

# New fire engine arrives at Aptos station

By BOB SMITH

STAFF WRITER

He paid \$220,000 for it as the price to build Santa Cruz County's newest resort.

Yesterday, Chuck Holcomb, of the Holcomb Corp., got his first official look at what his money paid for — a brand-new, lime-green fire engine that will become the mainstay of the Aptos-La Selva fire department.

Purchasing a new fire engine was one of the conditions imposed on Holcomb by Santa Cruz County a couple of years ago when it finally gave him permission to build the Seascape Resort and Conference Center, with million-dollar views of the Monterey Bay, on the benchlands.

The rationale at the time was that the conference center, the largest complex in the district and perhaps in Midcounty, would put an unacceptable strain on the community's fire-fighting resources without some help.

The resort's planning and construction was held up for 17

years by community controversy that included a law suit, environmental reviews, general plan and zoning changes, and a couple of changes in property ownership.

What the department got is a 1,500-gallon-per-minute Seagrave pumper equipped with paramedic lifesaving gear that will be housed at Station One, on Soquel Drive next to Mar Vista elementary school.

Aptos-La Selva Fire Chief Chuck Mornard said yesterday that the Holcomb engine was assigned to Station One because it's the newest, meets the latest federal safety standards of having a fully enclosed cab, and will be used for any out-of-district assignments such as the strike teams that are formed for major fires in Northern and Central California.

The special paramedic equipment can be taken off the engine in 30 seconds and the gear that the traveling firefighters need — sleeping bags, food, water — loaded in just a few minutes.

Aptos/La Selva firefighters will be walking through the resort for the next few days, familiarizing themselves with the layout of the complex, the fire alarms, sprinkler systems, hydrants, exits and evacuation routes.

When they arrived for their first walk-through yesterday, they were greeted by a little bit of Holcomb humor — a brilliantly polished, solid brass fire plug on the street in front of the hotel entrance.

The conference center, which opened last month, has 28 studio suites, 56 one-bedroom suites, seven conference rooms, a restaurant and bar, a spa, underground parking and paths to the beach.

Phase II, scheduled for completion next year, will add 82 two-bedroom suites and Phase III will add 114 two- and three-bedroom suites in 1996.

The resort offers an unusual form of condominium ownership: Hotel suites are privately owned with owners allowed to stay 90 days of the year. The remainder of the year, the units

are rented to vacationers and conference attendees. Current unit prices range from \$165,000 to \$195,000. Nearly two-thirds are under contract to be sold.

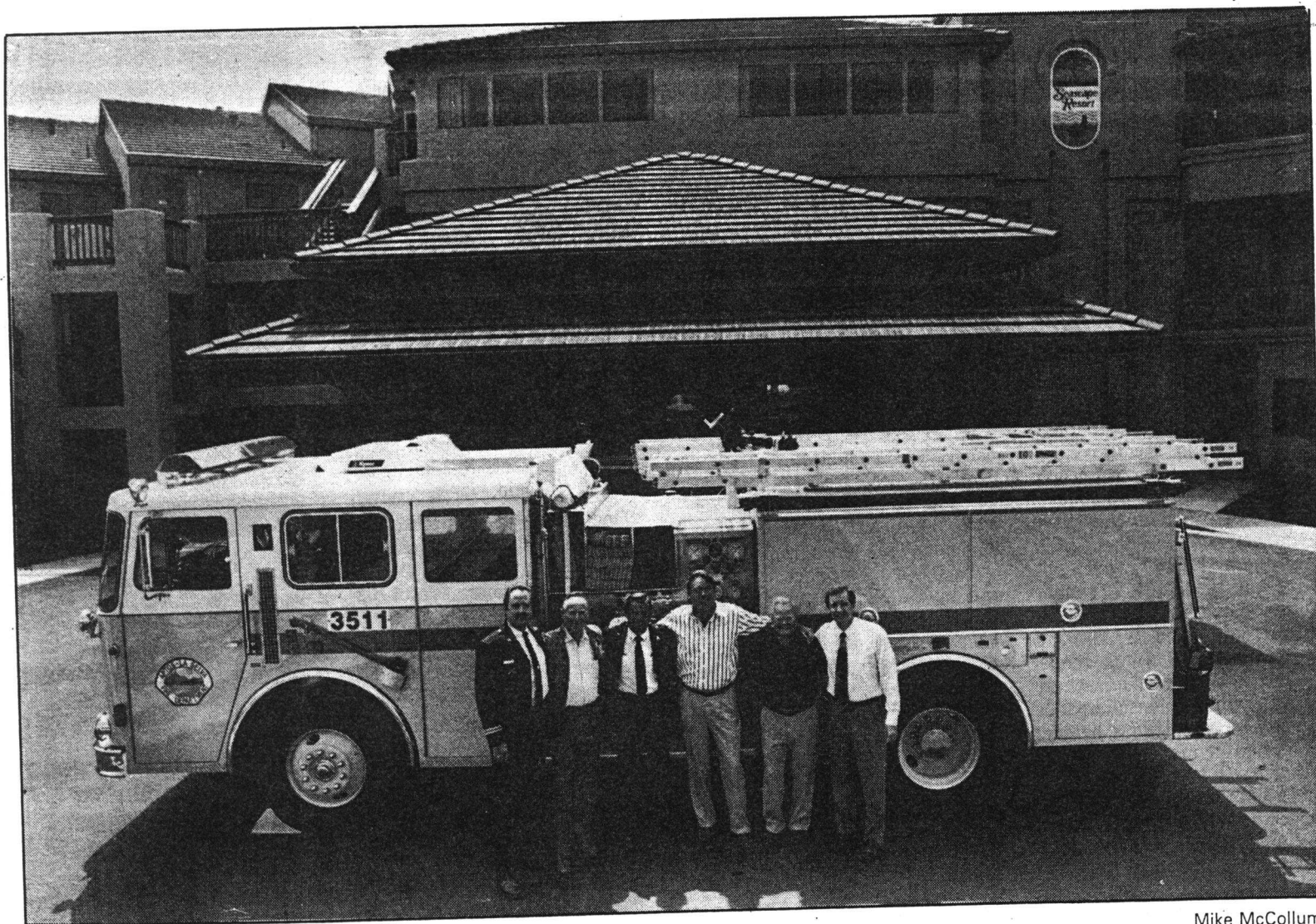
Each suite has a fireplace, balcony, ocean view, fully equipped kitchenette, cable television, daily maid service and phone with voice mail and modem port.

About 100 people work at the \$30 million resort, said spokeswoman Patty Smith, with a yearly payroll of \$2.5 million.

General manager is Jim Maggio with 21 years of hotel experience, the last 12 at Pajaro Dunes. He and his family have lived in Aptos for the last nine years.

Food and beverage manager Hector Herrera, who has 30 years experience in the industry, came here from the Sequoia Conference Center in Buena Park. Executive chef is Dwight Collins, a certified executive chef.

The resort serves lunch, dinner and Sunday brunch and will begin serving breakfast Sept. 1.



Mike McCollum

Welcoming the new Aptos-La Selva engine yesterday are, from left, Deputy Fire Chief Philip Scofield; Chuck Holcomb, chairman of the Holcomb Corp., which purchased the engine; Chief

Chuck Mornard; Mark Holcomb, president of Holcomb Corp.; Don Griffin, fire board member; and Jim Maggio, general manager of Holcomb Corp.'s Seascape Resort and Conference Center.