



ASSOCIATION OF  
FIRE DISTRICTS  
\* \* CAPITAL AREA \* \*

# CAPITAL BULLETIN

## FIRE DISTRICT NEWS

JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2023

EDITOR - TOM RINALDI

[tom@rinaldi1.com](mailto:tom@rinaldi1.com)

*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*

### 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

### 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 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>

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

**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**

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

## CAPITAL SHORTS:

- 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.

*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*



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)

### 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!)*

## **Will VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER SHORTAGE DISAPPEAR IF THEY GET 10% DISCOUNT ON PROPERTY TAXES? Probably NOT.**

Fingerlakes.com

Will legislation aimed at giving local firefighters and EMS personnel a tax break help with shortages? Volunteer fire and EMS agencies across New York State have been struggling to find willing bodies.

A couple weeks ago, Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation that would allow these volunteers to receive a small tax exemption. The advocates say the hope is to help with recruitment and retention.

Like many other states, New York has seen a steady, and equally concerning, decline in volunteer firefighters. That makes it hard to respond to calls in some communities. It also makes response time more difficult to manage in rural communities.

The new law allows local municipalities to provide a property tax exemption to volunteer firefighters. The exemption can be customized by community – allowing for savings up to 10%.

Still though, advocates worry about how it would be implemented. First, the property tax savings doesn't address the 'time availability' issue that many who are thinking about volunteering consider. Advocates say many don't think they have the time to volunteer or are concerned about the personal economic implications of choosing to volunteer over picking up a second, part-time job. The second issue involves the need for local municipalities to opt-in to the program.

## **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>

## **LET YOUR MEMBERS KNOW ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY!**

### **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-ss0@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 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)** <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](#).

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

### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

#### **16 Must-Read Books For Firefighters**

Megan Wells

FireRescue1 asked readers to recommend some of the best firefighter-related books they’ve read, and you shared plenty of interesting titles. Whether you’re shopping for a holiday gift for your firefighter or just looking to pick up a new read, check out this list of firefighter-recommended books.

**1. “3000 DEGREES: THE TRUE STORY OF A DEADLY FIRE AND THE MEN WHO FOUGHT IT” BY SEAN FLYNN**

On Dec. 3, 1999, a three-alarm warehouse fire in a six-story, windowless building sent the Worcester, Massachusetts, Fire Department into action. The blaze was unruly, with rollovers, flashovers and backdrafts. Once inside the warehouse, the firefighters found themselves trapped in walls of blazing orange heat and black smoke where they struggled to survive an ill-fated ordeal that would push them to the limits of courage. “3000 Degrees” gives an unprecedented look at these heroic firefighters who rushed into the burning building when everyone else just wanted out.

**2. “THIRTY YEARS ON THE LINE” BY LEO D. STAPLETON**

This title is the first of 11 books written by Stapleton, retired chief of the Boston Fire Department. This particular novel takes you to the beginning of Stapleton’s 39-year career. Stapleton shares his expertise, “how-to” insight and personal anecdotes that have shaped him into the person he is today.

**3. “SMOKEJUMPER: A MEMOIR BY ONE OF AMERICA’S MOST SELECT AIRBORNE FIREFIGHTERS” BY JASON A. RAMOS**

[Smokejumpers](#) are the Navy SEALs of the firefighting world. This book gives you an inside look into the epic adventures smokejumpers undertake as they parachute into wildfires in the most remote and rugged areas of the United States.

**4. “YOUNG MEN AND FIRE” BY NORMAN MACLEAN**

Another title devoted to the elite smokejumpers, “Young Men and Fire” details a specific event on August 5, 1949, when a group of firefighters jumped into a remote forest fire in the Montana wilderness. All but three of the crew did not return. Maclean, who also wrote “A River Runs Through It,” worked for the Forest Service in his youth and studied this fire extensively to write this perspective of the event.

**5. “REPORT FROM ENGINE CO. 82” BY DENNIS SMITH**

A memoir by Dennis Smith, “Report from Engine Co. 82” recounts a career as a firefighter in the poverty-stricken district of New York’s South Bronx in the late 1960s. Smith tells the story of a brutalizing yet rewarding profession.

**6. “ESSENTIALS OF FIREFIGHTING AND FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS” BY IFSTA**

If you’re just starting the pursuit toward a fire career, this book is, as the title says, essential. This textbook covers all the required material for Fire Fighter I and II levels of NFPA 1001, NFPA 472, and OSHA 1910.120.

**7. “CRUCIBLE OF FIRE: NINETEENTH-CENTURY URBAN FIRES AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN FIRE SERVICE” BY BRUCE HENSLER**

Hensler’s “Crucible of Fire” recounts practical knowledge gained from fighting 19th-century fires like the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 and the Great Boston Fire of 1872. These epic fires gave form and function to modern fire protection efforts.



The aftermath of these historic events redefined city planning, water distribution systems and underwriting for fire insurance.

**8. ["ON THE LINE: WOMEN FIREFIGHTERS TELL THEIR STORIES"](#) BY LINDA WILLING**

Willing, a FireRescue1 contributor, profiles more than 35 women who serve as firefighters in the United States and Canada. Each shares her story, from 9/11 to EMS calls and everything in between. The common thread among all women featured in this book is their love and commitment to a life of service as a firefighter.

**9. ["D.C. FIRE"](#) BY DENNIS RUBIN**

Rubin is a 40-year fire service veteran and previous chief of Washington Fire & EMS in the nation's capital. This collection of behind-the-scenes stories provides insight on leadership methods, as well as perspective on some of the most common dilemmas in fire service leadership today.

**10. ["RESCUE MEN"](#) BY CHARLES KENNEY**

Kenney, whose grandfather was among the first on scene at the [Cocoanut Grove Fire](#) in 1942, is a third-generation firefighter in Boston. Kenney takes a culmination of stories from his firefighting family to look at the history of firefighting, the changing politics in Boston throughout the years, racial tensions prominent in Boston during the '70s and '80s, and his father's struggle with alcoholism from a career in fire.

**11. ["FIRST IN, LAST OUT: LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE NEW YORK FIRE DEPARTMENT"](#) BY JOHN SALKA**

What does it take for someone to run into a burning building when everyone else is running out? FDNY officer John Salka, uses real-world stories to illustrate how to practice and teach high-stakes leadership and build loyalty in "First In, Last Out."

**12. ["PASS IT ON: WHAT WE KNOW ... WHAT WE WANT YOU TO KNOW"](#) BY BILLY GOLDFEDER**

For this book, Chief Billy Goldfeder gathered leading firefighters, fire officers and chiefs from all over the country to share their career wisdom and insights through short personal stories, life experiences and anecdotes. Proceeds from sales of the book go to a scholarship fund and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

(And don't miss ["Pass It On: The Second Alarm"](#) and ["Pass It On 3: Making Good Progress."](#))

**13. ["IN HONOR OF THE CHARLESTON 9: A STUDY OF CHANGE FOLLOWING TRAGEDY"](#) BY DAVID GRIFFINS**

The 2007 Sofa Super Store fire, one of the deadliest incidents for firefighters since 9/11, left nine firefighters dead. Dr. David Griffin, the engineer on the first due engine of the incident, studies how first responders' organizational processes and employee behaviors changed after this deadly day and shares his findings in this book.

**14. ["THE RURAL FIREFIGHTING HANDBOOK"](#) BY DOMINIC COLETTI AND LARRY DAVIS**

This textbook provides detailed information on improving fire suppression for the small community fire department. A few of the many topics covered include:

- Why your department's capability to control and/or suppress fire is dependent on the "Big Five."
- Tips for the fire officer on how to comply with pertinent standards and regulations and to stay out of court.
- How new technology, Class A foam and [CAFS](#) can increase the capability of your firefighting resources, people, equipment and water supply.

**15. ["SMOKE YOUR FIREFIGHTER INTERVIEW"](#) BY PAUL S. LEPORE**

"Smoke Your Firefighter Interview" is a great choice for any future firefighter. In this book, Chief Lepore covers 85 of the most commonly asked fire department interview questions. The format is simple: question, answer, and reasoning behind the answer. After answering each question, Chief Lepore carefully and thoroughly explains why he has answered the question the way he did.

**16. ["FIRE COMMAND"](#) BY ALAN V. BRUNACINI**

Prior to his death, America's fire chief, Alan Brunacini ("Bruno") wrote "Fire Command," which has long been credited with serving as an instrumental textbook about the incident management system.

**MORE GREAT READS SUGGESTED BY LEXIPOL'S OWN MIKE VATTER:**

- Frank Brannigan's ["Building Construction for the Fire Service"](#)
- Dr. Burton Clark's ["I Can't Save You, But I Will Die Trying"](#)
- Joe Flood's ["The Fires"](#)
- James Mattis's ["Call Sign Chaos"](#)
- James B. Stockdale's ["Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot"](#)

## CHALLENGES:

### Fly Creek Fire District Elects New Commissioners

By CASPAR EWIG

OTSEGO COUNTY - Keith Dickinson, Sam Hoskins and Edward Kukenberger emerged as winners in a hotly contested election on Tuesday, December 13 for three seats on the Board of Fire Commissioners of the Fly Creek Fire District.

Dickinson defeated Joan Kegelman, the sitting appointed chairman, for a full five-year term. Hoskins, who ran unopposed, will fill a vacant seat for a three-year term, and Kukenberger will rejoin the board for a one-year term, having defeated challenger Kevin Green.

The three winning candidates will join Christine Voulo and Betty Staffin, who are currently serving five-year terms. In addition, voters **rejected** five separate propositions. Four of the propositions requested voters to ratify board resolutions which had been passed the week prior to the election. **These resolutions sought to establish multiple reserve funds to cover the purchase, maintenance, and repair of various fire department equipment and buildings.** The fifth defeated proposition was to ratify a board resolution of November 10 that converted the position of fire district treasurer from an elected to an appointed post.

Fly Creek Fire District elections historically do not elicit a large crowd, and some past elections have drawn less than 10 voters, sources said. However, due to the emotions surrounding this election and issues raised by the propositions, the board anticipated a high turnout and had prepared 1,800 ballots. In the end, a total of 176 voters arrived at the polls, still representing an unusually high interest.

*According to community members, over the past few years an increasingly contentious atmosphere has pervaded the board, including the exchange of personal accusations and aspersions, resulting in what one voter described as an unprecedented number of resignations.*

These vacant spots were filled by appointment, and the terms of those commissioners could only last until the next annual election. Thus, Hoskins and Kukenberger were elected to fill the unexpired terms of those appointed commissioners.

The dispute underlying this election was the nature of the fire department's administration. "We governed according to the guidelines established in the Handbook of the Association of Fire Districts," said outgoing Chairman Joan Kegelman. *However, the slate of challenging commissioners campaigned on the theme that the existing board had created an unnecessarily rigid and formalistic structure, requiring needless expenditures of thousands of dollars.*

"In the past the board was always able to get things done within those guidelines on a more congenial and informal basis," said a spokesman for the challengers. "And this election was a referendum by the community that it wanted to return to that kind of governance."

A group opposing the proposals issued a circular prior to the election, titled "Save The Date," pointing out that the creation of reserve funds would seriously interfere with the flexibility of using monies as needed. Conversely, **the board considered the establishment of such escrow accounts to be consistent with New York State guidelines for Fire District Commissions.** *Neither side disputed the need to create reserves to replace or repair equipment, but again disagreed on the structure required to achieve that result.*

The first organizational meeting of the newly constituted Board of Fire Commissioners will take place on January 12, 2023.

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### Trashed Lithium-Ion Batteries Caused Three Garbage Truck Fires In California

Kevin Purdy

A firm that handles returned Amazon electronics has agreed to pay a \$25,000 fine after lithium-ion batteries it threw away caused at least three different garbage truck fires.

iDiskk, LLC, based in San Jose, California, agreed to a settlement with the district attorney of Santa Clara County in late November over civil charges regarding improper waste disposal, as noted by E-Scrap News. The company, according to the district attorney's office, "dismantles, recycles, and disposes of consumer computer electronics that are returned through Amazon, some of which contain lithium-ion batteries."

On three different dates in 2021—September 22, October 6, and October 13—trucks picked up residential waste from iDiskk's office address in Campbell, California. A Google Street View look at the address shows a home with a driveway and garage on a tree-lined street. Dozens of lithium-ion batteries were included with typical recycling materials, allowing them to be crushed and compressed with other waste. "In each case, the ... garbage truck driver ejected the truck's load," the initial complaint reads, and the cause was found to be batteries.

Although nobody was hurt in the fires, the October 13 fire, while being dumped into the street to avoid a vehicle fire, caused the raised bin to catch on overhead utility lines. The attached utility pole broke and fell to the ground. "These fires are incredibly dangerous to the safety of the garbage truck drivers and first responders who must then act quickly to deal with the fire," said Deputy District Attorney Christopher Judge in a press release after the settlement.

While this case involves the owners of an e-waste business that (by law) should have known better than to toss batteries into standard recycling, batteries continue to be the leading cause of fires in the waste stream. A 2018 survey of recycling facilities by the California Product Safety Council found that 83 percent of 26 facilities had a fire in the two years prior, and 65 percent of them were caused by batteries. A study in MDPI by Austrian professors found that, amid increased numbers of fires and significant potential for damage, "No other substance or material has ever comparably endangered the whole waste industry" as discarded portable batteries.

Of course, some batteries end up in trash and recycling because there's nowhere better to take them. In many parts of the country, a Best Buy or Walmart that will take used electronics is the best option residents may have. Otherwise, the best options include hunting down a proper facility, hoarding them until your local politician hosts a hazardous waste event, or just stashing them away indefinitely (where at least they'll slowly lose charge).

Scientists have suggested solutions to making lithium-ion batteries less fire-prone. Stanford University researchers suggested in 2017 using built-in flame retardants as an anode/cathode separator, which would release when things get hot. Powdered silica in the electrolyte mix was proposed by Oak Ridge National Laboratory in 2018. Neither improvement, obviously, has gone mainstream.

## 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 \*1 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S**

*According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com\**

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

## [It's Time To Track Our Fireground Exposures](#)

Mike Vatter

Keeping a personal log or using an exposure tracker app could be the key to assuring cancer benefits. If you follow fire service news, you may recall that, across the country, there are firefighters whose occupational cancer claims have been denied:

- [Former Fla. FF-medical sues county after being denied cancer benefit](#)
- ['Slap in the face': Ohio FFs outraged as city fights cancer claims](#)
- [Fla. firefighters sue county to drop legal challenge to state's cancer coverage law](#)

**Claims are being denied for a variety of reasons, but the one that sticks out is denial based on insufficient proof of exposure to carcinogens.** Depending on how an agency's workers' compensation program is administered, the denial could come from an insurer, third-party administrator or city/county administrative personnel.

*You may be thinking to yourself, "I have 12 years on the job and have been to hundreds of fires and thousands of incidents so that should be enough." Unfortunately, the answer is a confusing yes and no. And it is going to be dependent on exactly how the legislation is written and the interpretation of the claim's person.*

### **"REBUTTABLE PRESUMPTION" CALLS FOR LOGGING EXPOSURES**

The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) maintains a list of the states and Canadian provinces that have presumptive cancer legislation. **At the time of this writing, 49 states and 12 provinces have some form of presumptive cancer legislation on the books.** Only Delaware and Quebec fail to provide any form of presumptive cancer legislation. In many cases, the legislation provides that the presumption is rebuttable. What does this mean to average firefighter? A rebuttable presumption means that given sufficient, credible evidence to the contrary, your claim can be denied. In other words, *your* proof must be better than *their* proof for your claim to survive. And this is where the "12 years on the job" statement will fall flat. Do you have proof that you responded to hundreds of fires? And what job did you perform at those fires?

Incident reports and company journal entries can be helpful. But can you remember the date and address of every incident you ever responded to? Unless it is a particularly memorable call, it is unlikely that you will be able to recall most of the incidents.

Fortunately, there are ways to protect yourself and your family. Keep a personal log, journal or diary, or use an exposure report for every incident. It does not need to be fancy. Any hard-bound notebook will do, or you can use one of the exposure apps that are available such as the National Fire Operations Reporting System. You can also consider using both a notebook *and* an app. Remember, you are not writing a novel, but you need to include the date, time, incident number, address, your riding position and, most importantly, a brief description of what work you performed. For example: "I was assigned the nozzle on Engine 7. We were the first-arriving engine company, and I was the driver and operated the pump for the duration of the fire."

Make your personal journal/app entries as soon as possible after the incident. You (and your attorney) will want to be able to say that those entries were made contemporaneously. In other words, you made the notes as soon as possible, not the week before you filed your claim. Additionally, keeping a personal record will help with obtaining official records, such as an NFIRS report, fire investigation report or police reports.

### **ONGOING RESEARCH OFFERS SUPPORT**

There is ongoing research examining carcinogens. In June 2022, the International Agency for Research on Cancer published a report that states, "Occupational exposure as a firefighter was classified as carcinogenic to humans based on sufficient evidence in humans." How employers and insurers will react to this information is anyone's guess.

The fire service should be grateful for this research, but we need to do our best to protect ourselves and loved ones. Keeping personal records of each exposure is an essential part of your work. You could decide to journal every call and event during your time in the fire service. And who knows, even if you never need it for a claim, you may have the basis of a best-seller.

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**[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...**

- 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**

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	00+0=00
Last fire death none	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	0+0=0
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	00 + 17=17
Top Three State with the most 1&2 Family Deaths	1 PA – MI – WI – IO – AK =2
	2
	3
<b>There has been a total of 0030 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**

**\*\*Two Questions That We Will Cover More In Depth In Future Bulletins!**

- #1. Have your new commissioners completed their oath of office and has it been filed with the Town Clerk?
- #2. Is your fire district treasurer covered by an undertaking – bond – surety and has it been filed with the Town Clerk? (Bond should be in the amount at least equal to the amount of money the treasurer handles to protect the taxpayers and the district.)

**Butler (IN) Fire Informed Price More Than Doubles for Truck Equipment Installation**

Fireapparatus Magazine

What started out as a \$25,000 job to install equipment mounts, shelves and drawers in Butler (IN) Fire Department's new fire truck, jumped to a \$60,000 estimate, [KPCNews.com reported](https://www.kpcnews.com).

After some consideration and discussion, the Butler Board of Works Monday agreed to a higher than expected quote, the report said.

Fire Manufacturing Innovations LLC of Springfield (OH) submitted a \$60,000 quote to install the storage devices in the rescue-engine, which arrived earlier this month, according to the report.

The price has jumped considerably in a short period of time, a fire official said. The process for writing specifications for the apparatus — which will carry equipment from a rescue unit on a engine that pumps water — began in 2019.

The price started at \$25,000, the fire official said. At the first of the year the official received an estimate between \$30,000-\$40,000 based on inflation. The last estimate came in at \$60,000.

***In making his motion to approve the bid, a city official said he would like to see an exact quote from the company saying this is how much it's going to be, not just saying this is an estimate, the report said.***

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## **18 States Sue to Stop Parked Trains Blocking Fire Apparatus**

Fireapparatus Magazine

Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt has joined 18 other state attorneys general in *asking that the U.S. Supreme Court restore the rights states and local governments once had to regulate how long trains can block railroad crossings*. Absent that power, the public is put at risk, the attorneys general say in their brief. Countless people have died when emergency vehicles were delayed at rail crossings, The Star reported this month in an investigation of railroad safety lapses.

The problem has only gotten worse in recent years for many communities across the country, The Star reported, as the rail industry's practices have made blocked crossings more common.

The group led by Indiana Attorney General Theodore E. Rokita requests that the high court hear Ohio's appeal of that state's supreme court decision this year invalidating the Ohio law that allowed authorities to levy fines on railroads when their trains blocked a crossing for more than five minutes.

***The Ohio Supreme Court said that law was preempted by federal law and could not be enforced.***

Several state and federal courts in recent years also have negated the authority of other states and local governments to enforce their blocked crossings laws. *Those courts have ruled that only the federal government can regulate train movements, but Congress has failed to pass any laws limiting how long trains can block a crossing.*

The brief that the attorneys general filed in support of Ohio's appeal says state and local regulations are needed because the lack of rules puts public safety at risk.

"Absent enforceable anti-blocking statutes and ordinances, railroads have little incentive to remove idle trains from grade crossings expeditiously," the brief said. "The results can be tragic, as incidents across the country demonstrate." One of those incidents, The Star reported, happened in September 2021 near Leggett, Texas.

K'Twon Franklin was just 11 weeks old when his mother, a nurse, found him unresponsive a half hour after putting him down for a nap. Finding the crossing blocked to the dead-end road where the family lived, an EMT climbed through a parked train to get the child and carry him back to the ambulance.

But before he could get back across the tracks to the vehicle, the train had begun to move. Nearly an hour passed between the 911 call and when the baby was finally loaded into the ambulance. K'Twon was pronounced dead in the hospital three days later.

K'Twon's story was also one of the examples cited in the brief filed by Schmidt and the others. In a news release, Schmidt said ***Kansas is among 37 states with blocked crossings laws that, as The Star found, are effectively unenforceable.*** The law that Kansas has had on the books since 1897 was struck down in 2018 by the Kansas Court of Appeals.

*The state of Ohio argues in its appeal that lower courts misinterpreted a federal statute passed in 1995 that dissolved the Interstate Commerce Commission and transferred much of its authority to a new agency, the Surface Transportation Board.*

The Supreme Court declined to hear a similar appeal from the state of Oklahoma last year, but Ohio officials believe they have tweaked their arguments enough to get the court's consideration.

Railroad unions have also filed a brief in support of Ohio's appeal. CSX Transportation, the railroad that successfully sought to have Ohio's law thrown out, has asked the court to give it until the middle of next month to file a reply.

## FIRE STATION DESIGN THOUGHTS

### *The Evolution of Fire Station Design*

Janet Wilmoth

The apparatus, turnout gear and equipment advancements over the past 20 years are obvious. Each area was prompted by operations safety and efficiency. Similarly, over 20 years, advances in fire stations were slower, that is until 10 years ago. The goals of health and safety in fire stations have escalated quickly.

Going back thru 21 copies of fire station design awards programs, from 2001 to 2022, the past proves the importance of health and safety in fire stations is progressing quickly. Since the first fire station design awards program, we see innovations in fire station entries every year. Since it averages 3-4 years to design and build a station, innovations are incorporated or added before opening.

**Training**—In 2001, *Fire Chief* magazine introduced the first Station Style award program. Among the entries, the first career Gold Award winner was the Delhi, OH, Township Main Fire Station. Completed in 2002, Delhi's station was on the cutting edge of innovations for fire stations entered. The station had a separate area for turnout gear storage, laundry and decontamination rooms. The station included 6,000 square feet of space for future growth. That was 21 years ago. According to the 2001 award program judges, the most impressive element of the Delhi station was the fire department's investment in education and training for the staff. A multifunctional 40-foot training tower included numerous features for training options. Delhi's station was the first example of the *Training by Design* concept by Delhi's architect, David Acomb, AIA, formerly with Cole + Russell Architects.

**Fire Station Sprinklers**—Fire sprinklers in fire stations were first proposed in the early-90s. "How can we encourage citizens to install fire sprinklers if we don't have them in our stations?" a legendary West Coast fire chief asked. It was 2019 before every entry in the *Firehouse* Station Design Awards program had fire sprinklers

**Air Quality**—Used to be that fumes in apparatus bays were just part of a fire station. Slowly, air quality concerns eventually were addressed, and air quality was designed into stations. In 2016, [research on the air quality in Boston fire stations](#), funded by NIOSH and the National Institute of Health, reinforced the link between air quality and exposure "may" contribute to cancer risks in firefighters in fire stations. The 2020 entries in the Station Design award program each had one or two air quality systems and even separate systems for PPE storage rooms and decontamination areas.

**Green and Sustainability**—In 2005, the "greening" of fire stations was more than just recycling. Municipalities across the nation were requesting green options for new construction, particularly, the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). While LEED popularity increased over a dozen years, the most recent Station Design Award entries do not include LEED. Architects report fire departments follow the LEED guidelines but don't submit to the certification process.

**Shared Facilities**—Prompted by the "recession" in 2008 and the closing of fire stations, local governments looked at consolidating public safety into one facility. Thirteen years later, economics and the increasing joint responses of fire and police could be fortified by shared training, fitness, and classroom facilities.

**Bath and Sleeping**—An increase in women firefighters required separate bathrooms and adjustments to sleeping areas. After a decade, every award entry addresses unisex or "gender-neutral" bathrooms and an increase in individual sleeping rooms. There are pros and cons to each, but the bottom line is it is addressed in every fire station design submitted.

**Decontamination**—In 2009, we saw segregated laundry rooms for PPE and station wear; outside access to decontamination areas or away from living quarters; more sophisticated training systems integrated into the facility; and LED lighting.

**Hot Zone**—Maybe one of the most significant changes to fire stations was in 2014, which addressed firefighter health and safety. The introduction of red/yellow/green Hot Zone design was introduced, and in addition, research revealed

the stats on firefighter cancer and mental health. Paul Erickson, FAIA, LeMay Erickson Willcox, introduced the Hot Zone design concept at the 2014 Firehouse Station Design Conference in Baltimore.

Over eight years, the impact of Hot Zone design has had a dramatic impact on firefighter health and safety and continues today.

Look around your current fire station. How well does it protect and serve your personnel and your community? Whether you have a new, renovated or older fire station, take a walk around and see how you can improve the environment for your firefighters, EMS personnel, emergency vehicle technicians and civilian employees. These men and women are the assets you need to provide a healthy environment because you can't afford to lose them.

## THE STUFF FIRE DISTRICTS BUYS

### *The New NFPA 1802 Portable Radio Standard*

John Facella

Since the 1970s, the portable radio has been a vital tool on incident scenes. Unfortunately, the extreme physical environment that's encountered by firefighting, hazmat and technical rescue punishes these devices.

Furthermore, the hazard profile of residential structures dramatically increased because of furnishings that burn faster and hotter, engineered building materials that can fail and open space architecture that requires longer supports.

In June 2011, two San Francisco Fire Department firefighters tragically perished in a residential fire. The investigation revealed that both firefighters' remote speaker microphones (RSMs) failed because of high heat. Therefore, they couldn't transmit a mayday that they were trapped. Unfortunately, this wasn't an isolated incident. Communications are one of the five most frequent contributing factors in National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports. As a result, there were calls for a new standard to define radios that are better suited for the hazard zone.

The NFPA established a committee in March of 2013 to define a more rugged portable radio. This new standard, [NFPA 1802: Standard on Two-Way, Portable RF Voice Communications Devices for Use by Emergency Services Personnel in the Hazard Zone](#) (2021 edition), defines for the first time a radio and speaker microphone that are designed for the inherently hostile environment in which firefighters, hazmat teams and other agencies operate.

Thirty-five Technical Committee members worked on this effort, along with another 21 committee alternates and several other noncommittee observers. The group classifications on this Technical Committee included users, enforcement, manufacturers, labor, testing laboratories, consumers and special experts. Fire departments represented major areas and suburban/rural departments. The committee was led by Robert Athanas, who served on the FDNY for 36 years. He was assisted by NFPA Staff Liaison David Trebisacci.

#### **Overview**

The technical committee worked on three major areas to define these new devices: ergonomics, feature set and environment. Decisions were made at the beginning:

- The standard would encompass both the radio and the RSM, because the RSM often is the most exposed item to the fire environment
- The standard only would concern two-way voice devices
- The standard would be agnostic to the specific technologies that are used, such as radio frequencies and communications technologies (analog vs. digital modulation; trunking vs. nontrunking; LTE 4G as found in broadband devices); the result is that this standard will be useful even as voice communications advance

*Author's note:* The standard is very wide-ranging. Therefore, the summaries that are below are highlights and not all-inclusive. For specific details refer to the standard, which can be found at [nfpa.org](http://nfpa.org).

#### **Ergonomics**

Emergency incident scenes are stressful and distracting. Multiple researchers have discovered first responder "tunnel vision" when a situation deteriorates. Thus, every first responder's wireless lifeline device must be simple to use, to reduce the chances for error. Some of the key issues addressed:

- Radio control knobs and cable connectors must be able to be manipulated by responders who have large hands and/or who are wearing structural firefighting gloves
- The emergency alert (mayday) button must be easy to find



- Manipulation of the radio's controls is difficult or impossible if a member is trapped or injured or the radio is worn under the turnout coat or in the coat radio pocket; therefore, some important controls must be available from the RSM, which typically is worn on the outside of the turnout coat: the RSM is required to have an emergency alert button, and it can have at least one programmable button, which can be used for various purposes, such as reverting back to a home channel/talkgroup; the cable that's between the radio and the RSM is monitored; problems create an alert
- NFPA 1802 radios and RSMs will include voice announcements of various actions, including channel/talkgroup changes: if there is radio traffic, the voice announcement is delayed and then played when the radio traffic ceases; announcements while the radio is operated in the hazard-zone mode are louder
- The radio must provide clear voice transmission and reception; speech intelligibility is objectively measured with an internationally recognized test method that's used by cellular telephone carriers, called POLQA

### Feature set

At minimum, every radio must allow for analog conventional (nontrunked) transmission. This requirement provides for lowest-common-denominator communications among all emergency scene radios, even if all of the supporting radio infrastructure should fail.

Interoperability is guaranteed among all NFPA 1802-certified radios and all NFPA 1802-certified RSMs by means of the inclusion of a universal connector.

Visual and audible indicators of battery status are displayed.

Hazard-zone operation is different from the nonhazard zone, and the radio defaults to the hazard-zone mode when it is powered on initially. In the hazard zone, the radio's volume is louder. Radios can be programmed so that inadvertent powering off of the radio can be reduced when in the hazard zone.

Bluetooth technology allows the use of wireless SCBA microphones/speakers, RSMs, etc. As well, the radio periodically self-checks, and it must have a data logger that stores recent events, such as mayday activation. The purpose is to provide information for both the fire service and its vendors regarding proper performance of this equipment under stress.

### Environmental & testing

Overtemperature events are detected, recorded and alerted, and the radio and RSM must be rated nonincendive (Class I Division 2). Optionally, the radio and RSM can be certified as intrinsically safe-rated (Class I Division 1).

Radios and RSMs must undergo very extensive environmental testing. After most tests, the radio and/or RSM must undergo successful voice quality and operational checks. Here are a few highlights:

- Six complete cycles of 15 minutes of baking at 350 degrees F (177 degrees C), followed by immediate immersion in water for 15 minutes
- A three-hour vibration test
- Impact tests are performed on three devices by dropping on a concrete floor from 9.8 feet (3 meters), as if dropped from the bed of a ladder truck or engine
- Corrosion test includes high humidity and a salt spray
- A high-temperature test exposes the device to 500 degrees F (260 degrees C) for five minutes
- Heat and flame test first exposes the device for 15 minutes to a temperature of 203 degrees F (95 degrees C), after which the device is subjected to a 1,742 degrees F (950 degrees C) flame for 10 seconds
- A temperature stress test exposes the device to multiple cycles of warm-hot-warm-cold temperatures

### Now what?

The committee didn't address the provision of SCBA audio devices (microphones and earpieces). This will be the responsibility of the committee for [NFPA 1981: Standard on Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus \(SCBA\) for Emergency Services](#). When NFPA 1981 includes this, voice intelligibility will improve significantly.

Radios and RSMs that meet this standard will have new levels of ruggedness and ease of use and improved voice quality and functionality, which will result in improved safety for firefighters and others who work in the hazard zone. Although the standard only recently was issued, several manufacturers plan to introduce NFPA 1802 radios and RSMs.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

## FIRE DEPARTMENT FINANCIALS

### \*\*Message from OSC to all Fire District Treasurers in the State

#### Dear Fire District Treasurer:

Local governments are required to file an Annual Update Document (AUD) with the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) after the close of their fiscal year (General Municipal Law §30). This reporting serves as an important source of financial information for the public, our staff and other data users and stakeholders.

The software, tools and prior-year data file that you will need to prepare your AUD will be available on our website after your December 31, 2022 fiscal-year end. The filing is due within 60-120 days. Our website has your local government's [filing deadline](#) – Please submit your information accordingly.

Additionally, our office is transitioning to the new Annual Financial Reporting ([AFR](#)) application, and ***the current reporting website will be decommissioned in September of 2023. All reports not submitted by August 30, 2023 are required to be completed in the new application. To avoid losing your progress, you must complete and submit reports for fiscal years ending prior to 2023 by August 30, 2023.***

#### Getting started

- Visit OSC's [Annual Update Document \(AUD\) Filing website](#).
- Log in using the **User ID** and **PIN/Password** provided above. You will also need this PIN/Password to complete your certification later in the process.
- In the **Reporting Options** section, click on **Annual Financial Reporting**. Review the instructions on the steps involved.

If you need assistance with filing, contact our Help Desk at 866-321-8503.

For questions relating to accounting or financial reporting issues, contact your OSC [Regional Office](#).

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## STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE:

### All Eyes On You: Fire Chiefs Must Strive For Positivity Amid Scrutiny

Chief Marc Bashoor

It's vital to make decisions rooted in doing what's right for our organizations to prevent negativity from spreading. As leaders, we find ourselves in the unique position of being under the microscope. Whether professional or personal, intentional or incidental, all eyes are on the decisions we make, and the things we say and do are like real-life Petri dishes, ripe for examination. Unfortunately for us, it's not always subject-matter experts peering through the microscope lens. There are ways to manage the naysayers – by giving them little material to attack. And that begins with the choices we make and how we lead our departments.

#### CHOICES WITHIN YOUR CONTROL

We all have choices to make and outcomes to navigate and manage. The challenge for most of us is whether we wallow in the bed we've made or get up, fix the wrinkles and make another bed, better this time.

Clearly the outcomes aren't so one-dimensional, but the choices you make as a leader are fully within your control. The activities you engage in (on *and* off duty) are fully within your control. The type of people you align yourself with is fully within your control. And the more negativity you surround yourself with, the more negative you and your environment will become.

Whether it's politics, budgets, paid/volunteer issues, fire-based EMS debates, succession planning, crew management, apparatus purchasing, logistics management, alcohol/drugs, you name it, YOU have control over your engagement and your responses to those issues. And if you choose to make a bed of negative-environment choices, those who follow or align with you will lie in that bed of comfort with you if given the choice/opportunity. This is where the bacteria festers.

### **THE CANCER WITHIN**

For our organizations to succeed, we need to be motivators and forward-thinkers, keeping the organizational mission in the forefront of everything we do. If you align yourself with the negativity and conspiracies of the day, they will undoubtedly become your focus for tomorrow and beyond. Such decisions will only serve to grow more negativity and disease within your organization.

We don't HAVE to reply to every social media attack or internalize every letter to the editor. And, recognizing that every decision the administration makes doesn't always fit our mold, the mission and the lessons of leadership remain the same. Sure, it's tough to bite your tongue and keep moving forward all the time; if it was easy, we'd have no problem filling all our staffing holes with examples of positive energy and production.

Does everybody have the same educational background as you? Maybe, maybe not. How about the same certifications, work history, knowledge base or personal drives for success? Of course not. That's the beauty and the essence of diversity in humanity and in the workplace. The diversity of opinion, education and experience is what drives continuous growth and improvement. We must capitalize on our differences to build a stronger agency.

### **CHOOSE POSITIVITY**

Find a way to pull yourself out of your funk and be the beacon of positivity, clarity and focus that your communities, your crews and even you deserve. It's your choice. Your future and your organization's future depend on it!

**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

*Auld Lang Syne”: Behind the History of the Song and Why We Sing It on New Year’s Eve*

Julia Diddy

The song “Auld Lang Syne” is all but inescapable on the night of December 31, indelibly intertwined with New Year’s celebrations in many English-speaking countries. But where did it come from, and what does it mean?

The phrase “Auld Lang Syne” is from the 18th-century Scots language, and translates to “old long since,” or more generally, “the olden days,” according to Vox. The lyrics have famously posed an ongoing challenge to modern revelers who routinely struggle to recall the words beyond the opening verse and chorus. ([Here are the full lyrics](#), courtesy of CNN.) But with the lyrics’ focus on companionship and remembrance, it’s become a beloved part of the New Year’s Eve tradition across the world.

The poem “Auld Lang Syne” by Robert Burns has often been credited as the primary source of inspiration for the song’s lyrics, but the truth is decidedly more complicated — so much so that The Morgan Library & Museum in New York curated an exhibit around the song’s origins and evolution in 2011.

Burns was an 18th-century Scottish working-class poet and lyricist who traveled throughout his country, learning and collecting the traditional songs he heard. Of his famous poem, Burns himself admitted that he “took it down from an old man,” per RobertBurns.org.

“Burns said in one of the letters on view that he listened to an old man singing the song and that it had never been in print or in manuscript until he wrote it down from that old man singing,” Christine Nelson, [curator of the Morgan’s 2012 exhibit](#), told CBS News. “He didn’t make any secret of the fact that he was doing what he called ‘mending’ these old songs. So that they could be, you know, given to the public for posterity.”

Murray Pittock, a literary historian, said in an interview with [The Washington Post](#) that “Burns denied he wrote it because he didn’t. He edited it, though how much we don’t know.” He later added: “It’s impossible to say how many texts and tunes ‘Auld Lang Syne’ is derived from.”

Scholars believe there were a variety of source materials, some dating as far back as the 16th century, that inspired and shaped Burns’ version.

David Hopes, director of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway, Scotland, [shared with USA Today that Burns adapted an earlier version of the lyrics](#) written by another Scottish poet, Allan Ramsay. The [museum displays both the Burns’ version and Ramsay’s version](#) so that visitors may compare and draw their own conclusions.

The song’s present-day tune by all accounts isn’t the original melody that Burns would have first heard, either. It was music publisher George Thompson who paired the lyrics with the music of a different traditional Scottish melody, CBS News reported.

“It fit metrically with the words of ‘Auld Lang Syne’; we don’t have a record of how he made that decision to bring them together, but he did, and that is what we sing now,” Nelson told the outlet.

In Scotland, Burns remains a literary hero whose oeuvre encompasses famous works such as the epic poem Tam o’Shanter. And while he never attempted to pass “Auld Lang Syne” off as his own exclusive creation, it seems it shall remain forever intertwined with his name.

[Click here to listen to a beautiful performance](#) of the song by the Choral Scholars of University College Dublin.

**OFFICERS OF THE CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS**

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*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**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Location</b>
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