

Legeros Fire Blog Archives 2006-2015 - American LaFrance « Chapel Hill Fire Appa... » Big City Black Fire C... Closes (and Other Notes)

American LaFrance Closes (and Other Notes)

01/19/14 527 W - + 7 - 2

As many have already heard, American LaFrance released this statement Friday, saying that its closed its warehouse, production, and service facilities in Monks Corner (SC), Ephrata (PA), and Los Angeles. This was a last-minute announcement, as employees were reported notified at 5:00 p.m. of the news. This was the company's statement, reported in this [WCSC story](#):

American LaFrance, LLC, the manufacturer of fire, rescue and vocational vehicles, announced Friday the closing of its warehouse, production and service facilities in Monks Corner, SC Ephrata, PA and Los Angeles.

The company is advising its customers that they will be able to continue obtaining replacement parts and service for vehicles manufactured by American LaFrance from a new third party vendor. American LaFrance will contact customers with information about where they can obtain parts and service for their vehicles in the near future.

Unfortunately, the company's unexpected current financial condition requires the discontinuation of operations in these locations at this time and these facilities are not expected to reopen.

American LaFrance can trace its corporate roots back to 1832, just a hair over 180 years ago! The LaFrance Fire Engine Company was formed in 1880, and the American Fire Engine Company was formed in 1891. The merged company was named in 1904.

What's the historical perspective of other current of former major apparatus manufacturers? Here are some notes as pulled from Walt McCall's *Illustrated Encyclopedia of American Fire Engine Manufacturers*, published in 2007.

Looks like the late 1980s and early 1990s were a tough time for the industry, with what the author describes as brutal competition among American apparatus manufacturers. Readers can perhaps elaborate on my cursory take below. Apologies if one of your favorite companies was omitted.

Company	Start	Stop	Reason For Closing	Notes
Ahrens-Fox	1905	1956	Market for piston pumpers shrank, corporate shake-ups, etc.	Name resurrected in 2002, added to HME.
American LaFrance	1904	2013	Financial troubles, including bankruptcy for debt service six years ago.	
Boyer	1879	1988	"One of the victims of the upheaval in the brutally-competitive industry in the 1980s.	
Crown	1951	1985	?	
FWD	1910	1990, by	Merged into Seagrave, but the name FWD stopped appearing by 1990.	
Grumman	1976	1992	Competition too high, profits too low. [Stock answer.]	Rights to products acquired by KME in 1992.
Hahn	1913	1989	Found itself in financial difficulty at the end of 1980s.	
Howe	1872	1992	Sold to Grumman in 1976.	
John Bean/FMC	1915	1990	?	Didn't formally enter fire apparatus market until mid 1940s.
Luverne	1903	2003	Purchased by Spartan, merged into company along with Quality	
Mack	1901	1990	Competition too high, profits too low. [Stock answer.]	Changed to chassis-only in 1984.
Maxim	1914	1989	Competition too high, profits too low. [Stock answer.]	
Oren	1917	1976	Sold to Grumman in 1976.	

Imperial/Pemfab	1970	1997	Imperial sold to Pemfab in 1976. Pemfab sold its assets in 1997 to a company that later sold them to KME.	
Pirsch	1900	1991	Competition too high, profits too low. [Stock answer.]	
Quality	1962	2002	Merged into Spartan.	
Salisbury	1958	2004	?	Bought by Federal Signal Corporation in 1998, which also owned E-One.
Van Pelt	1925	1987	?	Purchased by FMC in 1978.
Walter	1909	1987	Sold to KME in 1987.	
Ward LaFrance	1918	1979	Competition too high, profits too low. [Stock answer.]	
Young	1944	1991	Competition too high, profits too low. [Stock answer.]	

Don't forget about American Fire apparatus

sleepingdog ([Email](#)) - 01/19/14 - 11:02

American Fire Apparatus had two incarnations...sort of. There was the American Fire Apparatus that built trucks used by, amongst others, Six Forks Rd VFD and Western Boulevard/Fairground FD. Later, there was an incarnation that was based in Ball Ground, GA, owned by the same man that owned Harold's Fire Equipment. Wilson's Mills has/had one of theirs.

And of course, there is Atlas/EEI.

DJ - 01/19/14 - 12:31

Forgetting Boardman Fire Apparatus 1929-1999 purchased by Freightliner and turned into ALF.

stretch - 01/19/14 - 13:41

End of an icon. Feel sorry for the folks who lost a job on short notice

charlie h - 01/20/14 - 15:32

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To prevent spam we require you to answer this silly question

What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

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