

2012 SPECIAL SESSION I

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 566

Offered April 17, 2012

Commending the Manassas Volunteer Fire Company.

Patron—Miller

WHEREAS, in 1892 the Town Council of Manassas authorized the mayor and clerk to order from the Howe Pump and Engine Company of Indianapolis a horse-drawn, manually operated four-person Piston Fire Engine at a cost of \$600, and upon its receipt on April 30, 1892, the Manassas Volunteer Fire Company, Company 1 of Prince William County, was formed; and

WHEREAS, members of this company, under the direction of the Town's first Fire Chief, J.I. Randall, were charged with the responsibility of maintaining this engine, as well as the hooks, buckets, and ladders that had been previously stored under the platform at the Railroad Depot; and

WHEREAS, a small wood-framed building was soon constructed on the exact same site where the current old City Hall still stands to hold the Howe engine and various other firefighting equipment; and

WHEREAS, with equipment in place, it was decided to use three locomotive wheel rims with sledge hammers mounted at strategic points throughout the town to alert the citizenry of a fire and to act as an alarm for the volunteer firemen; and

WHEREAS, on the cold winter night of December 5, 1905, the greatest disaster in the town's history occurred when a smoldering fire began in Blossom's Alley across the tracks from the Train Depot, resulting in a firestorm that destroyed or heavily damaged over 30 residences and businesses in the downtown area (two entire blocks), reflecting an absolute need for more comprehensive fire protection; and

WHEREAS, as a direct result of this incident, fire protection needs were reassessed and measures adopted, including the purchase of a Howe horse-drawn gasoline-driven piston pumper hose cart and horse-drawn ladder wagon that replaced the hand-operated Howe Pumper (both later modified to be pulled by a Model T Ford pickup truck); and

WHEREAS, in 1914, as the town and its needs grew, Albert Speiden, prominent Manassas citizen and noted architect, designed the town's first brick two-story fire station, which consisted of two bays for engines and equipment on the first floor while the upper floor was used as council chambers; the building remained the home of the Manassas Volunteer Fire Company for the next 43 years until the current firehouse on Centreville Road was built in 1956 and the Manassas Volunteer Fire Company moved into its new quarters in 1957; and

WHEREAS, over the next several decades, improvements in equipment and vehicles were made as the department continued to upgrade and expand; and

WHEREAS, today, Company 1 boasts over 75 members, including more than 45 active firefighters, and has a current apparatus roster of four Class A pumpers, including a 1997 Pierce Quantum, a 105-foot Emergency One tower ladder, a mini-pumper, and a 2001 Pierce Quantum Twin Agent engine that serves as both a standard pumper and foam/chemical unit; and

WHEREAS, to this day, the Buffalo pumper purchased in 1947 that marked the first expansion of the Company to two front line pumpers still carries the number "2" designation on its doors as the second engine of Company 1; and

WHEREAS, within the next several months, the Company's Fire Museum will once again open its doors to display the history of firefighting in Manassas, displaying equipment actually used by Company 1 over its 120 years of existence, and will include, among other memorabilia, the fully restored 1909 Howe pumper and hose cart, 1929 and 1947 Buffalo pumpers, and a 1966 Seagrave open cab pumper; and

WHEREAS, for over 120 years the members of the Manassas Volunteer Fire Company have served the citizens of Manassas, Prince William County, and other areas when requested, protecting life and property during fires and natural disasters, oftentimes placing their own lives in danger; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the Manassas Volunteer Fire Company hereby be commended on the occasion of its 120th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Manassas Volunteer Fire Company as an expression of the House of Delegates' congratulations and appreciation for the company's commitment to serving the community.

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