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Local business to donate resources to fire station renovation

By: RACHEL ALLOCCO - For the North County Times

Appalled by the working and living conditions suffered by the men and women of Rancho Bernardo Fire Station 33, Dream Design Builders president Jay Riordan said he will donate his resources and time to help renovate the fire house's kitchen and eating area.

The kitchen at RB Fire Station 33 is cramped, with water-damaged cabinets and a refrigerator that takes up much of the small room's space, officials said. The holes in the walls, that were necessary to repair flood damage, provide easy access for rats to enter the building. According to Fire Captain Jeff Larson, crew members are barely able to cook a meal in the dilapidated kitchen, much less sit down to enjoy their meals or relax.

"It's cramped in here," Larson said. "We bump into each other all day and just do what we can to deal and just make it happen."

In an effort to aid living conditions, the Rancho Bernardo Community Council is raising funds to repair the 48-year-old building. Dream Design Builders has pledged to help the council renovate the station's kitchen at the company's expense, so that the firefighters will have a place to enjoy their meals and relax.

"Jay Riordan has plans to contribute quite a bit," said Maria Keith, chairwoman for advertising and marketing for the council. "Dream Design Builders is going to remodel the kitchen and Jay and others are going to do the work on it."

The fire station, at 16966 Bernardo Center Drive, was designed in 1969 to house one fire engine and a three-man crew. Today, the station houses a six-man crew, two engines and a paramedic vehicle, adding to the tightness of the living quarters.

"It's unbelievable that the community would step up and see the conditions we're living in and work to make a difference," said Larson. "It's very flattering."

The Rancho Bernardo Community Council will be holding a tile-painting fundraiser at the Westwood Club, 17394 W. Bernardo Drive, Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. There is a \$20 donation per tile and refreshments and music will be provided.