



CAPITAL SHORTS:

- Both the election schedule and the budget development schedule are posted to the web site at www.CAFDA.net
- The Worchester Fire Department in Otsego County is hosting the NYSAFC "Short Handed Fire Fighting" on September 15th. A short drive down I-88.
- The State Association's 2025 Memorial Honoree Submission deadline, for the Annual Memorial Services on October 3rd, in Saratoga Springs is September 19th, 2025. Submissions can be made at:

<https://mms.afdsny.org/members/form.php?orgcode=FDNY&fid=7384225>

- WorHappy 36th Birthday to Colonie EMS.
- We are devastated to share that Flight Paramedic Kevin Robert passed away last night, August 27th, following a sudden medical emergency. Kevin, alongside a flight nurse and pilot, were caring for a patient aboard LifeNet 7-13, based out of Ticonderoga, NY. Keep Kevin's family, friends, and teammates in your thoughts, and join us in respecting their privacy as we all navigate this heartbreaking loss.
- Sad to learn that former State Fire Administrator Frank McGarry has passed away peacefully at the age of 87 on Sunday, August 24th, 2025 surrounded by the love of his family at St. Peter's Hospice Inn after a progressive illness. In 1979, he was appointed the first State Fire Administrator of New York after Governor Hugh Carey created the position as part of the establishment of the Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC). He remained in this position until retiring in 1995. Donations may be made in Frank's memory to The Community Hospice (communityhospice.org/donate) or the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York (regionalfoodbank.net).

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:

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!!

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.

THE LATEST FROM WASHINGTON

Washington Watch from CFSI

New Executive Order Aimed at Federal Grantmaking Processes

On August 7, the White House issued an executive order (EO) titled “[Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking](#).” Notably, the EO is intended to provide for review of grant awards by a senior agency appointee even after peer review processes have occurred. The EO also expressly directs said appointees to exercise independent judgment and not just “routinely defer to the recommendations” of other reviewers. The EO does note that the process should function “consistent with applicable law.”

National Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council (NEMSAC) Terminated

On [August 13, 2025](#), all 25 members of NEMSAC were [terminated](#). The U.S. Department of Transportation [stated](#) that it was in accordance with a Presidential Executive Order and the intent is to “reconstitute membership.” [NEMSAC](#) “was established in April 2007 as a nationally recognized council of EMS representatives and consumers to provide advice and recommendations regarding EMS to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), part of the Department of Transportation, and to the members of the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS (FICEMS).”

FEMA Review Council to Hold Third Meeting

The [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) Review Council](#) (“Council”) has a meeting upcoming at the end of August. The meeting will be led by the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Defense and the intent is to provide updates from the Council Members. Members of the public will be able to attend the meeting virtually.

- **Date:** The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 28, 2025
- **Time:** 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. The meeting may end early if the Council has completed its business.
- **Meeting instructions for virtual attendance:** Members of the public may register to participate in this Council meeting under the following procedures. Each individual can register to attend by entering their full legal name and email address into forms link by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on Wednesday, August 27, 2025. To receive the link please email Patrick Powers, Designated Federal Officer of the President’s Federal Emergency Management Agency Review Council at FEMAreviewcouncil@hq.dhs.gov.

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

STEP INTO THE CHIEF’S OFFICE

****Commanding Alone: Fireground Leadership When You’re All You’ve Got**

Bobby Drake

The fireground doesn’t wait for perfect conditions. Textbooks and training scenarios often include a robust command structure with the incident commander (IC) supported by operations, logistics, safety, and sector officers. However, for most departments, the reality is much leaner. Due to ongoing staffing challenges, rural geography, or sheer call volume, it’s not unusual for a single officer to arrive, assume, and maintain command...alone.

THE WEIGHT OF THE RADIO

The lone IC faces a uniquely difficult set of challenges. Often these individuals are faced with managing the chaos of an unfolding incident with limited immediate support. As a result, they are ultimately forced to make life-and-death decisions in real-time while simultaneously communicating with incoming units, monitoring fire conditions, and trying to maintain situational awareness. It's far from ideal, but far from rare. And succeeding requires more than technical know-how—it demands preparation, trust, and confident leadership under pressure.

But how do you succeed when commanding alone? This will require an understanding of your dynamic staffing model, decentralized decision making, and the critical importance of trust built well before the tones drop. As with any skill set you must learn, train, utilize, and apply previous experiences to become comfortable with being uncomfortable.

THE CHANGING FIREGROUND AND THE RISE OF THE SOLO IC

The fire service has evolved dramatically in recent years. Regardless of what type of department you are serving in, most are faced with increasing service demands, overlapping EMS responsibilities, and shrinking budgets. These factors are forcing more departments to do more with less. As a regular day-to-day operation in many regions, the first officer may arrive with a single company or even ahead of the first suppression unit. If mutual aid is required, it could be minutes or even hours before another officer arrives to assist with command.

While the Incident Command System (ICS) remains the national standard, the real-world application often requires adaptation. The system is built for scalability, but scalability assumes the eventual arrival of additional resources. What happens when those resources are delayed or don't come at all?

Enter the solo IC. Whether a seasoned battalion chief or any member of the organization who fills this role, these members naturally become the tactical and strategic head of the incident. Success hinges on their ability to apply foundational ICS principles with agility and discipline, supported by relationships, crew readiness, and simple, effective tools.

DYNAMIC STAFFING MODELS: PREDEFINED ROLES

One of the first areas to examine is staffing. Traditional fireground assignments are often based on structure type. For some, a single-family residence will get more resources and people than a commercial structure. However, in many localities, the same people and the same rigs are responding to both. The assumption associated with staffing models is that reality often outweighs policy and predesignated responses. Thus, ICs and personnel of all ranks need to remain dynamic and have a full understanding of their organizational reality. Given this gap, departments should embrace dynamic staffing models and use preassigned roles by riding position, automatic tasking by apparatus type, and scalable tactical benchmarks. For the lone IC, this allows for better predictability of task completion and crew performance, even from a distance. It's not enough to assume everyone "knows what to do." That knowledge must be built intentionally into your operations with clear expectations and used from the training ground to the fire scene.

For some, this may seem elementary, but there are many departments who do not have predefined roles and responsibilities laid out in their operational expectations. Therefore, if crews find themselves waiting for a "decision-maker," valuable time is lost for the citizen. For departments to be successful, these expectations must be built into the culture of your organization. Then, through repetition, training, and after-action, crews will learn to function with an autonomy that complements command rather than competing with it.

THE RISKS OF COMMANDING ALONE

Being the only command-level officer on the scene isn't just logistically challenging—it's cognitively exhausting. The solo IC carries the burden of tactical decision making, resource tracking, communications management, and safety oversight simultaneously. This creates the perfect storm for decision fatigue, tunnel vision, and missed cues.

Key risks related to this burden include:

- **Span of control overload:** The IC may be tracking too many units or fireground functions simultaneously.
- **Delayed decision making:** Waiting for more information can result in action paralysis.

- **Communication gaps:** Without a command aide or support officer, radio traffic can become overwhelming.
- **Mental and physical fatigue:** Especially on extended operations, the single IC may lack the bandwidth to rest, hydrate, or even take a breath. This mental fatigue can also lead to guilt and decision regret.

It's important to note that these risks are validated through numerous NIOSH firefighter fatality reports. One that specifically deserves mention is [the 2018 Maryland line-of-duty death of Lieutenant Nathan Flynn](#), which highlighted contributing factors such as:

- Lack of defined incident action plans
- Inadequate fireground communications
- Missed critical incident benchmarks
- Task saturation of the incident commander
- Lack of personnel accountability

In many of these cases, the incident began with one officer trying to manage too much, too soon, with too little. These tragedies underscore the importance of developing practical tools and empowering leadership throughout the organization to share the load.

DECENTRALIZED COMMAND: TRUSTING THE COMPANIES YOU LEAD

The answer isn't to expect more of the solo IC—it's to build more around them.

[Decentralized command](#) is a military-derived philosophy that encourages leadership at all levels. It relies on clear intent from the top, but execution from the bottom. In the fire service, this means that company officers and senior firefighters understand not just what to do, but why. When crews are trained and trusted to act based on the commander's intent, the IC can focus on the big picture. Rather than assigning every task, they validate the overall direction. This reduces [micromanagement](#) and allows faster action at the task level.

Some practical applications:

- Teach crews to interpret the IC's objectives and apply them independently within their scope.
- Train on tactical priorities and operational benchmarks, not just checklists.
- Encourage company officers to lead boldly, while staying inside the guardrails of department standard operating procedures and incident priorities.

A decentralized command structure doesn't work without trust, and trust isn't built on the fireground—it's built in the firehouse, in training, and at the kitchen table. When the IC knows the capabilities and mindset of his or her crews, and those crews know the expectations of the IC, trust becomes the bridge between chaos and control.

TRAINING FOR THE INEVITABLE

Every department must train for the reality of the lone IC. Regardless if you are a small rural department, a one-station city department, or even a large urban or metro department, there will come a time when an IC finds themselves alone. Waiting for or expecting the perfect command scenario is a gamble. Normally what can go wrong, will. To help combat this, departments should develop officer development programs that provide an emphasis on command-and-control training. Aspects such as these should be included, at a minimum:

- Undertake [tabletop simulations](#) with delayed command support.
- Assign rotating officers as "acting command" during drills.
- Debrief actual incidents where one officer ran the show. Identify what worked, what didn't, and what could be done better next time.
- Build isolated responses into training exercises where companies act independently and are required to make split-second decisions without direction.

When we fail to provide continued training for our members or remove their ability to grow, we destroy the confidence of those we trust in these positions. This lack of confidence or feeling of support from the organization can make some question if promotion is for them. And just like with our new members, recruitment and retention isn't the problem, it's a symptom of something deeper. For officers, this deeper problem is organizations not investing in their growth and development.

TECHNOLOGY AS A FORCE MULTIPLIER

When you're the only one wearing the white helmet, staying ahead of the incident is everything. A well-integrated, technology-based Common Operating Picture (COP) can serve as a true force multiplier for the solo IC. With today's tools such as rugged tablets, smartphone apps, and vehicle-mounted displays, the IC can visualize unit locations, access preplans, track assignments, and monitor benchmarks in real time.

But this isn't just about data—it's about decisions. A functional COP platform pulls together dispatch feeds, automatic vehicle location, hydrant locations, personnel accountability, and more, all into one intuitive interface. For the IC, that translates to reduced radio traffic, faster decisions, and reduced mental overload. And when reinforcements do arrive—whether mutual aid, a safety officer, or a division supervisor—they plug directly into the same operational picture, reducing the need for lengthy briefings or confusion.

Still, technology doesn't replace leadership. It enhances it. A COP is only as good as the training that backs it up. Departments must treat tech like any other tactical tool: train on it regularly, build confidence in its use, and ensure it supports, not replaces, command instincts. In the world of the lone IC, a well-integrated COP isn't just a screen, it's a second set of eyes and a lifeline in moments where clarity is critical and second chances are rare.

PREPARED, NOT ALONE

Commanding alone isn't about being the smartest or the loudest. It's about being the most prepared. It's about creating systems, building relationships, and cultivating trust so that when the moment comes, you're not truly alone. The work and effort you invest will ensure you're supported by a team of trained, empowered professionals operating from a shared set of values and expectations.

I've commanded from the front seat of an engine, from the passenger door of a chief's buggy, and a couple of times from the tailboard of a brush truck. Although my command experience is not nearly as robust as some, my experiences have allowed me the opportunity to be the only officer on the scene, with nothing but a handheld radio and a gut feeling. I've made mistakes. But each one has taught me that solo command isn't a disadvantage, but a responsibility—one we must prepare for.

Given the dynamic makeup of our fire service, many of us will never have the luxury of full command teams with even more support personnel behind the scenes. For this reason, we must engage with our crews, attend and lead training, and build an environment of trust and empowerment so "commanding alone" doesn't mean being alone.

STEP INTO THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Lacrosse Wisconsin Initiates Lawsuit Against Manufacturers

The city of La Crosse is suing three fire truck manufacturers — including two headquartered in Wisconsin — in federal court, accusing them of unlawfully coordinating to limit the supply of trucks and raise prices.

The class action suit was filed last week against the manufacturers Oshkosh Corporation, REV Group and Rosenbauer America. It also names the Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association. Oshkosh Corporation is based in the Fox Valley. REV Group is headquartered in Brookfield, and Rosenbauer is headquartered in South Dakota.

REV Group and Oshkosh Corporation called the lawsuit meritless. Rosenbauer America could not be reached for comment.

According to the civil complaint, fire truck prices have doubled in the last decade, exceeding the rate of inflation. For example, a ladder truck that cost \$900,000 in the mid-2010s now costs more than \$2 million, the suit states. Meanwhile, wait times for new trucks have ballooned from 18 months to more than four years.

The three manufacturers listed in the complaint are "responsible for increasing fire truck prices and perpetuating lengthy backlogs" as they control 70 to 80 percent of the U.S. fire truck market, the suit says.

The lawsuit also alleges the manufacturers used the backlog as an excuse for increasing the final price of new fire trucks after they go into production.

Rising prices and long delivery times have made it harder for municipalities to replace their aging vehicles in a timely manner, leaving fire departments using trucks that "have exceeded their service life," the complaint says.

"Cities and towns across the country are facing a crisis where demand for new fire trucks has outstripped availability and funding," the suit says.

La Crosse is currently operating a 2006 fire truck, despite ordering a replacement vehicle, the complaint states. Because of long delivery times, La Crosse will “need to rely on this outdated fire truck for several more years.” The city of La Crosse declined to comment on the suit.

The problem isn’t limited to La Crosse. According to the lawsuit, Chicago recently celebrated a fire truck’s 30th birthday. Municipalities in Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas, Kansas and West Virginia are facing similar issues.

Lawsuit says consolidations limited competition

From the mid-2010s to 2020, REV Group acquired six different fire equipment brands, including companies that had been direct competitors in the fire truck industry, the suit says.

The acquisitions “solidified REV Group’s position as the top fire truck manufacturer in the United States,” the complaint states.

Similarly, Oshkosh Corporation subsidiary Pierce Manufacturing completed a pair of acquisitions of fire equipment manufacturers in 2021 and 2022, giving Oshkosh Corporation control over “a full quarter of the U.S. fire truck market,” the lawsuit says.

Oshkosh Corporation also “embarked on a strategy of consolidating the U.S. brands already within its purview, reducing geographic overlap between its dealers” from 2018 to 2025, which “reduced or eliminated competition among Pierce subsidiaries,” the suit says.

Manufacturers allegedly exchanged economic information through trade group

Aside from using consolidations, the suit alleges that Oshkosh Corporation, REV Group and Rosenbauer have worked to cooperate with each other instead of compete.

The manufacturers allegedly exchanged confidential and “competitively sensitive” economic information through the Fire Apparatus Manufacturers’ Association.

The suit accuses the manufacturers of using that data to “coordinate price increases and suppress production,” as well as to “monitor their co-conspirators to ensure continued adherence to the conspiracy.”

“This information exchange is particularly likely to have anticompetitive effects because so few sellers control the fire truck market,” the complaint states. “Thanks to their conspiracy, (manufacturers) have been able to increase their margins by several percentage points and boost total profits.”

The lawsuit also alleges the manufacturers’ association organizes two meetings each year, where manufacturers have “ample time and opportunity to exchange sensitive economic information and coordinate supply restrictions and price hikes at these meetings.”

The suit asks the court to declare that the manufacturers and association violated antitrust law, require the manufacturers to stop their alleged anti-competitive behavior and to award La Crosse and other possible plaintiffs damages.

Oshkosh Corporation, REV Group say the suit is without merit

Rosenbauer America and the Fire Apparatus Manufacturers’ Association did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

A spokesperson for REV Group said via email the company believes the suit is meritless and intends to challenge the allegations in court.

Similarly, a statement from Oshkosh Corporation called the lawsuit “without merit.”

“Oshkosh has a long history of reinvesting in our businesses, driving organic growth, enhancing efficiency and expanding capacity to better serve our customers,” the statement reads. “We remain committed to delivering high-quality, safe fire trucks to meet the record demand of recent years.”

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

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

NHTSA Launches New Website For Emergency Response Guides And Rescue Sheets

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has launched a new website to provide emergency responders with easy access to Emergency Response Guides (ERGs) and rescue sheets. With the growing number of electric vehicle (EV) models on the road, it is critical that IAFF members use this information to operate safely, prevent injury or death, and understand how to locate and disable EV components during a fire. The new portal is now live and includes several key features:

- **Comprehensive Access:** Fire fighters and other emergency responders can quickly find and download ERGs and rescue sheets for electric vehicles (EVs).
- **Historical EV Files:** The database includes historical emergency response files for EVs, which have been transferred from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to NHTSA's new platform.
- **Transition from NFPA:** As part of this initiative, the NFPA will discontinue its ERG portal, and NHTSA's website will serve as the primary resource for these materials moving forward.

THE NEW PORTAL IS LOCATED AT THIS WEB SITE:

<https://www.nhtsa.gov/emergency-response-guides>

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

The Fishers Fire District Debacle Continues.

Fire commissioners vote to dissolve Fishers Fire District, Town of Victor releases short-term plan

Tom Lowalski, News 10 NBC

The Fishers Board of Fire Commissioners voted unanimously Monday to dissolve the Fishers Fire District despite a massive amount of public pushback.

The district covers 26 square miles of Victor, including Eastview Mall and part of I-90. They will now be forced to close by October 1st at 7 a.m.

The decision was made at a public meeting at Victor Senior High School Monday night. About 100 people showed up opposing the dissolution, with many voicing their concerns despite the Board not allowing public comment.

As [News10NBC has covered](#), the Board of Fire Commissioners has been seeking to dissolve the department because of financial sustainability. Over the last 10 years, the fire board of commissioners says the Fishers Fire District tax levy has more than tripled, rising from \$1.6 million in 2015 to \$5.3 million this year. A tax levy is the seizure of property to pay taxes owed.

The current Board blamed the previous Board for those longtime financial issues, saying they reached out to nearby fire districts about merging, but were denied.

"Once the new board, us, got control of the board in January of 2023, we immediately started conversations with both Victor Fire District and Mendon Fire District about merging," said Commissioner Fred Dewey.

"But they both said, 'no way, your costs are way, way too high. If we merge with you, our taxes will go up astronomically just like yours happened. We are not going to do that.'"

But many in attendance, like Erie Linke, a disabled veteran living in the district, voiced his disappointment in the decision.

"I agree, this was expensive, but 99% of our people wanted them," said Linke, referring to the District.

Now, 26 full time firefighters will be without a job come October. Those with the department feel the decision was made without full consequences in mind.

"[The Board has] no concern for public safety," said Asst. Fire Chief Michael Koch of the Fishers FD.

"They strictly only talked about their concern for finances. There was never a concern, never a thought about what happens to public safety when they cut services. It was strictly about cutting taxes. And they have never gotten into this for public safety to begin with. All of them ran on tax reduction platforms. None of them ever cared about the people that they served. They're all public servants who forgot the primary thing they're supposed to do, and that's serve the public."

Now that the board has voted to dissolve the Fishers Fire District, Victor, the Victor Fire District, Bushnell's Basin Fire Department, Henrietta Fire District, Farmington Volunteer Fire Association, and Victor Farmington Ambulance have formed a task force to oversee the transition to a new system. This task force will meet monthly. In the meantime, Victor Fire and Bushnell's Basin Fire will expand their coverage areas, with Victor Farmington Ambulance continuing to provide EMS. Eventually, new fire protection districts will be formed.

TO VIEW LONG TERM PLAN GO TO THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://www.whec.com/top-news/fire-commissioners-vote-to-dissolve-fishers-fire-district/>

Fishers Fire District to close: What this means for Victor residents

Madison Scott

The Fishers Fire Board of Commissioners has voted to dissolve the [Fishers Fire District](#), officially ending its operation on Oct. 1 at 7 a.m.

The decision was made during a board meeting held Aug. 18 at the Victor Senior High School Auditorium.

The district, which covers 26 square miles of the Town of Victor and five miles of the New York State Thruway, will transfer fire and EMS responsibilities to the Town of Victor upon dissolution.

Why is the fire district dissolving?

The board cited financial uncertainty and the potential for significant tax increases as reasons for the decision. "Although the current financial standing of the district is strong, it will quickly erode," the resolution states, due to rising equipment and retiree healthcare costs.

Fishers Assistant Fire Chief Michael Koch, a volunteer firefighter for over 25 years, questioned the board's timing.

"They're saying we can't afford costs 10 to 15 years from now — so why dissolve now?" Koch said.

Koch and the district's union had asked the board to hire a third-party consultant to conduct a comprehensive study evaluating future spending, tax base growth, ISO ratings, and service costs. That request was never voted on, he said.

What happens now? The town's short-term plan

With the district closing, the Town of Victor becomes legally responsible for fire protection services within the former Fishers Fire District.

On Aug. 6, the town issued a press release affirming its commitment to continued fire and EMS coverage. On Aug. 19, a short-term continuity plan was released, detailing how services will be maintained.

According to the plan:

- Services will be provided by:
 - Victor Fire District
 - Bushnell's Basin Fire Department
 - Henrietta Fire District
 - Fishers Volunteer Fire Association
 - Farmington Volunteer Fire Association
 - Victor-Farmington Ambulance

A Transition Task Force has been created to oversee implementation. It includes representatives from:

- Victor Town Board
- Victor Fire District
- Victor-Farmington Ambulance
- Bushnell's Basin Fire Dept.
- Fishers Volunteer Fire Association
- Legal, HR, and financial advisors from the town

This group will meet monthly to monitor response times, call volumes, and long-term planning.

Volunteer firefighters say they were left out

While the Fishers Volunteer Fire Association was approached early on to participate in planning if the dissolution passed, Koch said they were not included in any discussions before the short-term plan was released.

"We were never asked to be part of a transition group," Koch said. "We, as a volunteer association, 100% disapprove of the dissolution."

The town's document does not define the association's role, only stating that "discussions are underway" to determine their level of involvement.

Fire & EMS coverage details

Per the plan:

Victor Fire District and Bushnell's Basin will expand coverage into newly formed Fire Protection Districts.

Response maps and coverage areas are being updated.

EMS services will be handled by Victor-Farmington Ambulance.

NYS Thruway (I-90 and I-490) coverage will be divided among the participating agencies.

Tax bills will no longer include the Fishers Fire District levy. The Town of Victor will contract with partner agencies for services. Future tax impacts will be addressed in the annual budget process.

District assets will be distributed in accordance with New York State law. Equipment may be transferred to the town or partner agencies, while real estate may be sold, leased, or repurposed.

Concerns about public safety and jobs

Koch expressed deep concern about the impact on emergency response.

"You can't expect an engine from Bushnell's Basin to reach a Fishers house as quickly as an on-site service would," Koch said. "This isn't fear-mongering. Someone will get more hurt — or die — because we're not there."

Koch also said about 15 career firefighters will lose their jobs on Oct. 1. Many turned down earlier offers to transfer, hoping the district would be preserved.

"They don't want to just be firefighters — they want to serve here, in their community," he said.

Now, most local positions have been filled, and remaining options may involve relocating to other cities like Buffalo or Syracuse.

"This is crushing for everyone — career and volunteer firefighters alike," Koch said. "This is their identity."

Koch isn't sure about his own future but said volunteering has been part of his life for over two decades.

Indiana Approves Merger of Three Fire Departments

Ken de la Bastide – The Herald Bulletin, Anderson, Ind.

After a delay caused by a new property tax law, the expanded South Madison Fire Territory now has approval to move ahead.

Starting Jan. 1 the three fire departments serving the southern townships of Madison County will be merged into a single department.

The Lapel/Stony Creek and Markleville/Adams departments will be merged with the South Madison Fire Territory, which already serves Fall Creek and Green townships as well as the towns of Pendleton and Ingalls. The merger was approved this year by officials from each community involved, but it was delayed after the Indiana Legislature passed into law a bill touted by proponents as a tax relief measure. Part of that bill capped property taxes for local units of government at 40 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

The entities comprising the expanded South Madison Fire Territory had planned to charge 80 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

But local fire territory officials recently got a green light from the Department of Local Government Finance to move forward with the fire territory merger. The DLGF reasoned that the fire territory was not beholden to the new law since the property tax levy had been set before the new limit on tax rates was voted into law.

"We were trying to figure out the language in the legislation," Chris Nodine, chief of the South Madison Fire Territory, said Monday. "Because we were already established, the legal opinion from the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance approved the merger."

Nodine said the department is planning to hire up to 30 full-time firefighters, which would allow full staffing of stations in Pendleton, Lapel and Markleville.

He said the merger would result in faster response times and increased operational efficiency.

"The merger marks an important step forward for public safety in our community," the fire chief said in announcing the merger. "By uniting our departments, we are ensuring that our firefighters have the tools, training and support needed to protect lives and property at the highest level."

The Friday announcement said fire stations would remain operational and that firefighters would “continue to serve their communities as part of a larger, unified department.”

Earlier this year, the town of Pendleton, along with four townships and three other towns, had agreed to a tax levy of 80 cents for every \$100 of assessed value.

According to a public notice, the budget for 2026 would be \$12.5 million, increasing to \$14.7 million in 2027 and \$17.7 million in 2028.

The estimated property tax rate is 67 cents in 2026, 75 cents in 2027 and 87 cents in 2028.

The cost for a homeowner of property valued at \$100,000 is estimated at \$39.71 in 2026.

Property owners currently at the 1% cap for property taxes would see a minimal impact.

Stony Creek Township, Lapel, Adams Township and Markleville will continue to own the existing fire station and equipment; South Madison would provide the staffing and pay the operating costs.

Each governmental unit will have appointments to a nine-member board that will oversee fire protection territory operations.

The member government agencies have already created a new property tax of 3 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation to fund fire equipment.

EMS Provider Charged in NC Crash

Greenville police have charged the EMS provider operating an ambulance when it crashed Tuesday with unsafe movement of a vehicle. After reviewing footage from a nearby camera, investigators said that the driver, Andrew Tribula failed to properly clear the intersection and did not stop for oncoming traffic before proceeding through the red light.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

****Frederick County (MD) Fire & Rescue Helps Children Learn Firefighting Skills**

The Fredrick News-Post

Eight-year-old Isabella Meister is still deciding on her career path. “If I could have two jobs, I would be a singer and a firefighter,” she said.

Recently, Meister got a sneak peak into the latter career choice at the second annual Junior Firefighter Academy sponsored by the Frederick County Division of Fire & Rescue Services.

In partnership with Frederick County Parks & Recreation, Fire & Rescue welcomed 131 participants to the Public Safety Training Facility, south of Frederick.

“We bring in kids and run them through a bunch of different activity stations that are modified versions of what some of our recruits go through in our actual fire academy,” Fire & Rescue Community Outreach Coordinator Calli Guercio said.

“This event is great for any child, whether they have a fascination and a love for the fire service or public safety, or whether it’s that they need to get some basic knowledge about the fire department and what it is they do,” Sarah Campbell, the public information officer for Fire & Rescue, said.

Participants ages 6 to 11 got to experience a day in the life of a firefighter by rotating through eight stations that included activities such as spraying a fire hose, climbing through an obstacle course, practicing 911 calls and trying on firefighter gear.

“I felt kind of nervous and it was really hot,” Emma Knight, 8, said of trying on the gear.

Knight’s dad and uncle are both firefighters. “I like how they protect the people and keep them safe and get them out of the fire as fast as they can,” she said.

Six-year-old Hadley Campbell was most looking forward to the maze activity, but also enjoyed learning to hold and spray the fire hose. “It was heavy,” she said.

At another station, participants competed in a first aid equipment matching game.

Kids in two teams took turns running to their team’s board and picking up one of many overturned images. After running back to their line, they turned the image around. If it was an item found in a first aid kit, they could check it off their team’s list.

“We learned all the stuff they use and what they have in their bag when they come with it,” Isabella said.

Kevin Schmidt, a technician who led the station, said, "I think the kids like the overall event in general. Most kids grow up wanting to be a firefighter at some point in their life and today is a good day to live that dream for a few hours."

Another station, hosted by 911 dispatchers, taught participants how to handle 911 calls.

"It's really important in case they actually need to use it," LeighAnn Osuch, an assistant administrator of quality assurance, said. "A lot of kids don't know how to call 911, so it's really important that they know the important things that we ask when they call."

After a 15-minute lesson that included using a phone that simulates a 911 call, the children learned about when 911 should actually be contacted.

"I learned why you call 911 and how you do it if you need help," Isabella said. "I also learned that you can actually text 911 if you can't talk."

The Junior Firefighter Academy first began last year in an effort to build upon existing outreach, such as visiting schools, by bringing more people into Fire & Rescue facilities.

"It's really important, not only for the fire and life safety aspect of it, but it's incredibly important to get to know your local fire department," Guercio said. "We want the community to know us outside of a 911 emergency."

"We think it's also a really great opportunity to foster that interest in a career, even if it's at a really young age," she said.

At the end of the day, participants celebrated at a graduation ceremony, where they discussed what they accomplished throughout the training and were congratulated with a firefighter challenge coin.

"We keep getting asked if we'll do it for younger kids or older kids, so I think we have some things in mind for future years," Campbell said. "It's definitely something that we plan to continue doing. The kids love it and the firefighters here love doing it."

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH & SAFETY; PROTECTING OUR OWN

55

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!

- Sad news out of Albany, former State Fire Administrator Frank McGarry passed away. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family, friends and co-workers of Chief McGarry.
- A 40-year-old Florida man, Fendrick Gabaud, who was being assessed for recruitment as a Flagler County Fire Rescue firefighter died this morning at the John R. Keppler Jr. Fire Training Center on Justice Lane in Bunnell. Fendrick, who had recently graduated from fire school, successfully finished the pre-employment test at the county's fire tower but later complained of shortness of breath and collapsed.
- Chief Michael Reese, 53 of the Willow Street Fire Company. Willow Street, PA dies on August, 23rd. Chief Michael Reese responded to a vehicle accident during the early morning hours on 08/23/18. Several hours later that day, Reese suddenly passed away at home. The nature and cause of fatal injury are still to be reported.
- August 24, 2021 - LODD. Firefighter Judy Spencer, 65 of the Hartland Volunteer Fire Company. Gasport, NY, Niagara County. While at the scene of a field fire, Firefighter Spencer, who was acting as

a spotter for the Barker Fire Department rescue truck, was hit when the truck was backing up. She was pronounced deceased at the scene.

- A firefighter died of a suspected heart attack, Sunday while engaging in fire suppression efforts at the Bivens Creek fire in the Tobacco Root Mountains, according to the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*.
- An apparatus rollover crash has claimed the life of Raywick Firefighter Brian Hatt. Hatt, 51, died Monday afternoon of injuries sustained in the wreck last week. Hatt, who was driving, **was ejected** while Firefighter Leonard Winkler, 58, was trapped and seriously injured.
- A LifeNet flight paramedic collapsed and died while treating a patient. The incident occurred aboard LifeNet 7-13 while Paramedic Kevin Robert and a flight nurse were taking care of a patient headed to Albany Med. The pilot quickly radioed communications about the incident and landed at Saratoga hospital. Despite efforts, Robert could not be revived. Robert served in various ambulance services – mostly recently at Malta-Stillwater Ambulance. He also taught in the paramedic program at Hudson Valley Community College.

FIRE APPARATUS ACCIDENTS FOR THE WEEK

- Two firefighters with the Raywick Kentucky Fire Department were injured in a rollover incident. Brian Hatt, 51, was driving a tanker trailer to assist the Loretto Fire Department with a call when the truck dropped off the right shoulder and the edge of the road collapsed. The vehicle lost control and crossed the road, striking and embankment and overturning. Hatt was ejected from the vehicle, while another firefighter, Leonard Winkler, 58, was trapped inside.
- A Sacramento firefighter suffered a medical emergency while fighting a grass fire. The firefighter was in critical condition before being transported to a hospital, where he arrived in a stable condition.

FIRE APPARATUS

The Pros and Cons of Small vs. Large Rescue Trucks

Alan M. Petrillo

Bill Proft, business unit director of rescue products for Pierce Manufacturing Inc., says Pierce builds a lot of heavy and medium-size rescues, mostly on custom chassis. “We’ve been doing a lot of tandem-rear-axle rescues with our TAK-4® T3 rear steer axle,” Proft points out, “and lately, there has been a tendency toward walk-in rescues again. We build a few small rescues on Ford F-550 chassis each year, usually for those departments that want a very maneuverable rescue that can get into tight spots.”

Proft notes that Pierce recently built a walk-around heavy rescue for the Eastport (NY) Fire Department on an Enforcer™ cab and chassis with a single rear axle and a TAK-4 independent front suspension, carrying a Harrison Hydraulic 10-kW generator and a heavy rescue for the Cambridge (MD) Rescue Fire Company on an Arrow XT™ tandem-rear-axle chassis powered by a 605-horsepower (hp) Cummins X15 engine and an Allison 4000 EVS automatic transmission, with a TAK-4 independent front suspension and carrying a Harrison Hydraulic 20-kW generator.

Ernie Young, Rosenbauer’s western regional sales manager, says most of the rescues Rosenbauer builds are heavy rescues on custom cabs and chassis with 24-foot- to 28-foot-long bodies. “Sometimes, a department will want a crane on their rescue to have boat loading and unloading ability and also for urban search and rescue (USAR) work,” Young says. “We’ve built rescues that carry lots of shoring and lumber for collapse work, equipment to cut rebar and concrete, with high anchor points for gin poles and high-angle rescue, on-scene toilets, and small command areas.”

Jason Kline, sales manager for Rosenbauer dealer IKON Fire, says that IKON has built small rescues for Rosenbauer, usually on a Ford F-550 cab and chassis, as well as medium rescues on commercial chassis with 16-to 20-foot bodies. “With the smaller rescues, you’re limited as to how much you can carry by the 19,500-pound gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR),” Kline says. “When you go with a medium commercial chassis, like an International or Kenworth, there are greater options for weight ratings and chassis selection, as well as the vehicle having a larger storage package.”

Chad Newsome, national sales manager for Rescue 1, says *the small vs. large rescue debate hinges on how much a department can afford, how much equipment will be carried, staffing limitations, the ability to get into certain areas, and the wear and tear put on the rig*. “A heavy-duty dedicated rescue is usually the best choice, but the reality is that a department may not have the staffing for it and may not be able to get it into places it needs to go, especially in rural areas with winding and hilly roads,” Newsome observes. “So, the nice thing about small rescues is that many of the day-to-day calls can be handled easily by them, and the cost of ownership is much less.”

Newsome says that Rescue 1 recently built a heavy rescue for the Somers (NY) Fire District on a Spartan EMFD Metro Star cab and chassis with a 20-foot body and an overall length of 35 feet. Contrasted with that truck is one Rescue 1 built for the Nutley (NJ) Fire Department on a Ford F-550 4x4 four-door cab and chassis with a body length of 12½ feet.

Joel Konecky, vice president of sales at SVI Trucks, says SVI recently built a walk-in heavy rescue for the Durham (NC) Fire Department on a Sutphen two-door cab and chassis with a walk-in body with a roof hatch/skylight and an inflatable raft roof with transferring rollers and tie-downs. He says the rig has a squad bench for four firefighters with four Zico Lock & Load Walkaway self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) brackets, an FRC InView 360-degree camera system, a custom front bumper with a 20,000-pound Sherpa winch, and a Command Light CL series light tower.

For the Gunnison County (CO) Fire Protection District, SVI built a light rescue on a Ford F-550 4x4 four-door cab and chassis with a Command Light Knight series light tower, an SVI custom-made steel bumper, a heavy-duty winch, and seven winch receivers.

Zach Rudy, director of sales for Sutphen, says Sutphen has built custom chassis rescues of large and medium size, on both single and tandem rear axles. Rudy says Sutphen built a medium walk-around rescue on a custom chassis with seating for four firefighters for the Gardner (MA) Fire Department on a single rear axle, with an 18-foot body, stairs at the back to reach coffin compartments on top, and a Command Light tower. He adds that for the Ingomar (PA) Fire Department, Sutphen built a partial walk-in rescue on a custom cab with a single rear axle and an entry door on the curbside in the center of the body leading to a small changing space/command area; the back of the truck holds a large air compressor.

Jeff Rhein, director of North American sales for HME Ahrens-Fox, says his company partners with Alexis Fire Equipment Company to build rescue trucks on HME’s single-rear-axle custom cab and chassis. “The rescues usually have a Cummins L9 or X12 engine, and Alexis puts on its 20-foot body and crafts the compartments,” he says.

Michael Cox, vice president of sales for Emergency Vehicles Inc. (EVI), says EVI has been building a lot of large rescues lately, with the walk-in style making a comeback. He says EVI built a walk-in heavy rescue on a Spartan long two-door (LTD) tandem-rear-axle cab and chassis with a 25-foot body for the Stafford County (VA) Fire and Rescue Department. The rig has four SCBA seats in the walk-in area, five interior storage cabinets, 12 exterior storage cabinets, a 25-kW generator, and a Will-Burt LED light tower.

For the Brockton (MA) Fire Department, EVI built a walk-in rescue on a Spartan four-door cab and chassis with a walk-through from the cab into the 20-foot body, multiple interior compartments, eight exterior compartments, a 25-kW Onan generator, and a 9,000-pound portable winch with four receiver

John Cockerill, sales representative for Seagrave dealer Hudson Valley Fire Equipment, says Seagrave has been building a mix of heavy and small rescues, with the large rescues built with stainless steel cabs and bodies and the small rescues with aluminum bodies because of GVWR considerations. “In the past year, they’ve done a lot of custom-cab single-axle walk-around rescues,” Cockerill notes, and only a handful of tandem-axle walk-in rescues.”

Nate Callahan, mechanical engineer for 4 Guys Fire Apparatus, says 4 Guys built a medium rescue for the Cazenovia (NY) Fire Department on a Freightliner M2 crew cab and chassis with a walk-in 16-foot body carrying a 10-kW Harrison Hydraulic generator, a four-bottle cascade system, and a Space Saver fill station. For the Ambridge (PA) Fire Department, 4 Guys built a small rescue on a RAM 5500 chassis with a 12-foot walk-around body, a transverse Stokes basket module in L1/ R1, and a rear traffic control light.

Joe Messmer, president of Summit Fire Apparatus, says Summit built a light rescue for the Rainelle (OH) Fire Department on a General Motors 4x4 crew cab and chassis with a 12-foot aluminum body, seven compartments, and a Smart Power 12-kW generator and a heavy rescue for the Alexandria (KY) Fire

Department on a Spartan chassis with a 21-foot eight-compartment body powered by a Caterpillar C13 engine and an Allison 3000 EVS automatic transmission.

Rob Pike, corporate services manager for Fort Garry Fire Trucks, notes Fort Garry built a walk-around rescue for the Morrisonville (NY) Fire Department on a Freightliner four-door cab and chassis with a 5083 saltwater marine-grade aluminum body, a Command Light tower, a 10,000-pound Warn Zeon winch, and four receivers. For the Holyrood (NL) Fire Department, Fort Garry built a small rescue on a Ford F-550 chassis with a 12-foot walk-around marine-grade aluminum body and a transverse compartment with a Slidemaster bidirectional roll-out tray.

Ross Fischer, fire and emergency product manager for Marion Body Works, says Marion recently built a walk-around rescue for the Reedsburg (WI) Fire Department on a Spartan Metro Star LFD cab and chassis with a 20-inch raised roof, a Harrison Hydraulic 6-kW generator, a Command Light tower, and two transverse roll-out tool boards. For the Volunteer Fire Company of Center Brunswick (NY), Marion built a walk-in rescue with a 20-foot body on a Spartan Metro Star LFD cab and chassis with a 20-inch raised roof and a command area at the back of the engine tunnel.

FIRE STATIONS

Volunteer Fire Stations Cost Some Lancaster County (PA) Taxpayers More Every Year; Here's Why

Jade Campos – LNP, Lancaster, Pa.

As East Hempfield Township's fire chief, John Kottmyer plans for "armageddon" but hopes for the best.

Armageddon, he said, will happen the moment township leaders decide they need to hire a full staff of professional firefighters.

Right now, Kottmyer said officials are doing everything they can to hold onto the roughly 40 volunteers who staff the Rohrerstown and Hempfield fire stations.

"Everyone always asks the question, 'When do you think it will have to switch? When will you cease being a volunteer fire department?' And my standard response is, 'When it happens,'" Kottmyer said. "There is no crystal ball."

Professional firefighters are an expensive cost to tack onto the growing list of expenses it takes to run any fire company — which is why Kottmyer uses such an apocalyptic word to describe the potential change.

The volunteer fire departments serving East Hempfield will cost the township \$1.5 million in 2025, a 29% jump from last year. And budget projections show fire expenses will increase by around \$1 million over the next five years if the volunteer model can be sustained.

Scott Wiglesworth, chairman of the township's board of supervisors, acknowledges that the costs are becoming unmanageable.

"At the current rate that (costs) are going up, we're not going to be able to get away without some kind of service fee or tax increase as we're going forward," Wiglesworth said. "We're trying to start that conversation."

Diane Garber, East Hempfield's emergency services coordinator, said the cost of fire trucks has soared in recent years, so the township has agreed to shoulder the rising costs to take the burden off of the volunteer departments to raise the money themselves.

Chicken barbeque sales were a longtime staple of volunteer fire stations, but the fundraisers are a drop in the bucket when it comes to purchasing a \$1.4 million ladder truck. Ten years ago, the cost of the same truck would have been around \$500,000.

Fundraising takes a lot of effort but brings in less than volunteer companies need to operate. And the hard work of organizing fundraisers is in addition to the long hours of training, paperwork and actual firefighting that comes with being a volunteer. Time pressures are one reason why fire companies across the state are struggling to recruit sufficient numbers of volunteers.

"Our departments and the surrounding departments and departments all across the state have tried giving people nicer clothes, putting placements in local restaurants, have tried billboards. They have tried websites, they have sent mailers, they have done Facebook and all the social media, they have phone a friend," Garber

said. "Everything possible that is easily taken on by a volunteer fire department is being done or has been tried."

PROACTIVE SOLUTIONS

Municipalities across the state have grappled with the volunteer fire department model since the 1970s. A 2018 report by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives found that the number of volunteer firefighters statewide fell by around 260,000 over 40 years.

Jerry Ozog, public safety specialist for the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, said people just don't have the time to volunteer anymore. Call volumes are up and training standards have soared. Vehicle prices are at an all time high, which Ozog attributed to a consolidation of the apparatus industry, meaning volunteers need to spend even more time fundraising to afford to serve the community.

Joining the local fire company is no longer something a significant number of community members do. As a result, Ozog said municipal and fire officials need to work together to improve volunteer retention while also preparing a recruitment campaign for professional firefighters.

"If the volunteer fire service is gonna go away in Pennsylvania, we let it go away," Ozog said. "You gotta step up and solve the problem in your organization. You have to be proactive and not let your fire department get to a point where there's nobody left."

Ozog said many municipalities are setting more money aside to fund volunteer stations. For example, East Hempfield contributed \$679,891 for the township's fire services in 2010. This year, the township is projected to give \$1.5 million.

Volunteer fire services need a predictable stream of revenue to sustain themselves, which doesn't come from fundraisers anymore. East Hempfield is a good example of a proactive community, Ozog said.

Kottmyer is a full-time employee, for example. His position was called for in a multiyear strategic plan drafted to confront problems facing the local fire stations. As fire chief, Kottmyer oversees the administrative work that comes with fighting fires like investigations and submitting grant applications.

Kottmyer's salary is a cost to township taxpayers, but his position takes the burden off of the volunteers who'd otherwise spend time filing paperwork on their own.

The township also spends \$479,000 a year on contract drivers for Rohrerstown who are on call 24/7 to fill in manpower gaps throughout the day. Paying for the drivers, who are trained firefighters, may seem counterproductive to the goal of retention, Kottmyer said, but it helps the volunteers feel supported.

The township in 2017 also approved a tax rebate for volunteers who live in the township. It costs a little bit of money every year, Garber said, but it's a worthwhile sacrifice in the face of major personnel costs.

FIRE TAX

Several county municipalities are using property taxes to maintain their volunteer departments. In 2011, Manor Township and Millersville Borough agreed to take on the costs of Blue Rock Fire Rescue, a merger of the former West Lancaster, Millersville, Highville and Washington Boro fire companies.

At the time of the merger, Manor Township created a fire tax, which essentially earmarks a portion of property tax revenue for the fire station. The tax was raised to .41 mills this year and is expected to generate \$637,200 to cover \$615,352 in expenses. It's the first time the fire budget has grown since 2011, too.

"We'd like our volunteer firefighters fighting fires," Manor Township Manager Ryan Strohecker said. "It takes a lot of time to keep our volunteer fire company sustainable."

Denver Borough, with a population of less than 4,000 people, adopted its own fire tax this year to raise \$110,000.

Randy Gockley, the county's former emergency management coordinator and longtime volunteer with Ephrata's Lincoln Fire Company, said a fire tax could be a "fairer" system given the declining number of people living in a company's service area who donate directly to the fire stations. He estimated around 25% of borough residents give a yearly contribution compared to 75% when he began in the 1970s.

"When you look at police departments and other parts of government, staffing is the big budget (driver)," Gockley said. "The volunteer fire system eliminates the cost of staff. We need help providing the station and the apparatus."

'CAN'T STAVE THIS OFF'

Like Kottmyer, fire officials across the county are bracing for armageddon. Gockley said it's unrealistic to assume that volunteer stations like Lincoln Fire will stay intact forever. But it's probably also unrealistic to believe that Ephrata could afford a full-time professional fire company, he said.

Reamstown Fire Company, which serves East Cocalico Township, recently merged with nearby Smokestown Fire Company. Consolidation is another recommendation the state makes to respond to dwindling volunteers amid rising costs.

Reamstown Chief Scott Achey said the two companies wanted to come together because it no longer made sense financially to do everything apart while in such close proximity. Despite the change, Achey agreed it's likely that professional fire staff will be needed at some point in the future.

"We love to do what we do, and we enjoy helping the community. It's the only way you could do this, you have to really love what you do. But it is coming, we can't stave this off forever," Achey said.

Manheim Township Manager Rick Kane, who served as the township's fire chief until 2022, said he's constantly fielding questions from managers across the county about how the township manages a career department. He estimates the department is roughly 95% full-time and part-time firefighters.

The answer is simple, he said. Manheim Township has a larger tax base than most municipalities in the county. In 2023, the Census Bureau estimated there are more than 44,000 township residents. Right next door, East Hempfield had just under 27,000.

Manheim Township started transitioning away from total volunteer services in 2009, when commissioners implemented a .43 mill fire tax. Kane predicts the tax will eventually be phased out in favor of simply raising real estate taxes.

Officials considering a transition to professional fire departments should take a gradual approach, Kane said. Trepidation about the change is understandable, he said.

"Those places that are fearful of that, (and) they should be," Kane said. "Because it costs a (whole lot) of money, there's no bones about it."

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	50
Last fire death 8/21/25 Odessa, Schuylr Co Male 22	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	84
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	694
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/55
	#2 NY/50
	#3 IL /40

Civilian home fire fatalities in 2025: **1403**

2046 civilian home fire fatalities in 2024

Week 35 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?

Fall River, MA, Facility Owner Knew About Missing Sprinkler Test before Deadly Fire

Hadley Barndollar, masslive.com

Five days before a fatal blaze ripped through Gabriel House, a fire safety contractor alerted the building owner his sprinkler system had not undergone the state-mandated five-year inspection, according to sources familiar with the investigation.

The revelation is a critical piece of the state's ongoing probe. On the night of July 13, in the second-floor unit where the fire started, the sprinkler didn't go off, sources told MassLive.

Ten residents of the Fall River assisted living facility were killed, the highest death toll in a Massachusetts fire in more than 40 years.

The building's sprinkler system had an annual inspection tag, meaning it had been visually inspected this year as required. However, there wasn't a five-year inspection tag indicating an intensive physical inspection of internal components had been conducted, according to Shane Ray, president of the National Fire Sprinkler Association.

Ray has knowledge of the active investigation headed by the Bristol County District Attorney's Office and the state Department of Fire Services. Officials are trying to determine if noncompliance with fire safety codes contributed to the severity of the fire that tested Fall River firefighters and police who converged on the building to rescue its 70 residents.

In a joint statement released last week, the National Fire Sprinkler Association and National Association of State Fire Marshals said neither entity is aware of a multiple-fatality fire "in a structure with a properly installed and maintained sprinkler system."

The Department of Fire Services declined to comment on specific facts and evidence while the investigation is ongoing.

As civil lawsuits pile up, the allegations echo each other; when the fire ignited in a resident's room, the sprinkler system didn't work properly, ultimately fueling a five-alarm blaze that spread across the building. State fire officials have said the cause is undetermined, but narrowed it down to either an electrical or mechanical failure of an oxygen concentrator or the improper use or disposal of smoking materials.

Targeted by the lawsuits are Gabriel House owner Dennis Etzkorn and Fire Systems Inc., the private contractor that inspected the building's sprinkler system over the last decade.

Some of the suits claim the sprinklers at Gabriel House had recalled components from decades prior, as first reported by WCVB, and that they weren't replaced.

In prior statements, Etzkorn has said the sprinkler system, which was inspected quarterly, passed routine testing just five days prior to the fire, on July 8. *But during the same visit, Fire Systems Inc. notified Etzkorn of his apparent ongoing failure to obtain a five-year inspection of the system's critical internal components, sources told MassLive.*

A spokesperson for Etzkorn said on Tuesday they're refraining from commenting on specific questions at this time because of the pending investigation and litigation. Etzkorn has previously said he turned over all relevant building records to investigating authorities.

The spokesperson cited Etzkorn's last public statement released on Aug. 6, which said he was working closely with investigators to find out "why a fire that should have been contained to one room spread beyond that point of origin, in light of all our inspections."

Etzkorn had contracted with Dartmouth-based Fire Systems Inc. to inspect Gabriel House's sprinklers and fire alarms since 2014. The contracted services, though, did not include five-year inspections, a source told MassLive.

In a statement this week, a Fire Systems Inc. spokesperson said the company conducted “periodic inspection and testing of the Gabriel House fire alarm and sprinkler system in accordance with its service agreement, applicable standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and local requirements.”

ARE FIRE SAFETY INSPECTIONS AN HONOR SYSTEM?

Also emerging after the fire are questions surrounding how sprinkler systems are inspected and tested in Massachusetts. Shortly after the July tragedy, Fall River Fire Chief Jeffrey Bacon said municipal fire inspectors rely on building owners to contract with licensed professionals to inspect and maintain their fire safety equipment, including sprinklers.

Those results, he said, are then relayed to local fire departments during their annual building inspection process.

During a press conference in July, Bacon said “no fire department in the country” is staffed to the level that they could verify and conduct all inspections themselves.

“We just don’t have the resources to do that,” Bacon said. “We need to rely on the licensed professionals to do those, to do their inspections. And we’re just following up to make sure those are done.”

The Fall River Fire Department inspected Gabriel House annually, and the assisted living facility passed its last six inspections, according to records.

On a check-off for sprinkler systems, fire department inspectors often initialed “FSI” — short for Fire Systems Inc., and noted the date the inspection was conducted. Bacon told MassLive his inspectors take cues from inspection tags contractors attach to the system’s valves.

He couldn’t comment on the missing five-year inspection tag at Gabriel House.

“I’m not sure every inspector would pick up on those,” Bacon said of five-year inspections. “That’s definitely something between the building owner and the sprinkler contractor.”

The impact of the devastating fire has spread far beyond Massachusetts. Ray recently spoke about it at an event in Florida and said [*the fire safety industry across the U.S. is focused on finding out why 10 people died at Gabriel House when sprinklers save lives at other residential facilities every day.*](#)

“The whole fire protection community is interested in this, so we can make changes in the future,” Ray said. “There are (building) owners out there who haven’t done what they’re supposed to do. We need the local and state jurisdictions to enhance the enforcement of this issue.”

Bacon anticipates the tragedy will prompt a critical examination of all relevant laws and requirements.

“From Coconut Grove (in Boston in 1942) to The Station nightclub (in West Warwick, Rhode Island in 2003), when there’s a tragedy of this magnitude, things change,” he said. “Unfortunately, that’s what it takes sometimes to move the needle on legislation and codes. But you’re going to see that that’s going to be a result of this.”

Gov. Maura Healey’s office would not comment when presented with the fire safety inspection allegations regarding Gabriel House’s sprinkler system, instead referring a reporter to other state agencies.

THE CURRENT CODE REQUIREMENTS

A MassLive analysis of fire safety standards in Massachusetts revealed there are many types of sprinkler inspections and testing requirements, each with varying schedules. Some are mostly visual, while others test sprinkler functionality and physically examine internal parts.

NFPA 25 — the National Fire Protection Association’s minimum standard for water-based fire protection systems — governs sprinkler inspections and testing. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code adopts NFPA 25, making it law. Cities and towns can take it further by adopting their own additional regulations.

[*According to the standard, property owners are responsible for ensuring proper inspection and maintenance of their sprinkler systems.*](#)

Sean Lawlor, president of the Fire Prevention Association of Massachusetts, likened the dynamic to an annual car inspection — the car’s owner is responsible for getting it inspected and ensuring any necessary repairs are made.

Building owners commonly hire licensed contractors to inspect and test their sprinkler systems.

Fire Systems Inc. has a current Massachusetts Systems Contractor Business License issued by the Board of State Examiners of Electricians, according to the Division of Occupational Licensure. The division licenses sprinkler apprentices, journeymen and contractors in the state.

State records also show there is one active sprinkler contractor license affiliated with Fire Systems Inc., issued by the Bureau of Pipefitters, Refrigeration Technicians and Sprinkler Fitters. Three apprentices are currently supervised by that individual.

“Corrections and repairs shall be performed by qualified maintenance personnel or a qualified contractor,” NFPA 25 reads.

Sprinkler systems require both annual and five-year inspections, the latter of which includes an assessment of piping and an in-depth evaluation of internal parts. Individual components have a range of inspection and testing schedules — from monthly to every 10 years. There is a distinction between visual — “from the floor” — and functional/internal inspections.

Visually, any sprinkler that shows signs of leakage, corrosion detrimental to performance or physical damage should be replaced, according to the standard.

If a sprinkler component is found to be under recall, the property owner should be notified in writing, the standard says, and then they are responsible to “correct, remedy, repair or replace components and equipment under recall or replacement program.”

The fire safety standard indicates that records should be maintained by building owners for all inspections, tests and maintenance of sprinkler systems, and they should be made available to local fire inspectors upon request.

Many communities are explicit about requiring records. In Reading, for example, the fire department has a webpage where building owners are required to upload evidence of inspections and testing. According to Stoneham’s town code, the fire department “will be annually requesting and reviewing records of completed testing and maintenance documentation of the fire suppression systems.”

In Fall River, Bacon said their policy is also to obtain documentation.

Fire departments should always ask for proof of inspections and their results, according to Ray, of the National Fire Sprinkler Association. That should be the gold standard across the board, he said.

State fire officials have said the ongoing death investigation at Gabriel House involves a “large number of relevant records, some of which are in the custody of third-party contractors requiring various processes to obtain.”

The investigation includes checking those records against appropriate regulations and investigators’ findings, they said. Investigators also took several sprinkler heads to assess.

SPRINKLERS WERE ‘INADEQUATE OR INOPERABLE’ ON NIGHT OF FIRE

Attorney Steven Sabra, of Sabra Law, wants to learn more about what the fire safety inspections at Gabriel House entailed. He’s representing residents in Bristol County Superior Court and is also the lead attorney on a wrongful death suit filed by a deceased resident’s son.

“If the inspection company does their thing and then they tell the owner and the owner says to the fire department, ‘Yup, it’s all set,’” Sabra said, “then the issue becomes, is that all there is? Does the fire department just figure that these inspection companies are somehow certified, I guess, and therefore they take their word for it?”

In one of Sabra’s lawsuits, Gabriel House residents Michael Pimental and James Dixon claim the sprinkler system was “inadequate or inoperable, and failed to provide sufficient warning or provide life safety systems to alert residents and staff of the danger from the fire.”

Another lawsuit filed by the nation’s largest injury law firm Morgan & Morgan, on behalf of three residents, says the sprinklers “were improperly installed and maintained, and therefore were not operational at the time of the subject fire.”

Police body camera footage shows that at least some of the sprinklers were working on the night of July 13. Water can be seen on the floor of the Gabriel House dining room and in one resident’s apartment.

- Read more: [Exclusive: State suspended Gabriel House’s license years before fatal fire](#)

[One of Sabra’s suits also claims that a prior recall of certain sprinkler components was skipped over — for decades.](#)

The National Fire Sprinkler Association doesn't yet know the specific manufacturer of the Gabriel House sprinklers, Ray said, but a major recall in the late 1990s and early 2000s was for Central Sprinkler Company "O-ring seals," a component that could degrade and cause sprinkler heads not to activate in a fire.

WCVB previously reported that O-ring seals were the component needing replacement at Gabriel House. Before opening as an assisted living facility in 1999, the building had been a motel and was built in 1964. It's not clear at this time whether "the gross negligence and reckless conduct" alleged in Sabra's lawsuits is attributable to Etzkorn or Fire Systems Inc., he said.

"Is it all on the inspection company or is it all on the owner, or a combination of both?" Sabra said. "If the fire started in a particular room and the sprinkler system in that room did not operate properly ... if it had, it would have extinguished the fire and you wouldn't have had all this death and destruction."

The National Fire Sprinkler Association and National Association of State Fire Marshals said jointly that if the sprinkler parts were in fact recalled and not replaced, "this could explain the tragic loss of life."

Building owners, contractors and local fire inspectors should be following NFPA 25 as well as any additional oversight put in place at the state or municipal level, Ray said.

"That standard is law," he said. "(Buildings) should be inspected in accordance with that standard."

He emphasized the "onus" of fire sprinkler inspections is on building owners.

GREEN TECHNOLOGY & THE FIRE SERVICE

Two Years After Chaumont Fire, NY Updates Fire Codes for Large Battery Installations

Alex Gau;t. Watertown Daily Times

State fire officials have adopted new standards for fire safety for large battery energy storage systems, the result of a safety push in part sparked by a major blaze in Jefferson County in July 2023.

Last week, the state Fire Prevention and Building Code Council adopted an update to the uniform fire code that sets the standards for fire safety across New York. Under the new code, which will take effect *Jan. 1, companies that build and operate large-scale battery energy storage facilities, known as BESS installations, will need to provide qualified staff with working knowledge of specific facilities who can be dispatched to a facility within 15 minutes of an emergency alert and arrive within 4 hours.*

They will also be required to expand safety signage and documentation on-site, providing a site map, basic equipment information and contact information on the perimeter fencing of an installation. *Facility operators will also have to provide an emergency response plan and provide site-specific training to local fire departments to explain how to fight a fire at a BESS facility.*

Individual installations will also be required to have centralized station service alarm systems, monitored 24/7 by a dedicated security team or contractor.

The new code also removes any exemptions for battery systems maintained by the major utility operators, now mandating that all projects in New York follow the new fire regulations.

The regulations come after years of work by an interagency fire safety working group called by Gov. Kathleen C. Hochul in 2023 to respond to a series of facility fires in Jefferson, Orange and Suffolk counties.

The 2023 Chaumont blaze, which started July 27, 2023, at a Convergent Energy-owned facility, burned for days and sparked a local air quality alert, although subsequent testing hasn't indicated any long-term contamination as a result of the fire. One of the first major fires at a BESS facility in the U.S., Chaumont's volunteer fire department and supporting neighboring departments were not immediately familiar with how to fight a battery fire.

Questions over what material to use to extinguish the flames were raised, and officials were not familiar with the details of the facility. About 30 regional departments were called to the scene over the course of the nearly weeklong response.

Lithium-ion batteries, like those used in BESS facilities, are heat-sensitive and can catch fire as a result of physical damage, water infiltration or technical errors. The smoke given off when a battery burns is toxic, and officials have raised concerns over potential groundwater contamination when an exposed battery is sprayed with water to quench a flame.

Assemblyman Scott A. Gray, R-Watertown, and Sen. Mark C. Walczyk, R-Sackets Harbor, introduced legislation that would have required that data sheets for facilities be made readily available near the perimeter of the site, which is now part of the state's fire code.

Battery storage facilities are likely to become more prevalent — they're often installed alongside solar or wind facilities to store energy during peak production periods, and officials in New York consider them essential to decarbonizing the state's energy grid.

Officials just this week moved forward with a request for proposals to build a new, 1-gigawatt energy storage installation. While the request does not specify what technology should be used to achieve the gigawatt goal, batteries present one of the most developed and tested methods of energy storage available today.

"Battery storage is a key element to building a green economy here in New York, and we have taken comprehensive efforts to ensure the proper safety standards are in place," Hochul said in a statement announcing the new rules. "With updating fire codes, we're ensuring that New York's clean energy transition is done safely and responsibly."

EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin weighs in on proposed lithium-ion battery facility in Hauppauge

Krista McNally

The Hauppauge Fire District is calling for a moratorium on a proposed 79-megawatt battery energy storage system.

Federal EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin returned to his home county Monday to address a controversial environmental issue that has stirred debate across Suffolk County.

Scott Munro, of the Hauppauge Fire District, says his department is worried about the risks firefighters could face if they had to battle a blaze at a lithium-ion battery storage facility.

"We have not really dealt with anything to this type of magnitude," Munro explained. He added that traditional firefighting methods may not work, raising concerns about toxic runoff contaminating drinking water.

The Hauppauge Fire District is calling for a moratorium on a proposed 79-megawatt battery energy storage system (BESS) facility that LIPA and Key Capture Energy hope to build on Rabro Drive. Opponents say the site is too close to schools, homes, places of worship, and businesses, all within a mile.

Zeldin released the first-ever federal guidelines on battery energy storage systems.

"We are here to help," Zeldin said. "We are putting out the guidelines based on our own experiences, our own lessons learned and the technical expertise that we have."

A bipartisan crowd gathered to hear the EPA's stance and to share their own concerns. Adrienne Esposito, with Citizen Campaign for the Environment said, "We were relieved today to hear the EPA say that they wanted to offer technical assistance and guidance. We think we have to have diversification in our energy resources."

Others in attendance expressed fears.

"There is just too much danger!" one person said.

The newly released federal guidelines outline installation considerations, resources for fire planning and facts about recent BESS fires.

STUFF FOR YOUR OFFICERS AND MEMBERS!



Anatomy of an Intersection Crash ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

During this presentation, Lee Price will break down what happens as we approach intersections while using lights and sirens. We'll explore the perceptions of other motorists, evaluate the various hazards, and try to understand how it is up to what we do to prevent a crash.

Wednesday 9/10/25 at 7:00PM

REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

<https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=6719afc0ab&e=781e9a2c81>



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 to 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>

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=MTE0MTczX0dsb2JlX0ZSMV9GdWxsTGlzdF8zNTY4Xzl2MzlxLjZfOC04LT11&b44ed14b=YmY5NWQ4NzktNWRmOC00MWJkLTkzMDctNzg0Y2VhZTNjMzYy&x=b12372ef>

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>

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 on **Sunday September, 21st**.

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

The 2026 Budget Calendar and the 2025 Election Schedule are posted to our Website at CAFDA.net

Just Another Slap in the Face,' 9/11 Victim's Kin Says about WTC Memorial Staff Salary Hikes

As the salaries of officials who run the 9/11 Memorial and Museum skyrocket, so does the ire of Sept. 11 survivors.

Thirteen of the museum's 411 employees made more than \$100,00.

The New York Post's investigation revealed President and CEO Elizabeth Hillman received \$856,216 — a \$775,084 base salary, \$34,500 in retirement and deferred compensation, and \$45,679 in other benefits.

Information shows that she received a 63 percent pay hike since she took over in 2022

Records also confirmed that Executive VP Joshua Cherwin, the chief advancement officer and second highest-paid official, hauled in a \$410,379 salary, plus \$75,919 in other compensation.

It was a 78 percent increase since 2020 when reporters also took a deep dive into the museum's finances. Despite charging a \$36 admission fee to the 9,000 daily visitors and bringing in \$93 million in 2024, the museum ended in the red last year to the tune of \$20 million, according to documents unveiled by reporters.

"How can you justify these salaries? It's just another slap in the face of the families, more pain and grief to add to the heartache," said retired FDNY Firefighter Jim McCaffrey whose brother-in-law, Firefighter Orio Palmer, died on 9/11.

The Post's probe showed the museum's payroll was \$34 million in 2024, compared to just \$22 million in 2020.

"From the very beginning it was very clear that the 9/11 Memorial and Museum would not only be the most expensive memorial museum ever built on the planet, but also the most expensive to operate as well," slammed Glenn Corbett, professor of fire science at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and advisor to 9/11 firefighter families.

He and others have long called for the museum to be taken over by the National Park Service.

"The 911 memorial museum is paying out bloated salaries while asking Congress for handouts," said Sally Regenhart, who lost her son, FDNY Firefighter Christian Regenhart in the attack.

At the heart of the families' long-running bitterness with museum leaders is their continued refusal to put the remains of the 1,100 still-unidentified victims anywhere but the building's basement, ignoring the pleas of families — while they profit on their tragedy, reporters noted.



It Blew Me Away': Local Volunteer Firefighter Reflects On Emergency Response To Fatal Pembroke Crash

Sarah Minkewicz

A local volunteer firefighter shared the moments he worked with other first responders to rescue a woman who was pinned under the bus in Friday's crash on I-90 in Pembroke, which killed five people and injured many others.

The rescue crews are being called heroes, but they say they were just doing their jobs.

"Hero? Nah. Just a guy trying to help," said David Olsen, a volunteer firefighter for the Indian Falls Fire Department. "There were a lot of us and that's what it takes."

Olsen's actions, and the actions of many other first responders, saved lives after the tour bus crash, which involved a total of 54 people.

The Pembroke and Indian Falls fire departments were one of the first to arrive on the scene.

"I've been an EMT since 83 and I was a police officer for 32 years, and I've never come across anything like what we had Friday afternoon," said Edward Mileham Jr., the assistant chief of the Pembroke Fire Department.

"There were six of us. We got there and there was a bus on its side," Olsen said. "There were people who had been ejected from the bus, their belongings — a huge mess and obviously a huge problem we were never going to be able to deal with."

At least, not on their own. Backup then arrived from agencies across Western New York, including fire departments, EMS services and police.

"Crews from all over, they were there from miles away showing up to help," Olsen said. "The cooperation and help was amazing. It blew me away, more than I had ever seen."

Olsen came across a woman pinned under the wheels of the bus.

"[We] started to dig with a shovel to try to dig underneath this person," Olsen said. "She was underneath the rear wheel of the bus, trapped there, couldn't move. The Akron and Clarence fire departments, which are neighboring districts, showed up with equipment to brace the bus up and they really knew what to do."

While one first responder kept the woman calm, a local towing company showed up with equipment to lift the bus as carefully as possible.

"It wasn't on a flat, level surface and if you lift one side of the bus up, it slid," Mileham Jr. said.

Each time the bus was lifted a little bit, airbags were placed underneath to prevent it from collapsing.

"It's a slow process," Olsen said. "It was a half an inch at a time."

They were finally able to free the woman, pulling her out, alive.

"She was able to say thank you and it's something everybody enjoyed hearing," Olsen said.

The death toll could have been higher, if not for the first responders and emergency crews who stepped in to help.

With an aging population of volunteer firefighters in rural areas like Pembroke, Olsen worries that in a few years, help won't be this close.

In moments like these, minutes and seconds matter.

"If you want to make the world a better place, you need to step up and take ownership of it and be a part of it, be a part of something bigger than yourself," Olsen said. "There were a hundred people who believed in that out there that day. They're out there, and we need more."

LAUGH OUT LOUD!!

When a woman says, "Correct me if I'm wrong." Do not under any, I mean ANY circumstances do it!!

If your birth year starts with 19, you should no longer wrap gifts on the floor.

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Clifton Park-Halfmoon Fire District #1, is currently seeking District Station Keepers. Starting salary range is between \$21.00 and \$26.50 per hour depending on experience and qualifications. Candidates must be a minimum of 21 years of age and possess a valid NYS driver's license, a class B is preferred but training will be provided by the fire district to obtain a commercial driver's license. Candidate should be CPR/AED qualified. Preference may be given to active interior, SCBA qualified members of a local fire department.

Interested candidates should contact Director of Purchasing Grant Roberts via email at groperts@cliftonparkfire.org to submit and a resume and obtain a complete job description.

All resumes MUST be submitted by 3:00PM, September 8th, 2025

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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

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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..

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Brendan Kennedy ext 356



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FIRE STATION PEST CONTROL



431 New Karner Rd Suite 170
Albany, NY 12205
<https://fox-pest.com/albany-ny>

BANKING/FIRE SERVICE FUNDING SOURCES



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Assistant Vice President and
Senior Business Banking Officer
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www.nbtbank.com



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Ph: 518-730-3120
Cell: 518-506-0075
farstadd@pioneerbanking.com

*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 Hwy. 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