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City of Duluth - Fire Department

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DATE: 8/5/2021

SUBJECT: Seaway Hotel to serve as a Duluth Fire training facility before being torn down

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Training

CASE NO.:

INCIDENT DATE: 8/5/2021

INCIDENT TIME:

INCIDENT LOCATION: 2001 West Superior Street

Seaway Hotel to serve as a Duluth Fire training facility before being torn down

[Duluth, MN] The Esmond building, formerly the Seaway Hotel has one more purpose before it will be torn down next month. It will be repurposed to serve as a training facility for the Duluth Fire Department as they conduct various fire attack scenarios, and hose trainings through the end of the month.

"This is the largest building that we have ever trained in," Firefighter, and training instructor Damon Laurion said. "Being able to train in a building this large allows us to use bigger hose lines which requires more personnel, and be proficient in our skills."

We can't thank the Duluth Housing and Redevelopment Authority enough for the opportunity to train here for the next few weeks."

"Although its unfortunate that the redevelopment of the Esmond has encountered many delays, if it hadn't this incredible opportunity for our firefighters wouldn't have been possible," Duluth HRA Executive Director Jill Keppers said. "We were very happy to allow this building to serve yet another purpose in our community."

Recently, the Duluth Fire Department made a change in how it loads hoses so that it is more proficient to deploy them during a fire.

"The training today helps us to practice this new technique in what would be considered a high life hazard fire," Laurion said. "This building contains 80 rooms, and a lot of void spaces. We can use this building and take lessons that we have learned from large fires like the first Kozy fire and apply those lessons in how we fight fires today."

The last time the Department was able to conduct a training like this was in 2019 when they used a building owned by Essentia Health to conduct a similar training.

"During COVID, we couldn't do a lot of the trainings that we normally do every year," Laurion said. "We have new faces within the Department who haven't been through a training like this in an actual building before. This training is an important tool for all of us, regardless if you are new to the Department or 20 years into your career. This experience is something that we will take with us on future structure fire calls."

The Department will be using the building to train all three shifts in hose deployment, and search and rescue trainings for the next few weeks. Fake smoke will be used to create an environment similar to what firefighters would see in a real fire. While they are training signs are placed around the building to inform the public that a training is taking place. The Fire Department will be parking rigs in the alley behind the Esmond, and along North 20th Avenue West. The Department will be training Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

By the end of the month, the Department will have logged 22 days of training totaling 154 training hours on hose deployment, hose training, search and rescue, and different fire attack scenarios.

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