

Bayside Name Change Will Honor First Fire Chief

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The Bayside Fire Training Center is getting a new name. Last night the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly voted unanimously in favor of renaming the center to the Earl Smith Jr. Memorial Fire Training Center.

Earl Smith Jr. was the first fire chief at Bayside in 1983, and, according to a borough resolution, was instrumental in recruiting and training volunteers. Smith also played a key role in funding the construction of the Bayside Community Training Center and Fire Training Center.

The assembly held a public hearing on the name change, and Scott Arndt spoke in favor of it. Arndt said he had the pleasure of serving on the Fire Protection Service Area No. 1 Board during Smith's tenure.

"He was a mentor to many current and past firefighters and officers at Bayside. I think this is very fitting. And well deserved."

Assemblyman Tuck Bonney said he also knew Smith very well.

In 1998 Smith moved to Lemmon, South Dakota, and battled cancer in the years that followed. He passed away in February and Bonney said he would fully support memorializing him in the name change.

"I don't think there'd be anything better that we could honor him by but by doing this. Because the person that I knew in him certainly deserves it."

Borough Manager Bud Cassidy said there will be a dedication ceremony at the training center on Memorial Day 2014. Arndt said he believed Smith's wife, Donna, will travel back to Kodiak with Smith's family for that dedication ceremony.