

# CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

## BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE

JANUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2023

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*If nothing else read the articles preceded by \*\**

THE CAPITAL CALENDAR:

[WWW.AFDCA.ORG](http://WWW.AFDCA.ORG)

### 2023 CAPITAL AREA MEETING & TRAINING SCHEDULE

Member Dinner Meeting Thursday February 9<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm dinner served at 6PM

Thursday March 9<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm general membership dinner served at 6PM

**Saturday, March 11, 2023 6:00 PM Officer Installation Location in Saratoga Springs TBD**

Thursday April 6<sup>th</sup> Board of Director's Meeting 7PM

Thursday May 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the General Membership

Thursday June 8<sup>th</sup> Board of Director's Meeting 7PM

Thursday July 13<sup>th</sup> Board of Director's Meeting 7PM

**August, No Meeting**

Thursday September 14<sup>th</sup>, General Membership Meeting 7PM

Thursday October 12<sup>th</sup> General Membership/Nominations for Officers & Directors

Thursday November 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm general membership dinner served at 6PM/Elections

**December, No Meeting**

*Printable Calendar – See Last Page*

**Register Now and pay at the door!**

### Mandated Commissioner Training Sanctioned by the State Comptroller's Office, \$85.00 per person

**Saturday, February 11, 2023 8:00 AM 6 hour Commissioner Training Averill Park, Rensselaer Co. w/Greg Serio**

**Saturday, March 4, 2023 8:00 AM 6 hour Commissioner Training Clifton Park Saratoga Co. w/Greg Serio**

**Saturday, March 25, 2023 8:00 AM 6 hour Commissioner Training Berkshire Fire District Fulton, Co. w/Greg Serio**

Email [caaofd@gmail.com](mailto:caaofd@gmail.com)

### 2023 Membership Activity Options Being Explored

**Saturday, November 11, 2023 8:00 AM Fall Workshop Location and Date to be determined**

***We want to thank the Clifton Park – Halfmoon Fire District for allowing us to use their facility for the Capital Area meetings.***

CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION NEWS:

[WWW.AFDCA.ORG](http://WWW.AFDCA.ORG)

### You Are Invited to Join Us!!

The Capital Area Association has voted to amend its By-laws to allow both individual and regional or county Fire District Associations to join. The updated By-laws are posted to the [AFDCA.org](http://AFDCA.org) website.

Individual membership fee will be \$50 annually, fire district association fees will be \$300 annually.

Download THE APPLICATION HERE: <https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-Application.doc>

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The Capital Area has logo ware for sale, long and short sleeve polo shirts. Contact Secretary/Treasurer Tony Hill to purchase shirts.

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**Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence go to the Capital Area Association Mailing Address at:**  
AFDCA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063  
EMAIL: [CAAOFD@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CAAOFD@GMAIL.COM)  
[518-407-5020](tel:518-407-5020)

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**If you see \*\* it indicates a must-read article with educational value or leadership qualities.**

### CAPITAL SHORTS:

- **\*\*Page 9 The Attorney’s Office is a must read, this month related to Commissioner’s Oath and Surety Bond for the fire district Treasurer.**
- **Page 7 contains a link to the Vol FF Task Force Report, interesting read.**
- **The 2023 Scorecard is attached to the Constant Contact email this week, watch what pops up as the legislative season progresses.**
- **We still need someone to step up to be a region 1 director for the next two years, please contact tom rinaldi or any of the officers if you are interested. Nominations from the region can still occur until the May annual meeting.**
- **On last episode of NBC’s “Chicago Fire,” a storyline involving an infant safe surrender box sounded the alarm for both the Chicago Fire Department and an advocate for abandoned children, who called the plot “misleading.” Although Illinois has had a Safe Haven Law for newborns since 2001, it does not have a baby box system like other states such as Indiana. Illinois requires that babies who are surrendered are handed over to a person.**

*If you no longer wish to receive the Capital Bulletin you have the option to “unsubscribe” at the bottom of the introductory email.*

### SPECIAL NEWS FOR SARATOGA COUNTY DEPARTMENTS

This is the last week this news item will be in the Bulletin.



Claim Reporting WC First Fill Form  
Instructions (1).pdf PMA Management C

The attached is information on the new on-line reporting program for the Saratoga County Fire Department VFBL third party administrator. VFBL comp claim reporting changes will be effective January 1, 2023.

On behalf of Saratoga County Workers Compensation Plan, I am excited to announce that PMA Companies has been selected as our new third party administrator assuming workers’ compensation claim management services for all new and existing claims effective **January 1, 2023**. We will no longer be contracted with CorVel. *Please do not forward anything to them after close of business on December 30, 2022.*

We will continue to use a 24/7 nurse triage line (PMA Care 24) which PMA offers as a benefit to our employees. The goal of the triage service is to ensure the employee receives immediate medical attention and is provided with the most appropriate level of care. This service also initiates the claim notification process allowing for better overall management

of the incident. Ideally, the employee calls at the time of a work related incident. PMA Care 24 triage posters and business cards will be provided to you. I have also attached a 1<sup>st</sup> fill information form for any prescriptions that the injured worker may need. Please share with your injured worker at the time of injury.

In addition to the employee calling the PMA Care 24 triage, it is imperative that the **employer also report** a claim immediately by logging onto PMA's website [www.pmacompanies.com](http://www.pmacompanies.com) and clicking on the "Report a Claim" function. There is a generic username and password for Saratoga County that all participants will use. I have attached the claim reporting instructions so please be sure to save these and share with anyone who would possibly be reporting a claim for your entity. If online reporting is absolutely not an option, you can report an injury via e-mail to [firstreport@pmagroup.com](mailto:firstreport@pmagroup.com) (please include the PMA account # 1423573 in the email or on the intake form to expedite claim set up), by phone at 800-762-1281, or by fax at 888-329-2721.

**There will be training available prior to the program going live. We recommend having at least one representative from each participating entity attend. The training will focus on the claim reporting process. These sessions will be held online through Zoom and should run no more than 30 minutes in length.**

**Training sessions will be held as follows:**

**December 28<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 AM**

**December 29<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 AM**

**Please send the fire coordinator a list of attendees no later than December 23, 2022, and we will send out the invite for the session to attend.**

Please note PMA will be investigating and administering claims going forward. Please be sure to respond promptly to any PMA team member inquiries.

PMA will also be providing us with a number of medical management tools including medical bill review services, provider networks (PPO) and pharmacy benefits management services (PBM). These tools will help reduce the overall workers' compensation costs. PMA offers extensive reporting capabilities and program analysis tools to assist with data needed in the loss control process and to assist in safety programs to help prevent future injuries.

The pertinent contact information for PMA is below:

**PMA Customer Service Center**

**PO Box 5231**

**Janesville, WI 53547-5231**

**Phone: 888-476-2669**

New Pharmacy Benefit Manager as of 1/1/23:

**Express Scripts/myMatrixx**

**Phone: 888-897-9470**

(Injured workers with existing claims should let their pharmacy know of the change in Pharmacy Benefit Manager for any Rx's filled after 1/1/23)

We will be providing additional information regarding PMA and our new program as we move forward. We are excited about this transition and look forward to partnering with PMA to improve the service to our employees and help to reduce costs in our program.

Any injured workers with a current open claim will receive a letter from PMA advising them of their new PMA Claim # along with other PMA contact information. That letter will arrive closer to 1/1/23.

## STATE ASSOCIATION NEWS:

[WWW.AFDNYS.ORG](http://WWW.AFDNYS.ORG)

You are invited to attend...

### [2023 Annual Meeting & Leadership Summit Expo](#)

Wednesday, May 17 - Saturday, May 20

Turning Stone Resort & Casino

5218 Patrick Road

Verona, Ne 13478

#### **Annual Meeting & Leadership Summit Expo**

[Click Here to Register](#)

**A link to reserve your hotel room at the Turning Stone Resort & Casino will be included on your confirmation page and in your confirmation email. No call in reservations will be accepted.. 1 room per person**

**Anyone with hotel reservations in the AFDSNY block that is NOT registered for this event will be subject to your reservation being canceled by the host. Prior notice will be given when possible but is not guaranteed.**

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### [Edward "Ned" Carter Memorial Scholarship](#)

- The Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York is pleased to offer the Ned Carter Memorial Scholarship Award for High School Seniors. These scholarships are named in honor of Past President Ed 'Ned' Carter', and all deceased past presidents of the Association. In keeping with Ned's lifelong dedication to community service and helping others, four, onetime \$1,500 scholarships will be presented to graduating high school seniors who will be pursuing a career in a community services related discipline. **LINK TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** [https://www.afdsny.org/general\\_information.php](https://www.afdsny.org/general_information.php)
- Must be submitted online or Postmarked by March 3, 2023.

## TRAINING APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR ENTIRE BOARD/SECRETARY/TREASURER



### [COFFEE WITH COMMISSIONERS FOR 2023](#)

Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7PM, "Training for Success"

Saturday March 4<sup>th</sup> at 9AM, "Protecting Your Assets"

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: [https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN\\_-RyApNLJQrK-v3xBiNtnAA](https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN_-RyApNLJQrK-v3xBiNtnAA)

Log on To Previously Recorded Sessions

[https://www.afdsny.org/coffee\\_with\\_commissioners.php](https://www.afdsny.org/coffee_with_commissioners.php)

You Must Log on to the State AFDSNY web site to access!

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## THE LATEST FROM THE NYS LEGISLATURE

### [2023 Issues of United Concern – NYS Fire Service Alliance Legislative Initiatives](#)

- **ENSURE VFBL PARITY WITH WORKERS COMPENSATION**

Bring the volunteer firefighters benefit law pay equal to worker's compensation/what career firefighters receive when injured in the line of duty.

**Corresponding legislation:** S.1340 (Brooks) / A.3597 (McMahon) (2021-2022 Session)

- **DESIGNATE EMS AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE AND EXPAND THE BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO EMS PERSONNEL AND SET STANDARDS FOR EMS**

Recognizes EMS as an essential service, establishes a special district for the financing and operation of general ambulance services, expands access to health insurance and retirement benefits available to EMS providers.

**Corresponding legislation:** S.8432-A (Mayer) / A.9509-A (Otis) (2021-2022 Session)

- **ANALYZE FINDINGS FROM THE NYS DHSES RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK FORCE IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE ON:**

(1) RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

(2) RETENTION EFFORTS

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND BUILDING CODE COMPLIANCE ISSUES**

- **AMEND PENAL CODE TO ADD ENDANGERING THE WELFARE OF OCCUPANTS AND FIRST RESPONDERS**

**Corresponding legislation:** S.3741 (Gaughran) / A.6087 (Zebrowski) (2021-2022 Session)

- **RECOVERY OF 54-G FUNDING TO SUPPORT CODE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS**

Ensure state funds collected through dedicated fees on each fire policy written in the state go to support local code enforcement activities and not continue to be swept into State General Fund.

**Corresponding legislation:** S.6970-A (Kavanagh) / A.8802-A (Zebrowski) (2021-2022 Session)

- **TIMELY ADOPTION OF UPDATED STATE FIRE AND BUILDING PREVENTION CODE**

Would require that a new building code as published by ICC would be adopted by the NYS Codes Council within specified time frame.

**Corresponding legislation:** S.6210-A (Skoufis) / A.3559-A (Hunter) (2021-2022 Session) provides a framework to accomplish; support amendments to extending the timeline of enactment from 12 months.

- **ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS** – Ensure the Executive and Legislative prioritization of provision of affordable housing stock through legalization of more residential space is executed in a manner that prioritizes occupant safety and the safety of first responders in emergencies. Ensure a focus on legalizing existing units as well as create new units; advocate for increasing access to housing for first responders as a recruitment and retention tool.

**Corresponding legislation:** To be determined.

- **LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY STANDARDS**

Ensure proper registration/permitting, research and standard development, repairing and regulation of products containing lithium-ion batteries, work with stakeholders to raise public awareness around best fire safety practices, and examine solutions proposed from decision makers and opine as a trusted public safety voice.

- **CONTINUE TO IMPROVE TAX BENEFITS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

Push to allow volunteer firefighters to receive both real property tax exemptions and income tax credit, while continuing to advocate for an income tax credit increase (has been at \$200 since its inception in 2006.) This credit would step increase tied to qualifying years of service up to \$2,500 for 10 or more consecutive qualifying years of service.

**Corresponding legislation:** S.3989-A (Reichlin Melnick) / A.1320-A (Zebrowski) (2021-2022 Session)

- **CANCER COVERAGE COST RELIEF**

Pursue data collection to enable establishment of a funding stream to alleviate fiscal burden on districts/departments providing the coverage.

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**REAL PROPERTY TAX LAW SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR ON 12/09/2022**

Now that the bill is signed, we now need to encourage our local government to vote to provide a property tax exemption to our volunteer firefighters, and volunteer EMS providers.



This change in the real property tax law **will allow any county to adopt a local law** that will provide an exemption on real property owned by an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, department, or voluntary ambulance service.

The change in the law will exempt up to 10% of the assessed value for members who served a minimum of two years. The law would require localities that currently provide the exemption adopt a local law to conform to this provision.

**LINK TO BILL:**

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/BILL-NUMBER-9131-10-2022-3.docx>

**Parsing the Document Bill Number S9131:**

- Amends the real property tax law by adding new section 466-A\*2
- Signed by the Governor on 12/9/22 Chapter 670
- Provides all local governments with the *option* to provide a property tax exemption to volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers.
- Provides a tax exemption to **enrolled** members of an incorporated volunteer fire company or incorporated voluntary ambulance service.
- Shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of up to **ten percent of the assessed value** of such property for **city, village, town, part town, special district, school district, fire district or county purposes**, exclusive of special assessments, **provided that the governing body of a city, village, town, school district, fire district or county, after a public hearing, adopts a local law, ordinance or resolution providing therefor.**
- The property is the primary residence of the applicant. (can't be taken for a summer home, camp etc.)
- Exemptions only apply to residential property.
- In summation, the bill **would allow any county to adopt a local law** (**let's put that another way, it allows any local jurisdiction within any county to adopt a local law**) that will provide an exemption on real property owned by an **enrolled member** of an incorporated volunteer fire company, department, or voluntary ambulance service. The bill would exempt up to 10% of the assessed value for members *who served a minimum of two years*. **The bill would require localities that currently provide the exemption adopt a local law to conform to this provision.**
- *Volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers provide a significant benefit to residents and taxpayers through their countless hours of service protecting our communities. Currently, less than half of counties in New York are authorized to provide a local property tax exemption benefit to qualifying volunteer firefighter and ambulance workers. This bill seeks to provide a statewide option for all local governments to offer up to a 10% exemption of assessed value to eligible volunteers. This bill provides for flexibility in administering this property tax exemption by giving local governments discretion in adopting a local law or ordinance. By expanding the opportunity to provide this critical tax exemption, it will help improve recruitment and retention of our volunteer fire and ambulance services.*
- *Any city, village, town, school district, fire district or county that currently, through local law, ordinance or resolution, provides an exemption from taxation for an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service, such enrolled member and spouse, or an un-remarried spouse shall be authorized to continue to provide such exemption, provided however, such city, village, town, school district, fire district or county shall adopt a local law, ordinance or resolution to conform to the provisions of this section no later than three years after the effective date of this section. (In other words, the old tax exemption law and its language go away!)*

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**WEBINAR: What You Need to Know - The New Property Tax Exemption for Volunteer Firefighters and Ambulance Workers**

**Jan. 24, 2023, 6 p.m.**

**As a result of FASNY's longstanding advocacy on behalf of the volunteer fire service, the opportunity to receive a property tax exemption for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance workers is now available across the state. There is a brand-new law (Real Property Tax Law § 466-a) that extends a real property tax exemption statewide and requires specific opt-in by each local taxing jurisdiction. On Tuesday, Jan. 24 at 6 p.m., join FASNY General Counsel Tim Hannigan as he explores this new law in an information-packed webinar. He'll also provide insight, analysis, and a tool**

kit - including forms - for you to use with your local taxing jurisdictions to help obtain this critical recruitment and retention tool for your volunteer fire service.

**This program is open to FASNY Members only.**

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: [https://fasny.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_goxjkQyHTWSkZz9ho58FrQ](https://fasny.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_goxjkQyHTWSkZz9ho58FrQ)

## NEWS FROM THE NYS VOL. FF R&R TASK FORCE

**\*\*Updated Link for the Recruitment and Retention Task Force:**

<https://www.dhSES.ny.gov/volunteer-firefighter-recruitment-and-retention-task-force>

A report from the Task Force is pending, it's recommended that the Task Force continue for 2023.

Open Meetings and Webcasts are located at: <https://www.dhSES.ny.gov/open-meetings-and-webcasts>

**View the final report of the NYS VFF Task Force HERE:**

<https://afdca.org/view-the-final-report-of-the-nys-vff-task-force/>

The report can also be downloaded from the Association's website at [AFDCA.org](http://AFDCA.org)

## LET YOUR MEMBERS KNOW ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY!

### **REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR THE NYS AFC 117TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE & FIRE 2023 EXPO!**

**June 14-17 • The Oncenter • Syracuse, NY** With exhibits, fire and EMS classes, Hands-On Training, and networking events for personnel of all ranks, there's something for everyone at the premier fire industry, rescue, and EMS conference and expo in the Northeast!

#### **CLASSROOM EDUCATION**

More than **35 classes** will be presented by some of the most respected leaders in the industry from Wednesday – Saturday for Conference Full Term registrants. **EMS CME** classes will be delivered, and special training for **codes** personnel and **commissioners** will be available. The schedule of classes is coming soon!

#### **ATTENDEE REGISTRATION**

**REGISTER IN ADVANCE** or at the door! **New** – online registration is available for single registrants! Those registering groups must use the PDF form.

#### **ONE DAY TICKETS (EXPO ONLY)**

Pre-Registration: \$25 (per person, includes three tickets)

On-Site: \$10 (per person, per day)

#### **FULL TERM REGISTRATION (EXPO & CLASSES)**

NYS AFC Individual Member: \$100 (per person)

Non-Member: \$175 (per person)



### ***Annual Sexual Harassment Prevention***

#### **ESIP WEBINAR SERIES**

We review the best practices in ensuring our agencies are safe places for all members. During this presentation, we will take a "bystander assistance" approach to learning how to help protect each other from harassment or from being an accidental offender.

Wednesday 1/8/22 at 7PM

**REGISTER AT THIS LINK:**

[https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN\\_80ZyCibTQL6SbhST-](https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN_80ZyCibTQL6SbhST-)

[QLuLw?utm\\_source=ESIP+Risk+Management+Mailing+List&utm\\_campaign=8df6d2b7e0-](https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN_80ZyCibTQL6SbhST-QLuLw?utm_source=ESIP+Risk+Management+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=8df6d2b7e0-)

[EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_04\\_21\\_04\\_23\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_f653b3c566-8df6d2b7e0-278064383](https://webinar.ringcentral.com/webinar/register/WN_80ZyCibTQL6SbhST-QLuLw?utm_source=ESIP+Risk+Management+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=8df6d2b7e0-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_21_04_23_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f653b3c566-8df6d2b7e0-278064383)

## **NYS AFC 2023 Seminar Series, "Truck Skills Beyond the Textbooks"**

Early in our firefighting orientation, we're taught basic skills and tactics from textbooks. In addition, we'll drill and be tested on many of these skills at fire academy buildings to attain our firefighting certifications. It's a good process, but our learning shouldn't stop there because we haven't been exposed to many of the situations we'll encounter at fires and emergencies. Plus, the buildings in the academy aren't conducive to allowing us to operate with tools to open the walls and ceilings, pull suspended ceilings, remove baseboard and window trim, or even cut open tongue and groove sheathed roofs. This [interactive lecture](#) strives to go beyond textbook learning and bring alive street skills, tips, and tactics of truck work in: portable ladders, overhaul, forcible entry, roof ventilation, tool use, and more.

### **Registration (per person):**

\$35 – NYS AFC members

\$50 – non-members

Pre-registration encouraged.

**Albany Co. 10/23/23, Fulton Co. 9/7/23, Rensselaer Co. 4/3/23, Saratoga Co. 10/24/23, Schenectady Co. 3/6/23**

**REGISTER AT THIS LINK:** <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/2023seminarseries>

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## **Beginning Thursday, December 15th, we will be rolling out a new version of VFIS University.**

This change will allow us to clean up organization rosters and offer you a streamlined and efficient experience.

During the transition period, please note that the current system will be available through 12/30 (we will have a direct link to the page for this.) **We recommend downloading your organization's course history by 12/30 to ensure the smoothest transition possible, as access to course completions on the current system will *NOT* be available after that date.**

Some additional things to note:

- The training officer within your organization will approve users and assignments
- New features for your organization will be introduced in Q1 2023
- Only VFIS-authored courses and approved educational material will be available

As part of the registration process for the new system, you will be sent an email from "VFIS Authentication System" (noreply-ss@vfris.com). You will receive the email automatically, once our staff adds you to the new system. Please follow the instructions in that email to verify your email address and update your password. The password should be at least 8 characters long and contain an uppercase letter, lowercase letter, number and symbol.

All customer service for VFIS University will be provided by VFIS, so if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out via phone at 800.233.1957 Ext. 7228 or via email at [csapps@vfris.com](mailto:csapps@vfris.com), Monday – Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm.

Posted to our web site at this LINK: <https://afdca.org/vfris-training-opportunities-a-wealth-of-information/>

You will find:

[2022 VFISU-Flyer](#)

[2022 VFISU Course Catalog](#)

[2022 ETC-Resource-Catalog-VFIS](#)

[2022 VFIS-Responder Help Flyer](#)

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## **Hands-On Training at FIRE 2023 in Syracuse Announced**

Registration is open for Hands-On Training at the NYS AFC 117th Annual Conference & FIRE 2023 Expo! HOT will be delivered from Wednesday, June 14 – Friday, June 16 at the Syracuse Fire Department Training Center. Seven courses led by some of the nation's most knowledgeable and experienced instructors will be available: "Advanced Thermal Imaging Camera Ops," "Advanced Vehicle Extrication," "Aggressive Interior Fire Attack," "Fire Behavior On the Inside," "First-In Officers' Responsibilities," "Hoarder Fires," and "Truck Company Essentials."

**Learn More and Register At This Link...** <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/fire2023hot>

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## ***New Course! Leadership for the Fire & Emergency Services***

The NVFC has released a new course in the Virtual Classroom on “Leadership in the Fire & Emergency Services.” This on-demand course provides an overview of leadership roles, how anyone can be a leader regardless of rank, and tips to help in succeeding as an emergency service leader. Virtual Classroom courses are always free to **NVFC members**, but this course is free for a limited time to all members of the fire and emergency services. **Register now:** <https://virtualclassroom.nvfc.org/products/leadership-for-the-fire-emergency-services>

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## ***Innovative Recruitment Ideas for Volunteer Fire, EMS, and Rescue Departments***

Recruitment is a challenge for many volunteer and combination emergency service departments. The NVFC has released a new one-pager featuring 10 ideas to help jump-start your recruitment initiatives. Download it [here](#). You can find more tools and resources to help with recruitment – including customizable outreach materials and PSAs – from the NVFC’s [Make Me A Firefighter campaign](#).

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## **OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE -CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!**

### ***OPPORTUNITIES:***

#### ***Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Application Period OPEN:***

**January 9 - February 10, 2023**

The FY 2022 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) application period is now open. Helpful documents, including the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and Application Checklist, are posted at [FY 2022 Assistance to Firefighters Grant \(AFG\) Application Guidance Materials | FEMA.gov](#).

Don't wait to get started, as the application period closes on **Friday, February 10, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. ET**.

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#### ***Students In Nebraska Gain Real-World Firefighting Experience Through One-Of-A-Kind Community College Internship***

A new program in Omaha is helping future firefighters get more hands-on experience as they finish their studies. "Every class you learn a lot, you know, book knowledge, but out here, you're really putting it to use," says Michael Molacek, a student at Metropolitan Community College studying fire science. Molacek is one of around a dozen who are involved in a new internship designed by the fire science program at MCC that partners with Bennington Fire & Rescue. "We are the only school and fire district that have an internship program similar to this, they actually work here alongside an active fire department and the crew that's on duty 24 hours a day," says Jeff Strawn, the Fire Science Program Director at MCC. Several times each month, students will spend a full shift at Bennington learning from the staff and volunteers.

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### ***CHALLENGES:***

#### ***U.S. Official Warns of Risks Posed by Heavy Electric Vehicles***

Tom Krisher

The head of the National Transportation Safety Board expressed concern Wednesday about the safety risks that heavy electric vehicles pose if they collide with lighter vehicles.

The official, Jennifer Homendy, raised the issue in a speech in Washington to the Transportation Research Board. She noted, by way of example, that an electric GMC Hummer weighs about 9,000 pounds (4,000 kilograms), with a battery pack that alone is 2,900 pounds (1,300 kilograms) — roughly the entire weight of a typical Honda Civic.

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“I’m concerned about the increased risk of severe injury and death for all road users from heavier curb weights and increasing size, power, and performance of vehicles on our roads, including electric vehicles,” Homendy said in remarks prepared for the group.

The extra weight that EVs typically carry stems from the outsize mass of their batteries. To achieve 300 or more miles (480 or more kilometers) of range per charge from an EV, batteries have to weigh thousands of pounds.

Some battery chemistries being developed have the potential to pack more energy into less mass. But for now, there’s a mismatch in weight between EVs and smaller internal combustion vehicles. EVs also deliver instant power to their wheels, making them accelerate faster in most cases than most gas-powered cars, trucks and SUVs.

Homendy said she was encouraged by the Biden administration’s plans to phase out carbon emissions from vehicles to deal with the climate crisis. But she said she still worries about safety risks resulting from a proliferation of EVs on roads and highways.

**“We have to be careful that we aren’t also creating unintended consequences: More death on our roads,” she said. “Safety, especially when it comes to new transportation policies and new technologies, cannot be overlooked.”**

Homendy noted that Ford’s F-150 Lightning EV pickup is 2,000 to 3,000 pounds (900 to 1,350 kilograms) heavier than the same model’s combustion version. The Mustang Mach E electric SUV and the Volvo XC40 EV, she said, are roughly 33% heavier than their gasoline counterparts.

“That has a significant impact on safety for all road users,” Homendy added.

The NTSB investigates transportation crashes but has no authority to make regulations. For vehicles, such authority rests largely with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Even apart from EVs, the nation’s roads are crowded with heavy vehicles, thanks to a decadelong boom in sales of larger cars, trucks and SUVs that’s led to extreme mismatches in collisions with smaller vehicles. ***But electric vehicles are typically much heavier than even the largest trucks and SUVs that are powered by gasoline or diesel.***

Michael Brooks, executive director of the nonprofit Center for Auto Safety, said he, too, is concerned about the weight of EVs because buyers seem to be demanding a range of 300 or more miles per charge, requiring heavy batteries.

Setting up a charging network to accommodate that may be a mistake from a safety perspective, Brooks said.

***“These bigger, heavier batteries are going to cause more damage,” he said. “It’s a simple matter of mass and speed.”***

Brooks said he knows of little research done on the safety risks of increasing vehicle weights. In 2011, the National Bureau of Economic Research published a paper that said being hit by a vehicle with an added 1,000 pounds increases by 47% the probability of being killed in a crash.

He points out that electric vehicles have very high horsepower ratings, allowing them to accelerate quickly even in crowded urban areas. “People are not trained to handle that type of acceleration. It’s just not something that drivers are used to doing,” Brooks said.

Also, many newer electric SUVs are tall with limited visibility that poses risks to pedestrians or drivers of smaller vehicles, he said.

Sales of new electric vehicles in the U.S. rose nearly 65% last year to 807,000 — about 5.8% of all new vehicle sales. The Biden administration has set a goal of having EVs reach 50% of new vehicle sales by 2030 and is offering tax credits of up to \$7,500 to get there. The consulting firm LMC Automotive has made a more modest prediction: It expects EVs to make up one-third of the new-vehicle market by 2030.

## HEALTH – SAFETY & LODDS – TAKING CARE OF OUR MEMBERS!

### **January Dedicated as Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month**

Occupational cancer is now the leading cause of death among fire fighters – surpassing heart disease. The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN) are committed to reversing this trend to save more fire fighter lives.

During Fire Fighter Cancer Awareness Month ([iaff.org/cancer-awareness-month](http://iaff.org/cancer-awareness-month)), the IAFF and FCSN will partner to deliver targeted education and best practices and resources to reduce the impact of cancer on fire fighters.

The month-long campaign includes safety stand downs, factsheets, podcasts, survivor stories, and training briefs. These materials focus on the scope of the cancer problem, prevention, best practices, survivorship, leadership tactics to encourage prevention, and skills to help departments reduce their risk of occupational cancer.

Topics are reinforced through online resources, such as daily training information and infographics that promote the program on social media and podcasts addressing important cancer topics and the latest research.

“Cancer is the leading cause of death among fire fighters, accounting for more than 74% of the line-of-duty deaths added to the IAFF Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial Wall of Honor each year,” says IAFF General President Edward Kelly. “We must educate ourselves and do everything we can to extinguish cancer from the fire service. Together, the IAFF and FCSN are dedicated to doing whatever it takes to keep fire fighters healthy on and off the job.”

“As we continue to learn more about the link between firefighting and cancer, it is more important than ever that we take steps to minimize the risk fire fighters face every single day,” says FCSN CEO Bryan Frieders. “The science around fire fighter exposures is constantly changing but with continued research we learn more and more and are better equipped to introduce prevention practices to reduce our risk of developing occupational cancer.”

## **IN 2022 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED \*2 FIRE FIGHTER LODD’S**

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com\**

**In 2022 we experienced 101 LODDs reported nationally.!**

### **National Vol Fire Council FIRST RESPONDER HELPLINE AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Firefighting and emergency response are stressful, and the holidays can bring added pressures. The [NVFC First Responder Helpline](#) is here for you. NVFC members and their household families can call for assistance with work-life-volunteer challenges, including stress management, relationships, financial concerns, addiction, and more. [Register for this webinar](#) to learn more about the Helpline. If you are unable to purchase an NVFC membership for yourself or someone else who needs the Helpline, use [this form](#) to receive a complimentary membership.

### **YOU JUST NEVER KNOW...**

- Captain Charles “Chad” Cate, 46, was found deceased in his bunk by fellow crewmembers Thursday morning, Clallam County Fire District 3 in Sequim, Washington
- An off-duty Guil-Rand Fire Department firefighter who was helping a stranded motorist was seriously injured Wednesday night when he was struck by a car along U.S. 311 near Archdale, North Carolina.
- at: <https://www.firefighterclosecalls.com/>

### **Reference Material for Use in a Line of Duty Death**

- [VFBL Firefighters Guide to Benefits](http://wcb.ny.gov/content/main/vf-vaw/injured-in-lin-of-duty.pdf), wcb.ny.gov/content/main/vf-vaw/injured-in-lin-of-duty.pdf
- [Survivors Benefit Guide](http://www.firehero.org), www.firehero.org
- [National Fallen Firefighters Foundation](https://www.firehero.org) https://www.firehero.org

## **BUILDING & FIRE CODE ISSUES – WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT TO YOU?**

*Home builders and realtors already “drive” legislation with a history of disregard for life safety and a disgusting misinformation campaign about the cost of residential fire sprinklers, deaths are an awfully expensive price to pay to save money. Stop the carnage, install residential sprinklers.*

## **WEEKLY FIRE FATALITY DATA AS REPORTED BY THE MEDIA**

<b>Fire Deaths in 1&amp;2 Family Dwellings in NYS</b>	<b>00+1=1</b>
<b>Last fire death 9 year old, Brownsville, Brooklyn NYC</b>	
<b>Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS</b>	<b>0+1=1</b>

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	17 + 20=37
Top Three State with the most 1&2 Family Deaths	1 VA 5
	2 NM 4
	3 WI 3
<b>There has been a total of 0064 civilian home fire fatalities in 2023</b>	
There were a total of 2251 residential fire fatalities reported in 2022 in the US media.	
Both the states of Maryland and California require sprinklers in residential dwellings	

In 2022 in New York State 77 residents perished in fires in 1 & 2 family occupancies.

## THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

### **\*\*WHEN FILING OATHS THIS MONTH, DON'T FORGET THE TREASURER BONDS TOO**

By Greg Serio, CAFDA Counsel

In November, 2021 Brad Lander was elected comptroller of the City of New York. By January 31, 2022, just a little more than two months later, he was no longer the city comptroller.

What happened?

While Lander filed his oath of office with the Clerk of the City of New York in a timely manner, that is, within thirty days of his taking office on January 1<sup>st</sup>, he did not also file with the oath proof of the undertaking, or surety, that is required of the comptroller. As a result of the turn of the calendar to January 31<sup>st</sup>, he was automatically, without action of any official body, no longer the city comptroller. It took an act of the state legislature in March of that year to rewind the clock back to January 1<sup>st</sup>, allowing the comptroller to rectify his omission and file in a "timely" manner the undertaking securing his work within that office.

This rule pertaining to the city comptroller applies to a great many government officials who are responsible for the handling of public money, including fire district treasurers. The New York Town Law is quite specific as to this requirement. According to Town Law section 176(4) provides, according to the Fire District Officers Handbook by Ray Diraddo, Esq.:

The treasurer, before entering upon his duties, must execute and file with the town clerk of the town in which the district is located an official undertaking, conditioned for the faithful performance of his (or her) duties. This undertaking shall be in the form and an amount as approved by the board of fire commissioners and the board must vote their approval on the undertaking.

Actually, the language in the statute, found in the section of law pertaining to the powers and responsibilities of fire district commissioners, *requires* that the fire district commissioners compel the treasurer to give "an official undertaking" and that the treasurer "will well and truly keep, pay over and account for all moneys and property belonging to the fire district *and coming into his hands as such treasurer....*" The provisions further requires that "such undertaking shall be filed in the office of the town clerk."

Thus, the provisions of section 176(4) has several important parts: 1) requires the district to make sure the treasurer submits to whatever process necessary to obtain a surety or other kind of undertaking; 2) obtain an undertaking in an amount that the treasurer is expected to have control over or have access to, after determining the amount, and type of undertaking by a resolution of the board, and 3) file it, and proof of approval by the board of fire commissioners, in the town clerk's office.



An interesting element of this requirement is that all of this undertaking activity is to be done “before entering the duties of [the treasurer’s office],” which could create a bit of a timing conundrum when districts are conducting organizational and first monthly business meetings at the same time. Advanced work with the district’s insurance broker or surety provider, likely at the end of the prior year, is probably the best way to address this issue.

Given the number of conversations had in recent weeks, it seems as though this section of law has been hiding in plain sight for many years, with some long time district officials privately acknowledging that this practice has not always been followed notwithstanding the fact that this provision goes back many years, and that it has been included in commissioner training provided by the Association of Fire Districts of New York State. Focusing on looking forward, suffice to say that 2023, especially with the Lander story fresh in people’s minds, be the year that this provision of the fire district board’s responsibilities is followed to the letter of the law.

Some districts may find town clerks asking why this material is being provided in addition to the traditional oath of office form. District secretaries or those submitting the oaths and undertaking to the clerk can tell the story of the New York City comptroller from last year and that the fire commissioners wish not a similar fate for their treasurers. Even if the filer dispenses with the story, the clerk will still be required to collect, stamp and accept the documents provided to prove that section 176(4) is followed.

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**\*\*Important Reporting Requirements For Fire Company Administrative Officers**

Reprinted from FASNY Magazine with permission from Tim Hannigan, General Counsel

The tasks of a fire company board of directors vary depending on the type of political subdivision that has jurisdiction over the Fire Company. For "independent" or "contract fire companies that contract with a Town, City, or Village, the job generally entails procurement of apparatus, PPE, insurance and all other things applicable to firemanic operations of the membership. *Conversely, fire company boards in a Fire District with no contract generally focus their attention on the social and fundraising functions of the membership, only.* Regardless of the type of authority having jurisdiction, though, certain duties of the fire company board of directors are the same. With the end of the calendar year upon us, now is a good time to review certain annual reporting requirements of the board of directors and the timing for such reports.

**1. DIRECTORS" NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION LAWS 519 ANNUAL REPORT.**

This report ***must be presented at the annual meeting of the fire company.*** Generally speaking, the annual meeting occurs contemporaneously with fire company elections. The 519 report is designed to provide a status as to the health of the corporation in terms of finances and membership. The mandatory topics that must be covered in this report and reported to the membership are:

- a) The assets and liabilities, including the trust funds, of the corporation for the fire company's fiscal year;
- b) Changes in assets and liabilities, including trust funds, during the fiscal year;
- c) All revenue or receipts of the corporation during the fiscal year;
- d) All expenses or disbursements of the fiscal year; oration during the
- e) The number of members of the corporation as of the date of the report and a statement as to whether such number is an increase or decrease over the prior year; and
- f) A statement of where the names and places of residence of the current members may be found

The law requires that the 519 report be filed with the records of the corporation and entered into the minutes of the proceedings of the annual meeting. The Fire Company Secretary can either attach the report to the minutes, or record an abstract of the report into the minutes. The report must be verified/approved for accuracy by the President and Treasurer, the Board of Directors, or the Fire Company's independent auditing firm.

**2. DIRECTORS" NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION LAW 1402 (F) ANNUAL REPORT.**



This report is **required to be filed by Jan. 15 each year** in the County Clerk's office. Most of the contents of this report can be taken from the N-PCL 519 report referenced above. Like the 519 report, this report must also be verified. The mandatory items to be included in the 1402 report are:

- a) the names of the directors and officers of the corporation,
- b) an inventory of the property of the fire company;
- c) a statement of the liabilities of the fire company; and
- d) a statement that the corporation has not engaged, directly or indirectly, in any business other than that set forth in its certificate of incorporation.

### **3. FOREIGN FIRE INSURANCE MONEY (2% TAX FUNDS) ANNUAL REPORT TO OSC.**

**On or before Feb. 28 each year**, the Treasurer is required to submit a verified report of the receipts, expenditures and balance relating to the use and application of foreign fire insurance funds (2% funds) received and disbursed by the fire company. Notably, this report applies to Benevolent Associations as well.

### **4. CERTIFIED LOSAP REPORT**

This report, **required by March 31** each year, applies those fire companies that participate in a Length Award Program. This report is made by the fire its authority having jurisdiction. The report must list all volunteer members of the fire comp any and identify who has qualified for credit under the award program for the previous year. It is required to be certified under oath.

### **5. FIRE COMPANY IRS FORM 990 RETURN OF ORGANIZATION EXEMPT FROM INCOME TAX**

Commonly referred to as the "990," this tax return is filed with the IRS on an annual basis on or **before May 15**, unless an extension of time is sought and granted. If your fire company has total annual revenues less than \$200,000 and total assets at the end of the tax year less than \$500,000, you may be eligible to file Form 990-EZ, instead of Form 990. **Continuous filing of this return is critical to obtain and maintain federal tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.**

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### **WEBINAR: Marijuana in Your Station**

**Jan. 19, 2023, 7 p.m.**

The new cannabis laws in New York state have caused concerns for Fire/EMS. Like many New York laws, the logistics or science was not in place to ensure safety. How do officers know if their members are using cannabis? At what level of impairment does this create an issue? Can we legally test fire responders for cannabis use? What are reasonable suspicions? Is the first responder "Fit for Duty"? Join us to learn and discuss.

**REGISTER AT THIS LINK:** [https://fasny.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_QJHSW-gXRoufXazP5p3j1Q](https://fasny.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QJHSW-gXRoufXazP5p3j1Q)

MAIN SPEAKER: DAVE DENNISTON

## **THE STUFF WE BUY FOR OUR MEMBERS**

### **Personal Lights for Firefighters Make Work Safer, More Efficient**

Alan Petrillo

Firefighters, from those fighting structural fires to those on wildland fire lines, frequently need lighting to illuminate hazards in the environments they are working in. Light manufacturers have responded to these needs with an array of products that help firefighters do their jobs more safely and efficiently.

Mario Cugini, founder and chief executive officer of FoxFury Lighting Solutions, says FoxFury makes the Command+ LoPro White/Green Helmet Light, designed specifically for structure fire smoke. "The wide, panoramic LED beam provides a comfortable task light wherever you look without turning your head," Cugini points out. "The panoramic beam has a 38-degree spread that reaches over 85 feet for greater visibility and situational awareness during search." He notes that the

Command+ LoPro fits under visors and face shields, has a 45-degree tilting light head to direct the light where it is needed, has a blinking red LED safety light so search teams can keep tabs on each other's location and progress, is extremely durable, has an IPX7 waterproof rating to withstand severe weather and conditions, and runs on four AA batteries for up to 14 hours of run time. Cugini says that FoxFury also makes a Command+ Tilt White/Amber LED Headlamp/Helmet Light that is IPX7 waterproof, runs on AA batteries, and provides more contrast in vegetation smoke because of the white and amber LEDs, making it popular with wildland firefighters. In addition, FoxFury makes the Scout Clip Light in orange with white and red LEDs, where the red LEDs provide a night vision adaptation and the alternate white and red LED mode acts as a beacon. The Secure J-Clip on the unit enables multiwear options, Cugini notes, such as on a belt, pocket, backpack, or Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment. FoxFury also makes the Discover LED head lamp that illuminates to 60 feet; the Breakthrough BT2 handheld right-angle LED light that has a focused beam reaching out to 400 feet; the Breakthrough BTS LED right-angle handheld light that illuminates out to 60 feet; and the small, lightweight Scout right-angle LED light that shines out to 10 feet. Cugini adds all FoxFury lights are usable underwater, and all are available with alkaline, nickel hydride rechargeable, or lithium-ion rechargeable batteries.

Brian Whalen, marketing manager for Bayco Products Inc., says his company produces the Nightstick® line of LED lighting products. "Our Nightstick Fortem® dual helmet light has a 205-lumen forward spotlight and a 120-lumen downward flood light that can run simultaneously," Whalen points out. "Fortem has a 360-degree pivoting mount, a rubber foot, and can tighten on any helmet rim. It can pivot 180 degrees above and below the rim and rotates 360 degrees side to side." Bayco also makes the Nightstick Forge™ LED helmet light in a smaller configuration than Fortem, Whalen notes. "It's a 360-lumen spotlight, with a single button on the back that glows green, and it also rotates 360 degrees and pivots 180 degrees," he says. "The bestseller of all our fire products is our Nightstick Intransit® LED right-angle light," Whalen says. "We offer Intransit in lithium-ion rechargeable and in AA alkaline battery models. The head pivots 90 degrees, and Intransit has a 205-lumens spotlight and a 110-lumens flood light. It can be worn on a turnout coat and, if the firefighter is pulling ceilings, can tilt up to illuminate and allow the firefighter to be hands-free. Its retention lanyard swivels and can snap onto a coat carabiner." Bayco offers two models of LED hand lanterns. The Nightstick Integritas™ is hand-carried and has four LEDs with a dedicated reflector that makes the light beams converge about 15 feet away, Whalen says. It has a 180-degree pivoting head, 1,750 combined lumens, and a carry strap with a safety release and is powered by a lithium-ion rechargeable battery. Bayco's Nightstick Vulcan LED hand lantern is a three-head model that's lighter and smaller than the Integritas model.

Greg Windom, president of Ledlenser USA, says Ledlenser makes the H7R Work and H15R Work rechargeable LED headlamps. "What differentiates us, especially in wildland firefighting, is our super bright headlamps with long last batteries that give the firefighter either a flicker-free broad flood light or a pinpoint beam to go through smoke," Windom says. The H7R is rubber-armored, drop tested to 9.8 feet, and has a high-power output of 600 lumens that can be boosted to 1,000 lumens at the touch of a button, he adds. "The headlamp also has a dimmer to customize brightness settings, and maximum run time is 45 hours on the 15 lumens setting," he says. Ledlenser's H15R LED headlamp combines extreme luminosity with seamless focusing, Windom says, offering constant, flicker-free light and click less dimming with a wheel switch. The H15R has a rubber cover and protective lens screen for more resistance to various levels of impacts and is IP67 flex sealed for protection against dust and water. Ledlenser also makes a parallel line of P Work LED flashlights, Windom adds, "that are super durable, rugged, waterproof, super bright, drop resistant, and rechargeable."

## FIRE DEPARTMENT CONSOLIDATIONS

### [Clayton, Depauville Fire Departments Merge](#)

Zach Grady

TOWN OF CLAYTON, New York (WWNY) - Better response times, more volunteers, and consolidated training. They're all benefits that two Jefferson County fire departments hope to see as they merge into one department.

"Clayton and Depauville fire are out of service and the Town of Clayton Fire Department is in service covering the town of Clayton."

And just like that, with an announcement over emergency services dispatch, the 135-year-old Clayton Fire Department and 90-year-old Depauville Fire Department have become one.

It's a brand new fire district to cover the 86 square miles that is the town of Clayton.

"We figure both resources together to create one solid department for fire protection coverage," said Josh Reome, district chief, Town of Clayton Fire Department.

"Now we'll have consolidated training, consolidated equipment and apparatus operators. Single leadership, or a very streamlined leadership structure," said Justin Taylor, chairman, Town of Clayton Fire District.

Taylor says the move was necessary for the success of both stations as volunteer numbers have been trending downwards over the past several years.

For Depauville residents, Town of Clayton Fire Department Station Chief Kevin Warren says the merger will help improve both response times, as well as the number of firefighters showing up at the scene.

"You have more equipment that can respond, you know, adequately staffed. The homeowner is that much more protected. Response times will be as quick, if not quicker," he said.

Warren says everyone on board is excited to be a part of the foundation that is the future of the Town of Clayton Fire Department.

"The captains, the lieutenants, even the firefighters that walk through the door, we're all here at the beginning to watch it grow," he said.

Both fire halls will remain in operation with a station chief in charge at each one. As the two historic departments come together, a new department balances tradition and transformation.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT FINANCIALS

### **Downsville Fire District – Procurement and Claims Audit**

#### **Audit Objective**

Determine whether the Downsville Fire District's (District) Board of Fire Commissioners (Board) ensured that goods and services were procured in accordance with the procurement policy and claims were approved prior to payment.

#### **Background**

The District provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the Town of Colchester in Delaware County and has a station in the hamlets of Downsville and Cooks Falls.

The five-member elected Board is responsible for the District's overall financial management and safeguarding its resources, including creating and enforcing the procurement policy, and auditing claims prior to payment.

An elected Treasurer acts as the chief fiscal officer and is responsible for disbursing District funds once the claims have been audited and approved by the Board.

#### **Key Findings**

The Board did not ensure that goods and services were procured in accordance with the procurement policy and that all claims were approved prior to payment.

- ***None of the 18 purchases of goods and services tested, totaling \$58,117 (11 percent), complied with the District's procurement policy, because they either lacked evidence of required quotes or competition was not sought. As a result, taxpayers do not have assurance that goods and services are purchased in the most economical manner.***
- ***Seven claims and 44 debit card transactions, totaling \$8,346, were paid prior to Board audit and approval, which could result in the District making improper or inappropriate payments.***

#### **Key Recommendations**

- Ensure compliance with the District's procurement policy is clearly documented.
- Ensure that all claims are audited and approved prior to payment.
- **Discontinue using the debit card.**

**COMPLETE AUDIT HERE:** <https://www.osc.state.ny.us/files/local-government/audits/2022/pdf/downsville-fire-district-2022-130.pdf>

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## STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE:

## **'Be a not-knower': The power of leading with humility**

Dena Ali

Leaders who model “not knowing” foster environments where members feel they can explore new ideas and offer solutions.

I don't know if it's just my personality or because I felt that I entered the fire service at a disadvantage, but from day one, I sensed a need to prove myself and my worth to our profession. Initially, this attitude served me well. It instilled in me the discipline necessary to give 100% effort when studying, practicing and becoming a sponge of all things fire service related.

My first few years were spent learning from anybody and everybody who had information to share. Then, right when I started to feel comfortable about my skillset, I realized some of those skills I learned in the academy were depreciating. I looked around, and it seemed like my peers were getting more confident and competent while I was taking steps backward. I started to feel ashamed of my perceived loss of skill.

I didn't realize that it was normal to lose the skills that aren't practiced, and that it was OK to work on areas that were weakening. Fortunately, I was able to attend fire conferences and had the opportunity to encounter great leaders in our field who instilled in me a new skill – the skill of being a perpetual learner.

I'll never forget the first time I took a Nozzle Forward class with Seattle Firefighter Aaron Fields. He demonstrated the need for constant sets and reps at our most basic skills. He explained that to be a trustworthy firefighter, you must recognize that comfort and ego are the enemy. They prevent growth, and no matter who we are, we must always be willing to not only learn something new every day, but also recognize that the most important things you can say as a student, instructor and leader are, “I don't know and/or I made a mistake.”

With this knowledge, I developed the courage to start practicing the basics again and to even admit when I needed to work on a depreciated skill.

### **GROWTH THROUGH HUMILITY**

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Every man I meet is my master at some point, and in that I learn of him.” I took this quote to heart, and recognized that no matter my rank, there was always something I could learn from anybody.

As I promoted through the ranks, I realized that by modeling “I don't know and/or I made a mistake,” I was giving those who worked with me the right to do the same. As a crew, we became comfortable admitting our weaknesses and helping each other, regardless of rank or time on the job. I recognized the power of this behavior. Our crew became respected for not only our performance on scene, but also our habits at the firehouse. While we rarely did anything advanced, we became brilliant in the basics, and others took note.

Today, as I continue to have opportunities to lead and mentor, I recognize that one of my strongest skillsets is that of being a “not knower” and leading with humility. There is always more to learn, and we must be humble and willing to hear diverse perspectives when faced with complex problems. Being humble does not mean you can't be confident. One should always have confidence in their abilities and their knowledge, but they should also recognize that no one person has all the answers. Furthermore, research demonstrates that teams are more willing to engage in learning behavior when leaders demonstrate humility.

Somehow a dangerous myth has grown in our profession that makes our leaders feel that their teams will lose confidence in them if they don't have all the answers. In reality, the opposite is true: People gain confidence from leaders who admit when they don't know something. Some of the most successful leaders are those who model the positive trait of “not knowing.” Leaders who model “not knowing” foster environments where people feel they can explore their own ideas and offer solutions.

More importantly, leaders who not only model “not knowing” but also failure in training demonstrate that the only true failure is not trying. Mistakes made in training become powerful learning opportunities.

Businessman Harold Geneen once said, “People learn from their failures, seldom do they learn anything from success.” We must recognize the power of failure and mistake making and seek to never be afraid to grow in the training environment.

### **VERBAL ARMOR**

Today, as a battalion chief, one of the most dangerous conditions I witness is the ego that prevents honesty about one's skill level. While I would rather see a firefighter, driver or company officer practicing basic skills, I often witness those

most insecure about their skillsets hiding behind verbal armor or making comments such as, “this is a waste of time” or “that’s a recruit-level drill.” This reminds me of a quote from Chinese Philosopher Lao Tzu: “Those who know do not speak, those who speak do not know.” It’s also an interesting demonstration of the Dunning-Kruger effect. According to The Decision Lab, this effect occurs “when a person’s lack of knowledge and skills in a certain area cause them to overestimate their own competence. By contrast, this effect also causes those who excel in a given area to think the task is simple for everyone, and underestimate their relative abilities as well.”

Bottom line: Mastering our most basic skills requires consistent practice. No matter the level or the skill, if you don’t review, drill and practice, you will not maintain competency. As Ryan Holiday says in his book, “Ego is the Enemy”: “You must sweep the floor every minute of every day. And then sweep again.”

### **STUDENTS OF OUR CRAFT**

“Let No Man’s Ghost Come Back to Say My Training Let Me Down.”

This sign hangs at the FDNY training academy. While this message is so incredibly important, we must remember that the message is not just for probationary members; it’s for everyone who wears the uniform. We must always remain a student of our craft. Put another way, “If you’re not still learning, you’re already dying” (Holiday).

**CLASSIFIED**



# **Full Time Stationkeeper Position Announcement West Crescent Fire District**

The West Crescent Fire District is looking for a professional and highly-motivated person to perform custodial services and to maintain fire district buildings, grounds and equipment. Must have good communication skills, the ability to manage several projects simultaneously, be flexible with work hours when necessary. Prior experience preferred and all candidates must have clean driver's license. Employment application and job description can be found on the district website at [www.westcrescentfire.com](http://www.westcrescentfire.com) or by emailing Fire District Secretary Arthur Hunsinger at [wcfldsec@nycap.rr.com](mailto:wcfldsec@nycap.rr.com)

**Please send application, cover letter & resume to Arthur Hunsinger via email at [wcfldsec@nycap.rr.com](mailto:wcfldsec@nycap.rr.com)**

## **Position Announcement Station Keeper/Maintenance Person**

**Full Time (40 hours/week) at a rate of up to \$18.00 an hour. Benefits available (health and disability insurance, vacation, sick days, holidays, retirement).**

### **Qualifications/Requirements:**

- Minimum High School diploma or equivalent
- Relevant work or experience
- Pass District Physical, able to lift objects weighing 70 lbs. & Drug Testing
- Preference given to those candidates at least 21 years of age
- Ability to understand and carry out instructions.
- Ability to deal with the public and work successfully with other employees and members of the Fire Department.
- Familiarity with equipment found in fire stations.
- Experience with cleaning and light building maintenance.
- Ability to perform minor mechanical repairs.
- Initiative, resourcefulness and good judgement.
- Basic computer knowledge for data entry.
- Hold a valid NYS vehicle operator's license. A CDL-B license will be required within six (6) months of employment, to include Air Brake Endorsement. Driver's license will be enrolled in the NYS License Event Notification Service. License acceptable to Fire District's insurance carrier
- Background check for Arson Conviction and Sex Offender Registry.
- Preference may be given to an active SCBA qualified member in a local fire department.
- Need to be CPR/AED Certified

## THE LIGHTER SIDE!

Survival Tip: If you get lost in the woods, start talking about politics, someone will show up to argue with you!!

## OFFICERS OF THE CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS

### 2023 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

**President:** Tom Rinaldi, Commissioner Stillwater/Saratoga

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**Secretary/Treasurer:** Tony Hill

**Sargent at Arms:** Tom Wood

**Chaplain:** Fred Richards

**Legal Council:** Greg Serio

*The Capital Area Association represents fire district officials from the fire districts in Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington, Saratoga, Fulton and Montgomery Counties*

*Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, Secretaries and Chief*

*All are invited to participate in all of the Capital Area Activities*

*The Capital Area Association wants to take this opportunity to thank all the Fire Districts who continue to support the local Capital Area Association as members for 2023.*

## FIRE DISTRICT RESOURCES - -THE BACK PAGE - - FOR YOU TO FOLLOW UP!

### **What are the duties and responsibilities of a Commissioner?**

*The Answer is posted on our web site at [www.AFDCA.org](http://www.AFDCA.org)*

### **Vital Statistics on the State Association Regions – the break out is on our web site.**

# CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!!

**NOTE: BST & Co. CPAs Has Moved to 10 British American Blvd, Latham NY 12110**

Business Partner Applications Available At: [WWW.AFDCA.ORG](http://WWW.AFDCA.ORG)

[Welcome Back all of our Business Partners for 2022](#)

*We invite our business partners to submit educational information to be included in this Bulletin for district commissioners and chief officers*

*Write me at [tom@rinaldi1.com](mailto:tom@rinaldi1.com)*

Please Support Those Who Support Us!!

***If you have information on new products you wish to showcase or is educational and informative for fire districts, please submit it and we will use it in this Bulletin under the appropriate heading.***

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Brendan Kennedy ext 356



*The Capital Bulletin is reaching well over 400+ fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis. Since the Capital Area Association covers an area the size of Connecticut it is difficult to meet in person to exchange information and ideas.*

*This is a service of the Capital Area Association through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at [tom@rinaldi1.com](mailto:tom@rinaldi1.com) for comments or content contributions are always welcome.*

**MEMBERSHIP IN THE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS OF THE CAPITAL AREA**

Would you like to join the Association of Fire Districts of the Capital Area and join 75 members in 8 counties? Both fire protection districts and Village departments are eligible for membership.

The yearly membership dues (January 1st to December 31st) shall be as follows and shall be based on the annual budget of the Fire District/Organization;

**To take effect January 2023:**

- \$0 to \$200,000: \$50
- \$200,001 to \$400,000: \$100
- \$400,001 to \$600,000: \$200
- \$600,001 plus: \$300

**Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee**



**association of fire districts  
OF THE  
CAPITAL AREA, INC.**

**2023 Events Calendar**

Date	Time	Type	Location
Saturday, January 7, 2023	9:00 AM	Organizational Meeting	Clifton Park
Thursday, February 9, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Saturday, February 11, 2023	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Averill Park
Saturday, March 4, 2023	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Clifton Park
Thursday, March 9, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Saturday, March 11, 2023	6:00 PM	Officer Installation & Reception Dinner	Embassy Suites, Saratoga
Saturday, March 25, 2023	8:00 AM	Commissioner Training	Berkshire
Thursday, April 6, 2023	7:00 PM	Board Meeting	Clifton Park
Thursday, May 11, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Thursday, June 8, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park

Thursday, July 13, 2023	7:00 PM	Board Meeting	Clifton Park
Thursday, September 14, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
October 2023	NO MEETING		
Thursday, October 12, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
Saturday, November 4, 2023	8:00 AM	Fall Workshop	TBD
Thursday, November 9, 2023	7:00 PM	General Membership	Clifton Park
December 2023	NO MEETING		
Saturday, January 6, 2024	9:00 AM	Organizational Meeting	TBD