



## **WESTON CHOOSES 22 YEAR VETERAN TO LEAD FIRE DEPARTMENT**

September 19, 2008

**WESTON** – The Village of Weston Public Safety Committee has unanimously selected **Steven C. Meilahn** to be its next full-time fire chief effective October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Chief Meilahn will be paid \$60,000 per year.

**Meilahn, 46**, is a charter member of the Weston Fire Department having helped form the organization in 1986. During his tenure, Meilahn has served in every capacity in the fire department including volunteer chief from 1990-95. He currently holds the rank of Volunteer Captain and is a licensed EMT-IV Tech. As a bonus, Chief Meilahn also serves as a Certified Fire Instructor I at both North Central Technical College and Nicolet College. He is currently employed as a Detective Sergeant with the Everest Metro Police Department, where he is an expert in fire investigation and computer crime.

“We received fourteen applications and interviewed three very qualified candidates for the position. On skill set alone, any of the three finalists would have done an excellent job for Weston. In the end, it was Chief Meilahn’s internal support from his fellow firefighters, resounding endorsement from surrounding mutual aid fire departments, and his passion for Weston that tipped the scale in his favor”, said Public Safety Committee Chairman and former Fire Chief Loren White.

In the interview, Meilahn stated that it was his intent to continue to build relationships between paid on-call and full-time members, improve unified training, and to make Weston the best fire department in the greater Wausau area.

“I want to continue the systems improvement work begun by Chief Pierce and bring pride back to the firehouse”, said Meilahn in his interview.

This is good news for the current employees of the Weston Fire Department who have experienced a fair share of change in the last four years beginning with the hiring of their first full-time chief, converting to 24 hour a day / seven day a week fire service, and adapting to a new medical direction provided by St. Clare’s Hospital.

**“Members of the department are very excited. Steve has all of our respect”, said full-time WFD Lieutenant Evan McBain.**

Meilahn’s twenty year record with the department and his commitment to improve his skills and the skills of others in the fire service also played a key role in the decision.

“Steve has been one of our most dedicated firefighter/ EMTs since the beginning of the department. His ability to fight fires is unparalleled in the area and he has been instrumental in the purchase / maintenance of key equipment like our engine and shared aerial. Couple this with the fact that he has trained just about every volunteer fire fighter in the area and our choice became clear on who our next Chief would be”, said Public Safety Committee Member Karen Schmutzler.

One of Meilahn’s first tasks will be to implement Weston’s new arrangement with Ministry Health Care and Aspirus Hospital to provide Advance Life Support (ALS) paramedic intercept service to Weston taxpayers. The Weston Fire Department currently handles over 900 ambulance calls per year.

“My philosophy on emergency medical services is simple: stabilize the patient and deliver them safely to the health care experts in our two very fine emergency rooms. It is my opinion that paramedic intercept from both hospitals gives us the best opportunity to respond quickly and effectively to any medical emergency and give our taxpayers the best care possible under seven minutes”, said Meilahn.