

# Lake Stevens donates surplus fire truck to Hat Island

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HAT ISLAND — One of Snohomish County’s rural, all-volunteer fire departments is getting a “new” engine with the help of some distant neighbors.

A 1991 Darley Pumper truck is being prepared for its future home on Hat Island. The island is in Possession Sound between Everett and Whidbey Island. It has a small year-round population as well as a number of weekend and summer homes.

Its fire department (<http://www.heraldnet.com/news/on-hat-island-firefighters-volunteer-for-the-love-of-it/>) has an annual budget of around \$70,000. Most of that goes toward insurance, training, equipment and maintenance, Fire Chief Michael Worthy said.

The island’s two fire engines are from 1980. A new model — which could run \$700,000 — was not in the picture.

In stepped Snohomish County Fire District 8 in Lake Stevens. The district didn’t need the Darley Pumper anymore and was preparing it for surplus, Fire Marshal Mike Messer said.

For a long time, the Darley served Station 83 in rural Machias. It’s been a backup rig since 2015, Messer said. There’s been intense population and density growth in Lake Stevens. Crews need to be able to carry more equipment and pump more water than they used to, he said.

Fire rigs are purchased with public money. Lake Stevens folks liked the idea of the Darley staying in service in the county, he said.

The fire commissioners passed a resolution on May 18 to sell the truck for \$1. The engine transferred ownership a few days later. Hat Island decals were added, and now the rig is awaiting some testing before the big move.

The barge comes to the island every three months, so there may be a wait, Worthy said.

Still, the truck is “11 years newer than anything we have,” he said.

The island’s first responders have benefited from similar decisions at fire agencies throughout Western Washington.

“I’ve been doing this 35 years, and without the generosity of larger districts, we wouldn’t exist,” Worthy said.

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*Volunteer firefighter Scott Murphy, of Federal Way, goes through a rig check in 2012 on Hat Island. The Hat Island fire department is entirely staffed by volunteers. The rigs in the fleet date back to the 1980s and earlier. Soon they are getting a 1991 model, formerly used in Machias. (Herald file)*