

## Michigan Fire Company Puts Spencer Fire Truck in Service

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By [Alan M. Petrillo](#)

Bear Lake Township (MI) Fire Department had a 1978 front-mount pumper that badly needed to be replaced, so when the township put its vehicle replacement plan in action and the citizenry voted to approve it, Bear Lake Township's chief quickly got started on deciding what the new rig should look like.

"We made a short specification list of what we definitely wanted on the new pumper," Sean Adams, Bear Lake's chief, says. "We put that short spec list out to 16 vendors and got 14 replies of interest. Then we drew up the full specs and narrowed the vendors down to six. We received four bids and went with Spencer Manufacturing for several reasons."

Adams notes the main reasons the Bear Lake truck committee chose Spencer are that "it's a Michigan-based company, and also the cab and chassis comes from a Michigan company. Second, they came in with the most reasonable price. And third, Spencer was very responsive to us on our questions, needs and clarifications."

The resulting fire truck is built on a Spartan Metro Star cab and chassis, with a Cummins 400-hp ISL9 engine, an Allison 3000 EVS automatic transmission, a Hale QFlo Plus 1,250-gallon-per-minute (gpm) pump, an APR 1,000-gallon polypropylene water tank, a 20-gallon foam cell, and a Hale Foam Logix 2.1 single-agent foam system.

The Bear Lake Township Fire Department operates out of one station with 16 volunteer firefighters, protecting approximately 60 square miles of mostly residential and some commercial properties on Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula. Adams says the department runs an average of 200 calls a year for fire protection, rescue, and first-response emergency medical services (EMS) for a population of approximately 2,400.

The department's other fire apparatus include a 2000 Darley pumper with a 1,500-gpm pump, 1,000-gallon water tank, and compressed air foam system (CAFS); a 1987 Ford commercial chassis water tender (tanker) with a 2,000-gallon water tank; a 1987 GMC wildland vehicle with a 200-gpm Darley skid unit pump, 200-gallon water tank, and five-gallon foam tank; a Kubota utility terrain vehicle (UTV) with a 100-gpm skid unit pump, a 75-gallon water tank, and a two-gallon foam tank; a 12-foot rescue boat; and a 1997 medium-duty non-transport light rescue-ambulance.

Steve Buckner, the salesman who sold the pumper to Bear Lake Township, said he brought the department a Spartan demo chassis that had on-the-floor heating in the cab, as well as

electric and heated windows. "Those things are important in their area of the country," Buckner observes, "and the committee liked those options in the vehicle."

Buckner says the Spencer-built pumper has a wheelbase of 190 inches; an overall length of 32 feet, two inches; an overall height of nine feet, seven inches; and a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 40,000 pounds. Price on the pumper without equipment was \$384,577.

Grant Spencer, general manager of Spencer Manufacturing, says the pumper has two 1¼-inch crosslays of 200 feet each, and one 2½-inch crosslay of 200 feet near the midship pump house, and a 100-foot 1¼-inch hoseline in the front bumper, where a Federal Q2B siren also is located.

Spencer notes that Bear Lake Township chose to have Whelen 600 series **LED warning lighting** on the vehicle, along with a small LED Golight on the front, a Whelen LED single-housing brow light with dual Pioneer LEDs, four Fire Research Corp. Spectra 900 LED scene lights (two on each side), and four Fire Research Corp. telescoping LED lights (two on the back of the cab and two at the rear of the pumper). He adds that the pumper's complement of ground ladders is stored through the water tank, and that it has a rear folding access ladder that Spencer Manufacturing custom built.

Adams says that LED lighting was a main requirement of Bear Lake Township's specs. "We wanted low electrical needs so we didn't have to put a generator on the pumper, but we didn't want to give up lots of lighting," he says. "Other than the headlights, every light on the vehicle is a LED."

The pumper also carries two hoppers in the dunnage area above the pump house, one for ice-melting salt and the other for oil dry litter. "There's a port on each side under the truck where a chute is located," Adams says. "You put a shovel under it and an air-activated switch gives you the material."

Because the department does a lot of drafting, Bear Lake Township added a video screen on the pump panel that links to the pumper's back-up camera. "We do a lot of rear intake drafting," Adams points out, "so it allows the operator to see how the drop tank is doing as far as its water level. We also have large LED water level gauges on the driver and officer sides, and at the rear of the pumper, so it's easy to tell how much water is left in the tank."

Adams says the department's firefighters are very satisfied with the new pumper. "It's very maneuverable, has a good turning radius, is well balanced, and is a comfortable ride on the road," he notes. "We're very happy with it; it has performed above our expectations."

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