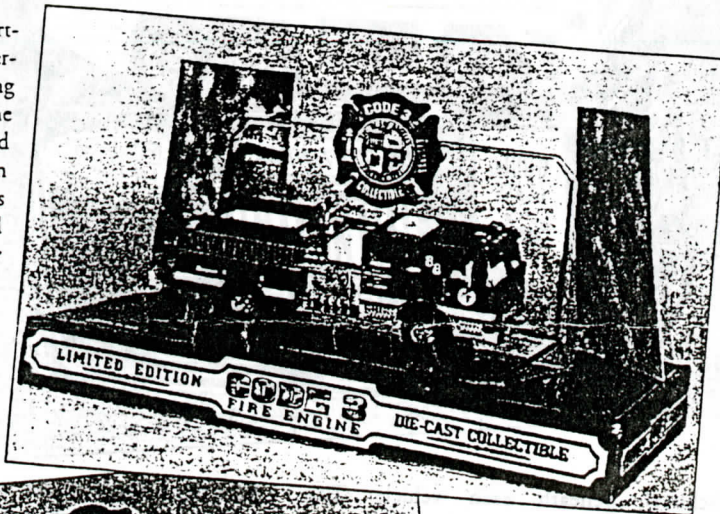


The Little

Engine House

By Larry Phillips

The 69th Fire Department Instructor's Conference, held this year during the week of April 14 at the RCA Dome and Convention Center in Indianapolis, Indiana, is now history. Sponsored for the first time by *Fire Engineering Magazine* (a Penwell Publication), a record number of fire chiefs, fire officers and fire instructors from all over the world converged on downtown



*Code Three Collectibles
1/64 scale Los Angeles
City Fire Department
Pumpers.*



Indianapolis to view and work with the very latest in firefighting technology, be it a simple, new hand tool or a state-of-the-art piece of fire apparatus.

Sunday, April 20 was Buff's Day at the conference (F.D.I.C.) and it was an absolute pleasure to meet so many *Toy Trucker & Contractor* subscribers from all different parts of the country. It's very reassuring to know that this column is not only read by many, many people, but that it is also used as a very viable information resource within the hobby.

There is no doubt which company stole the show during Buff's Day at F.D.I.C. this year. Code Three Collectibles in California shipped five of their new 1/64 Seagrave die-cast models to Little Engine House Advisory Board Member Bill Craven, who then made a revolving display stand that attracted everyone that came into the area to come over and take a look at their brand-new product.

Comments from the multitudes of observers ranged from just short of a cardiac arrest to "I'll give you a hundred bucks for that one..."

One comment, though, in reality, was that Code Three Collectibles reproduced the exact same pump panel configuration on both sides of the rig. A quick call to Code Three Collectibles brought this response: "There are some areas, like the pump panel, that were designed for individual modification. Specific tooling changes will be made on the New York City (F.D.N.Y.) Seagrave Pumper, scheduled for release in November."

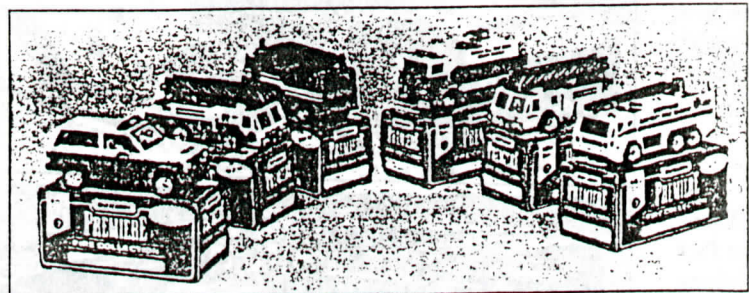
And, for those of you that may need a quick refresher, the Code Three Collectibles 1/64 scale Seagrave announced line-up for 1997 includes Los Angeles City for April release; Houston for July; Philadelphia for

September and New York City (F.D.N.Y.) for November. Also slated for release this year are Louisville and Honolulu, but no months are given for them yet. There will possibly be even more additional 1997 releases according to Funrise, and you'll read those here first when they are announced. I can tell you that one of America's largest retailers will be offering a special package release of the Seagrave pumper during this year's holiday season, and I'll let you in on that one when I can.

As I mentioned last month, the very first release of Code Three Collectibles 1/64 Seagrave will be 5,000 pieces each of five different Los Angeles City Fire Department Engine Company numbers (25,000 pieces total). Those done in the color red will be L.A. City Engines 18, 39, 88 and 90. The single piece done in the color yellow will be for L.A. City Engine 51. My sources at Code Three Collectibles tell me that the L.A. Seagrave will be packed twelve to a case, and there will be at least one full set of all five engine company numbers per case. Again, the cost will be around \$20-\$30 each, and the detail on these more than justifies that price figure. These are not toys, and were never meant to be. Funrise has created a whole new division for themselves in the collectible line, and I just wish I could tell you now what will be coming from them in the future. One thing I can guarantee our hobby at this time—you will not be disappointed.

By the time you read this, the Los Angeles City versions of the Code Three Collectibles Seagrave should be available in the stores. But, if the interest shown in them in Indianapolis is any indication as to their intended popularity, I wouldn't waste even one second to get your set just as soon as you possibly can.

The Matchbox Premiere Series of fire engines seems to now be available nationally, but they are in limited supply. From what I understand, these are delivered to the stores in cases of



*Matchbox Premiere Fire
Collection.*

twelve, and there should be at least one set of six per case. I've checked myself and found two complete sets per case at times, but the majority of the cases only have one complete set and six assorted of the others in no random quantities.

The set of six consists of the Airport Fire Tender (MB-8) in yellow with a black base, black interior, dark blue windows, silver-grey ladder, chrome wheels with rubber tires and is lettered for the Westford Airport Fire Rescue; Aerial Ladder Fire Engine (MB-18) in white over red with a silver base, dark blue windows, silver-grey ladder and chrome wheels with rubber tires and is lettered for the Springfield Fire Department "gold-leafed" for Ladder Company No. 5; Aerial Ladder Fire Engine (MB-18-A) in white over yellow with a silver base, dark blue windows, silver-grey ladder and chrome wheels with rubber tires and is lettered for the Bay District Fire Department, Ladder No. 3; Jeep Cherokee (MB-27) in white over red with a black base, grey interior, clear windows, a blue light bar and is lettered "Fire Chief"; Mack Rescue Truck (MB-57) in white over red with a chrome base, red windows with a red light bar, chrome wheels with rubber tires and is lettered Acorn Hill Fire Department Heavy Rescue in black letters on the top sides of the white rear rescue box; and, the Snorkel Truck (MB-63) in red with a black base, blue windows and beacon ray lights, black interior, and a silver-grey snorkel boom lettered Richfield Fire Department in black lettering.

Little Engine House Advisory Board Member Bill Weis in East Providence, Rhode Island, reported that a sharp-eyed Matchbox collector with access to the Internet posted a notice which stated that the MB-8 Crash Truck was lettered Westford Airport Fire Rescue, while its box was labeled Westfield Airport Fire Truck. All the other Premiere Series Fire Collection boxes, however, match the individual vehicles inside.

The Matchbox Premiere Series Fire Collection (as it's officially referred to by Matchbox) is packaged on individual blister cards (a yellow oval printed right above each vehicle on the card clearly states that this is a limited edition and is one of 25,000 vehicles produced) with a very attractive, red in color plastic-coated



*It says
Westford on
the truck
Westfield on
the box!*

"Matchbox" beneath each vehicle. The "Matchboxes" are plastic-coated, which makes one to believe that Matchbox wanted the boxes to be a bit more "high-class" than normal as well. There are nine different series of the Matchbox Premiere vehicles available, with only the one fire collection being released so far. What's interesting, though, is that Matchbox has also released six Premiere Police Cars as well (Virginia State Police-Ford LTD; Florida Highway Patrol-Ford LTD; New Jersey State Police-Ford LTD; California Highway Patrol-Chevrolet Camaro; New York State Police - Chevrolet Camaro; and Texas Highway Patrol-Chevrolet Camaro) and it is unknown if we will see Matchbox go the route with all fifty states in their Premiere Police Series as Road Champs is doing with their series.

Even though the individual pieces retail for either \$2.99 or \$3.99 each depending upon where you shop, Little Engine House Advisory Board Member Jack Gerhart in Pennsylvania reported complete sets of six being sold by dealers for as high as \$40 at the Spring Thaw in

Allentown, Pennsylvania in April. I noticed complete sets of six selling from a low of \$38 to a high of \$45 at the F.D.I.C. in Indianapolis, with individual pieces selling for \$10 each if you could find them. Needless to say, there weren't too many dealers in a hurry to break up their sets for individual sales.

Again, the word to the wise is to buy them now while you can, due to the tremendous popularity of both Matchbox and Hot Wheels vehicles amongst their respective collectors.

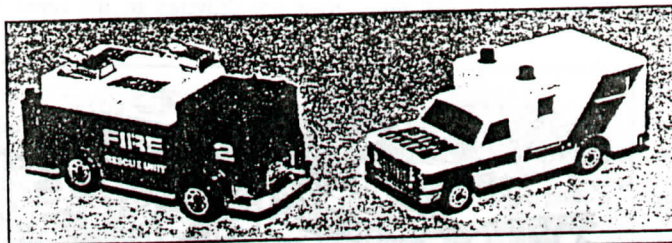
Two additional versions of still available Matchbox emergency vehicles have been reported. The Modular Ambulance (MB-25) and the Mack Rescue Truck (MB-57) are now available with the Matchbox "Action Systems" logo printed on them. The modular ambulance is painted white with red and blue markings, while the Mack Rescue Truck is red with white and blue markings. These two vehicles are not available in any stores; you have to send in two proofs of purchase found on Matchbox Action System Play Sets in order to get them.

Hot Wheels has come out with an "Action Pack Firefighting Set" which carries Mattel product No. 16148. Priced at around \$5.99, the set contains two previously released "Mini-Corgi" Fire Engines. This time, however, they are painted red and carry the Hot Wheels logo on each piece. In addition, two firefighting figures are included, but they seem just a bit big in relation to the scale of the vehicles. There are a total of six different Hot Wheels Action Packs available, and once again it seems that the Firefighting Action Pack is the toughest one to find.

With the summer season just about to start, remember to pull into every driveway that you pass with a "Rummage Sale" sign posted on the street. You'll never know what you'll be passing up if you don't!

See you next month.

*Matchbox
Action Series
Emergency
Vehicles.*



*Hot Wheels
Action Pack
Firefighting
Set.*

