

# Old fire truck gets new calling thanks to volunteers

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A fire truck that spent more than 20 years shuttling firefighters around Fox River Grove is now en route to Louisiana.

Members of an Algonquin Lutheran church left Friday to drive the 1979 fire truck to the 7th Ward Fire Department in Abbeville, La.

Initially, the fire department tried to sell the truck after replacing it with a newer model.

Yet even after knocking the price down to \$16,000, the department couldn't find a buyer.

Then Hurricane Katrina hit.

The Illinois state fire marshal put out a call for equipment to be donated to departments in Mississippi and Louisiana.

"We decided to donate it and see if we could help somebody else down there," said Fox River Grove Fire Protection District Chief Bob Kreher. "The interest was there right away. The problem was getting it down there."

Train and trucking companies both were consulted to move the vehicle, but a solution for transporting the truck south didn't come through until a group of volunteers from St. John's Lutheran Church offered to drive it down themselves.

The team of 22, which includes members of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Barrington, were headed south anyway to rebuild homes.

The list included a former firefighter and other men who could drive the truck.

The hope is that the town will get at least a year or two out of the vehicle, which should buy them time to purchase an updated model.

Although he was sad to see the truck go — Kreher still remembers riding on the truck when it went to its first fire on Witchie Drive — he is pleased to see it's going to a good cause, he said.

"It was nice to see it go to someone who could get a lot of use out of it," he said.

It was great to see everything work out, said Linda Burmeister, who organized the trip with her husband, Dennis.

"We really know that God is orchestrating all of this and he's in charge," she said. "And we take great comfort in that."

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