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BRIGHTON VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE HOSTS RIBBON CUTTING FOR \$1.9 MILLION, 11,000 SQ. FT. BASE EXPANSION

Base remains in historic building at no additional cost to local taxpayers, thanks to NYS grants from both Robach and Morelle totaling \$500,000.

Written by Michael E. Pollock, BVA Government Liaison

BVA officials today hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for its base renovation and expansion at its current location of 1551 Winton Road, South (corner of Westfall Road). Joining BVA officials were elected officials NYS Senator Joseph E. Robach; Former NYS Assembly Majority Leader, now U.S. Congressman Joseph D. Morelle; NYS Assemblywoman-elect Jamie Romeo; Monroe County Clerk Adam Bello, and Brighton Town Supervisor William W. Moehle. Also attending was Former NYS Lieutenant Governor, now President/CEO of the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce Robert J. Duffy, along with other local government and public safety community officials.

Brighton Volunteer Ambulance President Daniel L. McCue welcomed the gathering. Included were elected and appointed officials from State and Local Government, as well as members of the "Brighton Public Safety Team" including Brighton Police, Monroe County Sheriff's Office, New York State Police, both the Brighton and Rochester Fire Departments, and the Monroe County 9-1-1 Center/Rochester Emergency Communications Department. McCue highlighted the ambulance corps' thirty-two-year history serving the town of Brighton. Founded in 1983, the first BVA ambulance responded to a call in 1986. The first BVA base was a space rented from WXXI Radio on French Road. A temporary lean-to provided cover to the single second-hand ambulance BVA had purchased. In their first year, BVA crews responded to 1,500 calls.

BVA President McCue said that the ambulance corps founders were primarily local business people from Brighton and Pittsford. They set the tone for "Financial Stewardship". Every expense was carefully scrutinized. That environment has continued through the years, Money was set aside each year, saving towards the future.

McCue said maintaining close communications with their state and local government representatives is important. BVA has an ongoing dialog with them year-round, not just talking with them at their annual banquet. BVA keeps them aware of what is happening in EMS, and keeps them informed of their needs. They often reach out to BVA for answers to constituent questions about EMS. Keeping in constant communications with BVA's other Public Safety team members and its mutual aid ambulance corps helps create seamless quality service to Brighton and the surrounding communities.

BVA Vice President and Project Management Team Director Dennis J. Mietz continued with the history of BVA. In 1987, BVA purchased the home of its current base on the corner of Winton Road, South and Westfall Road. The BVA founders carefully chose this site. They conducted time trials to different sections of town. Looking at a town map, the base is in the center of the town giving the ambulance the ability to serve its coverage area expediently.

With an ever-increasing call volume for Brighton Volunteer Ambulance, on pace to exceed 6,000 emergency calls this year, BVA had to take action. Having sufficient finances to support this project was important. An architectural firm conducted a "space study" with their wish list. After reviewing the study, including the construction and annual building operating cost analysis, the building size was reduced to something that was still livable and within their budget. However, BVA had to find more money to speed the process.

Three years ago, during BVA's annual Open House, both NYS Senator Joe Robach and Assembly Majority Leader Joe Morelle were there showing their support. After the BVA president and government officials offered their greeting, our Government Liaison Michael E. Pollock took the Senator and Assembly Majority Leader aside together and told them that BVA needed help from State of New York to make this project happen, as soon as possible. He told them that all the FEMA Federal grants favor Fire Departments. Less than 2% of the FEMA annual grants were going to Independent EMS agencies, nationally. BVA ran out of space. They did not have the room to store all of our ambulances inside during extreme heat or cold. They needed a First Aid room within the building to take blood pressures or deal with walk-in patients in a private and HIPAA-compliant fashion. Working as a team, both of these statesmen came back to BVA with a solution. They each had secured a \$250,000 NYS grant for a total of \$500,000. That NYS grant gave BVA what they needed, along with their Capital funds savings to build our new building without a mortgage and without requesting a property tax increase through the Brighton Special Ambulance Tax District for the construction.

Mietz continued say, "BVA reviewed existing studies of EMS needs for the community and conducted its own research. That information determined the needs to serve the town of Brighton now and in the future. It was determined that renovation of our existing space and expansion on our current site was the best option."

"Our new challenge was how to design a structure that would complement the existing historic Buckland-Horst House (circa 1830), improve that building's facade within landmark status guidelines and fit in with the rich history of Brighton. Additionally, the solution had to fit into our residential-zoned neighborhood. BVA initially consulted with Brighton Town Historian Mary Jo Lanphear and the local civic organization, "Historic Brighton" for their thoughts. Then teaming with our engineering/architectural firm, MRB Group a final concept was born."

BVA Vice President Mietz explained, "The Renovation portion of the project called for all work on our Buckland-Horst farmhouse to be approved in advance by the Brighton Historic Preservation Commission. This included rebuilding all existing windows, restoring the existing Greek columns on the front porch, repointing all masonry, and re-roofing the historic farmhouse in a fashion that was in use in 1830, when it was originally built. All of this work, done in a historically accurate fashion raised the cost of our project."

The renovation portion served a concept for the expansion. BVA wanted to ensure that the building reflected Brighton's agricultural history. The building needed to fit both the needs of Brighton and BVA, visually into the residential neighborhood they share and the town's history. Working as a team with the Brighton Historic Preservation Commission, the town historian and MRB Engineering, they found a solution. They already had a farmhouse. Every farm needs a barn.

The expansion project will allow BVA many benefits that will ultimately benefit the community. With all offices and crew quarters located on the first floor, the second floor will be dedicated for storage. This will allow enhanced energy-efficiency in the building. The First Aid area for walk-in patients will have greater privacy. One of BVA's most popular features for town residents, the Loan Closet that includes crutches, canes, and wheelchairs, to be relocated, near new Public entrance on Winton Rd, South.

The expansion not only benefits the community, but BVA has something to be thankful for in this special time of year. The fleet that started with one ambulance is now up to five ambulances and two Emergency Ambulance Service Vehicles, typically used by BVA paramedics (Advanced Life Support - ALS). The new garage bays have space for eight vehicles. This makes BVA compliant with NYS Department of Health & Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services standards to keep the vehicles in a temperature-controlled environment, as well as a secure area, when not in use. With additional crew workstations, an exercise room, a kitchen/dining area, administrative offices, and storage space along with the added garage space, BVA grew from a 4500 sq. ft. facility to about 11,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility. The added storage space will enable BVA to eliminate its leased offsite storage. They will continue to maintain their training center in leased space at the nearby Brookside Elementary School.

BVA Vice President Dennis Mietz spoke about the cost of this undertaking. The final cost for the renovation and new construction was \$1.9 million. BVA did not have to run a Capital Campaign or ask the town for additional funding. This money comes from a variety of sources including purposed dedicated funds from operations, public donations, bequests, and grants.

Mietz talked about the BVA "New Building Committee" with representatives from the volunteers, career staff, and the BVA Chief of EMS Operations, who had input into the building design. Working with the architects, MRB Group Engineering, the New Building Committee reviewed space needs, floor plan layout, choice of flooring materials and interior colors.

"Nichols Construction Team constructed the building", said Mietz. He went on to say, "Brighton Volunteer Ambulance is extremely pleased that with MRB Group, along with Nichols Construction Team, we were able to have our new facility designed and built by local Rochester companies. We wanted to invest the money in our local economy."

BVA Government Liaison Michael E. Pollock explained that significant grant funding was achieved for this project by fostering a close working relationship with their New York State Legislators, Senator Robach, and Assembly Majority Leader Morelle over many years. Keeping them advised on how BVA served the public and initiatives introduced to improve the level of service to the community, the agency assisted the legislators in understanding issues concerning Emergency Medical Services and the public.

Senator Joe Robach, 56th District stated, "I was proud to secure a \$250,000 grant from New York State for Brighton Volunteer Ambulance Last year, the men and women of Brighton Volunteer Ambulance responded to over 5,600 emergencies with that number increasing upward They provided countless other services to the people and families of the Town of Brighton. With this \$250,000 grant, Brighton Volunteer Ambulance was able to modernize and construct a state-of-the-art facility to better serve the people of the community. I have and will continue to be a strong supporter of Brighton Volunteer Ambulance."

Former NYS Assembly Majority Leader, now U.S. Congressman Joe Morelle addressed the gathering. He said, "Today we see a critical investment in BVA's future come to life — it provides

much-needed facility upgrades and ensures the men and women of Brighton Volunteer Ambulance are able to perform their jobs at the highest level. I am truly grateful to all of our local ambulance personnel who selflessly and courageously put themselves in harm's way to serve our community, and I am proud to have been able to secure \$250,000 in state funding to support BVA in their important work." Morelle went on to say, "As our weather changes, we remember the many devastating storms and weather events we've experienced in recent years. We are reminded of how crucial our volunteer first responders are in times of crisis. We are blessed to have such devoted individuals we can count on in times of need."

Bob Duffy, President/CEO of Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce and Co-Chair of the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council congratulated BVA on their expansion. "I know from my time with the Rochester Police Department that having the proper tools is critical to carrying out the mission of first responders," said Duffy. "This new base will prove to be an excellent resource for BVA Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce is proud of the incredible contributions BVA makes to the region. Investment in local organizations like BVA is an investment in the success of our community. "

Brighton Town Supervisor William W. Moehle addressed those gathered saying, "The Town of Brighton is grateful to Senator Joe Robach and Congressman Joe Morelle for their help and support in securing funding for the cost of an important addition to the headquarters of Brighton Volunteer Ambulance."

"BVA has been an outstanding steward of the landmark property at 1551 Winton Road, South that serves as their headquarters. From this location, BVA provides high quality emergency medical service throughout Brighton. The expansion space enhances BVA's capabilities and support increasing call volumes. "

A traditional ribbon cutting ceremony took place. It included Congressman Joe Morelle, NYS Senator Joe Robach, Brighton Town Supervisor William W. Moehle, BVA President Daniel L. McCue, BVA Vice President Dennis J. Mietz along with BVA New Building Committee members: Michael E. Pollock, Xanthia R. Garcia, and Susie Hares. BVA Chief of EMS Operations Cody Dean and BVA Business Manager Barbara Sforza each supported the ends of the traditional ribbon, like the columns of support they are each day at BVA.

Brighton Volunteer Ambulance President McCue expressed gratitude on behalf of the ambulance corps. "We are fortunate to have garnered such great support from our state and local officials, as well as our community. Our volunteer and career members will continue to be leaders in Emergency Medical Services and providing premier prehospital care. We take pride in being part of the Brighton public safety team."