

Piece

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"What a wonderful trip, to see the firefighters and visit the memorial," he said. "I can't describe it."

A welcoming ceremony was held Monday night at the Yankton fire station. An open house, displaying the original steel, will be held from 5:30-7 p.m. Wednesday at the station located at 201 W. 23rd Street.

The local memorial will hold special meaning for the firefighters, said Troy Cowman, president of the Yankton Firefighters Association.

The WTC attacks took the lives of 343 NYC firefighters, 37 Port Authority police officers, 23 NYC police officer and eight emergency medical technicians (EMTs) from private ambulance services, Cowman said during Monday's ceremony.

"More than 2,500 civilians were also killed that day, but the emergency responders who died were there because it was their job," he said. "The civilians were in the line of fire, and wanted to get out. But the first responders all rushed in, working to get the civilians out ... while willing to go into danger themselves. (The responders) showed courage in putting their lives on the line and making the ultimate sacrifice."

Earlier this year, the Yankton Volunteer Fire Department received notification of the opportunity to obtain an original piece of steel from the World Trade Center to display at the local station, Cowman said. The department only had to select an approximate size and pay for shipping costs.

There was never any question about pursuing the steel segment, Cowman said.

"We are all part of the same fire-fighting (fraternity), and we wanted to show our respect (for the fallen responders)," he said. "The volunteer firefighters voted unanimously to seize this opportunity, and the wheels were set in motion."

Little is known about this particular piece of steel, other than it is a section of I-beam from one of the two World Trade Center towers, Cowman said.

"The rest is left to our imagination, to wonder if it was from the fifth floor or the 95th floor," he said. "Perhaps it (has) the invisible footprints of rescue workers as they stepped over it, looking for survivors. Maybe it was among the first pieces of debris removed from the site, maybe it was among the last."

"What we do know is that it is weathered and heavy, a symbol itself of the massive removal and reconstruction efforts that the

Wanna Be An NFL Owner? Packers Near 5th Stock Sale

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Cheeseheads around the world might soon have a chance to own a piece of the Super Bowl champs.

The Green Bay Packers, the NFL's only publicly owned team, are moving toward a new stock sale by the end of the year to raise money that would help pay for \$130 million in renovations at historic Lambeau Field.

Each share would likely cost about \$200 and include voting rights, though the value wouldn't appreciate and there would be no dividends. Stockholders would be able to attend annual meetings at Lambeau, and they'd enjoy such perks as tours of the playing field and locker rooms.

Best of all, they could legitimately call themselves NFL owners.

That last reason seals the deal for Staughton Wade, 29, a lifelong Indianapolis Colts fan.

"I'd absolutely buy a share," said Wade, of Fort Wayne, Ind. "It's a unique thing having the opportunity to buy a share of any NFL team, and the Packers are the only team you can do that with."

The NFL planned to brief the other teams about the proposal at a league meeting Tuesday.

An owners' vote won't be necessary because the proposal meets the same conditions established in 1997, the last time Green Bay sold stock, NFL spokesman Greg Aiello said. He said the league allows the Packers to sell stock as long as the money is used only for capital costs such as stadium improvements.

The Packers plan to add thousands of seats and other stadium amenities in time for the 2013 season. While other teams often ask taxpayers to help pay for building upgrades, the Packers will foot the entire bill themselves through the stock sale and private financing.

That's one reason Michael Constantine, a 26-year-old Wisconsin native who now lives in Seattle, intends to buy a share or two.

"I feel like the American public has spent enough over the last 20, 30 years to build and renovate stadiums," said Constantine, a staunch Packers fan. "I prefer the sale of stock to raising any sales tax."

The stock sale would be the fifth in Packers' history. There are currently 112,205 shareholders who own a total of 4.75 million shares

workers have endured over the past decade."

Instead of sending the steel by carrier, Villanueva — who has been with the Yankton unit only six months after a nine-year stint with the Omaha fire department — offered to drive to New York City and bring the steel home.

Villanueva left last Wednesday, returning Saturday morning with the segment. He was accompanied by a friend, Omaha firefighter Rex Ruth, and the men alternated time behind the wheel.

The two Midwest firefighters didn't expect to meet their New York brethren, Villanueva said.

"We happened to arrive when it was First Responder Day and they allowed (Ground Zero access) just for fire departments," he said.

"There were tons of firefighters in their Class A uniforms," he said.

"The firefighters from New York were a wonderful group of guys. It doesn't matter if you're from New York, New Hampshire or New Jersey, you're all part of the same brotherhood."

Villanueva felt a sense of awe upon viewing the Ground Zero memorial during his time in New York City. Each 9/11 victim's name is embedded in the memorial, officially entitled "Reflecting Absence," he said.

"The memorial is such a moving place, with the pool of water and 400 oak trees," he said. "The memorial was breathtaking, a testament to New York. They took such a tragic day and area and turned it into a place of remembrance and dignity. It shows the resiliency of the people of New York City."

"The Ground Zero memorial was gorgeous," he said. "It's an experience I'll never forget."

Port Authority officials helped load up the original steel segment for Villanueva.

"When you picked it up, you could feel a piece of history," he said. "This was very close to the 10th anniversary of 9/11, but it didn't matter whether it was the fifth anniversary or some other anniversary, it wouldn't have changed my decision (to volunteer for the trip)."

At Monday's ceremony, Yankton fire department chaplain, the Rev. Rod Veldhuizen, offered prayer and a tribute to the fallen responders.

"Every time we answer the call, it could be our last one. The men and women (on 9/11) didn't go up

that burning building saying, 'I'm going to die today,'" he said. "We offer (this memorial as) a historic place to come and remember."

The Yankton memorial will take shape in the coming months, Cowman said.

"Our vision is to create a memorial appropriate for our fellow emergency workers who perished on that tragic day," he said. "We are still in the early stages of planning the memorial, since we were unable to begin the planning until we saw the piece of steel for ourselves. The memorial will be the result of input from the firefighters and the amount of donations that we receive for this project."

The final memorial will carry tremendous symbolism, Cowman said.

"Obviously, this is more than just a piece of steel," he said. "It is a symbol of courage that was demonstrated by emergency responders who rushed to the scene that day and ignored the terror of terrorism. It also represents the strength of the American people who went to battle against terrorism and are winning the war."

Yankton fire chief Tom Kurtenbach noted all of the 1,200 pieces of steel are distributed, making Yankton's memorial unique.

"It's a museum artifact. It's a piece of history," he said. "I'm humbled that it's here, and I'm humbled that our fire department is working with this. It changed our lives on 9/11. People remember that day as it changed their lives. It's a destination for people to come and see a part of what occurred that day."

Villanueva noted the memorial will remind people that the mission launched on 9/11 isn't complete.

"We still have men and women fighting for freedom in the war on terror," he said.

School

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have to look forward because revenue generation does not happen within the same fiscal cycle. This assumes a 2.3 percent increase in our funding from the state for next year. Even at that, it would produce only half of what you would ask for because of the lag time."

Currently, the per-student allocation from the state is set at \$4,389.95. The total revenue and other sources in the general fund for the current fiscal year is \$14,742,264, with expenditures projected at \$16,526,649. That would force the district to use \$1,784,385 of the general fund reserve, leaving a balance of \$2,244,916. If the projections stay true through the next two years, after fiscal year 2013, the district would not have a fund balance with which to operate the district.

The projections of the district, while not final numbers, do reflect the best-case scenario, Bietz said.

"We really won't know that final number until the governor at least comes out with his budget projection in December," he said. "If he is thinking a 0 percent increase, the district is even further in the hole than what I am showing you. A 2.3 percent increase is probably a best-case scenario. Unfortunately, we won't know the actual number until March, and there are a lot of decisions that are going to have to be made before March. If the Legislature comes back and does give us a 2.3 percent increase based on the current consumer product index (CPI), but at the same time takes away the one-time moneys that they gave us last year, it trans-

lates into about a \$3 per student increase."

Board member Verlin Ailts questioned how prudent it is to go to the public with a request without knowing the actual numbers.

"My problem with doing that is being able to present a true factual amount before the Legislature meets," he said. "I understand the timing is horrible with our Legislature and collecting taxes six months (behind), but at the same time, to present a number that is not factual is going to be difficult to get passed as well. You will have a number that may or may not be factual. The state's revenue reports show that they are seeing an increase in revenues. But if we are going to do another opt-out for a shorter term, I really think we need to know what those dollar amounts are going to be."

However Bietz said that no matter what is done with a projection, there will be some variable that is unknown.

"You can do the projections with a best-case and worst-case scenarios, assuming that the Legislature is going to give us the 2.3 percent increase, and then do another set of numbers assuming there is going to be a freeze," he suggested. "If your objective is to know the outcome sooner rather than later as it affects the spending, you are realistic to set the vote in the February-March range for an opt-out. If there are additional cuts to be made, they can be done before the contract obligations kick in as dictated by state law."

Following the discussion, the school board agreed to set a special meeting for Monday, Oct. 24, to discuss the potential opt-out and allow Bietz the time to finalize the numbers and get an accurate assessment of the needs of the district, should the board pursue the opt-out.

During the meeting, the board also held discussion on a potential revision in the school board meeting policy.

Currently, the board operates under a closed-meeting policy, where it does not take public comment during the meeting. The board members expressed their desire to be able to more actively take comment, while still maintaining a professional meeting.

School attorney Mike Marlow presented a potential policy, to which the board members made suggestions, including the proper procedure for being placed on the agenda, limiting which agenda items could be commented on and time frames for those wishing to speak.

Following the discussion, Marlow agreed to revise the proposed policy and present a new draft at an upcoming meeting.

Also, there was a discussion on a revised policy change in regards to elementary student fundraising activities based on a request from parents Doug and Pam Upton.

The board agreed to review the policy and form a committee to review the current policy and any changes that should be implemented.

Other business included presenting the 2012 Large School Group Legislative Position Paper to the board by superintendent Dr. Joseph Gertsema.

Following the meeting, Rick Althoff presented the board with a three-page, hand-written letter describing his request for changes he feels the board should make in order to be compliant with an open meeting form of government.

These changes include allowing inspection of records, open access to public buildings and participation in open public meetings.



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