

Celebrating Our 63rd Year - Established May, 1940

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CHICAGO FIREFIGHTER Carlos Medina plans to drive this 1975 fire engine nearly 2,500 miles to Santiago, Durango, Mexico, where it will be donated to the volunteer fire department.

Medina, a Northwest Side resident, once lived in a

small town near Santiago. He was able to purchase the fire truck for \$1 after Alderman Patrick Levar introduced an ordinance in the City Council.

Shown are (from left) chief John Brooks, Levar and Medina.

City donates 1975 fire engine

by BRIAN NADIG

A seldom-used 1975 fire engine that has spent several months parked behind the Chicago Fire Department's Engine 108 firehouse at Milwaukee and Wilson avenues will soon have a new home in Mexico.

The City Council on Nov. 13 approved an ordinance allowing the city to sell the fire engine for \$1 to Chicago firefighter Carlos Medina, who plans to drive the truck 2,500 miles to Santiago, Durango, where it will be donated to the town's volunteer fire department.

Medina, a Northwest Side resident, said that he inquired about the availability of the engine, which has been on reserved status for the past couple of years, after he was assigned to the firehouse June 1

and saw it for the first time. A short time later he gained the support of Alderman Patrick Levar (45th), who sponsored the ordinance.

"It's goodwill. We're not going to use it in our fleet anymore," Levar said, adding that it is not uncommon for the city to sell old equipment to needy communities for \$1.

EARLIER THIS year, Medina arranged a similar agreement with a Downstate Illinois town, resulting in the donation of a 1969 fire engine to the State of Durango. That fire engine has a 1,000-gallon water tank, while the one being donated from Chicago has a 500-gallon tank, Medina said.

In contrast, Santiago's only fire engine is 60 years old and lacks a water tank, Medina said. He said that the community lacks a hy-

drant system and that a separate vehicle with a tank follows the engine any time it responds to a fire.

Santiago, which has a population of about 60,000 people, is located about a 15-minute drive from Medina's hometown of Herrera. Medina and his wife, Xochitl, recently visited Santiago and other nearby towns to learn more about their firefighting resources.

Medina and another project volunteer plan to start their 4-day journey to Santiago as soon as maintenance work on the fire engine is completed. Medina figures the driving time to be about 46 hours.

To pay for the maintenance work and other expenses related to the trip, Medina is asking those interested in making a contribution to call 773-617-5538.