



Capital Area Fire District's Association
THE WEEKLY CAFDA

BULLETIN

August, 16th, 2025

Editor, Tom Rinaldi, Tom@rinaldi1.com
Serving the fire service community since 2004

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- Nice time was had by all who attended the Day At The Races, the weather was perfect, and the food was plentiful. It was nice to see many old friends and some new friends. We'll plan on doing it again in 2026.
- **The Fire District Budget development schedule is in the General Interest section of the Bulletin.**
- **Both the election schedule and the budget development schedule are posted to the web site at www.CAFDA.net**
- Note the OSC Audit follow up report on page 6
- More than 30,000 wireless power banks sold across the U.S. and Canada have been recalled over reports of batteries catching on fire and exploding, causing thousands

of dollars in property damage. The recall of ESR HaloLock power banks impacts products with model numbers 2G520, 2G505B and 2G512B, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The items have five circular LED display lights on one side and were sold in dark blue, light blue, gray, white and black.

STUFF FOR YOUR BENEFIT, NEED TO KNOW!

WWW.CAFDA.NET

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING *Thursday September 11th, in person or Zoom in. 7PM.*

SAVE THE DATE: CAFDA FALL TRAINING SEMINAR, *Saturday November 1st at Verday Fire Department*

CAFDA is happy to announce the dates for Conference '26 in historic Lake George, April 9th, 10th and 11th, 2026 plan on joining us.

*All correspondence & Capital Area Fire Districts Association Mailing Address should be directed to:
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Financial issues should be addressed to: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET*

WHEN YOU SEE ** IT'S A RECOMMENDED READ, TAKE THE TIME TO INFORM YOURSELF!!

THE LATEST FROM THE STATE CAPITAL

Legislative Commentary

To see what the fire service accomplished during this legislative session go to the following LINK:
<https://cafda.net/what-did-the-fire-service-accomplish-during-the-2025-legislative-session/>
Now that the legislature is out of session, the ScoreCard will be reviewed for activity monthly.

Annual Cancer Reporting Requirements Reminder

New York State's Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) requires volunteer fire departments to submit annual reports on cancer disability claims under the Volunteer Firefighter Enhanced Cancer Benefits Law (General Municipal Law § 205-CC), including the number and types of cancer claims, and the number of claims paid, by December 1st each year. Departments must also file an "Annual Roster of Interior Firefighters" by December 1st annually to report their interior firefighters and obtain necessary OFPC Student ID numbers for reporting.

Annual Claims Report

- What to report: The total number of cancer disability claims made, the types of cancers reported, and the number of claims paid within the reporting calendar year.
- Due date: **Annually**, by December 1st.
- How to report: Use the annual claims report form provided by OFPC.
- Verification: This report must be signed by the head of the department or company, sworn to as true under penalty of perjury, and notarized.

Annual Roster of Interior Firefighters

- What to report:

A complete list of all interior firefighters in the department for the reporting year.

- Due date:

Annually, by December 1st.

- Requirements:

Each firefighter listed must have an OFPC Student ID Number. If they do not, your department needs to complete and submit an "EOSB-601" Student Data Sheet request form to obtain one.

- How to report:

Forms can be submitted online, or a printed, scanned, and emailed version can be sent to ofpc.training@dhses.ny.gov.

Where to Find Forms and Information

- Forms and detailed information can be found on the [New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services \(DHES\) website](#).
- Reports can be submitted by emailing the completed forms to vfecdb@dhses.ny.gov or by mailing them to: 1220 Washington Avenue, Building 7A, Floor 2, Albany, NY 12226, Attn: Volunteer Firefighter Enhanced Cancer Disability Benefit Law.

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON

What Federal Funding Is Important To You?

Chief, Marc Bashoor

The United States federal deficit has long plagued administrations on both sides of the aisle. In my lifetime, a balanced budget has only been achieved twice — first in 1969 under President Richard Nixon, then again from 1998 to 2001 under President Bill Clinton. The deficit steadily increased in the 29 years between those presidencies, and it has done so again since 2001.

The following represents the deficit at the end of each term of presidents since 9/11, according to the U.S. Treasury:

- President George W. Bush (R): 2001-2009 — \$1.4 trillion
- President Barack Obama (D): 2009-2017 — \$665 billion
- President Donald Trump (R): 2017-2021 — \$2.77 trillion
- President Joe Biden (D): 2021-2025 — \$1.83 trillion
- President Donald Trump (R): 2025 — TBD

To be fair, the deficit is not solely the result of presidential actions. Congress develops legislation to support and fund each budget proposal before the budget bill heads to the president's desk for signature.

Bottom line: Deficit spending upon deficit spending is not sustainable, particularly because, as a simple matter of economics, a deficit will become harder to overcome as it exponentially rises. I know this. You know this. We've been saying it for years, and yet, here we are.

To grasp our current economic predicament, it's important to understand our modern history of both spending and attempts to reduce spending — and ultimately the impact on the fire service.

9/11 CHANGES EVERYTHING

Setting aside the politics of it all, I believe it was the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, that set the stage for where we are today. Following 9/11, our public safety posture under President George W. Bush transitioned to homeland security, bringing forward massive shifts in government spending, organization, operational practices and personnel assignments. The product of such a shift in spending was a \$1.4 trillion deficit.

THE U.S. DIGITAL SERVICE (USDS)

In 2014, under President Obama, the U.S. Digital Service (USDS) was established to improve digital service efficiency. In theory, this was an attempt to improve government efficiency through the organization and modernization of digital data collection and processing across government systems. The USDS reported \$285 million in savings through an improved Social Security Administration website as well as a modernized Veterans Administration Caseflow system for appeals. It was my observation that the USDS operated with little fanfare in the shadows, and I still agree with this July 2024 statement from the Federal News Network: “The impact of the U.S. Digital Service is difficult to measure in real numbers or data sometimes.” Obama left office in 2017, having enacted policies that reduced the deficit to \$665 billion.

DOGE — THE NEW USDS

In 2025, President Trump renamed the USDS the United States DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) Service by Executive Order, with staff that was working at the USDS now working at DOGE. DOGE’s mission was very similar to the USDS: “... modernizing Federal technology and software to maximize governmental efficiency and productivity.”

While the stated purpose centers on technology, the primary public policy presentation from DOGE has been twofold:

1. Reduce the federal workforce through “early-outs,” involuntary separations and funding reductions.
2. Reduce federal budget expenditures through multiple methods: “claw back,” the recovery or return of previously allocated or disbursed funds, typically by the government reclaiming money that has not been spent or that was allocated but is no longer justified; cancellation of grant programs; consolidation of office space; and other means as necessary to produce savings.

Before we look at where we are with DOGE today, let’s gain some perspective from the most recent balanced budget.

While campaigning for the presidency in 1992, then-Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton pledged to balance the budget:

“We can no longer afford to pay more for — and get less from our government. The answer for every problem cannot always be another program or more money. It is time to radically change the way government operates — to shift from top-down bureaucracy to entrepreneurial government that empowers citizens and communities to change our country from the bottom up. We must reward the people and ideas that work and get rid of those that don’t.”

Similar to President Trump’s most recent election, the case was made that President Clinton’s election was a mandate from the people to reduce the federal deficit. When Clinton came into office, the federal budget deficit had grown to about \$300 billion.

Adding some fire service context, in 1993, the U.S. Fire Administration was positioned under FEMA, whose administrator reported directly to the president. Back then, the USFA’s budget was approximately \$44 million for base operations. Most of the grant programs the fire service benefits from today did not exist in 1993. It’s important to note that it is nearly impossible to draw parallels between now and then, as the USFA budget was previously a patchwork of underfunded appropriations on top of the base operations budget, highly influenced by FEMA’s other missions. We do know that overall government spending shrank by more than 22% under President Clinton; however, FEMA funding was static. FEMA funding and expenditures are impacted by the ever-changing number of natural disasters — so much more than the USFA alone.

Clinton’s 1993 initiative to balance the budget was labeled “Reinventing Government.” Although reducing the deficit would be difficult, it was something the administration wasted no time attacking. Clinton made significant and controversial reductions in federal spending and raised certain taxes to achieve the balance:

- Defense spending reduced (riding the wave of cessation of the Cold War). Although \$26 billion was cut initially, defense spending slowly rose over the years, regaining all of those reductions and more by 2000 [but the budget was still balanced until 2001?].
- Corporate and high-income taxes increased. The revenue increase was projected to be \$123 billion over five years (approximately \$25 billion annually). A 2006 U.S. Treasury analysis reported the actual revenue increase over that period was \$210 billion (\$42 billion annually).
- Federal government reduction in force (RIF): 400,000 positions cut for a reduction of \$146 billion.

During the Clinton terms, the RIF of approximately 400,000 jobs was primarily achieved through buyouts and early retirements, similar to Trump's recent reductions.

"ELIMINATING WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE" IN 2025

President Trump has repeatedly stated that his desire to reduce the size of the federal government part of a broader plan to "return power to the states." I wish I could put my hands on a roadmap to further help articulate "the plan," however, I cannot find such a roadmap.

Let me be clear that I appreciate the desire to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse in ANY organization, especially one using my own tax dollars! I challenge you to show me one ethically disciplined person who would not support such an effort, *with a plan*.

Acknowledging that I have been accused at times of being a proverbial "bull in a china shop" under certain operational circumstances, it is my observation that DOGE has been like a herd of bulls in the same china shop, indiscriminately recommending or directing the slashing of jobs and functions without regard for or understanding of their national security significance. Multiple RIFs were later reversed when it was learned that critical positions had been cut. Trying to quantify actual reductions (as opposed to proposals) that are the result of DOGE recommendations or presidential action has been clouded by the bevy of lawsuits filed following the announcement of proposed cuts. It has been widely reported that over 200 lawsuits were filed against the administration in its first 100 days, many of these lawsuits a direct result of the RIF attempts.

Setting aside their tactics, DOGE does claim billions in savings, available to review here. With an original goal of reducing spending by \$2 trillion in just 18 months. DOGE currently reports savings of \$199 billion. As for the RIFs, the best information I can find places the current number of actual job reductions between 59,000 and 150,000. It is believed that the administration desires to reduce the force by hundreds of thousands more. And remember, Clinton's RIFs achieved a cut of 400,000 positions.

Now, back to the USFA. In FY 2025, the USFA was budgeted at \$65 million for base operations. Additionally, \$95 million was allocated for operations over the five-year authorization (FY 2023-2028) of the Fire ACT grant. Fire ACT grants have already been under attack, with SAFER funding reduced by 10% (\$36 million) from FY 2023 to FY 2024. While there has been some streamlining and incremental progress, the USFA budget continues to be a patchwork of underfunded appropriations.

FUNDING REDUCTIONS SO FAR

While some agency funding has simply been slashed, other savings are being achieved through the reduction of grants. As many of the fire service grant opportunities and some of the emergency management grant opportunities were created after the 9/11 attacks, a significant or wholesale reduction in federal grants stands to adversely impact our emergency services. There have also been "claw back" efforts from some grant programs, taking back money that was already allocated. Specifically, it is reported that \$3.6 billion of previously approved grants were revoked when the "Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities" (BRIC) program was eliminated — these were projects benefiting communities as well as emergency services. Furthermore, recent proposals for \$1 billion in FEMA grant funding cuts included a significant amount of funding for programs that directly involve fire departments.

Then, only days later, FEMA made the same amount of disaster preparedness and homeland security funding available to communities nationwide. As has been the case with many decisions, this chaotic shift of proposals, halts and starts gives us some pause that we should use for some planning and reflection. As we've seen these proposals come, go and come back again, we must consider the potential impact: *Are efforts born out of and supported by the Fire ACT program, like Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER), Assistance to Firefighter Grants (AFG) and Fire Prevention & Safety (FP&S) important to you?*

The proposed FEMA cuts would have impacted those programs and more:

- Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) — \$500 million in cuts
- Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) and Homeland Security Grant
- Next Generation Warning
- Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP)
- The National Domestic Preparedness Consortium
- Rural Development Community Facilities Grant and Loan program
- Community Development Block Grant program

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Understanding the scope of our country's budget is important to forging a strategy forward. In 1993 and today, the USFA budget accounts for approximately one ten-thousandth (yes, 1/10,000) of 1%, of the entire U.S. budget (\$7.8 trillion x 0.00001 = \$78M). Add the bevy of grant appropriations, and the USFA total still only accounts for about one one-thousandth (1/1,000) of 1%. If we're talking about cutting, we're certainly not talking about a gold mine in cut possibilities at the USFA. Any cuts in such a thin margin will impact you as a firefighter, directly or indirectly.

No level of fire service is free. Volunteer, paid or a combination thereof, a community will receive the level and quality of service it is willing to accept and pay for — period. (Many FireRescue1 readers shared similar sentiments recently following the news of more FEMA cuts.). I would never suggest that the fire service be immune from helping reduce the federal deficit, but the public's safety and firefighter safety should be immune from federal budget cuts. How do we achieve savings without cutting our programs? There's the question.

It is prudent to consider what you could do without. This is where I'm asking you to decide what's important enough to fund in support of balancing the federal budget. If that means "no cuts" for you, fine, then fight the political fight for it. If you see the opportunity for cuts, then ask yourself how it would impact you. For example, "If SAFER were cut, how would it impact us?" Here's how I see it: SAFER has bridged a gap across the country; however, all hiring of firefighters has always been local, and local governments should find that funding. So, if I was faced with that do-or-die decision, I'd find a way to save there, gradually and temporarily.

Then there's UASI. That's where I draw that line. The originally proposed UASI cuts would adversely impact the urban search and rescue (USAR) programs that many of you support and for which some of you are even part of task force teams. The money that supports those programs fills gaps across state borders and are programs the federal government should fund. Is that important enough to save and to do something about? I think so.

To be clear, I am not suggesting the USFA's one one-thousandth of 1% of the federal budget should be considered for reductions. I am, however, trying to be a realist in today's political environment, and I recognize that sometimes we need to be prepared to help the greater good.

So, when you've answered these questions for yourself, then do something about it. Reach out to your legislators, many of whom are currently home during the congressional summer recess. Let them know how any proposed cuts will affect your fire department and our fire service. At a minimum, I implore you to reach out via email. You can find your representatives' information and much more from the Congressional Fire Services Institute. And for some of you, maybe it's time to consider a run for office — we need that advocacy from within!

Whether you believe the process to be chaotic or not, our best efforts may be to make our voices heard loud and clear through your legislators. Call it the "squeaky wheel" or "the right thing" or whatever else you want to call it, but these proposed reductions will have long-lasting and dynamic effects on emergency services across the United States. And if we believe these are adverse cuts, but we simply sit back and do nothing, then we will be complicit in the outcome.

We have underfunded the fire service for so long that we now have people that really believe we can do anything with nothing. They believe that there is widespread waste, fraud and abuse in the fire service. There is not. Yes, there will be bad apples here and there, but the problem is far from *widespread*. I am quite sure we could *all* point to things we could do more efficiently in our lives, not to mention waste that we'd like to reduce. Throwing the baby out with the bath water will quickly erode our capabilities and the public's trust in our ability to do our jobs.

I have not been a fan of DOGE's process. And while not targeting DOGE specifically, House of Representatives Budget Committee Chairman Jodey Arrington (R-TX) addressed budget reconciliation during the May 2025 "Fiscal State of the Nation," stating: "What we're lacking in Washington is courage to do what is necessary." I would add, "what's right." After all, the haphazard way DOGE has gone about its expanded mission has been neither necessary nor right — and emergency services are too often caught in the crosshairs.

There is 99% of the federal budget beyond the USFA — let's make sure we've reduced where public safety isn't impacted before we cut the bone. Difficult decisions will need to be made, and what's right and what's necessary are not mutually exclusive. *Contact your elected officials today. Choose wisely. Our future depends on it.*

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCES

Former Vernon Center Fire Department Treasurer Pleads Guilty to Stealing Over \$300,000

Jonnell Rose, former Treasurer of the Vernon Center Fire Department, pled guilty to stealing more than \$300,000 from the department, State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, Oneida County District Attorney Todd Carville, and New York State Police Superintendent Steven G. James announced today. Rose pled guilty to grand larceny in the second degree.

A joint investigation by DiNapoli's office and the State Police found Rose, 52, of Vernon, stole \$309,000 from the department over a six-year period from May 2018 to May 2024.

Rose wrote fire department checks to cash, which he pocketed, deposited checks written to various legitimate fire department vendors into his personal accounts and deposited checks intended for the department into his own bank account.

A forensic examination by DiNapoli's office revealed that Rose made numerous personal purchases and payments, including crypto currency transactions, credit card payments, and cash withdrawals with the funds he stole from the department.

Rose pled guilty before Judge Michael Nolan in Oneida County Court to Grand Larceny in the Second Degree and will be sentenced on October 28, 2025.

Otisco Fire District – Financial Activities

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

Did the Otisco Fire District (District) Board of Fire Commissioners (Board) and Treasurer ensure collections were recorded and deposited in a timely manner, disbursements were properly authorized and supported and accurate financial reports were provided to the Board?

AUDIT PERIOD

January 1, 2023 – February 4, 2025

UNDERSTANDING THE PROGRAM

The Board is responsible for the general management and control of financial activities. The Treasurer serves as the District's chief fiscal officer and is responsible for receiving and disbursing District funds, maintaining accurate financial records and providing periodic financial reports to the Board.

In order to ensure financial activities are properly managed, the Board and Treasurer should ensure collections are accurately recorded and deposited in a timely manner, disbursements are properly supported and authorized prior to payment, and financial records and reports contain complete and accurate information.

The District had 15 individual collections, totaling \$867,105, received or deposited between January 1, 2023, and October 31, 2024. The District paid 367 individual claims totaling \$827,347 during the period January 2023 through July 2024. The District had three bank accounts with a combined balance of approximately \$500,000.

AUDIT SUMMARY

We conducted an audit of the District's financial management procedures and issued a report in February 2017 that identified certain conditions and opportunities for the Board's review and consideration. We returned to the District in July 2024 to conduct an audit follow-up review. Our follow-up review was limited to interviews with Board members and the Treasurer and inspection of certain documents related to the issues identified in our report. *Based on our limited procedures, the District made no progress in implementing corrective action.* Of the three audit recommendations, two recommendations were not implemented, and one recommendation was not applicable for the period that we reviewed. *During the course of our audit follow-up, we identified additional deficiencies in the District's accounting records and procedures that resulted in a determination for a more comprehensive review.* As such, we engaged the District in this separate audit.

Our audit determined that the Board did not ensure that the Treasurer was properly accounting for District collections and depositing funds in a timely manner, and the Board and Treasurer did not ensure disbursements were properly supported and authorized and that periodic financial information reported to the Board was sufficient or accurate. We determined that:

- 12 collections totaling \$425,202 were not deposited in a timely manner (averaging 154 days late) including two deposits totaling \$22,143 that were made more than a year and a half late.
- Eight collections totaling \$24,453 were not recorded accurately.
- **11 claims totaling \$130,435 were not approved by the Board prior to payment.**
- **26 claims totaling \$19,479 lacked adequate supporting documentation.**
- The Treasurer's financial reports to the Board were not accurate and supported by the accounting records. For example, **the Treasurer reported \$53,424 less cash than was in the District's bank accounts.**
- **Bank reconciliations included questionable reconciling items and were not provided to or reviewed by the Board.**
- The Treasurer did not provide financial records to the Board for the annual audit, and the Board did not request the Treasurer's financial records annually for audit.

The lack of oversight and inaccurate accounting records and reports increases the risk that funds could be lost or misappropriated without detection. In addition, when the financial records and reports are not accurate, the Board does not have reliable information to oversee the District's financial activities and make informed decisions. **Had the Board conducted an annual audit of the Treasurer's financial records, it might have been able to identify and address the deficiencies sooner.**

The report includes 13 recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the District's financial operations. District officials generally agreed with our recommendations and indicated they planned to initiate corrective action.

The Board has the responsibility to initiate corrective action. Pursuant to Section 181-b of New York State Town Law, a written corrective action plan (CAP) that addresses the findings and recommendations in this report must be prepared and forwarded to our office within 90 days. To the extent practicable, implementation of the CAP must begin by the end of the next fiscal year. For more information on preparing and filing your CAP, please refer to our brochure, *Responding to an OSC Audit Report*, which you received with the draft audit report. We encourage the Board to make the CAP available for public review.

READ THE COMPLETE REPORT AT THIS LINK:

<https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2025/pdf/otisco-fire-district-2025-42.pdf>

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110 State Street, 12th Floor; Albany, NY 12236

The Advantage of a Fire District and Reserve Accounts

Chris Gaige, The Press Republican – Plattsburg, NY

At the Tupper Lake Village Board's regular July meetings, things appeared to be moving toward a new fire truck purchase.

Now, that appears to be out the window. That realization came on Thursday when village Mayor Mary Fontana, village Trustee and Deputy Mayor Eric Shaheen and village Treasurer Kyle Fuller were meeting to review potential purchase options for the new truck.

"We're shifting our focus now from a brand-new truck to possibly a used truck," Fontana said. "We need to make sure that we're still protecting this community, but we need to do so in a financially responsible way."

The village is in the midst of trying to replace the Tupper Lake Volunteer Fire Department's Unit 165 — a pumper truck that was built in 1995 and was purchased second-hand from the Peru Volunteer Fire Department for \$30,000 in 2015. The truck remains in service, but is starting to show signs of deterioration, according to a letter from TLVFD that was presented to the village board on May 19.

On Thursday, Fontana, Shaheen and Fuller were trying to figure out how much money the village could put down at signing, then determine how to finance the remainder and what interest rates the village would likely be facing before taking any possible board action to enter into a purchasing contract.

However, the “fire truck fund” — a specific fund meant to provide a reserve for the future purchases of new fire trucks. That’s when Fontana said the three of them realized the \$330,000 number was incorrect, and furthermore, that the truck fund had never been formally established in its own account.

Instead, that money was left as part of the village’s general fund. During that time, they were used for a slew of purposes that, while legitimate expenditures in accordance with the general fund’s purpose, resulted in less money being available for truck purchases — as some of it is currently being used to fund other projects. Instead of the \$330,000, *Fontana said there’s currently \$193,000 that could be used toward the purchase of a new truck. She added that’s not enough to purchase a new one in a financially responsible way. The E-ONE proposal was for \$889,287 — the cheapest of the three proposals that the truck committee recommended, and moving forward with that would result in too much being financed and subject to interest payments over time than would be responsible for the village to subject its taxpayers to.*

As a result, the village board will not commit to buying a new truck at this time. Instead, Fontana said the village will look to replace Unit 165 with another second-hand purchase, while taking steps to formally create the restricted fund and continue to add to it.

The difference in fund balances stems from previous withdrawals. The full \$330,000 is a figure that would have been the fund’s balance if there were no previous withdrawals since its inception in 2016. But there were — \$100,000 for a down payment on TLVFD’s Unit 163 pumper truck in 2017, \$45,000 for purchasing a used fire truck for TLVFD’s Santa Clara substation in 2019 from the Keene Volunteer Fire Department and \$32,000 for a Jaws of Life unit in 2021.

While those withdrawals add up to \$177,000, the truck fund deduction isn’t quite that much, as a portion of Unit 163 was paid for from the sale of the old fire station on High Street, and the town of Santa Clara has been paying \$5,000 back per year for the substation truck. They will continue to do so until the full \$45,000 has been repaid.

Part of the confusion stems from these appropriations being taken from the general fund, since there was no restricted truck fund. However, since they pertain to trucks and equipment, that’s what brought the current truck fund’s inaccurate original \$330,000 figure down to the \$193,000 that is still in the general fund — but should be in the separate truck fund, and if it were to be removed and placed in its own account, would not compromise village-wide finances across other departments, projects or grant fund fronting, according to Fontana.

She said that the truck money sitting in the general fund were not misused, but misplaced. This led to unclear accounting information and ultimately a green light from the board to open the truck committee based on misinformed information.

“In the almost two years that I’ve been on the village board, we’ve asked, I’ve asked, trustees have asked, the fire chief has asked, ‘How much money is in the truck fund?’” she said. “We’ve all received different answers at different times. We’ve all received the same answer at different times. But it was never the actual, real number — and that’s what’s really frustrating.

“(The village) board authorized the fire department to form a committee to begin the process of purchasing a new fire truck under the guise that we had \$300,000 to use, and we didn’t. Had I been met with an honest answer last year when we authorized this committee, I don’t think I would’ve wasted the time of the sales representatives; I wouldn’t have wasted the time of the fire truck committee and I’m embarrassed and I am very frustrated by this process.”

She called Town Supervisor Rickey Dattola and met with TLVFD Chief Royce Cole to inform them of the findings on Thursday.

“We asked them to form a truck committee, and they did everything that we’ve asked them to do and they’ve responded to every call this community has,” she said. “For me to say, ‘You have money to buy a new fire truck but you can’t use it,’ — that’s a really difficult thing for anyone to hear.”

Cole said the TLVFD was “highly disappointed” with the news, adding that would be the department’s only statement on the matter.

Fontana said there were some other issues with keeping the truck fund as part of the general fund. Among these, she said Unit 163’s \$100,000 down payment exceeded the amount that would have been in the dedicated reserve then — with the extra being pulled from the general fund that could have been used for but wasn’t expressly set aside for a new truck. The truck fund came out of a fire protection agreement

between the town of Tupper Lake and the village of Tupper Lake that was first established in 2016 and renewed in 2020.

In order for fire protection services from the village, the town agreed to pay the village \$135,000 that year, with the understanding that \$7,500 of that would be put toward the truck fund and the village would match that with another \$7,500. While the \$135,000 — with increasing contributions in subsequent years — was included in the contract, there was no written language stipulating the truck fund's creation and matching contributions, which was left as an understanding between the two boards, according to an Enterprise report about the agreement at the time. That can be found at tinyurl.com/4um6n5k8.

Fontana said the truck fund should be its own fund, and the fungibility of having it lumped into the general fund is bad practice.

"In my mind, whether it's personal finance or municipal finance, when you have an established fund or reserve for a specific thing, it creates its own account," she said. "That's what happens with bank loans, or checking or savings — and that's not what happened."

Going forward, Fontana said the village board is focused on correcting this practice and establishing a dedicated and separate account for the truck fund, especially as the fire protection agreement comes up for renewal at the end of the year.

"We are putting safeguards in place, and we do have a plan to correct this," she said. "I can't un-ring this bell. I can't fix what was done before my time, but I can correct this moving forward."

STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE

Yes, Policymaking Is Part Of Every Fire Service Leader's Job

Leonard N. Chan

Fire department leaders should not passively accept public policy changes that affect the fire service. The policymaking process offers ample opportunities for active involvement. Relying on your jurisdiction's legal department or even on professional associations has proven insufficient in a high-stakes environment that continues to evolve rapidly.

Bottom line: Direct public policy engagement by fire departments is a function that can no longer be ignored.

SET THE STAGE

Decisions affecting community safety don't just take place on emergency scenes. Long before the first unit arrives on scene, elected and appointed officials have already made policy decisions that affect a fire department's operations. This reaches beyond the local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), in which the fire chief may have at least weekly interactions with the mayor, city council or city manager. Significant policy decisions also happen at the state and federal levels, which may include establishing PPE requirements, training standards and injury protections. Regulatory and legislative bodies may also help facilitate information sharing and distribution of resources.

Despite opportunities to participate, local fire departments are often absent in the decision-making process. As the public policy process becomes increasingly turbulent, fire departments can no longer stand aside without active engagement and simply accept what policymakers pass.

FROM DISENGAGED TO UPROAR

Government agencies such as the Texas Commission on Fire Protection rarely make the news, much to the relief of the state's fire service. The commission's primary role consists of regulating the 1,300-plus fire departments that employ career firefighters.

Their quarterly commission hearings in the early 2010s rarely drew significant attendance. Agenda items such as curriculum updates for hazmat technicians lacked excitement. Occasional topics, such as the minimum training for fire inspectors, spurred significant debate, but the vast majority of departments had limited engagement. Few departments had staff available to attend half-day meetings in the capital for business that was considered routine.

That mentality started to change when fire departments across the state realized their regulatory rules could have drastic impacts on their organizations. The commission fielded a complaint that a fire chief served as an incident commander on a fire scene despite no longer having the skills to do so. In summer 2014, the proposed

solution consisted of requiring fire chiefs to have five years of experience within the last 10 years in a full-time fire suppression position. This meant no one spending significant time in administration, prevention or training would be qualified to be a fire chief in the state. In addition, a strict interpretation of this proposal could also mean five-year term limits for fire chiefs.

Despite being discussed in open meetings, the topic drew limited attention. However, once the proposed language was published as required, news spread like wildfire across the state. Multiple departments submitted written public comments ahead of the next commission meeting. That meeting had full attendance, with fire chiefs testifying about the unintended consequences of the proposal. One commissioner reprimanded the audience for not getting involved earlier. The process, however, provided multiple points for feedback. Advocacy efforts proved effective, and an eventual compromise was reached in which the commission doubled the continuing education hours required for fire chiefs.

THE POWER OF SMES

The impacts of state legislatures on the fire service cannot be understated. Topics such as first responder mental health, civil service, fire codes and hazardous materials may be addressed at the state level.

During the Texas 88th Legislature in 2023, elected officials introduced more than 250 bills that included the word “fire.” Influencing public policy doesn’t end on Election Day. The legislative process provides opportunities to directly address elected officials and testify before committees. Municipal fire departments often have the luxury of their respective government affairs staff to provide guidance. Their presence does not mean that the fire departments should cede all responsibilities in the policymaking process, but efforts must remain aligned with the AHJ. Individuals assigned to roles in government affairs lack the bandwidth to maintain subject-matter expertise in every field within their scope of responsibilities.

Reading draft legislation and monitoring hearings may only appeal to a select few in the fire service, but fire departments have an obligation to provide professional insight. This includes expressing concerns about legislation when necessary, even when the legislation is popular. For example, in 2019, legislation that would have prevented mobile internet providers from degrading their services in disaster areas nearly passed the Texas House of Representatives. The legislation stalled after first responder agencies raised concerns that this may endanger the ability to access necessary communications during emergencies.

BEYOND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The temptation to rely on professional associations in public policy advocacy must be resisted. Professional associations for fire chiefs and firefighters provide valuable services but may be required to operate on consensus rather than simple majorities. Topics related to shift schedules, health and safety, and training requirements continue to be hotly debated, and professional associations may shy away from adopting an official stance.

Also, select local issues that require remedies at the state level may not be of concern to professional associations. For example, although most metro-sized departments in Texas have their own pension systems, the Texas Legislature establishes their parameters. That means circumstances could compel individual fire departments to develop their own public policy strategies.

DOWNSTREAM IMPACTS

The publication of the *America Burning* report by the National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control in 1973 marked the turning point of the federal government’s role in the fire service. The report served as the foundation for congressional action that led to the creation of fire service institutions that persist to this day including the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Fire Academy.

Federal programs have enhanced cross-state coordination and standardization. The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) has long served as the most notable example because it acts as the database of fire service activities nationwide. Launched in 1975, NFIRS received its last meaningful update in January 1999 – and its problems have since been a focus of much discussion. Among the issues cited by the USFA: NFIRS lacked interoperability with modern systems and the ability to integrate critical data in order to provide insights into the national fire problem.

The development of its successor, the **National Emergency Reporting Information System (NERIS)**, provided an opportunity for stakeholders to participate in focus groups and submit public comments. During this

process, the Houston Fire Department did not assume that a subject-matter expert would raise suggestions on its behalf. With a significant volume of its emergency responses dedicated to motor vehicle collisions and its involvement in related community risk reduction efforts, the Houston Fire Department recommended terminology changes in to better align with the terms used by transportation safety experts. The updated version of NERIS incident types adopted this recommendation by referring to such incidents as “collisions” rather than as “accidents.”

Additionally, the federal Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program provides direct financial assistance to fire departments, EMS organizations, and state fire training academies to support critical training and equipment. During the 2021 grant cycle, 91 Texas fire departments received a combined \$19.4 million from the AFG program.

Funding for the AFG program, as well as for Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency (SAFER) grants, face frequent threats. In 2023, the Senate Appropriations Committee proposed a more than \$20 million reduction to each program. In response, Texas fire departments conducted a coordinated letter-writing campaign to their respective senators to ensure these grant programs would continue. The basic information regarding the grants remained constant across the letters, but each individual letter had specific details on how the grants affected each respective department. Understanding that form letters rarely attract attention, each department used their official letterheads and included the signature of the fire chief.

Another effort commenced to extend the sunset date for these programs to 2030. Despite reductions in funding, Congress renewed AFG and SAFER grants with overwhelming supermajorities in June 2024.

GET INVOLVED

No matter their intentions, when elected and appointed officials make decisions without the proper context, they have the potential to endanger public safety. Leaders in the fire service have an obligation to provide the necessary information to support informed policymaking. This requires recognizing the importance of situational awareness in committee rooms as much as on emergency scenes. Not all efforts will result in victories, but getting involved is likely to lead to better results than passive acceptance.

STEP INTO THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Consortium Purchasing for Fire Apparatus

Neil Sjostrom

Low bid. These two words can, for some, be the beginning of a purchasing process that's filled with frustration and disappointment, given the many variables that are involved in apparatus procurement.

I often am asked whether there is another way to procure fire apparatus without having to simply use “low bid.” It wasn't until the last 5–10 years that the answer became a resounding and successful, “Yes,” to those who seek a low-bid purchasing alternative by utilizing consortium purchasing processes.

Whether referred to as a “best-value,” “consortium” or “cooperative” purchasing process, the end-goal is the same: for the fire department or purchaser to receive the best-quality apparatus, specified and designed exactly as the customer needs, for the best possible price that's available without using the standard public and low-bid response process. This all sounds like a wonderful idea, but how does it work, and how can you use it to your advantage?

Step one

The first step to a successful consortium purchasing process is to find out what options are available in your state for purchasing outside of using a low-bid process. Here are three cooperative, or consortium, purchasing solutions that are available. However, there are numerous others, so this isn't an exhaustive listing:

- Sourcewell (formerly NJPA)— sourcewell-mn.gov
- HGACBuy— hgacbuy.org
- NASPO ValuePoint— naspo.valuepoint.org

It always is important to check with your state and local officials for any laws that pertain to the use of purchasing consortiums to assure that you remain compliant throughout the buying process. Each consortium has a different process for how to purchase through its system. Some require membership, and some have fees that are associated with the membership. It is important to check with each consortium group, as well as with your department/city purchasing agent, because you already might be a member of one of

these groups. It is common for municipalities to use these consortium purchasing programs for other large equipment items, such as dump trucks and construction equipment.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: TO THIS DATE FOR AN UNKNOWN REASON, THE NYS COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE IS SOUR ON SOURCEWELL ALTHOUGH STATE AGENCIES AND ENTITIES USE IT. MORE TO COME!]

Several fire apparatus dealers throughout the country have seen their business transition to more than half of their sales resulting from consortium methods. This lends strong support to the process and the value that it provides to fire departments that acquire new apparatus. This also has provided benefits to the dealerships for how they structure sales support staff and how they focus their time.

Although this article doesn't discuss the individual department needs assessment process, the process is an important part of any buying situation. A full understanding of what you want and need helps you to better leverage your purchasing power, particularly when you utilize consortium purchasing methods.

Step two

After you decide through which consortium you will purchase, you can reach out to the manufacturers from which you want to receive a proposal. That said, some customers simply solicit a single proposal from one original equipment manufacturer (OEM)/dealer, so they can purchase an apparatus that's consistent with their current fleet and needs of the department. Although this certainly is a viable option, working with more than one apparatus manufacturer (or dealer) helps to assure that you get the best value for your purchase while meeting your exact needs.

These changes to the purchasing process are altering the way that the traditional apparatus purchasing market operates. Fire apparatus dealers spend more time working one-on-one with fire departments to meet their exact needs prior to a formal price proposal and less time reading hundreds of pages of published specification documents and submitting price proposals with little or no contact with the customer. The days of random bidding are changing. This reduces frustration on both ends of the sale. The dealer sales staff doesn't feel like they are "chasing" their tails on dead-end project proposals, and the customer reduces the amount of time, effort and money that is put into an acquisition process by not having to read through noncompliant "low-ball" bids.

Step three

After you select the OEM that you want to work with and contact its dealer, notify them that you will purchase through a consortium purchasing authority. They then can provide you with the base models that they have listed with the specific consortium for the type of apparatus that you're buying (aerial, engine, rescue, etc.). Once you decide on a base model with the OEM/dealer, you can discuss which options you need, what modifications need to be made to the proposed apparatus and what the changes/additions will cost. It is important to note that, just because you use a consortium purchasing process, you don't have to purchase a watered-down, no-options apparatus that won't meet your department's needs. This transitions the apparatus buying process into a more open and transparent process that gives the customer the chance to evaluate a specific design feature and its cost before including it in a purchase.

For example, say a department wants to cover various chrome or shiny surfaces with a black paint or bed-liner material. Although this might be a desired option, the costs might be too high. By having this open dialogue, you can evaluate the specific cost/benefit of the option rather than burying it in the bid proposal and total price. Using the low-bid purchasing process creates problems when the lowest bid doesn't meet your desired specifications. However, this same scenario can happen when all bids are over budget and you have no real method of determining which features that are written into the specifications cause significant cost increases. The consortium process is similar to purchasing a new car; you see all of the available options and how much they cost before you ever include them in your purchase, rather than trying to decipher hundreds of pages of complicated proposals with little or no understanding of how much a particular request in a specification might cost the department.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Although fire departments generally serve a similar mission, all are unique in how they respond and the tools and equipment that their apparatus need to have on them. These unique requirements translate into high cost when purchasing an apparatus, as every special or custom option that's added to a project increases the price because of extra engineering and production time. The more customization that's needed, the higher

the end price. An open dialogue about specific customer needs with a dealer allows the OEM/dealer to provide valuable feedback on what options exist to meet the customer needs while avoiding the high costs that are associated with custom one-off solutions from a manufacturer.

Keep in mind, the industry produces thousands of apparatus per year, and each manufacturer has a large catalog of available, already-made solutions that solve a department's problems. Using an already engineered solution to meet your needs saves time and money. Additionally, you could ask your dealer for contact information of another department that implemented the solution that you're evaluating to see whether they have any suggestions for improvement or advice about how implementation was on their apparatus. This allows for feedback from firefighters who might have found design flaws or specific improvements that you might want to incorporate.

In addition to the design needs of the department, you also can include feedback and requests from your maintenance departments. Some maintenance staff might have requests for using specific types of materials or locating commonly serviced options in easier-to-access locations. These types of requests can be discussed with the OEM/dealer for incorporation into your proposal, which helps to reduce long-term maintenance costs of your new purchase.

Another of the key benefits of the consortium process is that you can have these open dialogues with more than one OEM/dealer. This allows you to truly understand a final price proposal and assures that the finite details of your needs are represented in the proposal. This open dialogue allows the customer to receive updated drawings of the final apparatus and/or photographs of specific components to make sure that the end result is as desired. Through this process, some manufacturers even provide 3D drawings of components, to help a customer to better visualize a solution before a purchase is made and any metal is cut.

The consortium process allows you to work with your dealer(s) to determine a comprehensive apparatus configuration that meets your department's needs and that assures you that you are within your budget parameters. This will give you confidence that your new apparatus will meet the operational needs of your department when it arrives. Through the detailed consortium process, you will be able to take a proposal to your purchasing-approving authority (city council, fire board, etc.) and articulate your research and the cost/benefit of the various options that you included in your project, to ensure that your new apparatus meets the needs of your community today and tomorrow.

Real Safety vs. Liability Safety, Part 1

Kevin Roberts

Before we can talk about safety, we need to address the principle of risk. On one level, risk is a practical synonym for life. The only people that do not incur risk are in their graves. So, now that we've expanded the audience to everyone capable of reading, let's get into it.

A very wise man once told me that, "Risk is the balancing of probability with severity." Probability is the likelihood of an occurrence. Severity is how bad the results will be, should the occurrence... occur.

Driving without a seat belt? Low probability, high severity. Walk through the living room in the dark with the kid's toys strewn about? High probability, low severity.

When seen this way, we see risk all around us. Getting out of bed could lead to a slip and fall. Eating breakfast could lead to illness from improperly produced or packaged food. Driving to work may be risky for the other drivers. At work, accidents are serious enough to have a dedicated government bureau. Driving home, eating dinner, and getting into bed mimic the morning activity risks. And don't forget that 15-20 percent of us will die on our sleep.

One of the goals in our industry is to minimize risk while still performing our duties. Don't think that risk can be avoided. That is not an option. The only option is to exchange one risk for another. If you forget that basic principle, you find yourself playing Whac-A-Mole with unintended consequences. Mitigating risk in one area exacerbates risk in another. When you exercise, you risk injury. When you don't exercise, you risk heart disease. When you incentivize your drivers to minimize the response time, to lower risk to the patient, you increase the risk to others on the public roadways.

\In short, life is not a game of chess, it is a game of poker.

The key concept here is what you know. And when it comes to the future, you know very little. You don't know if the guy at the stop sign is going to pull out in front of you. You don't know if the guy behind you is going to

slow down and stop while you are making a left turn across traffic. You don't know if that one necessary part in your transmission was incorrectly approved by quality control and is about to break in the middle of a run. The awareness of your lack of knowledge and of your responsibility to perform in the land of uncertainty is a mindset that must be cultivated. Both our culture and human nature lead us to drift into complacency. When an emergency vehicle technician (EVT) is inspecting a rig, he must continually ask himself the question, "What if?" so that he may avoid asking the question, "What now?" "What if" we postpone the replacement of the front pads and rotors? Will they survive until the next service? Asking this question now may avoid the "What now?" question after the truck breaks down (or worse) due to failed front brakes.

Due to many complex systems on the modern emergency vehicle, this may sound complicated and perhaps a bit overwhelming to a non-technician. However, it can be dramatically simplified saying, "Never do anything to an ambulance that you are not willing to explain to a jury." (Nothing that follows should be construed as legal advice; that needs to come from an attorney)

Bad things happen every day, and you can't know what they will be. First, the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) must recognize the normal deterioration of mechanical systems to properly maintain the rig and prevent failures. Doing so lowers but does not eliminate risk. Second, he must provide evidence of proper maintenance. If, through no fault of the AHJ, the unforeseen occurs, **not** having the rig properly maintained will still get him in deep trouble because he will be investigated by an unfriendly attorney. That attorney's goal is not to arrive at a just and proper result. His goal is to obtain a judgment against you. Juries may be subject to arriving at decisions that are more based on perception than reality, so any lack of due diligence on the AHJ's part, even if they are not contributory to the "incident" at hand, can be used against him.

This is not a complaint, this is a simple statement of reality. You see, that attorney is no more omniscient than you are. He doesn't know if you are a careful and conscientious manager or technician. So, not knowing causes him to evaluate whatever data he can find and arrive at a conclusion. Understanding this lack of omniscience **allows us to recognize risk**. Really? Realizing our lack of knowledge allows us to know something? Yes. It allows us to consider the knowns and unknowns which are at the heart of reality.

One of my favorite tools for evaluating two factor ideas is the Cartesian Plot with its two dimensional positive and negative layout as seen in Figure 1.

Known Unknowns	Known Knowns
Unknown Unknowns	Unknown Knowns

Figure 1

We see above four options. There are known knowns. These are our areas of expertise. There are unknown unknowns. These are concepts of which we are completely unaware.

This brings up the imbalance of knowing and not knowing. Your ignorance of the lower left **can be** absolute. But your knowledge of the upper right **can never be** absolute. The more you learn, the more you recognize the incompleteness of your understanding (if you possess humility).

Next, there are known unknowns. These are concepts in which we can (or should be able to) see the existence of even if we do not know when they will intrude into our reality.

Finally, there are the unknown knowns. These are things of which our System 2 (see the article: [Making the Most of Practice Questions](#)) is not fully aware. But below the surface, our System 1 is perfectly able to handle them. For example, you may have an imperfect key that you have trained yourself to use to open a lock. You find it easy to open that lock, but perhaps impossible to explain to someone else how to do so.

Let's consider the upper left. These are the foreseeable but unknown risks that due diligence will prepare us for. The unruly driver, the overly litigious citizen, the faulty part in the transmission. How to properly prepare for these is an idea we must understand. This informs the distinction between real safety and liability safety which is where technician certification comes into play. But that will take another article.

OUR CHANGING FIRE SERVICE –CHALLENGES & POSITIVE IDEAS. LEARNING FROM OTHERS

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Nothing but challenges this week!!

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

Shortage Of Volunteer Firefighters Could Force More Towns To Move To Paid Firehouses, Costing Taxpayers

Tom Hanson, Trey Sherman

Nearly 70% of the fire crews working in departments across the country are volunteers, according to the National Fire Department Registry. These dedicated civil servants serve on the frontline, keeping smaller communities safe, but that safety net is shrinking due to a growing shortage of volunteers.

Albert Osterman, 21, has trained for more than 150 hours to become a firefighter. A volunteer in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, he does the job with a deep sense of purpose.

"My father passed away in 2020, and the EMS crew that helped was from this fire department," Osterman told CBS News. "And so after that, I was like, 'Yeah, I wanna help people the way they helped me.'"

He works at one of nearly 20,000 volunteer firehouses nationwide, which save taxpayers an estimated \$46.9 billion a year — \$4.7 billion just in New York State, according to the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York.

"Were it not for the fire departments, those communities would simply fall apart. We're gonna rely on volunteer firefighters forever in this nation," said Steve Hirsch, chair of the National Volunteer Fire Council.

But between 1985 and 2020, the number of volunteers dropped by more than 20%, according to the NVFC. At the same time, the number of emergencies they're called to has more than tripled.

"There are fire departments across this nation that are responding to thousands of calls every year. They're wearing out people. They're burning them out," Hirsch said

Osterman said that in some cases, a lack of resources has "led to, unfortunately, more deaths."

Some lawmakers have been fighting to recruit young people through incentives, such as proposed legislation that would provide student loan forgiveness for volunteer firefighters. When asked if he thought those initiatives could help, Osterman seemed optimistic.

If there's a financial incentive that can help to get education, I'm sure it would boost numbers tremendously," he said.

"I think it's a fantastic idea," Osterman added. "As a student, and a student that knows a lot of other students that are firefighters, it would be a big de-stressor for a lot of people."

Some towns have already converted from volunteer to paid crews. Without more volunteers, towns like Hastings-on-Hudson could face a similar choice. For now, Osterman is still answering the call — motivated not for a check, but to fulfill his civic duty.

"He was a Navy man," Osterman said of his father. "He was a big fan of serving his country and serving his community. I think he'd be proud of me for it. Call me crazy, for sure, for doing it, but he'd be happy."

Mo. Officials Weigh Ending FD Ambulance Service In \$18M Fire Department Overhaul

St. Charles is considering a sweeping \$18 million overhaul of its fire department that would add more firefighters and build new fire stations in an effort to boost response times citywide.

Officials here are also debating whether to discontinue the St. Charles Fire Department's ambulance service and move ambulance personnel into firefighting roles. Department employees are trained to do both. The St. Charles County Ambulance District, a separate entity, already has two ambulances in the city and would add

more to cover the city of 72,000 residents, if the plan is approved by the St. Charles City Council. Ambulance response times wouldn't be affected, said district spokesperson Kyle Gaines.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Building to Recruit and Retain vs. the Cost of Doing Nothing

Robert Manns

The volunteer fire service long has been the backbone of fire protection in the United States in small towns and rural communities. Across the country, volunteers comprise approximately 70 percent of fire department membership and respond to emergencies to protect life and property at minimal cost to taxpayers. Unfortunately, the landscape of volunteerism is shifting, and the decline in the number of volunteer firefighters is an existential crisis for many communities.

It can cost a department more than \$1 million to operate a single engine across three shifts. Adding EMS service or a second apparatus can push this cost beyond \$2 million. When communities neglect their emergency service infrastructure and fail to retain volunteers, they eventually face an unavoidable financial reckoning.

DECLINE OF VOLUNTEERISM

Of course, volunteer departments and their communities rely on the willingness of individuals to dedicate their time and energy to serve. However, recruitment and retention have become increasingly complex. Several factors contribute to this decline:

- **Changing workforce demands.** More individuals work multiple jobs or commute longer distances, which reduce their availability to respond to calls.
- **Increased training requirements.** Although necessary, the growing complexity of fire and EMS training demands more time and effort, which makes volunteer service less feasible for many.
- **Aging membership.** The average age of volunteer firefighters continues to rise, with fewer young recruits stepping up to replace those who retire.
- **Competing priorities.** Family obligations, extracurricular activities, intensive youth sports and other commitments compete for potential volunteers' time and attention.
- **Lack of incentives.** Without compensation, retirement benefits and/or adequate facilities, convincing individuals to dedicate themselves to volunteering becomes more difficult.

The increase in calls for service, coupled with the decline of volunteerism, isn't just an internal challenge for departments. It's a communitywide issue that will result in significant financial and operational consequences if left unchecked.

STATIONS' OVERLOOKED ROLE

Every department needs several key elements to function effectively: funding, sound leadership, apparatus, personnel, proper training and, crucially, a station from which to operate. However, the station often is overlooked as a critical factor in recruitment and retention.

In fact, the U.S. Fire Administration's "2023 Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services" barely mentions fire stations in the context of facility conditions. A station is more than just a building; it's the home base for firefighters, a training ground, and a gathering place that fosters camaraderie and commitment. Yet, many volunteer departments operate out of outdated, inefficient or hazardous facilities. These facilities often fail to meet modern safety and operational standards and lack space that incentivizes participation and occupancy. Ultimately, this has proved to deter new members and diminish the pride and morale of existing ones.

A well-designed station can transform a department's capability to recruit and retain personnel. Modern stations provide:

- Comfortable/functional living spaces to accommodate volunteers during shifts.
- Adequate training areas to foster continual education and skill development.
- Safe and healthy environments that include proper ventilation, decontamination spaces and gender-inclusive facilities.

- Community engagement spaces that help to recruit younger generations and foster relationships with residents.

If volunteer departments want to sustain their ranks, they must address the fundamental infrastructure that supports their personnel. Ignoring facility requirements or taking shortcuts is a fast track to becoming obsolete.

FUNDING CHALLENGE

The greatest obstacle to constructing modern stations is funding. Elected officials, particularly in smaller communities, often operate within short-term, four-year cycles within which levying additional fees or taxes is politically unpalatable. Large capital projects, such as a fire station, frequently are considered secondary to other budgetary concerns. The numbers that are associated with the former often are entirely disproportionate to what the average person can relate to, so the idea of building a station can be scary.

The problem is that failing to invest in a fire station often results in a far more significant financial burden in the long run. When a volunteer department collapses because of recruitment and retention struggles, the municipality often must pivot to a career fire department, which is an exponentially more expensive transition. Many municipalities are accustomed to the low-cost operations of a volunteer department. However, panic sets in as volunteer staffing dwindles and emergency response times suffer. Time and time again, we've seen this movie. The script often goes like this:

- **Hiring a fire chief.** A paid chief is initially brought in to stabilize operations.
- **Consolidation.** Multiple failing volunteer fire companies often are consolidated into a singular department, which is a move that arguably addresses the symptom but not the problem.
- **Transitioning to career staff.** As volunteer numbers decline, paid personnel gradually are introduced.
- **Unionization and workforce expansion.** Career firefighters understandably seek fair wages, benefits and safe working conditions, which increases operational costs.
- **Facility overhaul.** The inadequate volunteer fire station, which already is unsuitable for modern demands, now must be upgraded significantly or a new station must be constructed to accommodate the safe and functional working conditions that career staff require.

This sequence of events is predictable, yet many municipalities fail to account for the long-term costs of inaction. By waiting until a crisis, they incur a massive financial burden that could have been mitigated through proactive investment.

PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE

Instead of reacting to the collapse of volunteer departments, municipalities should consider a more proactive approach:

- **Investing in facilities now.** Constructing a modern station that's designed to support volunteer recruitment can extend the viability of a volunteer model.
- **Enhancing training and living quarters.** Providing volunteers with quality spaces increases engagement and commitment. Providing individual spaces promotes the inclusion of women, who are a large portion of the population that's historically excluded from the volunteer fire service.
- **Planning for the future.** A properly designed fire station that's built today can be career-ready if needed in the future, which ensures a smooth transition if paid staff eventually become necessary.

A well-designed, \$10 million station that supports volunteerism in small and rural communities can pay for itself in as few as five years compared with transitioning to a fully paid department. The financial, operational and community benefits of investing in a facility before a crisis unfolds are undeniable.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

The reality is simple: Communities will pay for fire protection one way or another. They can either invest in the infrastructure that's necessary to sustain volunteerism now, face an exponentially more significant financial burden when their department collapses or lose immediately located service altogether. When a community transitions to a career model, everything becomes due at once.

The cost of doing nothing is staggering. Beyond the financial toll, communities suffer from decreased response times, potential loss of life and property, and the erosion of public trust.

Investing in a modern, well-designed station isn't a luxury but a necessity. Such a facility is a recruitment

tool, training center and operational hub that ensures a department's longevity. Even in the worst-case scenario in which volunteerism continues to decline, communities that invest today will have capital assets ready to accommodate future career needs at a discounted cost compared with having to build in the future when the effects of economic escalation come due.

Fire service leaders, policymakers and architects must collaborate to shift the conversation. Instead of viewing a fire station as an unnecessary expense, it should be recognized as a strategic investment that yields long-term benefits.

Communities that embrace this mindset will recruit and retain the next generation of volunteer firefighters and secure their future in the most fiscally responsible way possible. If a community believes that it can't afford to plan to build now, the struggle will be even greater in the future. Neglect all but ensures failure.

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH & SAFETY; PROTECTING OUR OWN

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LINE OF DUTY FIREFIGHTER DEATHS FOR 2025

In 2024 we experienced 64 LODDs reported nationally.!

Overall, 2024 was one of the safest years on record for U.S. firefighters with 64 on-duty deaths recorded, down from 74 in 2023 and reflecting a steady decline in annual fatalities in recent decades since a high of 174 in 1978. (The trend calculations don't include the 340 firefighters who died in the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.)

DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A FATALITY-JUST A DIBILITATING INJURY, YOU JUST NEVER KNOW!

- Assistant Chief John Lucariello, who collapsed at a Fishkill fire, is in critical condition at Westchester Medical Center. We wish John a speedy and full recovery.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- Kern County, CA Fire Department firefighter suffered major injuries when their truck rolled nearly 200 over a ridge and down a steep hillside in Castaic near the Canyon Fire on Friday night. By the time other firefighters arrived at the spot of the crash, they said that the victim had was out of the car. Though he was alert and conscious, he was said to have sustained major injuries in the collision. The firefighter was airlifted to Henry Mayo Medical Center in Valencia for treatment.

Wethersfield, CT, Fire Department Fined by OSHA After LODD

Firefighter Robert Sharkevich Sr., 66, was killed when the UTV he was operating rolled at a Meriden brush fire. The town's volunteer fire department committed a "serious" safety violation and was issued a fine after an investigation into the death of a firefighter during the brush fire on Lamentation Mountain in Meriden last year.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration said in a report that it fined the Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department \$640 after issuing a citation it classified as serious in connection with the death of 66-year-old Robert Sharkevich Sr.

At 5:30 p.m. on Oct. 22, the report said, a firefighter was operating a utility terrain vehicle during response efforts at a brush fire on Lamentation Mountain in Meriden. While driving over uneven terrain, it said, the UTV rolled over and struck the firefighter in the head and neck.

The report said emergency responders arrived at the scene, but the employee died from his injuries. It said three additional firefighters sustained minor injuries and were treated without hospitalization.

The fine was issued on Jan. 27, the report said, and it was due to be paid by March 17. OSHA did not specifically name Sharkevich in the report.

The brush fire burned more than 100 acres, officials said. Multiple municipal fire departments, state agencies and the Connecticut National Guard were involved in battling the blaze and operations to contain it with all manner of equipment, including trucks, UTVs, helicopters and drones.

The incident came as much of Connecticut was facing abnormally dry conditions caused by very little rain that month, bringing with it official warnings of extreme fire risk. The fire on Lamentation Mountain was just one of many brush fires authorities responded to that month.

In the days following Sharkevich's death, the state Office of the Chief Medical Examiner said it was caused by an impact injury of the head and neck during the accident.

FIRE APPARATUS

****New EPA Engine Standards: What Fire Departments Need to Know About the 2027 Transition**

Chris Mc Loone

The upcoming EPA emissions standards slated for 2027 are set to reshape the landscape of fire apparatus engines. This article discusses what these new guidelines mean for engines, cab and chassis design, and apparatus bodies, drawing on expert insights to help fire service professionals navigate this transition.

WHY ARE THE EPA STANDARDS CHANGING?

For several decades, engine emissions standards have been steadily tightened to reduce pollutants, particularly nitrogen oxides (NOx). Since 1988, regulations cut NOx emissions by approximately 80%. In 2027, the EPA and California Air Resources Board (CARB) are aligning on a further 80% reduction target within just four years. Such a dramatic drop—from 200 mg to 35 mg of NOx emissions per horsepower-hour—represents a steep technical challenge.

Chris Crowel, Emergency Vehicles Lead at Cummins, explains the magnitude of this change. The first drop in emissions was costly but achievable. Now, pushing that second 80% reduction requires completely new engine designs. Additionally, these standards extend warranty periods for emissions components from five to ten years and impose stricter compliance requirements. Engines must meet emissions across the entire operating range rather than relying on emissions averaging.

ONE ENGINE MANUFACTURER'S APPROACH

Cummins is responding with a \$2 billion investment in research, development, and manufacturing enhancements to deliver a new generation of fire apparatus engines. Existing engines like the B6.7, L9, X12, and X15 will be replaced with all-new platforms, including the AB7.2 (a 7.2-liter displacement engine) and the X10 (a 10-liter engine replacing the L9 and X12).

Several key technological innovations are driving these new engines:

Dual SCR Catalysts in One Module: To meet the low emissions thresholds, the after-treatment system will feature two Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) catalysts housed together, sometimes called a “snowman” or “infinity” design, increasing reaction surface area while managing packaging constraints.

Advanced After-Treatment Heaters: New heater elements before the Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF) and SCR catalysts will help engines meet emissions standards earlier after startup, but these require significant electrical power. Therefore, Cummins will add a belt-driven 48-volt alternator dedicated to generating this heat.

Clean-Sheet Engine Design: Leveraging computer-aided design (CAD), engineers have optimized material placement, improving cooling, oil flow, and block stiffness. For example, moving the gear train from the front to the rear reduces potential oil leaks and enhances durability.

Weight Management: Despite adding emissions hardware, the new X15 engine system will be roughly weight-neutral compared with current setups. The X10 engine will be about 300 pounds heavier than the L9 but similar to the current X12, which is itself lighter than most mid-bore engines in the market.

Improved Engine Performance: The X15 will maintain familiar horsepower and torque ratings, including the 605-hp/1,850 ft-lb rating popular in fire service applications. The X10 will cover all previous L9 ratings with a new high-torque family offering up to 1,650 ft-lb, close to the X12's current capability.

Environmental Improvements: Moving to canister-style oil and fuel filters, replacing steel housing and elements separately, supports environmental sustainability through reduced waste.

Cummins plans to launch the new X15 as early as April 2026, ahead of the 2027 mandate, giving manufacturers time to prepare. However, the last date to build with the current L9 engine frame will be December 31, 2026.

Impact on Cab and Chassis Design

Jason Witmier, Director of Education and Technology for Safe Fleet, emphasizes that while every OEM will face unique challenges, the anticipated design impacts share some common themes:

Weight Considerations: The good news is that weight changes will be minimal. This is crucial since front steer axle weight limits are often more restrictive than the rear axle, and balance is a constant design concern.

Engine Footprint and Cooling: *The new engines and aftertreatment systems, including larger radiators or additional cooling requirements, may slightly enlarge the engine “doghouse” (engine tunnel). Since cab width is heavily regulated by Department of Transportation standards (typically 96 to 102 inches), manufacturers have limited room to expand sideways, so any growth in engine or radiator size affects the available space inside the cab.*

Seating and Ergonomics: Potentially lost cab space could slightly impact seating configuration, particularly rear-facing seats located beside the engine tunnel. The NFPA’s minimum requirements for seating width and operability remain protected, so OEMs will have to innovate around those constraints.

Crash Testing Considerations: OEMs are working diligently to avoid significant changes in the doghouse’s structural design, which would trigger costly and time-consuming crash testing.

Witmier observes that OEMs are already integrating prototype engines and computer-aided models to ensure the new powertrains fit into existing frames and doghouses as seamlessly as possible.

EFFECTS ON PUMP PANELS AND BODY COMPARTMENTS

Behind the cab, pump panel design and body configurations may face subtle but important changes due to aftertreatment placement and heat management considerations.

Pump Panel Location: Aftertreatment devices typically reside near the pump house, requiring plumbing and panel layouts to accommodate their size and heat output. This may result in relocation of auxiliary suction lines or changes in the size or door configuration of pump panels. While no fundamental changes to pumping capabilities are expected, departments might see slight reconfigurations of access or compartment arrangements.

Body Compartments: For aerials, rescues, or other apparatus without a pump house, the sizable aftertreatment devices may occupy space traditionally reserved for compartments. Consequently, front body compartments might be reduced or reshaped. Given the fire service’s familiarity with fitting equipment efficiently and creatively, these adjustments can be incorporated with minimal disruption.

Space Trade-offs and Wheelbase Length: In some cases, extending the apparatus wheelbase slightly can provide additional space to fit the engine and after-treatment package without sacrificing compartment volume. However, keeping wheelbases short often means stacking systems more tightly, so some compartment space might be sacrificed to accommodate emissions hardware.

Preparing for the 2027 Transition

The consensus from Cummins and Safe Fleet representatives is clear: fire departments and apparatus manufacturers need to stay informed and proactive. The timeline is set:

- *Engines meeting the new EPA standards will be available in early 2026.*
- *The deadline for installing older-model engines on new apparatus is effectively March 2027, with only limited exceptions granted by the EPA.*
- *OEMs have been designing around these requirements for more than two years, leveraging CAD models, fuel and thermal testing, and prototype installations.*

Apparatus purchasers should engage early with their manufacturers and ask detailed questions about engine selection, emissions equipment placement, and how these affect cab, chassis, and body design. Since differences between OEMs’ approaches will exist, direct communication ensures that departments avoid surprises.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FIRE DEPARTMENTS?

The transition to cleaner engines comes with unavoidable costs and engineering complexities. The additional emissions hardware means careful packaging, potential minor sacrifices in compartment space or cab layout, and possible weight distribution adjustments. While no radical design changes are expected, departments should approach apparatus spec'ing with new engine technology in mind. This includes:

- *Verifying engine options and emissions compliance timelines with manufacturers.*
- *Evaluating potential impacts on seating, compartment volume, and pump panel accessibility.*
- *Considering operational implications, such as heat management around aftertreatment components.*
- *Planning for potentially extended lead times due to new production requirements.*

Advanced computer modeling and prototype testing at the OEM level reduces the risk of last-minute surprises, but the decision to specify and accept new engine models must be deliberate.

Fire departments should monitor developments, engage with suppliers, and prepare their purchasing processes accordingly.

Five Technology Upgrades for Fire Apparatus Without Breaking the Bank

Jason Moore

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The installation of routers onto fire vehicles reduces the potential for spotty signals in the performance of connectivity technology that keeps crews that are en route to an emergency in contact with computer-aided dispatch.
- The lower frequency signals of bass sirens for fire apparatus have a better chance of penetrating the soundproofing of automobiles and noise-cancelling earbuds, to aid in the safety of firefighters and civilians alike.
- On-board tracking and telematics technology for fire apparatus are vital tools for analyzing operations in terms of improving response times.

It's easy to get nostalgic looking at historic pumpers, but compared with the apparatus that's produced today, even fire vehicles that are 10 years old are missing some major technological advancements. In a connected world, the most recognizable vehicle that's on the road—the fire apparatus—quickly is ramping up options to bring information to responders better and faster than before.

Departments that want to provide the best service are leveraging technology upgrades to improve connection stability and redundancy; adding flexible options for crews to access information; investing in built-in information centers; providing proactive and intelligent options for intersection controls (along with bass siren technology); and using services that establish real-time updates on the vehicle's performance and location.

GET CONNECTED

From the inception of radio and eventually internet-based services, a fire apparatus must have the best connections. FirstNet-powered solutions have done a great job of providing priority access to the cell networks. However, spotty signals and even fire stations that block cell signals often lead to crew frustrations as computers search for a connection.

A key piece of equipment that reduces these frustrations is a Cradlepoint router. Ranging in price and options, these routers have robust capabilities, such as being capable of seamlessly switching between internet sources (station Wi-Fi, public Wi-Fi, cell services), using multiple cell services and providing precise GPS tracking. Compared with the old-school options of a hot spot or GPS puck, Cradlepoint routers are more durable, depending on the antenna, which can broadcast signals as far as 100 yards away, and have options for nearly every vehicle setup. The capability to hot-switch between internet sources proves to be the best feature, because it keeps the crew connected with computer-aided dispatch, allows for silent dispatch options (status buttons only) without interruption and creates a truly reliable network connection.

MDTS/TABLETS

Mobile data terminals (MDTs) are considered a staple in the modern fire service, so much so that many apparatus manufacturers create lowered dash options and premounted hardware for MDTs that don't block the driver's view. Compared with even 10 years ago, there are MDT solutions that can fit every apparatus configuration and department budget (e.g., larger laptops, touchscreens, multiscreen command consoles,

tablets of all sizes, and various operating systems). Today, there's no excuse to not have some sort of connection on a rig.

With so many software platforms that are available to the fire service, these MDTs offer access to preplans, drone broadcasting, electronic command boards, firefighter tracking solutions, digital reporting and air management telemetric programs.

Dispatch centers that have advanced technology can share live video of an emergency scene as responders are en route. Essentially, without an MDT, the modern responder is missing key information to make better decisions, which in turn provides better outcomes.

BUILT-IN INFORMATION CENTERS

Some of the first electronic sensors were added to fire apparatus to help to identify whether a compartment door was left open (a blinking red light). Today's apparatus can provide so much more information.

Built-in information centers are available in nearly every model of apparatus and provide the driver/officer access to mounted camera systems, lights/emergency lights/siren controls, apparatus system information and on-board diagnostics. If the viewer wants to see who is wearing their seatbelt, track the driver's speed or identify whether any compartments are open, built-in information centers are a great option.

INTERSECTION CONTROLS

The earliest preemption systems relied on a blinking light, infrared signal or the sound of a particular siren to change an intersection light to green from red for an approaching apparatus. However, today, these systems are more robust.

The best systems are connected knowing the path of travel for the apparatus, to ensure that traffic is cleared out well ahead of the apparatus' arrival, adjusting if the driver chooses to make a turn that wasn't anticipated on the established route. The systems also offer varying levels of preemption to help to improve the efficiency of other services, to include snowplows, buses and garbage collection.

Although preemption makes traversing intersections during emergency travel safer, they don't address soundproof cars or pedestrians who are wearing noise-cancelling earbuds, which is why it's important to investigate bass siren technology. Although there are numerous versions of this type of siren, the concept is the same: Lower frequency signals have a better chance to penetrate the soundproofing and noise-cancellation technology. The best options are sirens that can be felt. If you add both technologies, the ability to navigate to an emergency scene is safer.

TRACKING AND TELEMATICS

Although some crews might not appreciate the concept of Big Brother watching everything, modern fleets often have great tracking and telematics. The best organizations fully leverage these technologies to automate everything from marking an apparatus while it's en route, out in the area or back in quarters (geofencing), to reducing the workload during apparatus checkouts. Commercial fleets have used these technologies for quite some time to improve preventative maintenance programs and to hold drivers accountable for their driving behaviors. However, as the technologies enter the fire service, they provide vital tools for analyzing scene operations. What route did the driver take to arrive faster than expected? Was everyone wearing their seatbelt while the vehicle was in motion? Did the apparatus just cross a mileage or operation-hour threshold (to trigger a preventative maintenance task)?

These systems can report outside of the apparatus and help decision-makers to understand what's happening with the apparatus and where it is/has been. The true power comes after a particularly difficult call, when the entire response can be rebuilt from dispatch until the apparatus is parked at the station again. Knowing each apparatus' route and speed, truly seeing the arrival order, and, in the event of an equipment failure or accident, having access to speed, direction and rider information is invaluable.

BUILDING CODE ISSUES AND REPORTED FIRE FATALITIES

If we had sprinklers in 1 & 2 family homes by now the death toll of 700+ would be a hell of a lot less and fewer firefighters would be injured. But because builders and realtors make big contributions to politicians, sprinklers have been negotiated out of the Code!!

An awfully expensive price to pay to save money. Stop the carnage, install residential sprinklers.

Residential sprinklers are a component of the plumbing system, with approximately 1 head per room. The purpose of residential sprinklers is to allow time for the occupants to escape.

Residential sprinklers are designed for quick response and only one at the most two heads may be triggered. With residential sprinklers present, the civilian death rate is 89% LOWER.

Residential sprinklers will assist responding firefighters to do their jobs and save firefighters lives also, especially since everyone is short staffed!!

CHIEFS NEED TO SPEAK UP: Our fire problem would not be as bad if there were residential sprinklers!!

HOME FIRE FATALITIES REPORTED BY THE MEDIA FROM THE US FIRE ADMINISTRATION FOR 2025	
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	48
Last fire death 8/6/25 Cheektowaga, Erie Co Female 64	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	81
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	659
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/52
	#2 NY/48
	#3 IL & TX/36
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2025: 1335	
2046 civilian home fire fatalities in 2024	
Week 33 of 2025, fire has claimed on an average 40 lives PER WEEK.	
Both the states of Maryland and California as well as Wash. DC require sprinklers in 1&2 family dwellings.	
According to realtors and builders only old homes burn, so sprinklers are not needed in new homes: so when does a new home become an old home?	

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

House Fire with Entrapment – Quick Response Saves Lives

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service, MD units were dispatched to a house fire with reported entrapment at 14843 Poplar Hill Rd (FS31). Upon arrival, crews found a basement fire caused by lithium batteries.

Thanks to the swift actions of our firefighters, an elderly occupant was safely assisted out of the basement. Two other occupants were unharmed, and no displacement was necessary.

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!

This is an on demand Webinar, do it anytime that is convenient to you.



The fire service is entering a transformative chapter in personal protective equipment (PPE) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) management with the consolidation of NFPA 1851 and NFPA 1852 into the newly released NFPA 1850 standard. Join us for an in-depth webinar designed to prepare fire departments, safety officers and PPE managers for the changes ahead.

In this free on-demand webinar presented by FireRescue1.com and MSA, you will:

- **Discover new approaches to PPE and SCBA selection and service life**, including updated selection criteria, the continuing importance of the 10-year rule for turnout gear and how SCBA serviceability is now more tightly linked to compliance and equipment upgrades.
- **Explore practical improvements** such as increased wash temperatures and enhanced procedures for SCBA decontamination.
- **Understand the direction NFPA 1850 sets** for a more standardized, health-focused approach to PPE selection, care and maintenance across the fire service.
- **Learn the updated verification methods** for gear cleaning, including simplified protocols, optional chemical assessments and insights into how cleaning practices influence gear longevity.

Watch now to learn how program roles are evolving, including the introduction of the PPC Manager and PPE Technician, new interim qualification paths and specific responsibilities for managing contaminated gear and reporting safety concerns.

WATCH NOW AT THIS LINK:

<https://tracking.police1.com/t/9320633/187515077/7196883/1/1006865/?f5d63f87=MTE0MTczX0dsb2JlX0ZSMV9GdWxsTGlzdF8zNTY4XzI2MzIxLjZfOC04LT11&b44ed14b=YmY5NWQ4NzktNWRmOC00MWJkLTkzMDctNzg0Y2VhZTNjMzYy&x=b12372ef>



Agency Emergency Response Planning ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

More than ever, our departments need to look at their community's risks and develop a plan that addresses those risks. The plan should address how we can deal with them, where we will get help to deal with others and what jobs our personnel will do. In this webinar we will look at the process of developing an agency Emergency Response Plan that addresses how you plan to protect your community.

There is also a good chance that this will be a new requirement under the proposed OSHA Standard.

Wednesday 8/20/25 at 7:00PM

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

<https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=d25df30cf3&e=781e9a2c81>

Attend an NVFC Training Near You!

The NVFC hosts in-person trainings at locations across the country on topics including hazardous materials response, electric vehicle response, leadership, fire service culture, and much more. View upcoming courses [here](#). Don't see a training near you? Consider hosting a training at your department or regional event. View a listing of available courses and request a training [here](#).



New York Yankees Firefighter Appreciation Special

Join the **New York Yankees** at Yankee Stadium as they show their appreciation to the dedicated members of the fire and emergency services!

This **special event** runs from **September 5-7** (vs. the Toronto Blue Jays) and on **September 9** and **September 11** (vs. the Detroit Tigers).

All purchased tickets will include a \$15 meal and beverage voucher, and a Yankees firefighter trucker hat.

Questions? [Email](#) Jess Tragale, New York Yankees Account Executive, Group Sales & Service, for assistance!

LEARN MORE AND PURCHASE TICKETS AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://www.gofevo.com/group/Firefighterappreciation33?ref=Tragale>



2025 Seminar Series, Short-Handed Firefighting

34 years ago, this class was developed by Firefighter Andrew A. Fredericks. At that time, the fire service was starting to suffer from a shortage of members, especially but not limited to the volunteer ranks. Today, as we all know, departments across the nation have experienced a large drop-off in membership. With today's hotter, faster-moving fires, it is imperative that we get on the road ASAP and are ready to mount an aggressive interior attack – especially where life-saving attempts must be carried out. This class will look at new apparatus and equipment designed to make our jobs less labor-intensive. In many places, where it used to take one or maybe two departments to handle the job at a single-family residence, now up to six departments are necessary due our diminished ranks. We must protect our residents and, just as important, our members and make sure everyone goes home.

Mike Healy has been a member of the Rockland County fire service for 54 years, serving with the Blauvelt F.D. for 14 years, followed by the Central Nyack F.D. for 40 years. He has served as a chief for three terms. Healy is currently the coordinator of education for the Rockland County Fire Training Center. **Jeff Daniels** is a 23-year fire service veteran. He served with the Air National Guard as a crash rescue firefighter for 17 years and was a member of the West Haverstraw Volunteer F.D. for 14 years. In 2002, he was hired as a NYS DMNA firefighter and served for over four years before being appointed to the FDNY. Daniels was assigned to Ladder Co. 39 for 12 years and was later an instructor for the FDNY Fire Academy. Currently, he is a member of Squad 61. He also teaches at the Rockland County Fire Training Center.

Coming to These Counties in 2025 (7:00 p.m. Starting Time):

Cortland (October 28) • Erie (October 8) • **Fulton (September 9)** • Jefferson (October 15)
 • Monroe (September 30) • Nassau (November 5) • Niagara (March 12) • Oneida (September 24)
 • Onondaga (February 18) • Orange (April 29) • Otsego (September 15) • **Rensselaer (October 20)**
 • Rockland (April 23) • St. Lawrence (March 24) • Suffolk (April 2) • Westchester (September 3)

\$35 – NYSAFC members • \$50 – non-members (per person)

REGISTER AT THIS LINK: <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/2025seminarseries>

ASSOCIATION OF FIRE DISTRICTS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Coming Attractions:

- **October 2-4, 2025, Thursday - Saturday**, Annual Meeting and Vendor Expo at the Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs
- **October 8-10, 2026**, Annual Meeting and Vendor Expo at the Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL – TRAINING TIMES – COURSES/WEBINARS/EVENTS

LINK TO THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM: https://virtualclassroom.nvfc.org/featured_courses

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

The fire company thanks you for your support!! Breakfast will resume in **September**.

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

See you in October when we start up again. **Thank you for your support!**

Asking for a Friend

Help needed, is there a District/Company that accepts EMS applicants only. What are your requirements for those members that respond to EMS calls only, but are still considered firefighters for VFBL or LOSAP purposes? Contact me at my email address, asking for a friend. If you have a written policy and are willing to share please send to tom@rinaldi1.com, thanks.

GENERAL INTEREST

This will be held over for one more week, its also posted on out website at CAFDA.net
The Following Schedule Applies If Your Election Is Scheduled For December 9th.

The Board of Fire Commissioners is required to appoint a separate Board of Elections to conduct the election. The Board of Elections must include registered voters who are residents of the fire district and ***may not include members of the Board of Fire Commissioners or an elected Fire District Treasurer.*** On December 9th the Board of Elections conducts the election and the Board of Fire Commissioners waits for the election to be completed and the result to be certified by the Board of Elections.

The Board of Fire Commissioners and the Fire District Secretary must maintain records regarding each fire commissioner in office to make certain that it has an accurate listing of the terms of office so that the proper office is placed on the ballot each year and the fire commissioner whose office is expiring knows that he or she must run for re-election to remain in office.

Although this may seem like a straightforward matter, errors occur annually in fire districts across the state when the Board of Fire Commissioners and the Secretary become confused about which commissioner's five-year term is expiring and must be placed on the ballot. If the wrong commissioner runs for reelection, they are not eligible to serve the new five-year term, resulting in a vacancy. Meanwhile, the commissioner whose term actually expired and who did not run for re-election will leave office at the start of the new year. Elected offices that are rendered vacant during the year may need to be added to the ballot. The Board of Fire Commissioner must make certain that an office which becomes vacant on October 1st or before is placed on the ballot for the December election regardless of whether a person has been appointed to fill the vacancy.

FIRE DISTRICT ELECTION SCHEDULE 2025

October 9th, 2025

Last day to adopt resolution permitting absentee ballots at the Annual Election. Absentee ballots are optional for fire districts. If previously approved, does not have to be redone.

October 24th, 2025

Request County Board of Elections to provide a list of registered voters as of November 17th and to provide the list to the district by November 18th and order voting machines or other equipment and telephone coverage for the night of the election, if desired and available.

October 30th, 2025

Last day to adopt resolutions designating Fire District Board of Elections, including Chairman and Election Inspectors and/or Ballot Clerks, fixing compensation of the individual members of the District Board of Elections

November 5th - 12th, 2025

Publish Notice of Election (and publicly post) in district newspaper stating the date, place and hours of election; listing offices and propositions, if any, on the ballot; whether candidate petitions are required; the last day for voter registration; the procedure for absentee ballots, if any, and optionally designating the date(s) on which the Inspectors of Election will meet to prepare the register, where the meeting will be held, and the hours of such meeting.

November 17th, 2025

Last day to register at County Board of Elections to be Eligible to vote on December 9th, 2025 in Annual District Election.

November 18th, 2025

County Board of Elections to mail lists of registered voters to Fire District Secretary.

November 19th, 2025

Last day to file petitions for candidates for office, if required, or notify secretary in writing of intent to run for office if petition not required.

November 20th, 2025

If absentee voting is permitted, mail absentee ballots to any registered voter whose registration record is marked "permanently disabled" on receipt of list from County Board of Elections. Ballot must be finalized to complete this task.

November 19th - November 24th , 2025

Post Notice of Election on district website and signboard, if any, at least 15, but not more than 20 days before date of election. Remains on website until December 9th, 2025.

November 19th - November 24th , 2025

Copy of Notice of Election to town clerk for posting on municipal website, if any, bulletin board and signboard, if any, at least 15, but not more than 20 days before date of election.

These notices [for websites, signboards and bulletin boards] must include time and place of election, officers to be elected, term of office and any other details regarding matters to be voted on as well as hours of polls being open for balloting. Suggest using regular Notice of Election published in district newspaper.

November 24th, 2025

Suggested meeting date for Fire District Board of Elections to prepare register. Can be any other date you choose after receiving registration books.

December 2nd, 2025

If absentee voting is permitted, last day to receive application for absentee ballot if the ballot is to be mailed

December 8th, 2025

Last day to receive application for absentee ballots if it is delivered personally to the voter or his/her agent.

December 9th, 2025

Election Day- 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. minimum may be additional consecutive hours prior to 6:00 p.m.

December 12th , 2025

File results (Canvass of Election) with Town Clerk.

December 16th, 2025

Secretary to deliver a report to the County Board of Elections indicating the persons on the list of registered voters labeled "inactive" who voted at the fire district election.

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

You know you're getting old, when you barely do anything all day...but still need a nap to continue to do barely anything.

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

None at this time that we are aware of.

CAFDA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**OFFICERS**

President, Tom Rinaldi, Commissioner, Stillwater Fire District

1st Vice President, John Meehan, Commissioner West Crescent Fire District

2nd Vice President, Ellen Martin, Deputy Treasurer Clifton Park Fire District

DIRECTORS:

Les Bonesteel Commissioner Burnt Hills/Saratoga,

Fred Richards Commissioner Harmony Corners/Saratoga,

Joyce Petkus Treasurer Greenfield/Saratoga,

Ed Woehrle Commissioner Niskayuna #1/Schenectady

Art Hunsinger, Ex-Officio Member Clifton Park Fire District

APPOINTEES

Secretary Molly Jenkins, Region 1 Director, Assoc of Fire Districts, NYS

Treasurer: Tony Hill

Sargent at Arms: Tom Wood, Commissioner, Northumberland Fire District

Chaplain: Fred Richards, Commissioner, Harmony Corners Fire District

Legal Counsel: Greg Serio, Safety Officer, Verdoy Fire District

The Capital Area Association represents any fire district that wishes to join CAFDA. Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, and Deputy Treasurers. Secretaries and Chiefs are also invited to participate!

Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence should be mailed to:

CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063

[EMAIL TREASURER: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET](mailto:TREASURER@CAFDA.NET)

518-407-5020

[EMAIL SECRETARY: SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET](mailto:SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET)

Long Way to Travel? Zoom into the General Membership Meetings!

It's our desire that every member fire 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.

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Business Partner Applications Available At: WWW.CAFDA.NET

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

We want to thank all of our Business Partners for renewing their partnership for 2025. You are invited to our monthly membership meeting and to any of our social events..

FIRE SERVICE LEGAL SERVICES



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*The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over **650+** subscribed fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis. This is a service of CAFDA through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at tom@rinaldi1.com for comments and content contributions are always welcome.*

BECOME A MEMBER OF CAFDA!

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 CAFDA.NET website. Individual membership fee will be \$50 annually, fire district association fees will be \$300 annually. Download THE APPLICATION available on the home page at CAFDA.NET

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION (CAFDA)

Would you like to join Capital Area Fire Districts Association along with 100 members in 14 counties? Individuals, fire district associations, fire protection districts and Village departments are all eligible for membership. Annual dues (January 1st to December 31st) shall be as follows and shall be based on the annual budget of the Fire District/Organization;

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

Individuals \$50.00 or Other County or Regional Associations \$300 annually.
Business Partners: \$100.00 annual member fee

If You, Your Fire District or Department is not a Member of CAFDA You Can be?

Individuals can be members of CAFDA. The annual membership fee is \$50, which will provide you access to this Bulletin, attendance at meetings and social gatherings. Provides networking with other fire district officials and a source of the constant barrage of information related to today's fire service.

FOR A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR A BUSINESS PARTNER APPLICATION GO TO THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://cafda.net/membership-info/>

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

SAVE THE DATES!

CAFDA has been busy, and 2025 is shaping up to be a great year!

COMMISSIONER TRAINING

AVERILL PARK FIRE DISTRICT	Saturday, February 1, 2025 — Snow Date: Sunday, February 2, 2025
CLIFTON PARK FIRE DISTRICT	Saturday, March 1, 2025 — Snow Date: Sunday, March 2, 2025
BERKSHIRE FIRE DISTRICT	Saturday, March 29, 2025 — Snow Date: Sunday, March 30, 2025
WARRENSBURG FIRE DISTRICT	Saturday, April 5, 2025 — Snow Date: Sunday, April 6, 2025

OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

FINANCIAL TRAINING FOR FIRE DISTRICT OFFICIALS	Fulton Montgomery Community College — Thurs-Fri. March 13-14, 2025 — 2805 State Hgwy. 67, Johnstown
FINANCIAL TRAINING FOR FIRE DISTRICT OFFICIALS	Brighton Fire District — Tues-Wed. March 25-26, 2025 — 3100 East Avenue, Rochester
CAFDA CONFERENCE	Fort William Henry Hotel & Conference Center, Lake George — Thurs-Sat. April 10-12, 2025
ANNUAL FALL SEMINAR	Verdoy Fire District — Saturday, November 1, 2025 — 988 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham

SOCIAL EVENTS

OFFICER INSTALLATION DINNER	Century House, Latham — Saturday, March 8, 2025
ANNUAL DAY AT THE RACES!	Saratoga Race Course, Saratoga Springs — Friday, August 8, 2025

MEETINGS – CLIFTON PARK FIRE DISTRICT & ZOOM

General Membership Meeting	Saturday, January 4, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, February 13, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Wednesday March 5, 2025
Board of Directors Meeting	Thursday, April 3, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, May 8, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, June 12, 2025
Board of Directors Meeting	Thursday, August 14, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, September 11, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, October 9, 2025
General Membership Meeting	Thursday, November 13, 2025



OSHA INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

PROVIDED AS A SERVICE FROM THE CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICT'S
ASSOCIATION - CAFDA

NEWEST INFORMATION ALWAYS AT THE TOP WITH RED ARROW

By Dave Denniston NVFC OSHA 1910.156 Taskforce Chair

The NVFC continues to meet with the IAFC and IAFF as we wait for next steps from the Department of Labor and OSHA. There have been significant changes in leadership at these organizations. We are under the belief that they continue to digest the large volume of information and feedback offered during the process and are modifying the proposed standard into something that is much more agreeable. The proposed standard as written does not work for anyone, volunteer, combination, or career departments. All three organizations agree significant changes are needed from the proposal. *We anticipate that they will craft a new standard that is technically and economically feasible using what is referred to as logical outgrowth from the process.* The representatives from the IAFC, NVFC, and IAFF all agree that the best of all worlds would be to remove the NFPA standards by reference, bring a lot of the regulations back to the control of the home state and authority having jurisdiction, and make logical requirements that will help protect our first responders. We continue to monitor progress and are ready to pursue the next steps if the process does not yield a document that we can all live with. *We have also voiced our opposition to a pure exemption of volunteer firefighters as we feel that the move would be counterproductive and further divide the two major factions of our emergency services.* We have long fought for parity in items such as presumptive heart, cancer coverage, workers compensation benefits, equal representation, and firefighter safety. To simply exempt the volunteer fire service would be a huge disservice to these initiatives and leave combination departments in an extremely awkward, if not unmanageable situation. It would also be extremely difficult for municipalities to manage with two different sets of rules.

The three organizations are also hard at work building resources to support emergency services organizations moving forward. These resources include training, sample emergency action plans, risk management plans, community assessment forms, sample policies, and advocacy materials. The right tools will aid everything from a small rural volunteer department with a \$50K budget all the way up to the large municipal all-career city department, and everything in-between. We are very excited by the working relationship being built by these national organizations and all involved in the process feel we are seeing ground-breaking results. If you have any questions or concerns about the process, we encourage you to reach out and get involved in the discussions. I can be reached at 607-423-1636 or ddenniston@afdsny.org. By working together, we can help build a fire service that will serve us well for years to come.

[Link to Dave Denniston's Article Re: OSHA in the NYSAFC News](https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/blog_home.asp?Display=147)

https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/blog_home.asp?Display=147