



Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association

An Association Run for and by the Membership



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Fire Fighters Announce Fund to Restore Vandalized Monument \$11,000 reward still stands for information leading to arrest, conviction

TORONTO -- Ontario's professional fire fighters today announced a \$500,000 fundraising initiative that will result in the restoration of the province's Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial, which was damaged as the result of a shocking act of vandalism earlier this year.

The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association (OPFFA) is pleased to recognize the significant contribution made by the Ontario government as part of this initiative, and the OPFFA is asking all of its members as well as other fire service stakeholders and fire equipment suppliers to contribute to the fund, as well as members of the public.

"I hope that all Ontarians will consider making a contribution to this fund, because these fire fighters gave their lives while protecting the lives and property of the public," says OPFFA President Fred LeBlanc. "We owe it to our fallen and their families to ensure that their memorial is a respectable and dignified tribute to their sacrifice."

Contributions to the Ontario Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial Restoration Fund can be made at any **TD Canada Trust branch in Ontario – account number 239 5214118**. It is hoped to have the monument restored in time for the 2009 Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial.

At around 9 p.m. on May 12, 2008, a lone male approached the monument, which is on the grounds of the Ontario Legislature at Queen's Park. He painted slogans on several of its granite walls, which are inscribed with the names of 483 full-time and volunteer fire fighters who have died in the line of duty in Ontario since 1848. This was not a random act of vandalism; the slogans were political in nature and specifically targeted fire fighters.

In June, the OPFFA, in conjunction with the International Association of Fire Fighters and the Manitoba Professional Fire Fighters Association, offered an \$11,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the individual who committed this crime. The award still stands, and anyone with information can contact the OPP.

"This monument is not just for fire fighters and our families, it's a place that all Ontarians can visit and reflect on the sacrifices made on their behalf by fire fighters who have died in the line of duty," LeBlanc says. The fundraising initiative was announced at Queen's Park Friday at a ceremony also attended by Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Rick Bartolucci, Tim Beckett of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and Dave Thomson of the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario.

"The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association is committed to seeing Ontario's Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial restored to its original condition, and we're committed to ensuring that the person responsible for vandalizing it is caught and punished," LeBlanc said. "We are grateful to anyone who helps accomplish these two important goals."

The OPFFA represents 10,000 full-time fire fighters in the province of Ontario. The OPFFA is affiliated with the Ontario Federation of Labour and the International Association of Fire Fighters, AFL-CIO, CLC.

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