



# CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

## BULLETIN

YOUR FIRE DISTRICT NEWS SOURCE

MARCH 4TH, 2023

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*If you can't see yourself as a life-long learner, then please do us all a favor and retire.*

THE CAPITAL CALENDAR:

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

### 2023 CAPITAL AREA MEETING & TRAINING SCHEDULE

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

**ZOOM LINK FOR THE MARCH 9<sup>TH</sup> MEETING: Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84313653528?pwd=RIJ4T0tDVm02dWtsbFRNZlZxNmpsdz09>

Meeting ID: 843 1365 3528

Passcode: 621563

Saturday, March 11, 2023      6:00 PM      Officer Installation      Embassy Suites Hotel 86 Congress Street,  
Saratoga Springs, NY –

**IT'S NOW OR NEVER, MAKE RESERVATIONS RIGHT NOW!!**

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*

### ***It's March Already and Dues are Due!!***

All of our members and potential members should have received their annual dues notice by now. Your dues go toward the day-to-day operations of the Capital Area Association which are minimal. It has been our intent the your dues benefit the membership by keeping training costs to a minimum, we don't use our training as a funding stream. The Capital Area represents fire districts in 8 counties and provides advocacy in legislative matters, works collectively with the State Association, provides locally pertinent training and will continue to work for and with our fire districts assisting them to solve problems. Please consider finding that invoice and sending it in to cover your 2023 dues.

### ***Long Way to Travel to Meetings? Zoom In!***

*It's our desire that every member district have the opportunity to attend Capital Area meetings. We know we cover a large area, in 8 counties and beyond and wish to give all of our members a chance to participate in the general membership meetings. You have a voice and we would like to hear it. Join us at our next meeting either in person or via Zoom. The link will be sent via constant contact prior to each general membership meeting. Thank you for being a member and we hope you will join us.*

**Commissioner Training, Register Now and pay at the door!**

There are seats available at Berkshire Fire District, 320 Steele Ave Extension, Gloversville, NY for any of the Commissioners in the Western portion of the Capital Area or adjacent counties.

Whatever is convenient for you!

You are going to like the new format of this presentation.

Just west of the intersection of Routes 29 & 30

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

**LAST CHANCE IN THE CAPITAL AREA FOR IN PERSON TRAINING**

Saturday, March 25, 2023 8:00 AM 6 hour Commissioner Training Berkshire Fire District Fulton, Co.  
w/Greg Serio 320 Steele Ave Ext, Gloversville, NY 12078

RESERVE YOUR SEAT AT: Email [caaofd@gmail.com](mailto:caaofd@gmail.com)

2023 Membership Activity Options Being Explored

Saturday, November 4th, 2023 8:00 AM Fall Workshop Location 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.*

**IF NOTHING ELSE READ THE ARTICLES PRECEDED BY \*\***

**CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION NEWS:**

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

***You Are Invited to Become a Member of the Capital Area Association!***

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>

Benefits of membership include meeting attendance, receiving the Bulletin, access to legal advice

The Capital Area has logo ware available, 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:**

- Another successful Commissioner Training session is in the books, starting 2 hours later was just right, the roads were clear.
- The Wilton Fire District is looking for policies regarding Driver Certification, send to Megan Washburn, District Administrator at [mwashburn@wiltonfiredept.org](mailto:mwashburn@wiltonfiredept.org). Thank you.
- Are you interested in becoming a Director to represent our region, Region 1 for the next two years, please contact Tom Rinaldi or any of the Capital Area officers? Directors can still assume the position at the Annual Meeting in May.
- The Internal Revenue Service has announced the mileage rate for business related travel in 2023. It will be 65.5 cents per mile.

- Congratulations to both the Burnt Hills and South Glens Falls fire departments having received \$156K in federal funding from the AFGrants program.
- On Monday, Albany officials announced the ratification of a new contract for members of the Albany Fire Department. According to the agreement, members of the Albany Fire Department will see raises of 2.5% in 2023, 2.75% in 2024, and 3% in 2025 and 2026

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

## ON THE GRANTS FRONT:

### FY 2021 AFG Programs Status Update

Award announcements are still underway for all three programs. Even though FY 2021 ended Sept. 30, 2022, awards will continue to be made because of the \$300 million in supplemental funds provided through the American Rescue Plan Act (AFG-\$90 million, Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response-\$200 million, and Fire Protection & Safety-\$10 million). Awards are expected to continue into March. As award determinations are finalized, notification will be sent to grant recipients. Award information will also be posted on the FEMA website as each round is announced.

FY 2022 SAFER Grant application period is open until Friday, March 17, 2023 at 5 p.m. ET.

Start your application today by reviewing the FY 2022 SAFER funding notice and associated tools posted on the FEMA website at [www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safer/documents](http://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters/safer/documents)

## STATE ASSOCIATION NEWS:

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

### 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.**

**The Capital Area Association officers and directors are urging all fire districts who are members of the State Association to at least travel to Turning Stone on Friday Afternoon May 5<sup>th</sup> no later than 4PM to VOTE in favor of the By-law change which will allow future voting either in person or by Proxy. This would empower all of the members who pay dues to vote on the future of the State Association without having to travel, pay for and attend the annual conference. *If you pay dues to this not for profit Association, you should be enfranchised to vote!***

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

**Mark your calendar for November 4<sup>th</sup> 2023 for the Capital Area Fall Leadership Workshop, final location to be determined. If there are subjects that YOU think we should be covering, please let us know.**



## Coffee with Commissioners

### THE LATEST FROM ALBANY

#### From the 2024 Executive Budget Briefing Book

##### Improve Statewide Emergency Response Services.

- **Allow for Compensation Volunteer Firefighters.** The Executive Budget proposes legislation to allow municipalities and fire companies to pay volunteer firefighters modest compensation based on call response and still retain their volunteer status.
- **Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend.** The Executive Budget includes \$6.5 million to provide a State-funded stipend to volunteer firefighters who complete foundational training as well as funds for DHSES to administer the program and enhance their training capacity.
- **Create NY Emergency Services IP Network.** The Executive Budget includes \$20 million to assist counties in transitioning to Next Generation 911 via a fiberoptic cable network that would connect to a single Public Service Answering Point in each county
- **Amend Emergency Medical Services** This part would require the State Emergency Medical Services Council to advise the Commissioner of Health on issues related to EMS; establish a statewide comprehensive emergency medical services plan; establish mobile integrated healthcare program for ESM agencies; and establish a new process for the approval of EMS applications.
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** The Executive proposes \$7.6 million to increase the EMS special revenue fund in addition to providing capital equipment resources to enhance the statewide fleet of EMS vehicles including ambulances and non-transport treatment vehicles.
- **Create the Transit-Oriented Development Act of 2023** This part would require local governments to authorize the construction of residential dwelling units within proximity to any non-seasonal rail station.
- **Authorize a Property Tax Exemption for Accessory Dwelling Units** This part would authorize municipalities to adopt a property tax exemption program for residential property owners to create one or more additional residential units on their property.
- **Prohibit Installation of Fossil Fuel Equipment and Building Systems** This part would prohibit the installation of fossil-fuel equipment and building systems in new building construction and establish building benchmarking requirements

The executive budget will be presented to the legislature; they will review it, come up with their budget and then the negotiations begin. The budget is supposed to be in place by April 1st. We'll see.

#### 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)
- **S4120 MAYER/A3992 OTIS---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.
- **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

- **S3458 SKOFUS/A2776 ZEBROWSKI---AMEND PENAL CODE TO ADD ENDANGERING THE WELFARE OF OCCUPANTS AND FIRST RESPONDERS**
- **S2986 KAVANAGH/A4430 ZEBROWSKI---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)
- **S3531 SKOFUS---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.

- **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.

- **S324 OBERACKER---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.

**ALSO: A165 WOERNER AND S324 OBERACKER**

- **A1999 HAWLEY---CANCER COVERAGE COST RELIEF**

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

- *occupational, and other information from firefighters on an ongoing basis to enable public health researchers to learn more about the causes of firefighter cancer in order to better treat and prevent it.*
- **The SIREN Grant**, which is run through the Department of Health and Human Services and helps public and private nonprofit EMS agencies that serve rural areas pay for equipment, training, and staffing.
- Housing Guaranteed Loan Program assists approved lenders in providing loans to low- and moderate- income households to build, rehabilitate, or improve a home in eligible rural areas. **This bill will allow volunteer firefighters to participate in the loan program even if their income exceeds the maximum allowable income level by up to \$18,000.** The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Good Neighbor Next Door Sales Program *gives law enforcement officers, teachers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians a 50-percent discount from the list price of a home located in a revitalization area.*

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

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!

### [UL FSRI Fire Safety Academy – 1 Hour Web Based Course on Lithium Ion Batteries](#)

This course focuses on foundational research about lithium-ion batteries, thermal runaway and how fire and explosion hazards can develop. The knowledge you gain in this course can help you identify the risks associated with lithium-ion battery products in your personal and professional life.

COURSE ACCESS AT THIS LINK: <https://training.fsri.org/course/035-science-lib>

[Available at any time for your members.](#)

### [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)

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## **NYS AFC 2023 Seminar Series, “Truck Skills Beyond the Textbooks” Local Date Coming Up**

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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## **University Provides a Wealth of Training Opportunities UPDATED FOR 2023**

### **VFIS Instructor-Level Program Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT) EMS Vehicle Operation (EMSVO)**

Description This program is a train-the-trainer program which is designed to teach the necessary instructional methodology in order to successfully deliver the following programs. Upon completion, an instructor kit will be provided.

Course Information 3/11/2023 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM 3/12/2023 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM Empress Ambulance 740 Nepperhan Avenue Yonkers, NY 10703

Registration Insured by VFIS Not Insured by VFIS \$0 for first 3 seats, \$60 for each additional \$500

### **[VFIS TRAINING AND RESOURCE CATALOG 2023](#)**

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-ETC-Resource-Catalog-VFIS.pdf>

### **[VFIS UNIVERSITY – USERS GUIDE](#)**

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/VFIS-University-User-Guide-3.pdf>

### **[VFIS TRAINING OFFICER USERS GUIDE](#)**

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/VFISU-Training-Officer-User-Guide.pdf>

### **[VFIS RESPONDER HELP FLYER](#)**

<https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-VFIS-Responder-Help-Flyer.pdf>

## **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](https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/fire2023hot)**

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

### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

#### **[The FY 2022 FP&S Application Period Opens TODAY February 27, 2023 At 8 A.M. ET And Closes March 31, 2023 At 5 P.M. ET.](#)**

The Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grants are part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) and support projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards. The primary goal is to reduce injury and prevent death among high-risk populations. In 2005, Congress reauthorized funding for FP&S and expanded the eligible uses of funds to include [Firefighter Safety Research and Development](#).

The FP&S Program provides financial assistance directly to eligible fire departments, national, regional, state, local, tribal and nonprofit organizations such as academic (e.g., universities), public health, occupational health, and injury prevention institutions for fire prevention programs and supporting firefighter health and safety research and development such as clinical studies that address behavioral, social science, and cultural research. Examples of research and development grants that have been funded under this program can be found at [Fire Prevention and Safety | FEMA.gov](#).

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#### **[Apply Now for New Turnout Gear and Helmets Through MSA and DuPont's 2023 Globe Gear Giveaway](#)**

*13 departments will each receive four new sets of turnouts and four helmets.*

The ability, or lack thereof, to purchase adequate personal protective equipment is a well-known struggle for many volunteer fire departments across the U.S. To help combat this problem and keep first responders safe while they protect our communities, MSA Safety, DuPont Personal Protection, and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) have partnered for the 12<sup>th</sup> year to award volunteer fire departments in need with state-of-the-art turnout gear and helmets through MSA and DuPont's 2023 Globe Gear Giveaway.

"Year after year, I've seen this program change lives," said NVFC chair Steve Hirsch. "At the end of the day, volunteer firefighters want, and deserve, to have the adequate protection to keep them safe and healthy. We are honored to partner with MSA and DuPont for over a decade to provide this critical equipment to our nation's first responders."

"Partnerships such as these are important because our mission is to help keep people safe at work," said Bob Apel, chief operating officer of Globe Manufacturing Company. "This program allows us to support our valuable volunteer firefighters so they can help keep their communities safe and be there when their neighbors are in need."

Applications are now being accepted. To be eligible to apply, departments must be over 50% volunteer, serve a population of 25,000 or less, be located in the U.S. or Canada, demonstrate a need for new gear, and the person applying or the department chief must be a member of the NVFC. MSA will provide complimentary NVFC memberships to the first 500 applicants to help departments meet the membership requirement.

**Learn more and apply by June 1** at [www.nvfc.org/gear](http://www.nvfc.org/gear). Winners will be announced monthly between July and December. Stay tuned to the [NVFC web site](#), [Dispatch newsletter](#), and [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, as well as the [Globe Facebook page](#), for details.

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### [Apply Now for a \\$1500 College Scholarship!](#)

FASNY wants to help you retain your young members and one of the ways we do that is with the Gerard J. Buckenmeyer Memorial FASNY Volunteer Scholarship Program. Each year we provide 25 deserving high school seniors with a \$1500 scholarship to continue their post-secondary education. We're asking you to help spread the word about these scholarships. [Applications are being accepted online.](#) **The submission deadline is March 15.**

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### [Norfolk Southern To Donate \\$825K To Ohio FD That Responded To Derailment, Fire](#)

The donation will be used as a reimbursement for fire equipment used in the response to the fiery Feb. 3 train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, which led to evacuations when toxic chemicals were burned after being released from derailed tanker rail cars carrying vinyl chloride that were at risk of exploding.

The rail company has already provided a \$220,000 reimbursement to fund new equipment for the first responders since gear the firefighters used had to be decontaminated.

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### [REV Group Invests in Its Ephrata Facility to Increase Aerial and TDA Apparatus Production](#)

REV Fire Group, which includes REV Group Inc. manufacturers of E-ONE®, KME®, Ferrara™, Spartan Emergency Response®, Spartan Fire Chassis™, Smeal™, and Ladder Tower™ fire apparatus brands, announces the expansion and \$1.5 million renovation of its Ephrata, PA facility to allow for the increased manufacturing of aerial apparatus including tractor drawn aerials (TDAs). The expansion is expected to more than triple the production of TDAs, and nearly double the workforce. With the leasing of two additional buildings on campus, REV Fire Group has doubled its space to a total of 123,000 square feet among four buildings. One of the new buildings will be used exclusively to manufacture aerial apparatus for Ladder Tower, KME and Ferrara brands. The other will be used to manufacture TDAs and will include a 20,000 square foot customer experience final inspection center with three bays. For the existing two buildings, one will be used for service and refurbishment of all REV Fire Group apparatus, and the other as a full paint shop.

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### [Keep Talent In New Mexico': Bill Proposes \\$5K Bonus For New Fire Recruits](#)

Robert Nott

Nearly a year after two federal prescribed burns ignited a historic wildfire northwest of Las Vegas, N.M., devastating communities in more than 530 square miles of Northern New Mexico, the House Labor, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee has approved a bill that aims to help attract and retain firefighters to fight such blazes.

**House Bill 345 would create a firefighter recruitment fund to provide bonuses to firefighters who join a department. The bill calls for a \$5,000 bonus for each new recruit who stays on the job three years.**

The bill does not include an appropriation or estimate the cost of providing the bonuses. Instead, it would set up a fund with a goal of drawing future money from federal grants, state income earned from investments and legislative appropriations.

Rep. Cynthia Borrego, D-Albuquerque, who co-sponsored the bill, said in an interview the sponsors decided to "get a mechanism in place for the funding first and then come back with funding and rules" during next year's legislative session. Rep. Tara Lujan, D-Albuquerque, another co-sponsor, said there may be other funding sources, such as federal grants, available that lawmakers can access before next year's legislation to start the fund.

The fund would be administered by the state Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Fire officials who attended Tuesday's hearing lauded the bill, which next goes to the House Appropriations and Finance Committee for consideration.

They said HB 345 can make a difference when it comes to increasing firefighter numbers in a state prone to wildfires.

Capt. Martin Salazar of Albuquerque Fire Rescue said in an interview after the hearing a \$5,000 incentive could help pull people into a profession that does not pay as well in New Mexico as in other states.

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows the mean annual salary for firefighters nationwide is \$55,290. It was less than \$40,000 in New Mexico in 2021.

An aging, ready-to-rotate workforce is another reason to offer bonuses, Salazar said. His agency is down about 50 firefighters, with another 50 or so planning to retire at the end of the year.

"We still respond, but a lot of our firefighters are being overworked and burning out," he said. HB 345 is "one mechanism to keep talent in New Mexico."

Ed Lopez, a firefighter for the city of Santa Fe and president of the Local 2059 firefighters union, said in an interview after the hearing when he applied to the fire cadet training academy in 2009, he was one of 500 applicants.

Last year, just 51 applicants tried to get into the academy, spotlighting the sharp decline in firefighters over the years, he said.

The city has about 25 firefighter vacancies now, he said, which creates challenges in a community with an increasing population and a rise in fire calls. Lopez said the Santa Fe Fire Department had 22,000 calls last year, compared to 10,000 in 2009.

Valencia County fire Chief Matt Propp said his agency is now fully staffed, but it took "months to get there" after a firefighter decline that began shortly after the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

Propp said "it actually scares me" to think some departments have firefighter shortages in the wake of a record year for forest fires around the state, including the massive Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon Fire.

Other agencies around the state are also facing shortages, the bill's fiscal impact report says. It notes the state fire marshal reported a total of 126 vacancies among fire departments in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, Doña Ana County, Las Cruces and Santa Fe.

"There are likely more vacancies among the more rural fire departments," the report says.

The report says HB 345 "may incentivize more volunteer firefighters to become career firefighters."

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## **CHALLENGES:**

### **Firefighters, Faced With Dwindling Volunteers, React To State Proposal**

Tax breaks, training stipends and a partial salary. That's how New York state may tackle the ongoing drought in volunteer firefighters. Across the state, membership in volunteer fire departments is down. "We have more people retiring and getting out from being a volunteer than we do coming in so it makes it hard," said West Carthage Fire Chief Pete Crump. In recent years, his fire department has seen a serious drop in members. That makes it harder to function independently "We used to have 70 members and a waiting list. Now we're down to 35 and calling in a lot more mutual aid because you gotta have the help," said Crump. Included in Governor Kathy Hochul's latest state budget proposal are 3 options to compensate volunteer firefighters. Scott Alexander with the Northpole Fire Company says it's a step in the right direction.

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## **CUMMINS ANNOUNCES NEW X10 ENGINE, NEXT IN THE FUEL-AGNOSTIC SERIES, LAUNCHING IN NORTH AMERICA IN 2026**

Cummins Inc. announced it will launch the next engine in the fuel-agnostic series, the X10, in North America in 2026. This engine, named as part of the X engine family, is uniquely positioned to replace both the L9 and the X12 with the versatility to serve both medium and heavy-duty applications. It will be compliant with U.S. EPA's 2027 regulations a full year early. The diesel version will be first available, with other versions for gaseous fuels introduced later. This 10-liter displacement product slots into Cummins' product portfolio complemented by the B6.7 and X15 and will serve vocational, transit, pickup and delivery and regional haul customers.

"We are committed to advancing diesel technology while our markets and our customers need it to run their businesses. The new X10 has been designed drawing on our decades of experience as a leader in the medium and heavy-duty space,"

Diesel will remain a critical technology for the commercial vehicle market for years to come, and Cummins will continue to support it. Though the engine will first be available in Europe and North America, it will be introduced in other regions over time and will be made for off-highway markets as well. The new X10 diesel will emit 75 percent less NOx emissions than required at launch in 2026. It will be compliant to the U.S. EPA's 2027 regulations while providing a step change in fuel economy improvement. The X10 architecture uses a belt-driven, high output 48-volt alternator and aftertreatment heater solution optimized for increasingly stringent emission standards, and will be scalable to other advanced combustion technologies. For further reductions in carbon emissions, customers may choose to use B20 or renewable diesel. The new engine will reportedly be a shock to your pocketbook adding another \$40K+ more to your truck cost.

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## **Study: Staffing an issue for nearly 50% of 911 dispatch centers**

As call volumes continue to rise, adequate staffing is one of the biggest issues facing nearly half of all U.S. emergency dispatch centers in the U.S., according to a new study.

The study jointly conducted by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch and the National Association of State 911 Administrators received responses from 774, 911 centers in 47 states.

Some key findings:

- While 27% of centers reported no change in actual staffing levels over the most recent four-year period, 36% reported having fewer positions filled in 2022 than they did in 2019.
- The 911 staffing problem appears to be wide ranging, affecting parts of every state and every size of 911 center. The 25 centers reporting the greatest losses are located in all regions of the country, and the average vacancy rate is similar across all sizes of agencies.
- Nearly one-third reported stunning vacancy rates in 2022. Thirteen reported that 70% or more of positions were unfilled; 92 reported a vacancy rate between 50-69%; and 166 reported rates of 30% to 49%.

“An alarming number of 911 centers are experiencing their own workforce emergencies,” said Harriet Rennie-Brown, executive director of NASNA. “Better workforce recruitment, retention, and support are crucial to the quality of the 911 emergency services we all rely on.”

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### **Bergen County, NJ Creates EMS Fleet To Counter Volunteer Shortage**

Angela Barbuti

A lack of volunteers for its traditional emergency medical service forced New Jersey’s most populous county to buy ambulances and hire crews to staff them.

Bergen County created its own EMS fleet last month after finding that its residents needed more reliable service, NorthJersey.com reported.

The move came after Bergen County executive Jim Tedesco and a group of experts evaluated the volunteer services earlier this year. Several EMS agencies in the region shuttered due to difficulty recruiting volunteers.

“Our local Emergency Medical Service professionals sometimes need help in delivering medical care to their residents due to staffing issues and high-volume calls,” said Tedesco.

“It makes sense for the county of Bergen to step in and provide backup service and assistance to those communities that need an extra hand.”

Through grant money from the American Rescue Act, the county purchased four ambulances and hired 28 per-diem employees.

At least two of those ambulances will operate every day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., said Capt. Matthew Tiedemann, the Bergen County emergency management coordinator.

“We had cops waiting for ambulances for 45 minutes sometimes. We needed to make sure more ambulances are on the roads,” Tiedemann said. “Hospitals weren’t able to provide more and volunteers are a dying breed during the day, because people need to work their full-time jobs.” Last year, Gov. Phil Murphy signed a law that increased funding given to local ambulance and rescue squads because of the shortages.

## **LIVING WITH LI-ION TECHNOLOGY**

### **New York (NY) Plans Ban on Uncertified and Second-Hand E-Bike Batteries**

Chris Sommerfeldt, Josephine Stratman – New York Daily News

Buying and selling uncertified and second-hand e-bike batteries would be banned under a package of bills passed by the City Council on Thursday in a response to hundreds of battery fires across the city in recent years.

The bills would also require the Fire Department and the city Department of Consumer and Worker Protection run educational campaigns about e-bike safety risks and mandates the FDNY to submit yearly reports tracking the fire risks of e-bikes and electric scooters.

The package also includes a measure barring the reassembly or reconditioning of lithium batteries.

E-bike batteries are blamed in 216 fires in 2022 that resulted in 147 injuries and six deaths. Firefighters are also worried about the potentially dangerous toxins released in the blazes.

“These fires are a problem, these fires are powerful, and they are also destructive,” said Bronx Councilman Oswald Feliz (D-Bronx), who pushed other fire safety bills after the January 2022 Twin Parks fire in the Bronx that killed 17 people.

Feliz introduced the bill to ban the sale of batteries not certified by Underwriters Laboratories or other testing labs.

“They destroy our homes, they displace our families, and they put our lives at risk,” Feliz said. “We cannot wait for another tragedy to happen.”

But the idea of banning the sale, lease or rental of batteries that don’t meet safety standards stirred concern of financially burdening delivery workers. That issue prompted Council Member Alexa Avilés (D-Brooklyn) to be the sole “no” vote on Feliz’s bill.

***“Blanket bans simply drive items underground,” Avilés said. She added: “To drive them underground and raise false expectations that banning these batteries will somehow mitigate the risk of their existence in communities is terribly unfortunate.”***

The bills now go to Mayor Adams for his signature. If Adams does not sign them, they’ll automatically become law after 30 days.

Though she supported the legislation, Councilwoman Gale Brewer (D-Manhattan) acknowledged the issue is “very complicated” and suggested the Council must do more to ensure delivery workers aren’t saddled with too large of a financial burden.

“The deliveristas use three batteries a day,” Brewer said, adding that there must be a focus on “making sure it’s still affordable” for workers to ride their e-bikes.

Brewer sponsored a bill banning the sale of second-hand bike batteries, as well as their reconditioning. “This is the beginning,” she said. “We have much more work to be done.”

Council Member Shahana Hanif (D-Brooklyn) warned against the criminalization of delivery workers in the rollout of the new bills.

“Workers cannot be on the sidelines of policy conversations that directly impact them,” Hanif said. “The implementation of this package and future legislation needs to ensure that delivery workers are not penalized far too many times.”

The legislation comes as the city struggles to tamp down the spate of devastating fires sparked by lithium-ion batteries. The 220 fires caused by e-bike batteries in the city last year marked a sharp uptick compared to 44 in 2020, according to data compiled by the Council.

Most of the fires start from bikes owned by delivery workers who carry multiple batteries to power their wheels through long work days.

An e-bike fire in February claimed the life of a 67-year-old Brooklyn woman. So far this year, the FDNY has responded to around three battery fires a week.

Council members expect further legislation on the issue — including a bill sponsored by Majority Leader Keith Powers (D-Manhattan) to create a battery swap program to buy back cheap, refurbished batteries and replace them with batteries up to current safety standards.

At a press conference before the vote, Council Speaker Adrienne Adams (D-Queens) and several of her colleagues said tightening regulation around the batteries is a matter of life and death.

“The toll that these fires are increasingly having on families and communities across the city is devastating, and requires the urgent attention of the city, state and federal governments,” Adams said.

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### ***Union To FDNY: Do More To Guard Ffs From E-Bike Fire Smoke; It May Be As Risky As 9/11 Toxins***

Thomas Tracy

Thick smoke and gases released by burning e-bike and scooter batteries could be as dangerous as the toxins that swirled around Ground Zero after 9/11 or the military’s burn pits in Afghanistan, says an FDNY union that wants more done to protect firefighters from the blazes.

Because city firefighters battle an average three lithium-ion battery fires each week, better protocols are needed to ensure cleaning of bunker coats, air tanks and respirators covered by smoke residue from the blazes, said Andrew Ansbro, president of the Uniformed Firefighters Association.

Ansbro fears exposure to gases and residue from burning heavy metals in e-bike batteries could cause cancer and other long-term health problems for members of his union.

“We have to start looking at the firefighters’ gear,” Ansbro told the Daily News. The equipment “should be decontaminated immediately after these fires occur,” he said.

In 2022, e-bike and scooter batteries caused 216 fires, which ended in 147 injuries and six deaths. That was more than double the number of such fires from 2021, when blazes caused by e-bike batteries sparked 104 fires, 79 injuries and four deaths, FDNY officials said.

So far in 2023, the number of e-bike fires shows no signs of abating. As of this week, the Fire Department has blamed e-bike batteries in 22 fires, 36 injuries and two deaths.

Ansbro has begun conversations with FDNY Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanaugh to ramp up the cleaning of bunker gear after e-bike battery fires.

Ansbro hopes for a study on the long term health effects of repeat exposure to burning lithium-ion batteries.

“We really don’t know what the long term effects of the smoke will be on our members,” he said. “They shouldn’t be taking the dirty gear from these fires and bringing it back to the firehouse.”

“The FDNY is committed to working with our unions and other public safety partners to ensure our members have the best tools and equipment available to do their dangerous jobs safely and successfully,” Kavanaugh said in a statement to The News.

New York firefighters’ gear is routinely cleaned — but not after every fire, Ansbro said. In other municipalities, he said, bunker gear worn while fighting fires is immediately cleaned after firefighters are exposed to burning chemicals or materials that could be immediately dangerous to life or health.

The FDNY’s current cleaning and decontaminating policies for its protective gear exceeds national standards, an FDNY spokesman said.

City firefighters are issued two sets of bunker clothes to wear while fighting fires. Each set receives an annual full-service laundering and firefighters can have their gear sent in to be cleaned at any time. It’s recommended that firefighters have their gear cleaned after multi-alarm blazes, FDNY officials say.

Lithium-ion batteries — common in rechargeable batteries used in electric cars, laptop computers, cell phones, and other mobile devices — contain metals such as cobalt, nickel, and manganese, which are toxic and have been known to contaminate water supplies near landfills where they are discarded.

Repeat exposure to large quantities of manganese — which is used in the manufacturing of steel, and can be found in our bodies in small amounts — could result in lung, liver and kidney damage, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

The Fire Department blames the deadly spate of e-bike battery fires on after-market replacement batteries that are not designed to normal safety standards.

When lithium-ion batteries catch fire, they release “a dangerous gas mixture” of “highly explosive, hazardous, and carcinogenic components,” a 2016 study in Germany found.

But that’s not the biggest challenge firefighters face combatting lithium-ion battery blazes.

In a traditional fire, it takes roughly three minutes for a blaze to consume the room it was sparked in, FDNY officials say. But when one lithium-ion cell in a multi-cell battery overheats, that heat can transfer to nearby cells resulting in a chain reaction known as “thermal runaway.”

A fire resulting from thermal runaway can become more intense and spread quicker. Individual cells in the batteries can explode, producing an intense and violent blaze that can engulf a room within seconds.

A lithium-ion battery blaze in a Brooklyn apartment building on Feb. 14 spread so rapidly and was so intense that the building’s fire alarms and sprinkler systems, which were operational, were completely useless, FDNY officials said.

Ansbro said a program to make sure bunker gear is cleaned after every e-bike fire is essential and will open the door to more frequent equipment cleanings after fires in which firefighters are exposed to other burning metals and chemicals.

“The time has come to start cleaning their gear more frequently,” he said. “I’m sure there are long term effects to the smoke and chemicals that is left on their gear after these fires.

“We want to save our members’ lives 20 to 25 years down the line by being proactive,” he said.

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## **[Ban Electric Vehicles From Evacuation Routes? Florida Legislator Concerned About Cars Running Out Of Charge](#)**

Chris Pandolfo

A state lawmaker in Florida this week asked transportation officials to consider whether electric vehicles should be banned from evacuation routes until more charging infrastructure is installed along major highways.

During a discussion on charging stations at a committee hearing on Thursday, State Sen. Jonathan Martin, a Republican from Fort Myers, raised concerns that electric vehicles might obstruct evacuation routes in hurricane season if they run out of power on highways where charging stations are unavailable.

"With a couple of guys behind you, you can't get out of the car and push it to the side of the road. Traffic backs up. And what might look like a two-hour trip, might turn into an eight-hour trip once you're on the road," Martin said, according to WUSF public radio.

"My concern is there's not an infrastructure currently available in the state of Florida for the amount of EV's that might be used to evacuate, on evacuation routes, during a time of emergency," the GOP lawmaker added.

Martin's comments were addressed to Trey Tillander, executive director of transportation technologies at the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT). State transportation officials are currently consulting with lawmakers on how to spend federal funding from President Biden's bipartisan infrastructure law to develop electric vehicle infrastructure.

The Biden administration has made more than \$900 million available to build EV chargers across approximately 53,000 miles of highway across the nation and Florida is one of 35 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico who have submitted EV Infrastructure Deployment plans approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Tillander told lawmakers he would raise Martin's concerns to other agency officials, but said the department's preference is to find ways to help electric vehicle owners evacuate with their vehicles just like gas-powered car owners.

"Some of the things we're looking into ... is portable EV chargers," Tillander said. "So, if an electrical vehicle runs out of charge, there are technologies. We have our Road Rangers. We have our emergency assistance vehicles that we deploy during a hurricane evacuation that have gas. ... We need to provide that same level of service to electric vehicles."

He added that the Division of Emergency Management has guidance encouraging people to plan ahead for disasters, including making sure that their EVs are "fully charged" before they evacuate and finding relocation destinations that are within range of their cars.

Florida did not have significant issues with EVs becoming an obstruction during the evacuation for Hurricane Ian last year. Electric vehicles make up just over 1 percent of the vehicles in Florida, according to WUSF. There were 203,094 electric vehicles registered in Florida as of December 2022, a small fraction of the more than 19 million vehicles registered in the state.

A Democratic lawmaker from Boca Raton pushed back on Martin's concerns. "I don't think you can ban an electric vehicle from evacuating because that may be the only car someone has," said state Sen. Tina Polsky, who owns an electric vehicle.

Florida's DOT is expected to receive \$198 million in federal funds over the next five years to build electric vehicle charging stations. Tillander said officials have met with Wawa and other businesses to coordinate construction plans.

Federal guidelines require that new charging stations be 50 miles apart and open to all passenger electric vehicles. In this first round of grants, the stations must be built within one mile of the interstate system, and the Biden administration requires that consideration must be given to rural and underserved communities.

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### ***FDNY: E-Bike Batteries Responsible For 2 Deaths, Over 20 Fires In New York City In 2023***

As Staten Island continues its own battle against lithium ion battery storage sites, seemingly unpredictably volatile e-bike and e-scooter battery devices are already responsible for almost two dozen fires that caused 36 injuries and two deaths this year, New York City officials said Friday. Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh noted during a briefing on public safety that the lithium ion batteries used to power e-bikes and e-scooters have sparked 22 fires in 2023, four times the number of fires compared to this time last year. "These are incredibly dangerous devices, and we must make sure that members of the community are handling them properly and using them safely," Kavanagh said.

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

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***IN 2022 WE HAVE SADLY EXPERIENCED \*11 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S***

**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...**

- Randy Ballinger of Philadelphia Ladder 13 fell nearly 25 feet from a roof at a two-story row home on the 1100 block of South Paxon Street. He sustained a collapsed lung, broken ribs, a broken pelvis, and multiple long bone fractures in both legs.
- Santa Cruz County Recruit Daniel Lamothe, 38, is the county's first volunteer line-of-duty death, he died during a weekend training exercise.
- Flint Michigan Firefighter Ricky Hill Jr., 49, suffered a possible heart attack when he collapsed at the scene of a mobile home park fire.
- Three firefighters were injured at a house fire Friday, and a mayday was called early on as conditions quickly worsened. The crew began to experience moderate heat and zero visibility.
- A Buffalo firefighter died in a downtown fire on Wednesday.
- Erie Pennsylvania Firefighter Michael Smith, 47, died of occupational cancer. Shortly after firefighters arrived, an explosion, most likely a violent backdraft and interior structural collapses occurred resulting in a Mayday.
- More 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? WEEKLY FIRE FATALITY DATA AS REPORTED BY THE MEDIA**

*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.*

<b>Fire Deaths in 1&amp;2 Family Dwellings in NYS</b>	<b>22+1 = 23</b>
<b>Last fire death Islip, Suffolk Co. Female</b>	
<b>Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS</b>	<b>36+2 = 38</b>
<b>Fire Deaths in 1&amp;2 Family Dwellings Nationally</b>	<b>225 + 75 = 300</b>
<b>Top Three State with the most 1&amp;2 Family Deaths</b>	<b>1 NY = 23</b>
	<b>2 PA = 18</b>
	<b>3 TN = 17</b>
<b>There has been a total of 0495 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	

## RETENTION & RECRUITMENT

### [New York State 2023 Evidence Based EMS Agenda for the Future](#)

FIND THE ENTIRE REPORT AT THIS LINK: [The NYS 2023 Evidence Based EMS Agenda for the Future - Report!](#)

Excerpt from the Executive Summary:

*“The New York State EMS system has markedly deteriorated over the past several years due to declining volunteerism, lack of public funding to cover costs of readiness, inadequate staffing, rising costs, insufficient insurance reimbursement, rising call volumes, a lack of performance standards, poor understanding of the EMS system by elected officials and the public, NYS home rule, and lack of transparency and accountability for EMS agencies. New York State’s (NYS) emergency medical services (EMS) are in trouble. Multiple ambulance services have closed their doors over the past several years, and many who remain open are unable to respond to emergency calls in any consistent fashion. Originally established as a transportation provider, EMS has developed over time to encompass healthcare, public safety, disaster response, mitigation, and public health. Today, EMS is an unanticipated (and often unfunded) safety net provider of pre-hospital healthcare, offering care to all patients regardless of their ability to pay for services.”*

## ANOTHER FIRE DEPARTMENT IN DANGER OF DISSOLVING

### [Blasdell \(NY\) Fire Department in Danger of Dissolving After 118 Years of Service](#)

Barbara O’Brien

Time may be running out for the Blasdell Fire Department.

It has not answered calls since October, it has no certified EMTs, it sold its ambulance and membership has dwindled to less than 20.

The Village Board has to work with the department on a plan, Village Administrator Janet MacGregor Plarr said.

“They’re either going to resuscitate, or they are going to have to think about passing a resolution to dissolve,” she said.

The Village Board plans to discuss the options with the public during its next regular meeting March 15.

“If people don’t step up to the plate to volunteer and get trained, we’re going to have no other option other than to enter into a contract for fire protection services,” Plarr said. “This is absolutely heart wrenching and heart breaking.”

If the board decides to dissolve the department, the measure can be put to a public vote if 20% of voters sign a petition requesting a referendum.

Blasdell’s Fire Department was formed in 1905, and for much of the 20th Century, it was the center of social life in the village, with dances, fish fries and bingo. At its height, it had 80 members.

Volunteer fire companies have been faced with a decline in numbers for more than three decades.

A survey in 1990 showed a shortage of more than 2,200 volunteer firefighters in Erie County. Officials then attributed it to a general lack of volunteer time, increased distances between home and work and greater danger in fighting fires that might involve hazardous materials. Add to those the additional time required for training and certifications and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fire companies have held recruitment weekends, and offered incentives, such as Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP) providing a pension-like benefit to firefighters who qualify.

But recruitment and retention efforts have not been successful for some departments, including Blasdell’s. Then the pandemic hit, adding more pressure, stress and risk to first responders.

The Blasdell department has no certified emergency medical technicians, Plarr said. When Big Tree Volunteer Fire Company’s ambulance could not be fixed, Blasdell leased its ambulance to Big Tree, eventually selling it to the company, she said.

Fire calls in Blasdell have been answered by neighboring fire companies through mutual aid, but Plarr said mutual aid is not a permanent solution.

There are nine volunteer fire companies in the Town of Hamburg, including the villages of Blasdell and Hamburg. Some volunteers in Blasdell left to go to other fire companies, while others left the fire service for good, Plarr said. “We’re a very small department that doesn’t have a lot of the bells and whistles that other folks have,” she said.

## WHAT ARE OTHER STATES DOING?

### *Pennsylvania Takes Steps To Ease Volunteer Firefighter Crisis*

Lauren Jessop

As Pennsylvania’s volunteer firefighters dwindle, lawmakers hope to reverse the trend.

States nationwide struggle to recruit and retain volunteers, while simultaneously investing time and money into training required to keep up with stringent regulations.

According to the **U.S. Fire Administration**, volunteers account for 96.8% of firefighters in Pennsylvania – the third highest percentage in the country. The national average is 70.2%.

Since the 1970s, the ranks of volunteer firefighters in Pennsylvania have dropped from 360,000 to fewer than 37,000.

A bill passed unanimously by the Senate last week would create a pilot program for community colleges and universities within the state’s higher education system to provide firefighting training to high school students. It’s now under consideration in the House of Representatives.

**The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Michele Brooks, R-Crawford, would grant \$150,000 to one school in three regions across the state – eastern, central, and western – to establish fire training programs.**

Brooks’ Chief of Staff Adam Gringrich told The Center Square the senator was pleased to have the bill moved so early in the session and hopes that the House takes it up when they convene.

“The regional component of the grants addresses the equal need for certified volunteer firefighters across the state, and making more educational facilities available for certification will ideally afford greater opportunity and access to young firefighters,” he said.

“By requiring a study to be commissioned by LFBC we can determine if this approach is successful in getting more young people invested in volunteering,” Gringrich added.

**The bill would also require the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to conduct a survey of fire departments in the surrounding areas of the pilot programs to determine if they were instrumental in increasing the number of volunteer firefighters.**

Jane Porter, executive director of Firefighters and EMS Fund, a nonprofit dedicated to advocating for the safety and well-being of firefighters and their families, told The Center Square, the bill “empowers” schools to create firefighter training programs and offers state funding to help create the “environment needed to nurture the next generation of firefighters.”

“We look forward to witnessing the fruits of this measure and hope many more states around the country will go on to take steps which address the recruitment and retention struggles plaguing the fire service to this day,” she said.

The **National Volunteer Fire Council** says some of the challenges to recruitment and retention include balancing time demands between family, work, and volunteering. Increased training requirements, aging communities, and leadership problems are also factors.

Lack of manpower means fewer people coming out to fires, leading to multiple-alarm fires being called – not because of the severity of the blaze, but because of the lack of personnel.

**Senate Bill 148, the second bill introduced by Brooks, seeks to establish a state tax credit of \$500 for active volunteer firefighters. That legislation has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee.**

Porter said the measure “further seeks to alleviate the financial hardships our volunteer firefighters endure each year and is a step in the right direction toward equitable compensation for their selfless service.”

Firefighters & EMS Fund has been following, and are in full support of, similar bills put forth in the past. They cited a bill passed in Illinois several years ago granting a \$500 tax credit for volunteer first responders.

The organization said it’s pleased to see Pennsylvania picking up the mantle.

Large cities like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have paid fire departments with starting salaries in the range of \$40,000 to \$50,000. The cost of switching to a paid department is not feasible for most suburban or rural municipalities.

**\*\*EMERGENCY PURCHASES AS AN EXCEPTION TO THE COMPETITIVE BIDDING REQUIREMENT**

AFDSNY Fire District Affairs

Fire districts and other local governmental entities are required to comply with the competitive bidding requirements of General Municipal Law §103 for all contracts for public work involving an expenditure of more than (\$35,000) thirty-five thousand dollars and all purchase contracts involving an expenditure of more than (\$20,000) twenty thousand dollars unless a statutory exception applies.

Competitive bidding does require a process where bidders are required to submit sealed bids after the fire district or local government board advertises for bids on notice to bidders and the public. The process requires a public bid opening and then a process to determine which bidder is the lowest responsible bidder.

A different process is followed when the basis of the award is best value rather than lowest responsible bidder, but in both cases there is a process and the process takes some time. A government buyer can save time if it can just select a contractor or supplier and award a contract. However, the preference under the statutory scheme is to go through the process so that the public will have confidence in the contracting process. Several exceptions to the process are permitted because other important public purposes come into play. One example of a permitted exception is the emergency purchase.

The statute provides as follows: *Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision one of this section, in the case of a public emergency arising out of an accident or other unforeseen occurrence or condition whereby circumstances affecting public buildings, public property or the life, health, safety or property of the inhabitants of a political subdivision or district therein, require immediate action which cannot await competitive bidding or competitive offering, contracts for public work or the purchase of supplies, material or equipment may be let by the appropriate officer, board or agency of a political subdivision or district therein.* N.Y. Gen. Mun. Law § 103 (McKinney) Clearly, the intent behind this exception is to provide a method to make an emergency purchase when an accident or unforeseen occurrence causes the need to act.

It is important to separate true emergencies from a delay to take action that results in a pressing need. A storm, a fire, an explosion, an accident, the impact of extreme heat or extreme cold are factors that may be unforeseen and contribute to a need to act. Failure to maintain property or equipment **does not** contribute to an unforeseen emergency.

It is important for the Board of Fire Commissioners to consider the facts and the statutory language and determine if the emergency purchase option should be applied. A part of the evaluation should also be an examination of the impact of employing an expedited process that still complies with the competitive bidding requirement as compared to proceeding with an emergency process. It is possible that the time saved does not justify the emergency purchase. In addition, it should be noted that making an emergency purchase places an obligation on staff and the vendor or contractor to bring the purchase to completion quickly. If an emergency contract is let and the vendor or contractor does not perform promptly, the entire process is called into question. The Office of the State Comptroller has noted considering one emergency purchase as follows: *The declaration of a public emergency for competitive bidding purposes is, in the first instance, a matter of local determination to be made by the governing board in light of the existing factual circumstances and the requirements of section 103(4). However, in our opinion, it is doubtful that the facts in this case would warrant such a determination by the Village Board.*

In order for circumstances to “require immediate action which cannot await bidding” within the meaning and intent of section 103(4), there normally must be some imminent danger to public or private property or the life, health or safety of a municipality's residents which makes a further delay in action occasioned by compliance with competitive bidding requirements unwarranted.

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## **\*\*What Makes A Great Fire Service Leader?**

Paul Beamon

Throughout my career in the fire service, I have had the privilege of working with a wide variety of leaders, some of whom were exceptional and innovative, while others were more challenging. My years of experience have shown me that while there are many ways to lead, service, strong character and compassion are necessary no matter what style of leadership you adopt and regardless of the arena in which you serve.

### **LEADERSHIP EVOLUTIONS AND EXAMPLES**

Early in my career, the fire service was very much organized in a paramilitary fashion with strong authoritative and autocratic leadership styles. There was strict adherence to rules, regulations, training and the chain of command.

As a recruit, I was eager to learn all that I could, and when assigned to my first captain, I knew they would keep me on track. I had many great mentors, whom I consider my family and who assisted me in growing as a firefighter/paramedic. Both my first captain and chief, while tough at times, were strong role models for me. I considered that first captain a great leader and one who truly cared about our personal and professional development. He had high standards and strictly adhered to policies and procedures, but it was clear that his ultimate goal was to help me become the best firefighter I could be.

I recall one hectic shift on the medic unit when my me and my partner (also new) got back to the station at midnight. We were exhausted and just wanted some rest, but my captain was there to check in on us. He woke up my partner in a concerned and caring manner, asking if he was OK. My partner, still half asleep, was confused, but the captain calmly explained that he wanted him to take advantage of the opportunity to do some street study since he was already awake. I couldn't help but chuckle, and when the captain heard me laugh, he said, "Beamon, since you're also awake, why don't you go with him?" My laughter halted.

Albeit this example leans more to the humorous side, the captain's dedication to our growth and development was evident. Even though it wasn't always enjoyable at the time, his strict adherence to routine and training helped us become better firefighters. To this day, I still admire his leadership and its positive impact on my fire service career.

I have also worked with leaders who adopted more progressive styles, such as democratic, transformational, coach-style leadership and, growing in popularity over the years, servant leadership. These leadership styles focus on involving team members in decision-making, promoting teamwork and collaboration, and fostering personal and professional growth. These methods are particularly effective, as they focus on achieving the department's goals but also on the development and growth of the team members.

### **PROBLEMATIC LEADERS AND THE 'PETER PRINCIPLE'**

So, what about those dreadful leaders? If you have yet to have the misfortune of working with an unhealthy leader, consider yourself lucky.

An unpleasant leader tends to be unapproachable and unwilling to listen to the concerns of their team, as they feel they are the smartest ones in the room – perhaps hiding behind their own inability. Toxic leaders create toxic environments where team members are afraid to speak up and share their ideas or concerns for fear of being belittled or dismissed. Poor leaders criticize or ignore their team's suggestions, causing morale to suffer and leading to a lack of trust among the team. This ultimately compromises the team's ability to work effectively together and perform their duties safely.

Other potential poor leaders may be those individuals who believe they naturally deserve to take the next step into a leadership role due to their skill at their current position or due to a long tenure in a department. However, research suggests that these individuals do not always make strong leaders and often succumb to the "Peter Principle."

The Peter Principle is a management theory proposed by Dr. Laurence J. Peter in his 1969 book "The Peter Principle: Why Things Always Go Wrong." This theory states that employees tend to rise to their level of incompetence, resulting in poor performance and inefficiency in the organization due to promotion based on current performance rather than future role abilities. It is often used to describe the phenomenon of employees being promoted to management positions despite lacking the necessary skills or qualifications.

### **COMMON LEADERSHIP TRAITS**

Strong leadership comes in many forms. While some may possess natural leadership instincts, others may need to develop their skills over time through experience and dedicated study. A great fire service leader may be a tenured firefighter with years of service or someone who has a reputation for being skilled in firefighting and medical calls, but

then again, they may not. Ultimately, the most important factor in becoming a successful leader is a commitment to learning and understanding the trade, department policies and procedures, and how to lead by example, not title or self-image.

So, what makes a great leader in the fire service? Great fire service leaders possess natural mentoring abilities and are dedicated to continuously developing their leadership skills. They take initiative to mentor and guide new recruits, teach essential skills, and are always willing to learn from mistakes. They view all functions as ways to better the community rather than themselves. These individuals are the future leaders of the agency. Those who are dedicated to becoming effective leaders will be well prepared for the promotional process.

Leadership styles in the fire service are constantly evolving, and it is vital for leaders to be open to feedback and development to lead their teams in the most effective way possible. Each leadership style has its advantages and disadvantages, depending on the situation, and one style may be more appropriate for one leader than another. However, certain traits and behaviors are common among successful firefighter leaders:

1. **Successful leaders stay calm:** A good leader should be able to communicate effectively with their team without becoming overwhelmed by the situation. We can only get a great deal accomplished if we keep our faculties about us.
2. **Successful leaders practice accountability on the job:** This means they are direct and clear in their communication and hold their team members accountable for their actions without being overbearing or overly punitive. It is essential that a leader first ask questions and see whether the incident or situation in question can be used as a teaching lesson, and then proceed accordingly.
3. **Successful leaders develop interpersonal skills:** Leaders must find common ground among team members, create a safe and comfortable workplace, and foster an open and constructive dialogue between their members. As any leader will tell you, at times, this is much easier stated than done. The fire service is steeped in tradition, and some firefighters are less open to change than others. Finding common ground can be exhausting but worth the effort.
4. **Successful leaders communicate well:** Leaders must effectively exchange information and directives with their team, remain open to feedback, and listen to each team member's input.
5. **Successful leaders are willing to go above and beyond:** Fire department leaders must be willing to put in the extra effort to ensure the team's success, even if it means they work more hours or put more energy into their job than others.
6. **Successful leaders must always strive for excellence:** They set high standards for themselves and their team to ensure that tasks are done safely, effectively and efficiently. Embracing excellence is the hallmark of successful firefighter leaders.

By taking on these traits and behaviors, firefighters can become successful leaders and effective team players.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

A leader who is caring, empathetic and inclusive, who is always looking for ways to develop and empower the team, is the one that creates a positive work environment for the team and ultimately leads to a safer and more efficient department. Strong leadership in the fire service is critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of the community and the firefighting team.

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### **\*\*The 2020 NVFC Retention Research Report**

Both chiefs and commissioners need to take a few minutes to page through this report and listen to what members of volunteer departments are saying, what we are doing WRONG, what we are doing RIGHT and thus painting a clear picture of what we need to START doing and what we need to STOP doing. Please take the time to read this and think about it in terms of YOUR department.

**FIND A COPY OF THE REPORT AT THIS LINK:** <https://afdca.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/NVFC-Retention-Research-Report-FINAL.pdf>

**CLASSIFIED**

**Position Announcement Greenfield Fire District**

The Greenfield Fire District is looking for a professional and highly-motivated person to perform custodial services and maintenance of fire district buildings, grounds and equipment. Must have good communication skills, the ability to manage several projects simultaneously, and 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.greenfieldfd.org](http://www.greenfieldfd.org).

**Please send application, cover letter & resume to Joyce Petkus, District Administrator via email at [jpetkus@greenfieldfd.org](mailto:jpetkus@greenfieldfd.org) or regular mail to Greenfield Fire District, P.O. Box 103 Greenfield Center, NY 12833 no later than Friday, March 17, 2023.**

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# **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 [wcfdsec@nycap.rr.com](mailto:wcfdsec@nycap.rr.com)

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

Two women in a bus fighting bitterly over the last seat available. The driver had already tried unsuccessfully to intervene when someone from the back of the bus shouted, "Let the ugly one take the seat." Both women stood for the rest of the trip, argument done!!

## OFFICERS OF THE CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS

### 2023 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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

**1<sup>st</sup> VP:** John Meehan, Commissioner West Crescent/Saratoga

**2<sup>nd</sup> VP:** Art Hunsinger, Commissioner Clifton Park Halfmoon/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!!

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, 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