



News from Surrey Fire Fighters!

July 5, 2012

The Surrey Fire Fighters celebrated their 55th Anniversary Thursday evening with their annual BBQ, peer awards and retirement recognition evening.

Surrey Fire Fighter peers were recognized for the contributions to their association and charitable work they do in the community. This year we had an extraordinary announcement to make as we recognized an individual who is retiring this month after serving thirty five years, twenty five of those years as an executive officer of the I.A.F.F. Local 1271 Surrey Fire Fighters' Association. The Surrey Fire Fighters Axe Award goes to a member with a minimum of ten years of service who has shown a dedicated and conscientious effort to uphold the standard of professionalism, reflects credit upon Local 1271 on and off duty, and promotes goodwill among union brothers and sisters. They will have been contributing to the betterment of all Local 1271 members for a majority of their service. This year the "Axe Award" was renamed after Lorne West to the "**Lorne West Silver Axe Award**" in recognition of his many years of leadership, dedication, and mentorship.

🔥 The Lorne West Silver Axe Award 🔥



Lorne's family was on hand for the ceremony



Lorne West (left) with President Mike McNamara (right)

President Mike McNamara stated, "Lorne West exemplifies what leadership is about. His dedication to local 1271 for 25 years will be unmatched and stand as a mark that sets the high bar for leadership. Lorne definitely

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made a positive contribution for his 25 years as a local leader and left the local a better place than it was when he started.” Mike went on to say, “We felt it was necessary to remember his service and honour him by attaching his name to our Peer Awards.” Only two fire fighters have their name attached to our most prestige’s awards (The Red Powell Award, and now the Lorne West Silver Axe Award).

Lorne had received our most prestige’s award in 2007 – The Red Powell award which goes to the Firefighters, FIREFIGHTER. The recipient of this award should exemplify that of a conscientious and dedicated fire fighter on duty and off duty. They also uphold the standards of our profession and reflect credit upon local 1271. They promote goodwill among union brothers and sisters. The Red Powell recipient should have been a member of Local 1271 for 20 years or more. They will have contributed to not only the betterment of all Local 1271 members but also the people in the community, which we serve. Local 1271 is proud of them as a member and they are proud to be a member.



Lorne stated in his speech that much of the success local 1271 had when he was president is attributed to his extraordinary executive team he worked with. (From right to left - Terry Hunt, Jon Caviglia, Lorne West, Larry Thomas, Gerry Wilson and Mike Starchuk).

Lorne West’s Legacy with the Surrey Fire Fighter’s Association

Lorne started on the local executive in his second year as a fire fighter. He held Vice President and Secretary Positions over a period of 12 years before being elected as President in 1991 and holding that position until 2004. During his tenure, Lorne completely rewrote the local constitution and bylaws as well as developed the first policy manual for local 1271, which stands as the guiding document for governance of the local today.

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Under Lorne's leadership he brought forward a business model to make the local accountable in a financial manner, including budgets, forecasting at the same time moving to an electronic era. Putting the finances in great shape allowed the purchase of our Union hall to hold our meeting and social functions.

His vision on relationship building and political action has solidified the Surrey Fire Fighters as an association with great influence. Lorne's courage to make public endorsements of the multi partisan political candidates was done at a time when most other trade unions stuck to the traditional labour friendly political parties.

Lorne had the ability to build relationships with individual politicians whose influence would assist us in the future. This visionary concept eventually saw those we supported in the position of political power. From there, Lorne began extolling the high road to make the politicians understand the concerns of the fire fighters. Lorne connected with all of the highest levels of government so they are able to pick up the phone and have a first name conversation. Even with a personal crisis at hand (loss of a sister in-law), Lorne went to Ottawa to lobby for changes that not only benefit individuals but society as a whole. He also used those same skills to lobby the politicians in Ottawa to protect Fire Fighters in arson fires.

During his time as Local 1271 president, Lorne negotiated many trend setting collective agreements, each building upon the previous to establish the best collective agreement in our region. He was instrumental in establishing a coordinated regional bargaining effort between the other Locals in the Province. He was the first to negotiate the 15 year rate of pay on our region, and managed to negotiate the highest rate of pay for local 1271 members despite a regional pattern already being established. Lorne undertook the greatest visionary bargaining item with the 2.33 accrual rate. Achievement of all of these items shows the positive side of being politically active.

Lorne always placed firefighter safety at the forefront of his efforts. Lorne was relentless in his pursuit to convince the politicians and decision makers that it is essential to have four firefighters on every first line Aerial or Engine. This was done though the constant political pressure to open new fire halls in strategic areas in a city with exponential growth. Lorne's research allowed presentation of empirical data to show how the facts dictated we needed more staff to have a safely staffed fire ground.

Lorne's proactive vision on human rights issues, whether it was the hiring of women in the fire service, drug and alcohol programs, an employee assistance program, critical incident stress programs, to name a few, were instituted before management even had a concept of what to do. These programs have proven to be so successful with buy in from the membership; it forced the employer to recognize these programs and assumed responsibility for them.

Lorne took a mentorship role within the local and expanded this with other local's executive members. Lorne's leadership made Surrey's involvement at various conventions some of the most active. Not content with status quo, Lorne was relentless with his development of resolutions to better change our greater organizations. This was noticed at an early stage with Lorne's appointments by the General President to various IAFF committees at convention.

Under Lorne's leadership we went from one boot drive a year to raising hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Our charitable society went from obscurity to one of the largest charitable agencies in the city. Lorne's

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political connections solidified the charitable efforts by supporting those charitable endeavors of the politicians. Lorne made sure that all charitable transactions were held accountable and transparent. This allowed the local to go from raising money for other city programs to raising money for the local's unique programs in the city. Programs such as a nutritional snack program that covers off breakfast for youth in 80 Surrey schools and dedication of one million dollars to mental health and addiction issues in the City.

Lorne's has managed to balance his work and family responsibilities. He has made many sacrifices to his personal life that has made great gains for fire fighters, but during all of this his family understood that this was for the greater good.

Lorne West exemplifies what leadership is about. His dedication to local 1271 for 25 years will be unmatched and stand as a mark that sets the high bar for leadership. Lorne definitely made a positive contribution for his 25 years as a local leader and left the local a better place than it was when he started.

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