



The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan

7500 Soaring Eagle Blvd.

Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

989.775.4000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 26, 2026

CONTACT: Erik Rodriguez, Interim Public Relations Director

Call 989-775-4059

Pinconning Fraser Fire Department Ladder Truck Acquisition Project

The Pinconning Fraser Fire Department has successfully concluded a decade-long initiative focused on replacing its outdated 1976 Mack Baker Aerial scope ladder truck. This journey began in 2006 when Dow Chemical Company from Midland approached the department with an offer to acquire the aging ladder truck. During the discussions, it became evident that evolving firefighting strategies, coupled with the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe's plans to develop a casino and multi-level hotel at Saganing Eagles Landing Casino, underscored the necessity of having a reliable ladder truck in the northern county. Recognizing this critical need, the department accepted Dow Chemical's generous offer, which was made for a nominal fee of just one dollar.

In partnership with the Kawkawlin Fire Department, the Pinconning Fraser Fire Department crafted a comprehensive operational plan to seamlessly incorporate the ladder truck into the regional emergency response framework. Over the years, the department sought additional funding through FEMA Fire Act Grants but faced challenges that hindered their success. In 2023, the department made a strategic decision to collaborate with Lexipol, a firm specializing in grant writing, to enhance their chances of securing funding for the 2022 FEMA Grant application. This collaboration proved fruitful when, to the department's delight, the grant was approved in late 2023, resulting in a substantial award of \$957,857.14, with a required copay of \$47,892.86. With this financial backing, the department initiated the process of soliciting bids and defining the specifications for the new apparatus.

Following a meticulous evaluation process, the Pinconning Fraser Fire Department selected a 2026 Spartan Chassis equipped with a Smeal rear-mounted aerial ladder from R & R Fire Truck Repair Inc. located in Belleville, Michigan. This decision was the culmination of extensive discussions with various fire apparatus manufacturers, where the department assessed bids and established relationships based on service history and reliability. The acquisition of this new ladder truck not only enhances the department's operational capabilities but also significantly improves the safety and efficiency of emergency response efforts in the community.

In accordance with AFG requirements, the 1976 Mack Aerialscope will be retired from emergency service and donated to the Antique Toy and Firehouse Museum in Bay City, recognizing its valuable contributions to Dow Chemical and the communities of Northern Bay County and Arenac County. The acquisition of the new Smeal ladder truck represents a

substantial investment, totaling \$1,347,915. To manage the additional manufacturing costs that have arisen over the past two years, the Pinconning Fraser Fire Department has strategically utilized 2% funds obtained from the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe. Furthermore, the department has devised a comprehensive plan to pursue \$390,158 in grants over the next three years, while also committing to setting aside smaller amounts biannually to gradually build the necessary financial resources. The Saginaw Chippewa Tribe has shown exceptional generosity and support for the community, reinforcing the collaborative spirit of this initiative.

The operational scope of the new Ladder North will extend to any regional department requiring assistance, whether in response to fire emergencies or high-level rescue operations. This innovative approach effectively consolidates the capabilities of three fire apparatus into a single, versatile unit. Ladder North will be strategically stationed at the Pinconning-Fraser Fire Station 15, ensuring swift response times to the northern communities that have consistently supported this project. The Pinconning Fraser Fire Department expresses its sincere gratitude to the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe for their unwavering commitment to enhancing public safety in Northern Bay County and Arenac County over the years, highlighting the importance of community partnerships in fostering a safer environment for all residents.

On Friday, March 27, 2026, a collaborative event will take place as local government officials, fire authorities, and representatives from the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe come together for a blessing of the new Ladder North fire apparatus. This ceremony is scheduled to begin at 2:00 p.m. at the Saganing Outreach Center, located at 5447 Sturman Road, Standish, MI 48658. During this brief yet meaningful gathering, District 2 Council Member Shirley Houle will perform a smudging ceremony to honor the new truck, symbolizing the community's commitment to safety and service.

For those interested in learning more about this event or seeking additional details, please reach out to Erik Rodriguez at (989) 775-4059 or via email at erodriguez@sagchip.org. This collaborative effort not only highlights the importance of community partnerships but also reflects the cultural significance, fostering a sense of unity and respect among all participants.