South Tahoe adds ladder truck to fire fleet

South Lake Tahoe's ladder truck is the fire department's newest piece of equipment. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

A million dollar truck is rolling around South Lake Tahoe. It's the fire department's ladder truck.

The old ladder truck was so decrepit it was taken out of service in 2012. The city has possession of the new one, but a few things still need to be done before it hits the streets.

"There will be extensive training, installation of radios and equipment and fire station 2 needs to be remodeled to account for its size; it's a bit over 48-feet-long," Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Our folks will get lots of drivers training before she goes into service."

South Tahoe has been able to rely on neighboring agencies in

the interim. It was Tahoe Douglas Fire that supplied the ladder truck when the house went up in flames on Pioneer Trail in April 2012.

One of the conditions in the original contract for the Chateau project near Stateline was to be able to provide adequate fire protection. This meant the city had to have a ladder truck. It did when the contract was signed.

Ladder trucks tend to have a lifespan of 15 years. South Tahoe doubled that number with its last truck. But it was also costing the city about $100,000 in annual maintenance costs. And then it got to the point where parts were no longer available.

It's possible with better equipment and improvements being made to South Tahoe Public Utility District and Lukins Brothers Water District water lines that the city's ISO rating could improve.

ISO provides advisory services and information to many insurance companies.

In March 2012, the city received an ISO rating of four. This is out of nine, with one being the best.

"For a city our size, four is very good. This rate has little affect on homeowners insurance. It's more about commercial rates for businesses," Meston said. "We could add staff to improve the rating, but that is costly."

Ratings are done about every six years.