

**PUSH ON TO RESTORE FIRST FIRE TRUCK
CITY OF COOKEVILLE, TN**

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COOKEVILLE – Cookeville officials are working to bring the city's first fire truck back to working condition. The 1924 American LaFrance fire truck has been in forced retirement since the early 90's when a cylinder cracked and caused it to overheat during the Christmas parade. The last time it was used to fight fires was in the late '60s to early '70s.

"It's been in the back of a lot of people's minds, a lot of former fire chiefs, chiefs who've passed away and lots of members within the department – we want to have it running," said Fire Chief John Kendrick.

Right now the truck is sitting in the Cookeville Fire Station on England Drive where it is awaiting the restoration project to begin.

The immediate plan for the fire truck is to get it up and running to be used in parades and other special events.

After that is accomplished, the fire station will see what other repairs need to be made and take it one step at a time. David Qualls of Pro-Service Auto Glass Incorporated in Cookeville is currently the master mechanic of the project.

"He seems to think, when we talked a few days ago, that the cost of getting it started and driveable is going to be very minimal," said Don Prince, who is coordinating the restoration project.

Prince was involved in Project 509 with the Cookeville Train Depot that used public donations to purchase a train. He is hoping for similar enthusiasm over the restoration of the fire truck.

"Surprisingly there were a whole lot of train fans out there, and I would not be surprised if there's not a whole lot of fire truck fans out there too," he said.

The mechanic hopes to have the truck up and running in time to be in the parade celebrating the Depot's 100th anniversary on June 27.

Compared to a modern fire truck, the 1294 truck is tiny. These days the minimum tank size on a fire engine is 500 gallons.

The old truck held 30 gallons before the tanks were switched out for slightly larger ones.

The old truck's pump was designed to pump no more than 200 gallons, while there are newer trucks that can pump 2,000 gallons in a minute.

The old truck, which was top-of-the-line when it was purchased by Jesse Fouch for the city, cost \$6,000. For a top-of-the-line truck now, the city would have to dish out anywhere from \$500,000 to \$600,000.

Kendrick and Prince are open to any help from the public who want to donate money, manpower, knowledge or any other resources about the old fire truck.

They eventually hope to put the truck on display somewhere such as in a glass case at the fire department or at the history museum.

Anyone wanting to offer aid can contact City Hall at 526-9591 and ask for the fire hall, or contact Prince at 528-8411.

<http://www.ajlambert.com>



From left, Fire Chief John Kendrick, Don Prince, Mayor Sam Sales, Councilwoman Alma Anderson and Councilman Ricky Shelton get on board Cookeville's first and oldest fire truck, which they hope to get back up and running in the near future. Photo by Megan Trotter, Herald-Citizen.

FIRE TRUCK RESTORATION DONATIONS

Representatives for the Friends of the Depot and the Friends of the Cookeville History Museum stand with a 1925 American LaFiance fire truck, Cookeville's first fire truck.



From left are Chief John Kendrick of the Cookeville Fire Department; Don Prince, project coordinator; David Qualls, wrench turner and "chief mechanic"; Earl Jaquess of the Friends of the History Museum; Marge Rios, vice president of the Friends of the Depot; and Carol Holland, president of the Friends of the Depot. The Friends of the Depot donated \$1,000 and the Friends of the History Museum donated \$1,500 toward the fire truck's restoration project. Total donations to date are \$2,700. Margaret Powell of Sparta also donated three antique fire buckets for the project. Donations are still needed and are appreciated. For donation inquiries,

call Don Prince at 528-8411 or contact the Cookeville Fire Department. Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea