

Ti EMS to break ground

Ti Ambulance Squad to start construction

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TICONDEROGA — The Ticonderoga Emergency Squad has cleared another hurdle in its efforts to construct a new building.



An architect's vision of the new Ticonderoga Ambulance Squad building

The town planning board has approved the squad's proposal for a new 4,100 square foot home to be built at the site of the former Ticonderoga Civic Center between The Portage and Lake Champlain Avenue, according to Sue Johnson, squad secretary.

"Ground should be broken in the next month or so," Johnson said. "It should take approximately 4-5 months from start to finish. "

The Ticonderoga Emergency Squad began a fundraising campaign for a new facility in 2009 when the town board sold the volunteer group land for \$1 — with conditions.

The squad must have the money for a new facility in hand in two years and construction must be complete in another two years or the land reverts back to town ownership.

The proposed building will be approximately 4,100 square feet with two drive through bays, a meeting room, offices and sleeping quarters, Johnson said. The architect is Steve Jung of Schroon Lake.

Johnson stressed the building will be constructed without taxpayer support.

"We receive no town funding from Ticonderoga and we are solely supported by donations and soft billing (insurance reimbursements)," Johnson said.

To kick-off fundraising efforts, the squad raffled a 2005 Honda Shadow VLX 600 motorcycle. Squad members have also held coin drops. Other fundraising events are also being planned.

"Fundraising has been slow," Johnson said. "We are estimating that it will cost us approximately \$800,000 with \$200,000 raised to date."

Donations will not cover the cost of the new building. The squad has applied to a federal program for grant money to match local donations. It has also secured financing through a local bank.

Dennis Johnson, squad president, said a new ambulance home is needed. The present building, located behind the Ti Community Building, is inadequate for the squad's needs, he said, and is a safety concern because it's difficult for the ambulance to reach the street during an emergency.

The squad has been in the same location since 1963.

When the unit formed following World War II, patients were picked up in an old hearse donated by a local funeral home.

Today, the Ti Emergency Squad has state-of-the-art ambulances, equipment and training. In fact, the Ti squad is the only North Country unit with a "thumper," an auto-pulse cardiopulmonary resuscitation device.

It's roster has more than 50 members, including 28 emergency medical technicians.