallen fire fighters began in 1994. The founders of the original committee had a common vision, to establish a living statewide memorial to recognize members of the Oregon fire service. At the April 30, 2004 meeting of the DPSST Fire Policy Committee (FPC) the proposal to construct the Oregon Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial at the Oregon Public Safety Academy, located in Salem, Oregon, was approved. The FPC also asked each statewide fire service organization to participate in the design process and assist those who had invested years in this effort. The design for the memorial was later selected by the Oregon fire service and is now being maintained by the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST).

The Oregon Public Safety Academy is located off Aumsville Highway near Cordon Road on over 200 acres of property. This facility allows for the training of Oregon's public safety professionals, including fire, corrections, law enforcement, 9-1-1 and many others. The academy opened in July 2006. Oregon law requires 1% of all construction dollars be allocated towards the arts. The Oregon Public Safety Academy Arts Committee selected the construction of the Oregon Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial as one of the projects to be funded from this fund.

The goal of DPSST and the Oregon Public Safety Academy Arts Committee was to assist in a long-term goal of the fire service, the construction of a statewide memorial that honors structural and wildland firefighters who have made the ultimate sacrifice and given their lives in the line of duty.

After a number of meetings with the State Arts Commission and various artists a selection was made by the workgroup. The work was awarded to Scott and Robert Murase of Portland. Murase Associates is a Portland-based firm that has received dozens of awards over the past two decades for their work throughout the Pacific Northwest. Murase Associates proposed a polished granite wall with a bronze Maltese cross that would list the names of the fallen. A black granite path inscribed "In the Line of Duty" will go across the front of the memorial and is illuminated at night.

The Oregon Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Committee has worked with structural and wildland fire agencies across the state to ensure all of our fallen comrades are honored. Line-of-duty-deaths from as far back as 1881 have been submitted for review. To date the Committee has approved 161 submissions for the memorial. The submissions include every aspect of the fire service including career, volunteer, wildland, and structural fire fighters; chief officers, company officers, engineers, and fire fighters. The construction of the memorial was completed and dedicated on September 9, 2006. The Oregon Fire Service Honor Guard has volunteered to serve as the conduit for the annual memorial ceremony that is held on the third Thursday of every September.

Since the inception of this idea in 1994, the biggest challenge faced on this project was funding. Originally DPSST set aside \$100,000 for this work, later DPSST approved an additional \$25,000 to complete Phase I of this memorial. Phase I includes the work described above, a second phase is planned but completion of that work would take almost another \$100,000. The second phase involves a figurative sculpture, a marble overlook and a fountain in a nearby pond. The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association has graciously established a tax deductible account to raise funds for Phase II of the memorial and to address costs associated with the annual memorial ceremony.

We would like to recognize the original members of the Oregon Fallen Fire Fighters Committee that were an essential part in the creation of the Oregon Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial. Jack Carriger (Oregon Fire Chiefs' Association), Patrick Fale (Oregon State Firefighters Council), Lou Gugliotta (Oregon Fire Marshal's Association), Laura Houston (Oregon Fire Service Administrators Association), Michael Hundt (Oregon Fire Service Honor Guard), Bill Klein (Oregon Fire Instructor's Association), Committee Chair Stan Parker (Oregon Fire Service Museum), Dick Ragsdale (Oregon Fire Service Learning Center), Steve Schneiderman (Oregon Volunteer Firefighter's Association) and Eriks Gabliks (Department of Public Safety Standards and Training)