



ARM-R-LITE

DOOR MANUFACTURING CO., INC.

Liberty Corner Fire Company

names Schiavoni new chief

By LISA MONTAGNA
Staff Writer

The new decade is shaping up to be a good one for the Liberty Corner Fire Company as 1990 has already seen the arrival of a new chief, the announcement of the first Firefighter of the Year award and the near completion of a new station on Church Street, Basking Ridge.

After eight years on the department, Richard Schiavoni, 26, has been elected as the new chief of the company.

"It's an accomplishment I've been striving for," Schiavoni said.

Schiavoni, who replaced Steve Peterson at the company's top position, said he was surprised to find out how different the responsibilities of a chief are compared to the duties of other department members.

"One day you're taking orders and on Jan. 1, you're giving orders," Schiavoni said. "My responsibilities change on the fire scene, like deciding whether we need additional manpower depending on the area. With newer laws and compliances, manpower is of the utmost importance."

Peterson is now serving as the first assistant chief under Schiavoni.

While Schiavoni is scheduled to be chief for two years, he would have to wait a full year after his term expires before being able to hold the post again.

"It gives you a chance to get more current schooling," Schiavoni said. "If you want to be chief, you have to prove yourself."

That's just what Schiavoni has done during the past eight years as he moved through the ranks working as a firefighter, driver, foreman, second assistant chief and first assistant chief.

Unlike some departments, the Liberty Corner Fire Company does not have lieutenants and captains which makes the path to becoming chief tougher than usual.

"You go right from firefighter to assistant chief," Schiavoni said.

Firefighter Of The Year

One of Schiavoni's first decisions as he new chief was implementing the firefighter of the Year award for the member who worked the most hours outside his required volunteer time.

"It was my idea to keep track of the hours the guys worked above and beyond what is expected of them," Schiavoni said. "There are a lot of guys who put a lot of time in, then get burnt out and we lose an asset to the fire company. We needed some type of incentive program."

The program seemed to have worked on this year's winner Chris Kvederas, who worked more than 250 extra hours.

"I just thought he deserved it," Schiavoni said. "He saved the fire



(Photo by Ray Jones)

New Fire Chief

Richard Schiavoni, the newly elected chief of the Liberty Corner Fire Company, checks out the grounds at the company's soon-to-be-completed fire station on Church Street.

of things in house."

According to Schiavoni, one way Kvederas helped out the department was by servicing many of the company's trucks on his own.

"Everytime a truck goes out for service it costs at least \$500," Schiavoni said.

Kvederas, 25, is the foreman of engine 4102. He said he joined the company three years ago, following in the footsteps of his younger brother, Brian. His father, Tom, has also been a member of the Liberty Corner First Aid Squad for 10 years.

"These guys are like a second family," he said of the company. "We work hard but have a good time together. The guys are right there for you if you need them."

Professionally a driver for UPS, the lifelong resident of Mountain Road said he spends between 25 and 40 hours working for the company.

But Kvederas isn't the only dedicated firefighter on the company. Schiavoni said each of the department's 42 members deserves credit for volunteering their time for the benefit of the town.

"They do it out of the goodness of their hearts," said Schiavoni, referring to the common misconception that the firefighters are paid employees.

Schiavoni added that is one reason why he is excited about the completion of the 14,800-square-foot fire station under construction on Church Street. He said the \$2 million facility, which should be ready for the firefighters by July or August, will make the volunteer job a bit more desirable.

"They need some place nice to go," Schiavoni said.

The construction of the structure has not sat well with local residents, some of whom have questioned the need for such a large facility.

Schiavoni said although the new station may at first seem like an intrusion, it is a necessity in providing safety and fire protection to the community's increasing population.

"With The Hills coming in, we need a facility like this to protect the town properly," Schiavoni said. "As far as I'm concerned, it is more than enough

for the next 50 to 75 years. Obviously I'm biased, but we bought the property 50 years ago for the sole intent of building a new facility when the need arose."

The Hills Development Company is planning to build 1,893 residential units and a 27-hole golf course on 1,166 acres in Liberty Corner.

Currently, there are 42 members on the company but Schiavoni said only about 25 are active since many of the remaining 17 are older and can't assist on fires as much as they would like.

"Hopefully with this firehouse we will grow in membership as well," Schiavoni said. "We've already built in the new building in the fire company into the new building."

He added that the new station will also give the firefighters the room to once again hold community benefit like pancake breakfasts and spaghetti dinners.

"It's a real nice time," Schiavoni said. "You see a lot of people in the town."



Liberty Corner Fire Company, NJ
© Arm-R-Lite.com