

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 29, 2023

Mesachie Lake Fire Hall completes retrofit and upgrades with funding from the Province of British Columbia and Infrastructure Canada

MESACHIE LAKE, BC – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Fire Rescue Services and Mesachie Lake Volunteer Fire Dept. are pleased to announce the completion of retrofits and upgrades to the Mesachie Lake Fire Hall.

The Fire Hall retrofit extends the service life of this critical local government infrastructure that is vital for the delivery of these local community public services and firefighting operations. The 2017 facility condition assessment became the starting point for the scope of work for this project, with additional engineer's, architect's and quantity surveyor's reports identifying further work required.

“Safer and more modern facilities help reduce emergency response time, support local firefighters and communities, and ultimately save lives. By continuing to invest in critical infrastructure like the Mesachie Lake Fire Hall, we are increasing community resilience, allowing us to protect what matters most,” said Parm Bains, Member of Parliament for Steveston—Richmond East, on behalf of the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities.

“There's great history behind the Mesachie Lake Fire Hall. These upgrades give the people in the community the confidence that the firehall will be there to serve them for many more years to come,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Municipal Affairs. “It's so important to keep the firefighters and volunteers safe so they can continue to protect all community members. These retrofits and improvements help ensure fire equipment and services are there for the community when they need them most.”

“The CVRD and the community considered the future of the Mesachie Lake Fire Dept., in terms of its ability to maintain fire protection and emergency response services, given its proximity to Lake Cowichan and Honeymoon Bay, along with the high cost of upgrading the Fire Hall,” said Area F - Cowichan Lake South/Skutz Falls Director, Ian Morrison. “In response, the community rallied to preserve both the fire hall and the department, and we went to work to secure funding for both the fire hall retrofit and the replacement pumper truck.”

A \$280,000 contribution from Infrastructure Canada and \$70,000 in provincial funding was awarded in 2021 through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – Covid -19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream, construction on the project began in early 2023 and was completed in July 2023. The retrofit to the fire hall has provided health and safety improvements to interior air quality for volunteer firefighters by replacing an obsolete oil fueled appliance, converting to electricity, and upgrading the existing ventilation system. Aligning with the CVRD Sustainable Service Delivery Plan framework and BC Building Code, the new energy improvements to the fire hall are also expected to reduce GHG emissions.

Improvements to the engine bay include creating a safer and more operationally effective space for firefighters to don their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and maneuver around and board the engine.

“We’re very pleased to have the upgrades we need for our hard-working volunteer firefighters and rescue services community and appreciate all those who have been instrumental in making this project a reality,” said Kevin Smith, Fire Chief of the Mesachie Lake Volunteer Fire Dept. “With the upgraded fire hall, we are better prepared than ever to respond to emergencies promptly, protect the Mesachie Lake community and continue hosting community engagement and fire safety education events at the fire hall.”

The Mesachie Lake Fire Hall was built in circa 1940 and its Volunteer Fire Dept. has faithfully answered calls from residents and from visitors to the semi-rural community of Mesachie Lake concerning fires, motor vehicle incidents, emergency medical assistance, mutual aid, and rescues. The Mesachie Lake firefighters look forward to hosting a Fire Hall open house to Mesachie Lake residents and local government officials to showcase the department’s operations and celebrate the successful retrofit this September.

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New - Mesachie Lake Fire Dept. Pumper Truck