Capital Area Fire District's Association
THE WEEKLY CAFDA
BULLETIN
July 12th, 2025
Editor, Tom Rinaldi, Tom@rinaldi1.com
Serving the fire service community since 2004

CAPITAL SHORTS:

- FASNY offers a valuable benefit to student volunteers through the Higher Education Learning Plan (FASNY HELP). This program provides up to 100% tuition reimbursement (up to $1,500 per semester) for active volunteer firefighters attending a New York State college or taking online courses through Empire State College. Students in any field of study are eligible. Participation is limited to 100 students per semester on a first-come, first-served basis. The next deadline to apply is October 15.
- Saratoga Springs City fire Chief Joseph Dolan, who spent more than two years on administrative leave after being accused of misconduct for getting paid by the city at the same time he was getting paid by the state, has been reinstated. Aaron Dyer, who has served as acting chief since Dolan was on leave, said he returns to his position as assistant chief.

STUFF FOR YOUR BENEFIT, NEED TO KNOW! WWW.CAFDA.NET

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

Day at the Races Friday August 8th, lunch, snacks, permitted beverages included 11;00 am entry, tickets at "will call"

SAVE THE DATE: CAFDA FALL TRAINING SEMINAR, Saturday November 1st at Verdoy 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:**
CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063 or EMAIL: SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET
Financial issues should be addressed to: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET

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

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

THE LATEST FROM THE STATE CAPITAL

Legislative Commentary

In the words of the State Comptroller, "As is often the case in New York, a broken legislative process paired with misguided priorities yielded little of merit during this legislative session. It seems the 2025 session will likely be remembered more for an obvious lack of productivity and missed opportunities than anything else. New Yorkers deserve thoughtful action but were instead met with political theater and half-measures."
The following are the major accomplishments of the fire service in the state, less than stellar through no fault of our lobbyists or those who stated our case, but rather that lack of attention of our majority who have much different priorities no matter how much they drool all over us or say how much they need us. They are clueless and could care less.

- EMS Billing has been extended 5 more years, provisioned in the Budget Bill.
- S688A/A5619A The property tax break has been amended, to *permit* municipalities to adopt a local law or ordinance to allow unremarried spouses of volunteer firefighters or volunteer ambulance workers with between two and five years of service, who are killed in the line of duty, to continue receiving pre-existing property tax exemptions.
- S8011/A8275 & S7852/A8276 The Heart and Lung bills passed in both chambers and have both been extended for another 5 years to 2030.
- S8409/A8657 statewide volunteer firefighter/ambulance worker property tax exemption intended to replace the numerous local bills authorizing such exemptions in various localities. Chapter 670 sets those local exemption bills to expire in 2025. This bill extends the local bills until 2028 to allow municipalities that have not adopted a local law to replace them.
- S779/A596 increases the number of members on the state fire prevention and building code council from sixteen to seventeen with the addition of the commissioner of agriculture.
- S4157/A112 repeals section 3403 of the insurance law relating to anti-arson applications. Recognizing that the reason that this law was originally enacted no longer exists.
- S31/A34 requires the thruway authority to issue emergency services permits to ambulance and fire vehicles, which would exempt such vehicles from paying tolls while engaged in an emergency operation**.**
- S4328/A3343 permits a municipality to enact, adopt, or enforce any ordinance, resolution, or regulation permitting the imposition of fines on alarm system companies solely for false alarms resulting from deficiencies in the alarm system, errors by the alarm system company, or mistakes made by the central monitoring station.
- S1515/A2177A the purpose of this legislation is to remove emergency medical services from the tax cap for local municipalities in order to support local ems services.
- S2703/A3790 Requires that a written report be submitted to the governor and legislature, on or before February fifteenth of each year, on firefighter training activities. Such report shall include at least the following information: the minimum training hours allocated on a county-by-county basis, the training hours requested by each county, any unfulfilled training hour requests, [and] the number of hours used by each county on a county-by-county basis, and a statewide total of the number of hours allocated to each firefighter. *Such report shall also identify the fire department or district providing the training including the number of hours of training and the type of training for each firefighter. In addition, such report shall also list the names of those firefighters qualified to do interior firefighting*. The written report shall be prominently posted on the division of homeland security and emergency services website no later than March first of each year.
- S2748/A8485 this legislation will establish a statewide program where veterans or discharged military personnel are encouraged to volunteer ("vets to vollies") in their local fire department or ems agency.
- S801/A2400 this chapter amendment requires the state fire prevention and building code council to promulgate standards that would require new buildings with new parking to have electric vehicle charging infrastructure and charging stations.
- S737/A440 changes instances of the term moped to limited use motorcycle in relation to lithium-ion battery safety**.**
- S5848/A247 requires the state fire administrator to make available a specialized electric vehicle emergency response training program**.**
- S73/A4641A to provide for the safe collection and disposal of damaged or defective batteries collected by retailers and by government agencies and provides that a battery manufacturer may not sell, offer for sale, or distribute rechargeable batteries in the state unless they are implementing or participating under an approved plan.
- S7501/A8086A establishes an emergency medical services local planning process to provide for counties, cities, towns, and villages to develop a comprehensive plan to provide for a coordinated emergency medical services within their counties.

Note that most of the bills that have passed both chambers now have to go to the Governor's office for signature. Continue to monitor the ScoreCard for updates. **Now that the legislature is out of session, the ScoreCard will be reviewed for activity monthly.**

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON

Nothing new to report this week.

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCES

Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

Phone: (518) 474-4037; Email: localgov@osc.ny.gov
Address: Office of the State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability
110 State Street, 12th Floor; Albany, NY 12236

Former Marbletown Fire Chief Pleads Guilty in Connection With $100K Theft From the Department

State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, Wayne County District Attorney Christine Callanan and New York State Police Superintendent Steven G. James announced that William Storrs, a former fire chief and treasurer, pleaded guilty in connection with the theft of more than $101,000 from the Marbletown Volunteer Fire Department in Newark, New York.

DiNapoli's office launched a joint investigation into the Marbletown Fire Department with the New York State Police in 2024 looking into allegations of theft. They found Storrs used his position as treasurer and then later as chief to steal $101,000 over four years. From January 2020 to July 2024, he made numerous personal purchases with the fire department's debit cards and made direct payments from the department's bank accounts to his personal accounts. He also made payments to his wife's credit card and purchased items from various retailers.

The theft was discovered when a member of the fire department attempted to make a purchase with the department's debit card and it was declined due to lack of funds. Fire department officials then reported the unauthorized activity to the State Police. In July 2024, Storrs was replaced as chief and suspended from the fire department.

Storrs pleaded guilty to attempted grand larceny in the second degree before Judge Richard M. Heaty. He is due back in court for sentencing on Sept. 3.

STEP INTO THE CHIEF'S OFFICE

***When In Command, Be In Command: Owning The IC Role*

Brycen Garrison

As a young officer, one of the most important lessons I learned was simple in theory but hard in practice: *When you're in charge, you have to be in charge.* That principle extends from the fireground to the drill ground and into every facet of the job where incident command is exercised.

While there are many contexts where collaborative leadership styles are valuable, the fireground demands a clear, confident and decisive leader. At critical moments, there is no room for ambiguity — the IC must direct, decide and deliver.

The bugles on your collar aren't just symbols, they're a commitment. They represent accountability, leadership, and the weight of responsibility that comes with every decision, every command and every outcome.

THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE INCIDENT COMMANDER

The incident commander operates at the strategic level. While they may be aware of tactics and cognizant of tasks, their focus should be on overarching objectives — offensive vs. defensive posture, rescue profile

priorities, extinguishment goals, and situational adaptability across various incident types. Whether it's a hazmat spill, a structure fire or a technical rescue, the IC's job is to align resources to the needs of the incident. Every scene unfolds differently. Some escalate rapidly and remain prolonged; others peak and subside within minutes. A good IC must not only react but also forecast, anticipating the evolution of the incident before it happens.

COMMAND PRESENCE: BUILT, NOT FAKED

Command presence is essential — and it's not something you can fake. It's forged over time through realistic training, firsthand experience and reflection. This presence isn't just about barking orders; it's about seeing the problems on the horizon before they materialize. Predictive capability, built from experience, inspires trust. Firefighters will risk a lot for a rescue, but they want to know someone is managing the scene who has their back, understands their strengths and limits, and applies risk appropriately. Leadership without trust is dangerous. Good ICs keep crews out of trouble or at least make sure the risk is matched to the reward.

FROM TACTICS TO TASKS: DELEGATION WITH PURPOSE

While strategy is the IC's domain, tactics come next — identifying what needs to be done and assigning resources accordingly. Whether assigning a line to floor two or directing ventilation, the IC's clarity drives action.

There's debate in the fire service about whether tasks should be assigned automatically via standard operating procedures or directed on scene. Both approaches are practiced nationally, and each has its place depending on culture and need. The important point is this: Whatever the approach, the IC owns the outcome.

TRAINING: THE FOUNDATION OF EFFECTIVE COMMAND

Training is where command is built. It's where we simulate failure and success in a controlled environment. But for training to work, it must be realistic, actionable and continuous.

Training divisions should assess real incident trends within the department's service area and design evolutions that directly prepare crews for the challenges they're likely to face. Piloting training with one or two companies before rolling it out department-wide allows for refinement and relevancy.

After each session, a lessons learned debrief should be shared across the department, so that firefighters walk into training prepared, confident and set up for success, not failure.

KNOW YOUR PEOPLE, BUILD YOUR TEAM

An IC isn't just an operational overseer, they're a team builder. Knowing your people — how they work, where they struggle and how they fit into the team — gives you insight that pays off on the fire ground. Preparation doesn't start with tones dropping; it starts with intentional engagement in the station, at drills and through mentorship. Great ICs don't just lead in the moment, they invest in their teams well before the incident ever occurs.

DYNAMIC DECISION-MAKING AND ADAPTABILITY

Incident command isn't one-size-fits-all. It's situationally dependent. A good IC assesses scene access, resource needs and unconventional tactics (e.g., a horizontal standpipe) and applies all of it in real time. This includes recognizing when a firefighter's lack of years or experience may call for reassignment, not because of incompetence, but to avoid overextension in an unfamiliar challenge. That's not micromanagement, that's leadership.

POST-INCIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES: IT'S NOT OVER WHEN THE FIRE'S OUT

The IC's job doesn't end with incident stabilization. In fact, the post-incident phase often carries the heaviest lift.

From arranging after-action reviews to coordinating property protection, temporary housing and support for displaced civilians, it's the IC who ensures these critical pieces get handled. Whether you're the second, third or fourth-due officer assuming command, the responsibility for the incident's closure — and its follow-through — rests on your shoulders.

But perhaps most importantly, the IC must check in on the well-being of their people post-event. That includes ensuring all personnel are free of injury and emotionally steady enough to return to work, especially after a

high-stress or high-stakes incident. Physical safety is paramount but so is mental and emotional health. It's the leader's duty to verify that no unseen wounds linger, either in the body or the mind.

THE FULL SPECTRUM OF COMMAND

Being in command is more than directing radio traffic on a fireground. It's preparing before the call, leading through the chaos, and ensuring that what comes after is as strong as what came before. It's building confidence in your people. It's training hard. It's leading with presence, not pretense. It's earning trust before asking for it. And it's knowing that when you're in command, you need to *be* in command.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Former Sturgis Fire Chief Indicted For Alleged Misappropriation Of Funds

Jana Garrett

Attorney General Russell Coleman and Commonwealth's Attorney for the 5th Judicial Circuit Zac Greenwell announced that joint action by their offices resulted in the indictment of a former public official in western Kentucky.

Officials say a Union County Grand Jury indicted Chad Cullen, 41, of Sturgis, on one count of Abuse of Public Trust. According to the indictment, between January 2022 and December 2024, Cullen, who was serving as the Sturgis Fire Chief, allegedly pocketed tens of thousands of dollars from the department. According to court documents, he allegedly failed to make deposits, instead allegedly using the department's funds for "personal purchases and non-authorized expenditures." The indictment alleged Cullen stole more than $50,000 during that three year period.

Officials say detectives with the Attorney General's Department of Criminal Investigations (DCI) investigated the case. Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Wes Hunt, who serves Crittenden, Union and Webster counties, presented the case to the Grand Jury on behalf of the state of Kentucky.

Former Sardis Fire Department Official Pleads Guilty To Embezzlement

Rose Johnson

Mississippi State Auditor Shad White announced that the former Sardis Fire Department Secretary and Treasurer pleaded guilty to one count of embezzlement of public funds.

William Clark provided falsified emergency response numbers to get funds to which he was not entitled.

"We will continue to hold the line on misuse of your tax dollars, big or small. This is how we've been able to recover more money in the last seven years than any other seven-year period in the history of the Auditor's office."

State Auditor Shad White

Clark was prosecuted by the Panola County Circuit Court.

He was sentenced to ten years of post-release supervision and ordered to pay $1,100 in fines and $7,525.00 in restitution.

Webinar: Fire Apparatus Operator Liability

Join Curt Varone as he examines litigation data and raises awareness on criminal charges brought against fire apparatus operator.

Date: Tuesday, August 5, 2025

Time: 1:00 PM

Duration: 1 Hour

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

https://endeavor.dragonforms.com/loading.do?omedasite=FH_WC_VectorSolutions_08052025

A certificate of attendance will be offered.

Operating emergency vehicles is one of the biggest areas of fire service liability. This webinar will focus on lawsuits brought against fire departments and firefighters personally for apparatus accidents. Fire chief and attorney Curt Varone will also examine the most common criminal charges brought against apparatus operators, including manslaughter, reckless driving, DUI, speeding, and red light/stop sign violations — the

factors which are often overlooked in apparatus crashes. Whether you're an engineer, on the promotion list or an officer/chief, this session will review litigation data and examine numerous case studies to help you understand the important issues you could face the next time the bells ring and how to prevent them. Bring your questions to the live session on Aug. 5

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

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Application Period Now Open for the DripDrop Hydration Giveback Campaign

The application period for the 2025 DripDrop Hydration Giveback Campaign is now open. For the sixth year, DripDrop has partnered with the NVFC to donate 200,000 electrolyte sticks to help volunteer fire departments keep their responders safe and hydrated during wildfires, extreme heat, long incidents, and more. A total of 1,000 departments will each receive 2 cases (200 sticks) of DripDrop electrolyte powder. At least one member of the department must be an active member of the NVFC. The application period closes at 8pm ET on July 22. **Read article**.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

Dry Ice May Have Caused Houston Couple's Death

Houston police believe a couple who was found dead in their wine cellar may have died after leaving dry ice out. Firefighters and police were called to the home in the River Oaks neighborhood after neighbors called 9-1-1. When firefighters went to investigate, they noticed a chemical smell and retrieved their SCBA, which allowed them to search the home where they found the man and woman deceased. "There was dry ice being stored in the wine cellar," Police Lt. Larry Crowson told KHOU.com. "When dry ice melts, it turns into carbon dioxide (gas). Unfortunately, it appears the two people who went into the wine cellar were overcome." Evidentially the couple were not aware that dry ice was frozen Carbin Dioxide which displaces oxygen.

Fire Tech Brief: 5 Things to Know Before Starting a Fire Department Drone Program

Jason Moore

For a lot of departments, discussions of adding technology often leads to the low hanging fruit of adding a drone or starting an Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) program. While this is quickly growing beyond simple reconnaissance/search and rescue applications to the use of drones as responders, taking the time to rigorously evaluate your program before it ever launches is key to success. At a minimum, take a look and consider these five things you need to know before you start a drone program or purchase any equipment.

WHY DO YOU NEED A DRONE PROGRAM?

Every good program begins with asking the simplest of questions…why? Departments that fail to ask this question and then ensure the answer is aligned with their mission, vision, and values often find themselves in unsustainable and costly situations, sometimes wasting taxpayer's funding. When talking to the leading experts on the UAS Task Force for the International Association of Fire Chief's Technology Council, they indicated that all to often a department has end-of-year money to spend and they will buy a drone. This leads to building a program around the equipment they bought instead of getting what they really needed.

Stopping to ask "why" will identify key elements that will guide the purchasing process and drone program development. Also, know that like all technical competencies you often must crawl before you walk or run. That means almost no fire department is going to go from no drone program to having drones deliver payloads

such as life preservers or AEDs in quick order. If you know the end goal of where you want the program to be, you can often make smarter decisions on equipment platforms that, in many cases, have add-ons to increase operational capabilities.

CREATING POLICIES TO GUIDE

Public safety drones are not the toys you buy in a store and often there are serious considerations for use that need to be addressed prior to ever putting a drone in the air. Beyond being a significant investment, they also cross into federal regulations through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Departments need to consider who is authorized to place a drone in service, what conditions it will operate, what agencies it will assist (especially when crossing into law enforcement operations), and what mission it will serve.

Since most drones have the ability to capture and store images, video, and telemetric data, they enter the realm of public data. Policies governing the collection and use of data in addition to data retention and dissemination will help prevent a department from crossing legal lines that could prove to be extremely costly. As a final consideration, it is also good to review the department's insurance policies to ensure potential damage caused by a wayward drone is going to be covered. Public input on policies is also an effective way to engage with our residents to improve community acceptance of what is essentially a surveillance device.

Ultimately, good policies are also a foundation for safe operations. There are too many lessons learned related to a lack of policies, do not add to the list of departments that are under negative attention for what was supposed to be an innovative addition to the services provided to help the community.

PILOT STANDARDS

There are two paths to becoming a certified remote pilot. According to the FAA, there are first-time pilots and existing (Part 61 certificate holders). Eligibility for first-time pilots includes:

- Must be at least 16 years old (important if you have Explorers)
- Be able to read, speak, write, and understand English
- Be in a physical and mental condition to safely fly a drone
- Pass the initial aeronautical knowledge exam (Unmanned Aircraft General – Small)
- Eligibility for existing pilots includes:
    - Must hold a pilot certificate issued under 14 CFR Part 61
    - Must have completed a flight review within the previous 24 months

For complete details check these details on how to become a certificated remote pilot. Just like when hunting or fishing in most states, you better make sure the UAS pilot has their remote pilot certificate available while flying.

TRAINING BEYOND PART 107

Throughout my career I hated the ideal of minimum training standards, which is essentially one step up from incompetence. When it comes to operating a public safety drone, there are often high-stress and high-risk incidents that require the pilot to be well beyond the minimum training standards. At a minimum completing a "Part 107 training course" is the initial training to get a pilot to the starting line of being able to operate a drone.

Depending on the mission scope, there are a growing number of strategies and tactic courses that will help a pilot identify best practices, common approaches, and safety considerations for each incident type. Additionally, after seven years of arduous work and lobbying there are finally courses at the National Fire Academy with the first offering currently accepting enrollment until July 7, 2025. NFA A-450 (Basic Remote Pilot) and NFA S-373 (Incident Operations) are groundbreaking train-the-trainer programs meant to exponentially expand the ability to provide this training for future pilots. Contact Jeff Pricher or Logan Davis for more information, or apply with this form.

ANNUAL & ONGOING EXPENSES

As an often end of year surplus expense, departments often fail to research the annual and ongoing expenses of a drone program. Beyond general maintenance considerations, which should always be considered with every fire department equipment purchase, there are increasing demands for maintaining FAA records, storing video footage (server space), the potential need for specialized software to track flight logs/hours, and streaming software subscriptions. This is on top of annual training requirements for pilots, repairs to the

equipment from potential mishaps, increases in department insurance costs, and add-ons to the aerial platform to expand capabilities.

CONCLUSION

After reading this article, some of you may be second guessing your decision to pursue a drone program. However, like other areas of the fire service, this is not a journey you need to complete on your own. There are links throughout the article for resources that are more than willing to help you succeed and there are several departments that have a robotics group or division due to the value that drones add to the department. If anything, I hope reviewing these five things to know before starting a drone program encourages you to build it properly so it can benefit your community for years to come.

Fire Departments being Sucked into the Political Jousting

BRENTWOOD, N.Y. — Fire chiefs are pushing back against Assemblyman Phil Ramos after he protested ICE's use of a Long Island firehouse parking lot.

The protest, held on July 6, followed a July 3 incident in which ICE agents staged at the Brentwood Fire Department's Broadway location, which is in a predominantly Latino neighborhood, **Patch.com** reported.

After a video allegedly showing ICE agents at the fire department began circulating online, State Sen. Monica Martinez confirmed their presence on Friday, stating, "I have received several calls from constituents voicing their concerns regarding the reported presence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) personnel at one of the Brentwood firehouses."

In response to Ramos speaking at the July 6 protest on department property, the East Brentwood Fire Department revoked his "honorary chief" title. Patch reached out to both Ramos and the East Brentwood Fire Department for comment, but neither was immediately available.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

'I Saw You On Tiktok': The Fire Service Recruitment Strategy No One Is Talking About

Rachel Engel

The days of receiving a stack of applications for one open position on a fire department are gone.

From the Great Resignation to inflation, coupled with the challenges brought by the pandemic and civil unrest, the fire service is reaching a crisis point when it comes to recruitment.

Traditional tactics, even out-of-the-box ideas, are not reaching what should be a department's target audience: young people. Up-and-comers. The new generation of fire recruits.

So, where are they? And how do you reach them?

Welcome to TikTok

With the oldest millennials now turning 40, most new fire recruits will come from Generation Z, who are currently 26 or younger. People of this generation are unlikely to see your department's Facebook post about open positions, as the percentage of Gen Z teens using Facebook dropped from 71% in 2015 to 32% today.

However, while Gen Z may not be on Facebook, they are on TikTok – and if you're dismissively rolling your eyes at the mention of the newest social platform, you can take comfort in the fact that you're not alone. Sacramento (California) Fire Department Captain Keith Wade was also skeptical when it came to incorporating the app into their department's arsenal of recruitment tools.

"I'm 46 years old, married with three kids; I didn't know anything about TikTok," admitted Wade, who also serves as the department's public information officer (PIO). "I envisioned it as people dancing and singing. I'm like, 'What is this going to do for us?'"

But Wendy Aguilar, a professional storyteller hired by the department as a media and communications specialist, saw the app's potential. Just a few months after she started the **@sacramentofire TikTok account**, they had their first viral video – a fire safety clip reminding viewers to never re-enter a burning home.

"That video has been viewed 8.5 million times," Aguilar said. "It doesn't matter if it's somebody in our community [who sees it] – anyone in the country or the world can benefit from hearing that message. That's when we knew we had something with our TikTok account."

'I SAW YOU ON TIKTOK'

While SFD's safety video was able to reach a global digital audience, it was just the beginning of their TikTok engagement strategy. As Aguilar shared videos of promotion ceremonies, helmet cam footage from fireground operations, and the always-popular animal rescue videos, the views and comments began racking up – and this time, they were local.

- "Can't wait to get my firefighter 1 certificate and join the Sac fire dept much respect for all those that are currently in the force"
- "This is so cool! I live in Sac and had no idea you guys were on TikTok!
- "Can you make a video about life at the department? Like a daily routine of sorts?"

Aguilar was rapidly replying to fans with encouraging updates, while also sharing the recruiting link for SFD. Eventually, their digital promotion yielded real-life results, which shocked Wade.

"We've had people show up at recruitment events and say, 'I saw you on TikTok,'" he said. "It was hard for me to fathom a bit. Like, that's how you're arriving at our doorstep? But it's a testament to this new generation. If you're not on these types of platforms, you are somewhat archaic. You have to get with the times."

It's an area the fire service must make a priority like it has with other issues that needed an updated approach in the modern era.

"We're doing a good job across the nation with cancer prevention and working on how we can do a better job on response times and keeping our firefighters safe," he said. "But in recruitment, you have to stay relevant as well. How do you keep it moving and meet new benchmarks?"

'WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?' IN SACRAMENTO

One of the reasons Aguilar and Wade believe the SFD TikTok account has seen so much success is due in part to the contrast in their perspectives. Aguilar, as someone without any prior experience in the fire service, is looking at every aspect of the industry as an outsider, as opposed to someone on the inside, like Wade.

"It's kind of a unique dance that we're doing," Aguilar said, "because he knows the feel and the look of the fire service, whereas I'm here with the curious mind of what people in the outside world may be interested in."

Case in point: SFD's "What's for lunch?" TikTok series, which was inspired after the first time Aguilar ate a meal at the firehouse; she knew immediately it was something the public would be interested in.

"… Everybody's cooking, coming together at the table, they're breaking bread together and having these conversations about their day," she said. "They really are building a community that's kind of like their family. For me, I thought, 'If I would've known this about the fire service, that would've made me want to join, just for the family environment of it.'"

So, she captured that dynamic on video, talking with firefighters at the station about what they're making, and getting footage of the collaborative cooking process as members talk amongst themselves.

"It blew up," she recalled. "People absolutely loved it."

The series has become something of a competition between stations, Aguilar said, as crews try to outdo each other with elaborate meals in the hopes of attracting the most views.

There has been pushback from some crewmembers who don't like the idea of showcasing firefighters at the station, but Aguilar underscored that it's a part of the whole package of being in the fire service.

"They want to be seen as firefighters running into burning buildings, with big flames and a lot going on," said Aguilar, adding that focusing on who firefighters are after the flames have been doused and turnout gear put away is what completes the picture of the profession.

"We've really done a good mix of both. You get to see what they do for the work they do, but also that family environment where they are just people, like everybody else," Aguilar said. "As a storyteller, that's the way we connect. It's about people. It's about who we are at the very core."

It's that insight from Aguilar that makes it work, Wade says.

"That's where I was really missing the mark. I was sitting there going, 'Well, I don't care where Bill came from, I want to talk about this incident,'" he said. "What I didn't see and now I totally get, is that Bill has a story. Bill arrived here somehow and that can empower people to think, 'Oh, I'm just like Bill. I grew up like Bill did, and now I can be a firefighter, too.'"

FIREFIGHTERS AS SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS?

Yes, the idea of firefighters as influencers may make you chuckle, but in 2022, it's a logical step to modern recruitment, as well as overall community engagement. A viral safety video or an animal rescue video that strikes an emotional nerve can bring awareness to the fire service and your particular department

"Animal rescues are my absolute favorite stories to write," Aguilar said. "I feel like I'm writing a children's book every time. And Loki was the first one that really went viral for us."

Loki, an abandoned pit bull puppy who was found with burned plastic on his body at a fire scene, garnered more than 600,000 views in his introduction video, which was set to the tune of "You've Got a Friend in Me" from Disney's Toy Story.

Viewers on TikTok followed Loki's story as he was given a name and fostered by one of the firefighters, who eventually adopted him.

When one of SFD's viral TikToks highlighting the rescue made its way to the local news station, news crews were quick to make a trip to the firehouse to film their own update on the story, which had already become a local sensation.

"The reach of that story is so massive still, to this day," Aguilar said. "I'll post something on TikTok and [commenters] will say, 'Oh, thank you for saving this family' or whatever the incident is, but then they'll ask, 'Where's Loki? Can you tell us more about Loki?' It is great for us to tell that story and for the community to know that the fire department is here for everyone."

The SFD TikTok team also views the account as an educational tool they can use to give residents more insight into what their local fire department does on a daily basis. On one of the "What's for lunch?" series videos, one commenter posted, "Oh, so that's where my tax dollars are going, to pay for your meals."

Aguilar turned the remark into a civics lesson.

"I asked, 'Hey, people are asking who pays for these meals?' and right away I start recording their answer that they pay for their own meals," she said. "It's a great teaching opportunity."

It's the concern that comments will turn ugly that Wade said holds many fire leaders back from engaging on social media platforms and trying new ways of connecting with the public.

"If you're not open to get out there and take some risks, you aren't going to have a whole lot of successes," he said. "You're going to stay in safe mode all the time. Take some risks, invite conversation, and then just have a plan on how you're going to answer stuff and not shy away from it. You've got to be kind of bold on these types of things."

HOW TO MAKE FIREFIGHTING 'COOL'

For any department, large or small, curious about the possibilities of TikTok, Wade encourages PIOs or whoever disseminates information for the organization to have a discussion with senior leadership about the app's potential.

"They need to have these discussions and really learn what the value is, because a lot of them think it's nonsense and just for fun and zany ridiculous back and forth," Wade said. "But there's real value to these platforms for recruitment and retention."

And that value is being connected to the next generation, according to Aguilar. She recalled a conversation she had with a captain at Sacramento Fire Station 4 who shared a moment between him and his daughter.

"His daughter said, 'Oh my gosh, dad, you guys are so cool. You're on TikTok,'" Aguilar said. "And he said, 'I wasn't cool before because I was a firefighter, but now I'm cool because we're on TikTok.' So, it kind of gives you the idea of where this is going and where the next generation is."

She punctuated the point: "And that's where want to be – wherever the next generation is."

Webinar - Fire Up Your Recruitment Game: Harnessing Digital Tools for Recruitment Success

Thursday Aug. 7 at 2pm ET

Presenter:

Katie Bulla

REGISTER AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wWLe0KGBRyGp4PZ6O5K3cA#/registration

IN 2025 WE HAVE EXPERIENCED 43 FIRE FIGHTER LODD'S

According to FirefighterCloseCalls.com*

In 2024 we experienced 64 LODDs reported nationally.!

*****NIOSH Makes Recommendations after Frederick County, MD, Battalion Chief Killed at Fire***

Susan Nicol

"Tell my family I love them."

Those were the final words of Frederick County Battalion Chief Josh Laird nine minutes after he fell through the floor into a basement of a house on Aug. 11, 2021.

Laird, the officer on the first engine in, told dispatchers: Engine 251 is on-scene, large 3½, 2 ½ – story single family. We do have a working fire. Go ahead and start RIT and tanker task force."

He fell through the floor as he advanced a line into the 5,375 square foot, two-story, colonial-style home with an unfinished basement. Investigators determined his crew had "separated" from him and were peforming other tasks.

Following an investigation, NIOSH investigators determined contributing factors:

- Low frequency/high risk incident
- Incident management system
- Crew integrity
- Initial rapid intervention crew (IRIC)
- Professional development
- *Corrugated stainless-steel tubing (CSST) system*

Following interviews with incident commanders and firefighters as well as listening to communications, NIOSH investigators made several recommendations.

- *For low-frequency, high-risk incidents, fire departments should ensure ICs implement an incident management system that prioritizes personnel accountability and maintains effective incident communications.*
- Fire departments should ensure all companies operating on the fireground maintain crew integrity throughout the incident.
  Companies can:
  - Operate based on the assignment given by the IC
  - Communicate critical incident benchmarks to the IC
  - Deploy to rescue members during the initial stages of an incident
  - Use a thermal imager during the scene size-up and while operating in the hazard zone.
- *Fire department SOPs/SOGs are consistently updated to ensure adequate staffing and professional development opportunities to support skills and competencies to manage Type V and Type IV incidents*. Possible opportunities and activities:
  - Train all firefighters and fire officers in fireground survival procedures
  - Conduct training on rural water supply operations
  - Provide annual proficiency training and evaluation on fireground operations, including live fire training, to all members involved in emergency operations
  - Train all members and dispatchers on the safety features of portable radios including the EAB
  - Train on awareness of CSST and the hazards associated with it

NIOSH investigators also addressed the cause of the fire -- lightning caused the corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) to fail. The flames ignited nearby combustibles. The fire burned for an unknown time before being discovered.

They recommended: "*Governing municipalities (federal, state, regional, and local) should develop and implement legislation which prohibits the use of corrugated stainless-steel tubing in residential, commercial, and industrial structures.*"
Since the fire that claimed the father of two daughters, Sara Laird, his wife, has teamed up with another widow, Celeste Flynn, who lost her husband three years earlier in nearby Howard County, MD.
The two have travelled around the country to promote changes to CSST regulations and the importance of firefighters getting training about basement fires.
The ATF conducted an analysis of the fires that both occurred in unsprinklered large houses with open floor plans.
"ATF personnel utilized engineering analysis methods including field fire testing, large-scale laboratory fire testing, advanced computer fire modeling and electronic data sources to assist with determining the origin and cause of the fire, the route of fire spread throughout the structure and the events that led to the firefighter MAYDAY and LODD," investigators wrote.

DOES'NT HAVE TO BE A FATALITY-JUST A DIBILITATING INJURY, YOU JUST NEVER KNOW!

- Fire Chief Michael Phillips of the Marble Falls Volunteer Fire Department went missing after being swept away by floodwaters while responding to a call in Cow Creek in Travis County, Texas. Chief Phillips was driving an emergency vehicle when he went missing late this morning. The vehicle has been found; however, the Chief has not been found with the vehicle, or anywhere else as of yet. Searches continue.
- An Oklahoma firefighter is recovering after suffering severe burns in a fireworks explosion that injured three people. The explosion occurred when fireworks were being delivered to a Choctaw Nation building. Brad Lewallen, a firefighter at Camp Gruber and Keys Volunteer Fire Department, sustained burns over approximately 70% of his body. Brad remains in intensive care, with concerns about smoke inhalation and lung damage. His wife told the station he will undergo skin graft surgeries twice a week for at least four weeks. Two other individuals, identified as Eli Smith and Cash Collins, both of Vian, were also critically injured in the explosion and remain at a Tulsa burn center.
- The United States Fire Administration announced the line-of-duty death of North Andover Firefighter Jeffrey Deschenes, who died on May 29 after suffering a heart attack following his shift. Deschenes had responded to multiple emergency calls throughout the day. Later that evening, he experienced chest pain and went to the emergency room around 10 p.m.. Despite efforts by medical staff, he could not be resuscitated and was pronounced deceased that night.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- A Walker County (GA) Fire Rescue ladder truck tipped over and caught fire recently. Georgia State Patrol (GSP) cited the driver of the apparatus, a mechanic, for not having the proper license to drive the rig. The driver and his supervisor were fired after the crash, the news report said. *The truck has liability only insurance.*
- A Waynesville (MO) fire truck suffered a right front tire blowout, resulting in minor injuries. Waynesville Rural Fire Protection District confirmed that the heavy rescue exited the roadway and went up an embankment after the blowout where it struck a highway sign causing the windshield to shatter and resulted in significant damage to the fire apparatus.
- A fire truck overturned Thursday, closing down a North Las Vegas roadway and covering the street in an unknown substance. That engine, police said, had been responding to a house fire. Three firefighters were injured in the crash. Police described their injuries as “minor,” and they were taken to an area hospital for evaluation. Investigators are looking into the details of the crash.
- Four people were hospitalized Thursday afternoon after an ambulance crashed into a home in Mt. Holly, Burlington County, N.J. All of injuries are believed to be non-life-threatening.

BUYING APPARATUS, WHAT YOU NEED TO CONSIDER

Fire Apparatus Supplement 2025: Designing Pump Panels

Tom Shand

During the design and specification process for new pumpers, members often focus on the concepts that are important to them depending on their riding assignments and on-the-job experience. One of the challenges for members who sit on the apparatus committee is to consider all of these concepts without losing focus on the mission of the vehicle. Many of these ideas will appear to benefit the apparatus design, until the initial blueprint is completed and someone on the committee comments on the vehicle dimensions and remarks, "We can't access some points of our first-due area now. How are we going to improve if the new pumper is 33 feet, 9 inches long, with a 212-inch wheelbase?"

Numerous questions must be answered when developing baseline requirements for a new pumper. Depending on the personnel on an apparatus committee, there might be a wide range of interests in what those folks believe is important from an operational perspective. A driver/engineer might focus on interior dash panel layout and windshield visibility. The officer might have concerns about the amount of space on the right side of the cab, the location of the radio and mobile data terminal (MDT) hardware, and access to his forcible entry tools. Crew members might have opinions on the arrangement of rear cab seats, locations of handrails to permit safe access, and the height of crosslay and rear-body attack lines.

Three distinct areas affect a pumper's wheelbase and overall length. Apparatus positioning and placement on the fireground largely depends on the size of the apparatus and of the training and experience of drivers/engineers. If the design of a new pumper appears to be quite large on paper, I can assure you that the rig won't be any smaller or more maneuverable once you take delivery of it.

The size of the cab and the desired seating arrangement affect front-axle-to-rear-of-cab dimensions, ranging from 54–84 inches from most custom chassis builders. The length of the apparatus body depends on the water tank size and the desired compartment configuration and hose load, with this area having the greatest degree of options to accommodate the department's requirements.

After the criteria for the cab and body are determined, the design of the pump panel and the required width to accommodate the pump, intakes, discharges, gauges and instrumentation along with foam systems and components, which must be housed over the pump, all have an effect on the final design. The layout and design of the pump panel is one of the most important pieces of real estate on the apparatus but often is overlooked during the specification and design process.

OPTIONS OTHER THAN STANDARD

Although many manufacturers have a standard pump panel design, to include piping runs and termination points for discharges, the apparatus committee should specify the location of certain pump instrumentation, suction and discharge valve controls, and other components. The pump panel design on a pumper should be laid out in a logical fashion that meets the operational needs and standard operating guidelines of the department.

As a committee reviews pump panel layouts at trade shows or during inspections of different manufacturers' new deliveries, it will become apparent that there are numerous concepts as to how pump panels should be designed. The location of major controls, such as the governor, throttle, tank-to-pump, tank fill and master gauges, often are in different locations, as determined by the manufacturer's engineering staff based on manufacturing efficiencies and predetermined standard locations. Some of these designs might work for your department. However, understand that the layout of the left- and right-side pump panels, along with the piping runs and placement of gauge lines, are based on ease of manufacturing and might not consider a department's desired flow and friction loss through the piping, particularly with large-diameter and rear-body discharges.

The preconstruction conference is the time to review how pump panel gauges, intakes and discharges will be laid out, considering the width of the pump panel and the degree of complexity of the pump system, including foam systems. The department should include requirements with its bid for the successful manufacturer to provide a detailed layout of the pump panel at the preconstruction conference for review and approval. This documentation isn't provided as standard. In some instances, there's a cost to provide this level of detail prior to the start of production.

PUMP PANEL WIDTH

The width of the pump panel affects the wheelbase and overall length of the vehicle and can range from 38–60 inches, depending on the make and model of fire pump, piping arrangement, number of crosslay hosebeds and foam system components. On aerial devices, room for the cradle support also is a factor. Although the concept should be to keep the pump width as compact as possible, consideration should be given to pump access for repairs and maintenance. This can be accomplished in several ways, including by providing removable panels for the left-side panel discharges, a full-height, vertically hinged door on the right side above where the drain valves are positioned, and front access on custom chassis that are equipped with a tilt cab. Depending on the amount of fixed equipment that's used as booster reels, hydraulic generators and electric cable reels are located above the fire pump; removable floors can be provided to gain access to valves and piping.

ELECTRIC VALVE CONTROLLERS

When compared with manual pull rod controls or gear-operated valves, which require straight-line runs from the panel to the valve, the use of electric valve controllers can reduce the size of the pump panel. Depending on which valves are outfitted with electric controllers, consideration should be given to providing access points to manually override the valve in the event of an electrical malfunction.

Although electric valve controllers generally have proven to be reliable, wherever possible, manual controls should be utilized, particularly for tank-to-pump, tank fill and discharges where preconnected lines are utilized.

PEDESTAL-STYLE PUMPS

One current trend is to utilize pedestal-style fire pumps that have compact suction and discharge manifolds. This can shrink the size of the panel and, when combined with electric valve controllers, can require less than half of the space of the traditional pump panel. If this design permits your department to carry more equipment or to reduce the overall length of the apparatus, this design might have some merit.

When evaluating this style of panel design, pay attention to the location of intakes and discharges and their capability to support large-capacity fire flows with multiple large-diameter intakes and a minimum of 4-inch full flow valves and piping for large-diameter-hose discharges.

The position and size of intake and discharge gauges should be given consideration by the committee. Although the apparatus industry largely has standardized on 2½-inch gauges with a pressure range of 30-0-600 psi, master gauges are available in 4½- and 6-inch sizes with different pressure ranges. There is a nominal cost difference to specify the larger 3½-inch gauges, which might be beneficial for a department's operations.

HOSEBEDS' AFFECT

If a department utilizes crosslay or transverse hosebeds, the height from the ground and clear width of each hosebed should be detailed in a specification.

Transverse hosebeds should be no more than 62–64 inches from the ground to permit safe and rapid deployment.

How a department loads attack lines has an effect on how the transverse beds should be arranged, along with the position of the discharge piping. Consider having the transverse bed discharge terminate directly under the respective hosebed, which permits rapid extension of the line when needed and reduces the friction loss in the chiksan swivel.

LARGE-DIAMETER INTAKES

The pump piping and valve size for attack line should be determined based on a department's desired gpm target flows for both small- and large caliber streams. These flow rates and desired pressure loss must be called out in specifications and then verified at the final inspection.

To develop its rated pump capacity, a pumper should be designed with multiple large-diameter intakes to supply the fire pump. Front-, side- and rear-suction inlets should have the capability to control at least two of these intakes from the left-side pump panel area. Using a power-operated valve that has an air bleeder, and manual override enables the pump operator to control the water supply without having to run around the apparatus.

The location and length of attack lines depend on the department's response district and the standard staffing for the engine company. Some departments rely on multiple preconnected attack lines that range in length from 100–400 feet, with static bulk beds or 2½- or 3-inch hose to fill out extended hose lays. If an organization

has a standard attack line complement, this can be integrated easily into the vehicle design. (The dimensions of existing apparatus can be replicated for use on the new rig.)

CONSIDER THE DRIVER/ENGINEER

One of the greatest challenges for an apparatus committee is to determine the desired panel configuration that will meet the operational and training needs of the organization—as opposed to just throwing all of the components into the smallest available space. The engine company driver/engineer has one of the most important jobs on the fireground. *Anything that can be done to make this person's job safer and easier enhances the overall operation greatly to ensure success*.

PUMP PANEL LIGHTING

The pump panel area should have adequate panel lighting to illuminate both the left- and right-side panel areas. This lighting should extend to the top area above the pump, particularly when the unit is equipped with a deck gun or wagon pipe. *Depending on the width and layout of the panel, the manufacturer's standard lighting configuration might not be sufficient to illuminate all of the working area*. Extensive lighting is extremely important if the pump panel is covered with dark material.

EQUIPMENT YOU BUY FOR YOUR FIREFIGHTERS

Tradition Vs. Function: The Debate Over Firefighter Helmet Components

Jeff and Grace Stull

Perhaps the most iconic part of the firefighter ensemble is the helmet. This item of PPE has provided ready recognition of firefighters for generations. Despite the fact that firefighter helmets can be traced back to the turn of the 20th century, many fire service traditionalists still champion the original design — the unique ribbed dome shape with a drooping large back brim, shorter front brim, and leather shield held by a metal eagle depicting the local fire department. In fact, this look is still so engrained in fire service tradition that even though the early shape was necessary for creating the seams between the leather segments of the dome, the style is replicated in the current product models that use modern material technology.

HELMET DESIGN, THEN AND NOW

Of course, fire service helmets have evolved over the last four decades. In 1977, the National Bureau of Standards (NBS, now the National Institute for Standards and Technology, NIST) rolled out tests to demonstrate the efficacy of these products in protecting a firefighter's head during structural fires and other emergencies. Other designs offered a more smooth-domed shape with usually smaller brims and, further to what some in the fire service would consider blasphemous, the motorcycle-like designs more commonly seen in Europe. Helmet design and performance was also impacted by NFPA standards. The first draft of NFPA 1972 was introduced in 1987, mimicking the NBS recommendations as new requirements for these products. While NBS suggested the use of ear covers to help protect the neck, NFPA 1972 added criteria for either flame- and heat-resistant face shields or goggles to be part of the helmet.

From this point on, eye and face protection along with ear covers became constant for the expected helmet configurations. Consequently, a variety of helmet styles persist today, driving an ongoing debate about the "acceptable" types and need for both ear covers and eye/face protection. More recently, the question has been raised whether these components should remain mandatory.

COMPONENT OFFERINGS FOR HELMETS

All firefighter helmets are required to consist of base components, which include:

- The helmet shell, which is the primary hard component protecting the firefighter's head;
- An energy absorption system, essentially the helmet's suspension system, which allows the helmet to be seated on the head and consists of a series of internal straps and a headband that further permits adjustment for the helmet fit;
- The retention system, usually a chinstrap that may or may not be supplemented by a nape device at the back of the firefighter's head and upper neck;
- Fluorescent and retro-reflective trim for visibility;
- Ear covers that thermally protect the back and sides of the firefighter's head and neck; and

- An eye and face protective device, which is either a face shield or set of goggles.

Ear covers have become defined as a layered textile fabric-based panel that extends from the left to the right front sides of the helmet around the back of the wearer's head. This component was originally proposed to provide thermal protection to the firefighter's neck and, consequently, shares some properties with garments such as flame resistance, heat resistance and thermal insulation. With the increased mandatory use of firefighter protective hoods, which is considered an interface component rather than a separate element of the ensemble, the required thermal insulation is much less for the ear covers than the garments. In fact, it has the same minimum TPP rating of 20 W/m^2, as does the protective hood. (Garment composites must have a TPP rating that is 35 W/m^2 or greater.)

Eye and face protective devices are much more varied. Historically, face shields were a principal item of most helmets that were certified to NFPA standards. The broad shield would sit above the brim and pivot down in front of the firefighter's face when needed, usually for calls like victim extrication and post-fire activities. While the height of the shield would vary, most fields extend several inches below the front brim and to the sides. For some helmets, flip down or eye shields have been mounted on the underside of the front brim. These hinged components would angle down and be held in place by a spring-tensioned mechanism. Over the past two decades, some helmet designs incorporate base shields that can retract to the interior portion of the helmet and be released by a mechanism that brings shields in front of the face. Typically, both flip-down eye shields and retractable lenses are smaller than the counterpart full face shields.

Goggles have also been provided with helmets — sometimes directly mounted, sometimes loose. Unlike face shields that are not primary eye protection, goggles have the attribute of fitting directly against the wearer's face over their eyes, but they sacrifice protection to other portions of the face.

Over the years, NFPA standards have defined the minimum design and performance of both face shields and goggles, introducing eye and face-area coverage as well as unique flame- and heat-resistance requirements. There have been numerous debates regarding whether face shields or goggles should be mandated and how they should be provided with the helmet. *Currently, any structural firefighting protective helmet must be supplied with either a face shield that is mounted directly to a helmet or goggles, which are permitted to be provided loose (not attached to the helmet)*.

EAR COVERS AND EYE/FACE PROTECTION UTILITY

Many firefighters question the use of both ear covers and eye/face protection as mandatory components for firefighter helmets. *Some believe that with the mandatory use of protective hoods, adequate thermal protection is provided to their neck and head areas that are not covered by the garment collar, SCBA facepiece or helmet shell. Part of this thinking is that the hood TPP rating can be increased well beyond the minimum 20 W/m^2 value.*

There are also some beliefs that having a slightly less protected area of the firefighter ensemble allows a firefighter to have a better sensory perception that the fireground environment is becoming thermally overwhelming sooner rather than later, which would allow them to exit earlier before conditions worsen and exceed the protective capabilities of their ensembles. Others may point to the lack of ear or other facial burn injuries at their department, showing that their tactical approaches work without the ear covers being used.

Ear covers easily become contaminated, leading to secondary exposures of firefighters with residual fireground chemical products. There have been complaints that the removal and cleaning of ear covers can be difficult, though the most recent editions of NFPA 1971 helmet design requirements have promoted the easier removal and reinstallation of these components. *Still, ear covers can provide a greater level of heat retention in the head/neck face area that makes firefighters feel hotter than they might otherwise perceive under non-fire conditions.*

There are broader criticisms for mandatory face shields or goggles. The fire service has increasingly transitioned to the appropriate use of SCBA during all fireground operations, including overhaul. In the past, eye and face protection was particularly useful for overhaul operations involving teardown of ceilings and other actions that create significant debris on the fireground. Because SCBA facepieces already provide primary eye and face protection, the argument has focused on eye and face protection on the helmet being redundant and a possible unnecessary expense.

As already noted, face shields don't fully cover the firefighter's eyes. Debris and particulates can contact the face or enter the eyes through the sides of the shields. Moreover, face shield plastics, though heat resistant, melt or distort easier than other parts of the helmet during heavy fireground exposures, requiring frequent replacement and may be difficult to clean. When mounted to the top of the helmet, goggles that become contaminated put that contamination next to the firefighter's eyes when worn for other reasons after the fire. *Consequently, many departments would prefer that goggles be a separate device that they can use when needed that does not have to be supplied with the helmet as currently dictated by the NFPA standard.*

WHAT IS THE RIGHT CONFIGURATION OF HELMETS?

Obviously, there are a lot of factors to consider when selecting a protective helmet for firefighters' overall structural firefighting protective ensemble. It is understood that minimum requirements for helmets have evolved over decades, often in response to specific fire service needs that have been identified, then turned into specific design or performance criteria. However, it is further recognized that not every fire department uses the same tactics when working structural fires. Also, given the large variety of other ensemble components, including garments, hoods, gloves and footwear, it is likely that there is not a "one solution fits all" product configuration.

We believe that as much as appropriate helmet configurations have been debated over the last several decades, there is a need to better understand how current helmet products are used and the utility of the specific mandatory components. Collecting information on ear covers and eye/face protection can reveal important trends and perspectives on how firefighters may choose to deploy their helmets as part of an overall ensemble. In fact, the results from a simple survey conducted at the F.I.E.R.O. PPE Conference in March of this year were telling. Therefore, we invite you to **take this simple 12-question survey here**, which remains open. Our intent is to promote this information to the NFPA Technical Committee that addresses structural firefighting protective helmet requirements. It is hoped that by being informed of actual data and findings, the committee can now make responsible choices for how specific helmet configuration requirements are set.

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	43
Last fire death 7/8/25 Hopewell, Ontario, Co. Female, 70	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	75
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	573
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/48
	#2 NY/43
	#3 IL & TX /34
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2025: 1169 2046 civilian home fire fatalities in 2024	

Week 28 of 2025, fire has claimed on an average 42 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

CFSI VIRTUAL MINI SYMPOSIUM: LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES

Tune in on July 16th and July 23rd for the next installment of CFSI's new online educational series, the CFSI Virtual Mini Symposium Series! In this symposium we focus on lithium-ion batteries, and cover important topics including an overview of micro mobility, updates of current legislation, available trainings for fire service personnel and more.

Wednesday July 16th Noon to 1pm
Wednesday July 23rd Noon to 2PM

A special thank you to UL Standards & Engagement for sponsoring this installment.

REGISTER FOR THIS SYMPOSIUM AT THIS LINK:
https://cfsi.org/cfsi-virtual-mini-symposium-series-lithium-ion-batteries-micromobility/

FDNY: Lithium-Ion Battery Fire Kills First Victim in 2025

Olin Mason, Thomas Tracy, NY Daily News

A fire sparked by an e-bike battery killed a grandmother trapped by the blaze in the bathroom of a Queens pizzeria, officials said Tuesday.

Sunnyside resident Yuet Kiu Cheung,76, was doing some holiday shopping in Flushing Friday with a friend when they decided to stop at Singas Famous Pizza on Kissenna Blvd., her son Tommy Ou Yang said. She wouldn't make it out alive, becoming the first person to die from a lithium-ion battery fire in the city this year.

"For me to find my mom burnt like a roast pig, almost 100 percent of her whole body, is a memory I cannot forget," the victim's son told the Daily News in an exclusive interview. "She's a very loving parent, a loving grandmother. All her grandchildren, they all miss her."

MI Auto Parts Facility with Lithium-Ion Batteries Catches Fire—Again

Ryan Boldrey

ATC Drivetrain [*Headquartered in Farmington Hills, Michigan, and founded in the 1930s, ATC is a leading global independent remanufacturer of transmissions, engines, HV batteries, electric drives, EV components, and other driveline and powertrain components for light duty vehicles, commercial trucks and off-highway vehicles.]* caught fire for the second time in less than four months Wednesday afternoon.

Fire crews with the Holland Department of Public Safety responded to the facility, at 926 Waverly Road, shortly after 1 p.m. on Wednesday, July 9. The auto parts manufacturing facility also caught fire overnight on March 30.

Upon arrival on Wednesday, fire crews encountered smoke and fire conditions within the facility, Fire Capt. Brad Brower stated in a news release. Due to the size and complexity of the structure, along with the nature of the fire, a full commercial fire response was initiated, Brower said.

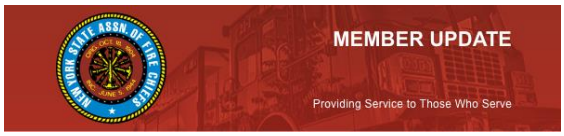
Crews needed to remove multiple lithium-ion batteries that were on fire, he said. Due to heavy smoke in the building, along with water from sprinkler activation, maneuvering the batteries out of the structure was time-consuming,

Assistance was provided by 10 additional fire departments, as well as the Ottawa County Hazardous Materials Team and ***the Allegan County marine division, which provided an air boat for ventilation.***

American Medical Response was also on standby for EMS support and one firefighter on scene was treated for heat exhaustion.

The fire was brought under control after an extended operation, with crews remaining on scene into the evening to conduct overhaul and ensure the fire was fully extinguished, Brower said. The cause of the fire is under investigation and damage estimates are pending, he said.

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!



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

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National Fire Protection Association Webinar

A Comprehensive View of Renewable Energy Installations Through the Lens of the Electrical Cycle of Safety

Tuesday, July 29, 2025
12:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time
1 hour

REEGISTER AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:
https://event.on24.com/wcc/r/4893775/4727F8AA54981A958884C7D552CF3CFD?partnerref=email&utm_source=emil&utm_medium=email_medium&utm_campaign=emil0344&utm_content=webi&order_src=e811

Webinar - Fire Up Your Recruitment Game: Harnessing Digital Tools for Recruitment Success

Aug. 7 at 2pm ET
Presenter: Katie Bulla

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

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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

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NVFC TRAIN STRONG

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

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

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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

How Can I Help You?

Michael DeStefano

Close your eyes (after reading this, obviously, or else this article will end very quickly) and imagine being in a fast-food restaurant. In this restaurant, every employee is smiling, and you are greeted at the counter with a friendly, "How can I help you today?" You ask a couple of questions about menu options, do not feel rushed, and are given accurate and helpful answers. You pay and find a seat in a clean booth and notice additional employees actively cleaning the dining area, again smiling while asking customers if they can get anything for them. Then, an employee brings your food neatly assembled, precisely as you ordered it, on a clean tray. You

thank the person for bringing your food and immediately hear a reply of, “It’s my pleasure.” I imagine you, like myself, can immediately tell the restaurant that you are in. This is because that fast-food chain has invested countless hours into training its employees to create a customer service experience like no other.

Now, let’s do the same thing, but on the opposite side of customer service. You are greeted by people who look annoyed that you are there, provide short responses and replies, and do not offer any help. When you go to sit down, many of the tables are still dirty, and there is trash on the floor. The employee hands you a haphazardly wrapped sandwich that is not what you ordered and gives attitude when you bring it to their attention. I’m pretty sure the second one comes with an extra side of spit.

Let’s now review each of these fast-food experiences from the point of view of the employees who are working there. The employees at the first restaurant work together to provide efficient and accurate products, while the second is just there to collect a paycheck. The employees of the first restaurant look over the counter and see happy customers smiling back at them who go out of their way to make sure they clean up after themselves and hold the door open for the next person as they exit the restaurant. The second restaurant sees angry faces that often erupt into shouting matches with staff that end up on social media. The trash is left on the table, and fights break out in the parking lot as the patron leaves the establishment. Why is this?

People want to be around friendly and helpful people. There is a natural desire to interact with those who are nice, happy, and there to serve. We talk a lot about the attitudes of our crews and how it is contagious in reference to each other, but what about our customers? Those same attitudes are contagious to them, as well.

Self-reflection time: Which restaurant does your organization resemble? How about your crew? Are they the helpful, smiling, there-to-serve types, or are they the ones who show up with attitude, a poor product, and probably poor outcomes?

BEING HELPFUL

It doesn’t have to be the second restaurant that you think of. You can change your station’s culture, which will eventually trickle up to the entire organization, no matter the external circumstances your department faces. I like to call this the “How can I help you?” culture. It starts from day one in the fire station (and ideally the organization), in which expectations and a mantra are created. Everything at your station begins with, “How can I help you?” The phone rings, “Fire station 41, how can I help you?” The 15th med job of the shift, “Good evening, how can we help you today?” The rescue gets back from a transport, “Welcome back, guys. How can we help you restock?” This simple and repeatable phrase becomes the culture of the crew.

DISCIPLES AND THE MISSION

The critical part of changing culture is discipleship. As these crew members promote, bid to other stations, or just work overtime somewhere else, they bring the same culture that you have created with them. Suddenly, B shift sees the difference in the demeanor of one of their regulars when your fire medic shows up on scene and treats them with a positive “how can I help you” attitude. Salty Captain Smith sees the difference and says, “Wait a minute, what just happened here?” The next call goes the same way. By the end of the shift, Salty Captain Smith shows up on scene with his shirt tucked in, has finally shaved his face (other than the squirrel living on his upper lip), and has a smile on his face. And get this, he makes patient contact first! This is an example of your disciple leading up the chain of command when sent out on his own. It works, I have seen it, and I have been a part of it.

Ready for the best part? If you are a company officer, then your story of success will look similar to that of the above paragraph. But, if you are a chief-level officer or, even better, an executive-level officer, you can impact the entire organization almost immediately by implementing this culture and building the buy-in of your officers as the disciples. Instead of requiring the youngest person on the crew to lead up, you can have your officers set the example; concurrently, the new guy in orientation is also taught the culture. This approach is what we call top-down, bottom-up, leading to the most tremendous success of an organizational culture shift.

Look, the mantra of “be nice” is great, but the impact of adding service through servant leadership at all levels and to all customers, internal or external, is key. Create a positive organization that provides a “how can I help you” culture to its employees and citizens. Get to work!

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

My granddaughter Olivia asked me, "Grandpa today I watched someone do 50 pushups – do you think you could do that?
I said, "Of course, sweetheart. I don't want to brag but I could probably watch someone do 100 pushups."

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Greenfield Fire District is Hiring

The Greenfield Fire District is looking for a professional and highly-motivated person to perform a wide variety of functions relating to the material needs and possessions of the Greenfield Fire District. Must have good organization and communication skills, the ability to manage several projects simultaneously, and be flexible with work hours when necessary. Prior experience preferred and all candidates must have a clean driver's license. Individuals residing within Fire District Boundaries preferred. Employment application and job description can be found on the district website at www.greenfieldfd.org. Applications, or cover letters & resumes, will be accepted until the position is filled, and should be sent to Joyce Petkus, District Administrator via email at Jpetkus@greenfieldfd.org or regular mail to Greenfield Fire District, P.O. Box 103 Greenfield Center, NY 12833.

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2nd Vice President, Ellen Martin, Deputy Treasurer Clifton Park Fire District
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APPOINTEES
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Treasurer: Tony Hill
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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
518-407-5020
EMAIL SECRETARY: 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

D'AMATO LAW GROUP

The D'Amato Law Group LLP
Gregory Serio, Partner
Alyssa B. Snyder, Partner
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Email: gserio@dlgny.com or asnyder@dlgny.com
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Ducharme, Clark & Sovern, LLP
Jack Clark, Fire District Attorney
646 Plank Rd. Clifton Park, NY 12065
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Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP
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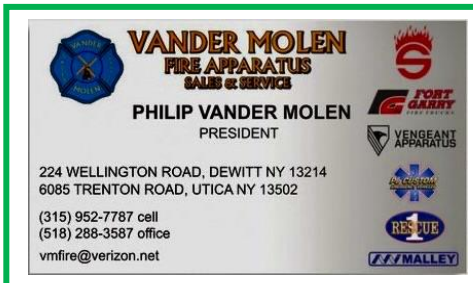

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Deborah JR O'Connor
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The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over 650+ subscribed fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis.
This is a service of CAFDA 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

FOR MORE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Website	**www.CAFDA.net**

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

Dave Denniston Reports on a Successful Visit to Washington, D.C.

Could not be prouder than to be part of the current team as we laid the foundation for groundbreaking collaboration between the US Secretary of Labor, OSHA, IAFF, and NVFC. We all agreed to roll up our sleeves and finish crafting the Emergency Response Standard. ***This new rule*** will be a labor of love that protects our mutual volunteer and career first responders with a standard that is reasonable, and both economically and technically feasible.

The passion in this room was unsurpassed and I am confident the group will leave a fire service for the next generations that is safer and better than the one we found. Thank you for all the hard work that got us this far and the work of additional others that will be invited to help us in this process moving forward.

NVFC Forming Red Ribbon Panel to address proposed OSHA ER Standard, more information to be posted as soon as it is available.