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Tuesday, November 2, 2010

# Saying goodbye to old quarters

## New Holden complex set to open



Members of the police honor guard raise a flag at the new public safety complex at 1370 Main St. yesterday. (T&G Staff Photos/JIM COLLINS)

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**HOLDEN** — It was an occasion both solemn and

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joyous.

It marked the impending shuttering of the cramped 32-year-old police station and the 55-year-old fire station, with all their funny and sad stories. It celebrated the opening — scheduled for Nov. 20 — of the new public safety complex with all its technological possibilities and spaciousness for the efficiency and comfort the Police and Fire departments have been looking for.

So yesterday, the Holden police honor guard took down the American flags flying over their own department and the Fire Department. And, in a bitter-sweet moment, a flag that had been flying over the Police Department commemorating fallen police officers was presented to Pamela Mortell, widow of Paxton Police Chief Robert J. Mortell, who was slain Feb. 1, 1994, while chasing three robbery suspects in the woods off Route 31 here in town. Their daughter Erin and grandson Cameron were there, too.

The complex, built for about \$2 million less than the \$15.5 million authorized, "begins a new chapter of public safety" in town, said Christopher Luchessi, chairman of the building committee. Indeed, he is the chairman of the third building committee that sought to bring Holden police and fire into the 21st century.

Town meeting turned down two proposals for such a complex before the current one was approved, and both Mr. Luchessi and David J. White, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, paid tribute to all three building committees.

As District Attorney Joseph D. Early Jr. looked on, U.S. Rep. James P. McGovern, D-Worcester, praised the town voters for approving the complex.

Then, accompanied by the Worcester Police Department's Pipes and Drums, they marched about a tenth of a mile to raise a 5-foot-by-8-foot flag over the 38,000-square-foot complex at 1370 Main St.

The officers will no longer have to squeeze into school desks just to attend meetings and training sessions in whatever school the chief was able to book for the occasion.

And the Fire Department will move its 18-full-time members, 50 call firefighters and five engines — including one that arrived in August and is being housed off-site because it won't fit into the old fire station next door to the new complex, said fire chief Jack Chandler.

The whole move is nothing new to Albert Bourget. It will be the third police station in town since the 64-year-old detective joined the department in 1974.

His first station was in a house at Main and Highland streets. It was so small that police took the people they arrested — the ones they didn't take home to be dealt with by their parents — to the Worcester Police Department to await arraignment in Central District Court.

Holden police have been housing their own prisoners since the previous station opened in 1978. And Detective Bourget's son Jonathan and daughter Janet — both patrolmen — now take their prisoners to Leominster District Court.

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Holden police Officer Jason Consiglio with his 1-year-old son, Cameron.  
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