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CLOSING DOWN — New Brunswick's Remsen Avenue firehouse will be shut down within a week, an economy move that has prompted concern and fear among area residents. Mayor Lynch yesterday said the shutdown is preferable to laying off firemen.

City plan to terminate Remsen Ave. firehouse met with concern, fear

By TED SERRILL
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NEW BRUNSWICK — A plan to close the Remsen Avenue firehouse has provoked fear and outrage in area residents, but authorities maintain that the neighborhood will continue to receive adequate protection.

"We should have more firehouses instead of closing them out," said Gilbert Mercado yesterday when he learned the city plans to close down the Remsen Avenue firehouse for at least several months.

Mercado is co-owner of a market located across Remsen Avenue from the old firehouse.

On the Suydam Street corner across from the firehouse, they were equally unhappy at Cataldi's Pharmacy. "This is an old, deteriorated area; we really need the firehouse," said one pharmacist.

"Some of these old buildings, if they caught fire, need a quick backup by the Fire Department," said George Kortbawi, a lifelong neighborhood resident who helps out at the pharmacy. "To de-

pend on a backup from Rutgers Village is the big problem. At 8 o'clock in the morning, they'd be lucky to get here in 15 minutes."

The city disclosed Monday that as an economy measure, Engine Company 4 will be transferred out of the firehouse to fire headquarters four blocks away on Joyce Kilmer Avenue and the firemen who work at Remsen will be reassigned to the three remaining firehouses in the city.

The move will occur within a week or so, according to Business Administrator Stanley Marcinczyk.

Mayor John A. Lynch yesterday spoke of the need to cut costs. "It beats laying off firemen," he said of the temporary closing that could become permanent if it is determined that the Fire Department's service is not impaired, and if costs actually are lower.

The department "hierarchy" — led by Chief D. Leo Harkins who yesterday was attending the League of Municipalities convention in Atlantic City — is convinced that the speed of response

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