

PRESS RELEASE

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MANISTEE FIRE STATION DECLARED WORLD'S OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY MANNED OPERATING FIRE STATION BY GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

June 17 Announcement Falls on Fire Station's 130th Anniversary During Manistee's 150th Year as a City

MANISTEE, Mich. – *June 17, 2019* – Today's announcement in Manistee was more than two years in the making and 130 years of proof. The Manistee Fire Station at 281 First Street was awarded the title for *Oldest Continuously Manned Operating Fire Station* by Guinness World Records at a dedication event at the fire station that included community leaders and media.

The Manistee Fire Station's recognition of Oldest Continuously Manned Operating Fire Station is the first time Guinness World Records has ever made this award designation – one that required the Manistee Fire Department to prove it has not only been in operation but also staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year as a fully manned, paid professional fire department since it opened June 17, 1889.

"Today, we get to take a look back in time at our fire station and the inception of our fire department," said Manistee Fire Chief Tim Kozal, who kicked off the dedication event. "Chief Fleissner opened the doors of this station 130 years ago. One can only imagine the stories, the training, the sleepless nights and how they communicated shaped the fire department."

Kozal welcomed the audience to the event and thanked attendees, then introduced Mark Fedder, executive director of the Manistee County Historical Museum, who assisted in locating documentation in the museum's archives to prove that the Manistee Fire Station has been continuously in operation since it opened in 1889.

"I would like to congratulate the City of Manistee, the Fire Department, and Fred LaPoint for this monumental achievement," said Fedder. "It's really something unique. The Manistee community has always been proud of this building and its firefighters, and this designation makes it all the more special."

Kozal then presented the final speaker, Manistee engineer paramedic Fred LaPoint, who joined Manistee Fire Department in 1979 and spearheaded the world record project. Not long after Kozal joined the City of Manistee in April 2017 as the director of public safety, LaPoint came to him with the idea of pursuing a world record for the fire station. "I can still recall when Fred first discussed the history of the fire department and what he had on his mind," said Kozal. "I was intrigued and asked Fred if he wanted to tackle it. Here we are more than two years later. Fred *did* tackle it. I am very proud of Fred and his diligence to the cause."

LaPoint spoke about his passion for the project: "A little over two years ago, I embarked upon a task which for me has been a labor of love. It was and remains a way for me to pay it forward to my brother and sister firefighters and to my community, which I have been honored to be able to serve these past 40 years."

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LaPoint sent an initial submission to Guinness World Records in January 2017 to get the organization to create a category for Oldest Continuously Manned Operating Fire Station. Once the category was established, he began the official application process in earnest in July 2017, spending hundreds of hours sifting through archives from the library and historical museum in order to prove that the fire station was open and staffed every day for 130 years. In total, the application consisted of thousands of pages of text, hundreds of photos, and 25-plus audio/video files totaling approximately two gigabytes of data.

The dedication event culminated with LaPoint pulling a drape off of a new sign with the Manistee Fire Station's world record designation, which will be mounted outside of the fire station. Attendees then took tours of the fire station afterward.

"This day marks an important milestone not only of our fire department, but for this fire station and the community it serves," said LaPoint. "The Manistee Fire Station continues to tell the stories and carry the memories of all the firefighters who came before, including those currently serving and those who will serve in the future. Historic places like the Manistee Fire Station matter because they give us a deeper appreciation and understanding of our past in a way that written documents can't. This plaque not only recognizes this incredible milestone, but is also a tribute to the many people and organizations that helped in so many ways to make this accomplishment possible."

The Manistee Fire Station received its world record designation on its 130th anniversary as a fire station.

About the Manistee Fire Station

The Manistee Fire Department has proudly served the citizens of Manistee County since its formation in 1869 when the City of Manistee was formed, The current fire station building opening its doors June 17, 1889 and has been operating 24 hours a day, 365 days per year for 130 years. Tours of the Manistee Fire Station are available by appointment upon request by contacting (231) 723-1549. For more information, visit manisteemi.gov/129/Fire-EMS.

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Photos and Video

- Historic Manistee Fire Station photos plus photos of the June 17 dedication event are available for download [from this folder](#). *PLEASE CREDIT RESPECTIVE SOURCES IN PHOTO TITLES.*
- [4:14-minute video of Manistee Fire Station](#) prepared as part of Guinness World Record submittal. *CREDIT MMHS (Manistee Middle High School) Video Production*
- [Historic photos and video](#) about the Manistee Fire Station as part of Manistee Historic Sites Tour. *CREDIT Manistee County Visitors Bureau*