



# THE BULLETIN

JUNE 13, 2026

The Voice of CAFDA since 2004  
Editor, Tom Rinaldi – [tom@rinaldi1.com](mailto:tom@rinaldi1.com) since 2014  
When you see \*\*, highly recommended article

## CAPITAL SHORT TAKES

- A recording of the video Future of the Fire Service, panel discussion and open forum is available on the AFDNYS.org website.
- Hundreds of thousands of space heaters sold at Costco and other major retailers for years are being recalled after reports that the units overheated and caught fire, prompting federal safety officials to warn consumers to stop using them immediately. Vornado SRTH small room tower heater was sold between August 2013 and January 2017 with the item number 1002889 (UPC 43765008478).
- Stellantis is recalling more than 1 million 2021-205 Jeep Wrangler and Gladiator vehicles over a defect that could spark a fire, urging owners to park their vehicles outdoors and away from buildings until a remedy is available. In the affected vehicles, an electrical issue involving the wiring for the electric hydraulic power steering pump could cause nearby materials to overheat and potentially ignite.

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

### From CAFDA

**1. Join us at the NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday September 10 features dinner for attendees. Please join us.**

ZOOM LINK FOR THE SEPTEMBER MEETING at 7pm:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89275151494?pwd=H9Wzo77bprmGQd5beFEjODUJxebjC.1>

**2. Mark your calendar for the CAFDA Conference '27, Lake George NY, April 9-10-11, dinner/vendor show Friday April 10<sup>th</sup> Fort William Henry Carriage House. Sponsored Mixer the evening of Thursday April 9<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn Resort, food, games, beverages. The response has grown each year and we are in the process of identifying the subjects for 2027.**

**3. Mark your calendars now, CAFDA Fall Seminar, Saturday November 7th, at a location in Colonie to be announced. The Education Committee has identified the subjects including the ever popular "Experts Panel".**

**4 CAFDA Commissioner Training for 2027 will be held in Averill Park, Thomas Corners, Clifton Park, Schoharie and Warrensburg.**

**A DAY AT THE RACES to be held again this summer, stay tuned for more information, Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, in the Picnic Paddock Area, lunch included.**

### CAFDA TRAINING AND EVENT DATES

Day/Date	Time	Type	Location	Notes
<b>FY 2026</b>				

July, 2026	NO MEETING, See next month's Day at the Races			
Friday, August 7, 2026	1:00 PM	Membership Activity	Saratoga Race Course	NYRA Day at the Races!
Thursday, August 13, 2026	7:00 PM	Board of Directors Meeting	Clifton Park	
Thursday, September 10, 2026	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, October 8, 2026	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officers/Director Nominations
Saturday, November 7, 2026	8:00 AM	Annual Fall Workshop	Verdoy	
Thursday, November 12, 2026	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
DECEMBER 2026	NO MEETING			
<b>FY 2027</b>				
Saturday, January 2, 2027	9:00 AM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting
Thursday, April 8 - Saturday April 10, 2027		CAFDA Conference '27	Fort William Henry Conference Center	Lake George
Thursday, April 6 - Saturday April 8, 2028		CAFDA Conference '28	Fort William Henry Conference Center	

## From Other Organizations

### ***NYSAFC is Bringing Hands-On Training to Your Area!***

#### **FIRE BEHAVIOR ON THE INSIDE**

REGISTRATION: <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/firebehavior>

#### **FLASHOVER**

REGISTRATION: <https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/flashover>



### ***Leading by Example: Get Screened for Cancer Early ESIP WEBINAR SERIES***

In honor of National Cancer Survivor's Month, we invite you to a roundtable discussion featuring [Dave Denniston](#) and [Pat Quinn](#). They will be exploring why early cancer screenings are so vital!

Date: Wednesday 6/17/2026 Time: 7:00 PM EST

#### **REGISTER AT THIS LINK:**

<https://mcneilandcompany.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=03596f243a9d922954ebaf15e&id=ff30619dd5&e=781e9a2c81>

### ***NYSAFC 2026 Seminar Series "Dangerous Spaces: Challenges and Tactics When Dealing with Garage and Basement Fires" With Chief/Commissioner Michael Lombardo (Buffalo Fire Department)***

<https://www.nysfirechiefs.com/2026seminarseries>

Pre-registration is encouraged. On-site registration will be accepted if space permits.

Note: A 3% service fee will be applied if paying by credit card.

2026 Dates and Locations are available at the website for this series.

## LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

## From Albany

When you review the summary of the legislation that is related to the volunteer fire service in the state, it will become clear that the majority legislators in the senate and the assembly do not genuinely care about you and I they have a much different agenda which does not address our issues. Out of all the bills related to the fire service introduced; only six made it through both chambers and one of those bills requires what we don't need, additional training; the one thing we are unified in complaining about!

The legislators have demonstrated by their actions that they are more concerned with their pronouns and progressive agenda items, than the health of the volunteer fire service in this state.

If there were 25K bills introduced in the session how many can they pay real attention to? Note that only bills introduced by the majority party have made it through the committee process to a floor vote and to the Governor's desk. We will wait to see what she signs into law.

Next time one of these politicians asks what they can do for you the answer is "genuinely support us" and pass the legislation that we endorse that will improve participation in the volunteer fire service!

S8832 KAVANAGH	A9504 GLICK	1/23/26 PASSED SENATE 2/10/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	THIS CHAPTER AMENDMENT MAKES RETAILERS' ACCEPTANCE OF E-BIKE AND E-SCOOTER BATTERIES VOLUNTARY. ANY COLLECTION SITES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO MINIMIZE CO-LOCATION WITH RESIDENTIAL HOUSING TO THE EXTENT FEASIBLE, BE CONVENIENT FOR CONSUMERS AND COMPLY WITH APPLICABLE FIRE SAFETY AND BUILDING CODES.	N	2/13/26 SIGNED CHAPTER 87
S6368B SKOUFIS (D)	A3126B LUNDSFORD (D)	4/22/26 PASSED SENATE 3/30/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	REQUIRES THAT WHEN A COMPLAINT IS MADE TO LOCAL CODE ENFORCEMENT OF A VIOLATION OF THE UNIFORM FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING CODE OR A LOCAL CODE WHICH RESULTS IN THE ISSUANCE OF A COMPLIANCE ORDER, THE COMPLAINANT SHALL ALSO BE PROVIDED A COPY OF SUCH ORDER.	N	TO GOVERNOR FOR SIGNATURE
S9502A MARTINEZ (D)	A10885B STERN (D)	5/2/26 PASSED SENATE 6/1/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	Surviving spouses of police officers AND FIREFIGHTERS killed in the line of duty. 1. After the local legislative body of a county, city, town, or village passes a local law, or a school district passes a resolution, notwithstanding any other provision of law, real property owned by a surviving spouse of a police officer OR FIREFIGHTER killed in the line of duty, and constituting the primary residence of such surviving spouse shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of fifty per centum of the assessed valuation thereof.	N	TO GOVERNOR FOR SIGNATURE EXEMPTION IS CONTINGENT ON ACTIONS OF EACH LOCAL AHI PASSING IT!!
S7316 HINCHEY (D)	A8008 LUNSFORD (D)	5/18/26 PASSED SENATE 6/1/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	REQUIRES THE FORFEITURE OF BENEFITS TO BE PAID PURSUANT TO A SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM TO VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS WHO HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF FELONIES COMMITTED AGAINST A VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, FIRE DISTRICT, OR FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT.	N	TO GOVERNOR FOR SIGNATURE
S5614 ADDABBO (D)	A3681A WOERNER (D)	6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 1/28/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	REMOVES RESTRICTIONS ON THE FREQUENCY CERTAIN AUTHORIZED NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS MAY CONDUCT BINGO GAMES. (COMMITTING TO RULES INSURES THIS WILL BE CONSIDERED PROMPTLY IN 2026 SESSION)	N	TO THE GOVERNOR FOR SIGNATURE
S4675 JACKSON (D)	A688 BUTTENSCHON (D)	5/6/26 PASSED SENATE 4/29/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW, IN RELATION TO PROVIDING MINIMUM BASIC TRAINING RELATED TO HANDLING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS INVOLVING INDIVIDUALS WITH ANY PHYSICAL AND/OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY TO ALL FIREFIGHTERS	N	OPPOSE MORE MANDATED TRAINING TO THE GOVERNOR FOR SIGNATURE

## From Washington

### WASHINGTON WATCH

Applications for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program; Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program; and Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant Program are now open until **June 22, 2026**.

A link to each grant opportunity is below:

[→ AFG Link](#)

[→ SAFER Link](#)

[→ FP&S Link](#)

## From Federal DOL/OSHA

See the latest from DOL/OSHA at CAFDA.net website.

## FIRE DISTRICT FINANCIAL NEWS

### Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

Phone: (518) 474-4037; Email: [localgov@osc.ny.gov](mailto: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

### NYS-OSC Fire Service Audits

None this week that we haven't already reported on.

Fire District audits are available at [osc.ny.gov/local-government/audits/fire-district](http://osc.ny.gov/local-government/audits/fire-district)

## THE FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

### \*\*Same fire, different year: Why we struggle to learn from our mistakes

William Howe

The tones drop. A crew misses a radio transmission. Somebody freelances. A mayday comes too late. Accountability breaks down in a fast-moving scene. An exhausted medic makes a medication error at three in the morning after running nonstop calls for hours. Somewhere after the incident is over and the rigs are back in quarters, somebody inevitably says, "We've got to learn from this."

The problem is, we often do not. Or maybe more accurately, we learn from mistakes *temporarily*. A close call sparks conversations. Policies get rewritten. Training gets emphasized for a few months. Leadership talks about accountability and lessons learned. Then time passes. Personnel changes. Staffing shortages return. Complacency creeps back in. *Eventually, the same mistakes begin to reappear under different department names, incident reports and years.*

*Communication failures, freelancing, poor accountability, fatigue-related errors, weak command presence, training culture and resistance to change have been identified repeatedly throughout decades of line-of-duty death reports and after-action reviews.* We also see how an organization's reluctance to address mental health can impact membership, not to mention department culture and retention.

We already know the problems. The challenge is that we still struggle with *institutional learning*, the ability to permanently absorb lessons and consistently apply them across generations.

#### RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

One of the profession's biggest weaknesses is confusing experience with expertise. Time on the job absolutely matters, *but years alone do not automatically equal competence*. A firefighter with 20 years of repeating poor habits is not necessarily experienced; sometimes, they are simply comfortable. Yet parts of the fire service still resist change with the familiar phrase, "We've always done it this way." That mindset becomes dangerous when the profession itself continues evolving rapidly.

*The firefighters who remain effective over long careers are usually the ones who stay teachable.* They continue training, continue adapting and continue asking questions long after probation ends. The moment someone believes they have nothing left to learn is often when danger begins to creep in.

#### COMMUNICATION FAILURES

Communication is another area the profession continues to relearn the hard way. *After almost every major incident or near miss, investigators identify the same recurring issues: incomplete size-ups, missed assignments, poor radio discipline, unclear command structure or delayed mayday declarations.*

The frustrating part is that we already have systems designed to prevent these failures. Incident Command System principles, crew resource management and standardized communication models are no longer new concepts. Yet under stress, many departments still fall apart operationally because communication standards were never fully built into the culture.

*Completing online ICS courses and checking training boxes does not automatically create disciplined fireground communication.*

Departments that communicate effectively during major incidents are usually the ones that practice disciplined communication in routine operations every time. Chaos does not create weak systems; it exposes them.

### **FREELANCING**

Every firefighter who has spent time on a busy engine, truck, rescue or medic unit has witnessed freelancing — crews taking assignments without communicating, companies self-deploying to another division because they “saw smoke” or officers operating outside the incident action plan, believing they are helping the operation move faster. On a single-house fire, that behavior can already create accountability and safety problems. During large-scale disasters involving hospitals, healthcare systems, evacuation operations and regional coordination, freelancing becomes exponentially more dangerous.

Imagine a major hurricane in which EMS units begin independently transporting patients to facilities already on diversion or fire companies self-assign to overwhelmed hospitals without coordination, while coalition partners are actively trying to balance staffing, fuel, oxygen delivery and patient movement across an entire region. Even during mass-casualty incidents, a single uncoordinated decision can create traffic congestion at treatment areas, overwhelm receiving hospitals, or disrupt resource tracking for emergency management and healthcare partners.

The modern fire service prides itself on disciplined operations and strong incident command for a reason. Regional disasters demand the same discipline on a much larger scale. Healthcare coalitions and unified planning help reduce freelancing by ensuring that agencies understand not only their own mission but also how their actions affect the broader response system around them.

### **FATIGUE-RELATED ERRORS**

Fatigue may be one of the most normalized dangers in modern fire and EMS culture. *The profession has become remarkably good at joking about exhaustion while simultaneously ignoring its operational consequences.* Sleep deprivation has become part of the identity. Firefighters brag about nonstop shifts, endless overtime and running all night without rest as though exhaustion somehow proves dedication.

*But fatigue is not a personality trait. It is a physiological impairment.* Exhausted firefighters and medics make mistakes. Medication errors increase. Driving performance declines. Situational awareness narrows. Decision-making suffers. Emotional control deteriorates. Yet many departments still treat fatigue management as a weakness rather than as an operational risk management issue. No firefighter would knowingly disconnect their SCBA in an IDLH environment, but the profession routinely expects providers to make life-and-death decisions after functioning for extended periods with little meaningful sleep.

*At some point, the fire service must stop glorifying burnout and start recognizing fatigue for what it truly is: a threat to responder and patient safety.*

### **POOR ACCOUNTABILITY**

The profession also struggles with how it handles mistakes internally. Too often, firefighters and medics remain silent about near misses, bad decisions or operational failures because they fear humiliation, punishment or becoming the target of station gossip and social media criticism. That culture creates dangerous consequences. Organizations that focus exclusively on blame eventually teach people one lesson above all others: Hide mistakes better next time.

That is *not* how high-reliability organizations improve.

Accountability absolutely matters, especially in cases involving recklessness or negligence. But there is a difference between accountability and public destruction. A profession focused entirely on punishment limits honest discussion, and honest discussion is where meaningful learning happens. *Departments that genuinely improve are usually the ones willing to ask uncomfortable questions after incidents, rather than immediately searching for someone to sacrifice.*

### **WEAK COMMAND PRESENCE**

Equally important is the issue of command presence and leadership integration during unified operations. Weak command presence during multi-agency incidents quickly creates uncertainty, especially when fire/EMS agencies operate alongside healthcare administrators, emergency managers, public health officials and law enforcement partners who may not traditionally function within the fire service’s command culture. A hesitant

or poorly coordinated command structure can lead to conflicting priorities, communication breakdowns and delayed decision-making at the exact moment regional coordination matters most.

Fire officers today must be comfortable not only managing tactical fireground operations but also operating within unified command environments where healthcare system impacts, evacuation coordination, resource shortages, shelter operations and public health concerns compete for attention simultaneously. *Strong command presence in these environments is no longer just about controlling the scene; it is about building confidence across multiple disciplines, maintaining operational clarity, and ensuring that every agency involved understands the mission, priorities and direction of the response.*

### **MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA**

The fire service has also been slow to fully accept mental health as part of operational readiness. For decades, firefighters and medics were expected to absorb repeated trauma silently. Fatal pediatric calls, suicides, violence, abuse, gruesome accidents, and death notifications became normalized parts of the job while emotional reactions were often viewed as weakness. That culture is changing, but not fast enough.

*Behavioral health is not separate from operational readiness. Firefighters carrying unresolved trauma eventually bring those effects back into the station, into decision-making, into relationships and sometimes into destructive coping mechanisms.* Departments have significantly improved peer support systems and behavioral health resources in recent years, but stigma persists in parts of the profession. The idea that emotional suppression equals toughness has probably damaged as many firefighters as the job itself.

### **TRAINING CULTURE**

*Training culture presents another challenge. There is growing pressure for training to look impressive rather than simply be effective.*

Departments sometimes focus heavily on flashy drills, dramatic videos and aggressive training culture branding while neglecting basic competencies that actually save lives. The fundamentals remain what matter most:

- Disciplined communication
- Building construction knowledge, reading smoke
- Scene accountability
- Strong EMS fundamentals
- Consistent size-ups
- Repetition under stress

Nobody posts viral videos of firefighters calmly performing routine tasks correctly, but those routine tasks prevent tragedies every single day. Real professionalism is often repetitive, disciplined and honestly a little boring. But boring fundamentals win emergencies.

### **WHY DON'T WE LEARN?**

So why is learning from mistakes still so difficult in the fire service? Because this profession is deeply personal. Firefighters and medics build identities around this work. Departments become family. Traditions matter. Pride matters. Criticism, even constructive criticism, can feel personal because people care deeply about the profession and the organizations they serve. Nobody wants to believe their department could fail. Nobody wants to imagine tragedy happening under their leadership or on their watch. But meaningful growth requires uncomfortable honesty.

*The fire service does not naturally drift toward excellence. It drifts toward complacency unless leaders intentionally fight against it.*

Departments that improve in the long term are usually the ones willing to self-evaluate honestly, train consistently, adapt when necessary and admit weaknesses before tragedy forces the issue publicly.

### **REASON FOR OPTIMISM**

Despite all these challenges, there is reason for optimism. Firefighters and medics entering the profession today are often highly educated, motivated and eager to improve the culture. Many care deeply about training, leadership development, communication, responder wellness and professional accountability. Across the country, there are outstanding departments and leaders working hard to move the profession forward while preserving the traditions that truly matter.

*The fire service will always make mistakes. Every profession does. The real danger begins when organizations convince themselves they have already learned the lesson, even as they continue to repeat the same behavior. That is when history stops being history and starts becoming a pattern.*

## THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

### **PROCEDURE AND FORMS TO EXPEND MONEY FROM A CAPITAL RESERVE ACCOUNT**

Reprinted from Fire District Affairs - AFDSNY

Boards of Fire Commissioners frequently ask about the proper procedure for expending funds from a capital reserve fund established under General Municipal Law §6-g. The statute sets forth a clear process to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with permissive referendum requirements.

Approval Process:

1. The Board must approve any expenditure from a capital reserve fund by adopting a resolution at a properly noticed Board meeting.
2. The Secretary records the resolution in the meeting minutes and must publish a legal notice in the official district newspaper within ten (10) working days of the meeting.

#### **Permissive Referendum:**

- After publication, there is a 30-day period during which resident taxpayers may file a petition to challenge the expenditure.
- For a petition to be valid, it must be signed and acknowledged like a deed, and must come from taxpayers owning at least one-quarter of the assessed value of all taxable property in the district, based on the latest assessment rolls.
- If no valid petition is filed within 30 days, the Board may proceed to expend funds from the account on the approved project or purchase.
- Because of the high threshold for a petition, challenges requiring voter approval are rare. Nonetheless, the Board must wait the full 30 days before authorizing expenditures.

#### **Documentation and Proof:**

- The Secretary should obtain an affidavit of publication from the newspaper as evidence that the legal notice was published.
- This affidavit should be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting.
- The Treasurer should not pay publication fees unless the claim voucher includes the affidavit.

#### **Project-Specific Expenditures:**

- The resolution and legal notice must identify a specific capital project or purchase. Funds may only be spent on the listed project or purchase.
- The Treasurer cannot authorize payments from a capital reserve fund without a direct link to the approved project or purchase.
- Similarly, the Board should not approve claim vouchers related to a capital reserve fund unless the payment aligns with a project for which the proper procedure was followed

#### **Exceeding Budgeted Amounts:**

- The resolution and legal notice establish a maximum expenditure amount for the project or purchase.
- If the total cost will exceed the approved amount, the Board must adopt an amended resolution, publish a new legal notice, and complete a new permissive referendum process before expending funds above the original limit.

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- Follow the statutory resolution, publication, and waiting period requirements strictly.
- Ensure all expenditures are tied to a specific approved project or purchase.
- Maintain thorough documentation, including affidavits of publication and Board minutes, to provide legal proof of compliance.

[Click on this PDF to see notes from DOL related to Prevailing Wage Rates for Construction, Article 8](#)

**PREVAILING WAGE RATE NOTES OPEN THIS LINK:**

<https://cafda.net/information-on-the-nys-dol-prevailing-wage-rates-for-fire-districts/>

## POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

### POSITIVE OUTCOMES

No Report

### FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

- Taftville, Connecticut Fire Company was closed Friday morning, becoming the second local volunteer fire department to be shuttered by city officials this year over safety concerns and other issues such as the inability to answer calls. The City of Norwich has replaced volunteer Taftville firefighters at the Providence Street station with career personnel.
- After the Gaines, Michigan Township Board appointed a new fire chief, 17 firefighters and command staff walked out. The person firefighters said was unifying the department, Interim Chief Scott Mangrum, didn't get the position he's held since last August. "What qualifications or factors led the Board majority to conclude that a candidate who had not served with the department for more than three years was the better choice? Why was the candidate who had been successfully serving as Interim Chief not selected despite having the support of the department's leadership?" firefighters want to know. When the recently appointed Stevens retired in 2022, he wrote in an e-mail, to township officials: "I will not work for an employer who treats me the way this township has after more than thirty-one years of qualified and dedicated service." Despite being overlooked, Mangrum is working with the town manager to get the firefighters back.
- Fort Smith, Arkansas Fire Chief Darrell Clark said eliminating seven uniformed positions and closing one of the fire stations was one of the toughest decisions of his career. Three driver positions, three firefighter positions, and one administrative battalion chief position were cut. One positive aspect to this reduction was keeping the three captain positions from the cut station, and moving them to our heavy rescue which was previously staffed by only two.

## SATISTICS FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

### FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY – PROTECTING OUR OWN

#### **FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES**

# 32

***In 2025 we experienced 78 LODDs reported nationally.!***

- **Data from US Fire Administration on LODD:** <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/>
- **Information on FF injuries and deaths from the Secret List:** <https://www.firefighterclosecalls.com/>
- **Information of Fire Apparatus MVCs:** <https://www.emergencyvehiclresponse.com/>

#### *Fire Apparatus Accidents*

- The driver of a Mini Cooper and a 10-year-old passenger died Friday in Hemet, California in a collision with a fire truck racing to a blaze in Riverside County. The Cal Fire engine's driver and two other firefighters riding in the apparatus were transported to Inland Valley Hospital for evaluation. Medical personnel later released all three.
- Firefighters on FDNY Engine 82 were in route to an emergency when the rig struck a woman down the block from their Intervale Avenue firehouse.

- One person died following a crash in Tama County, Iowa earlier this month involving a volunteer firefighter responding to a fire call. A volunteer firefighter was driving a personal pickup truck to the Chelsea Fire Station with emergency flashers activated in response to a fire call. The truck failed to stop at the intersection and collided with a vehicle heading eastbound on Highway E66. Both drivers suffered serious injuries.

*Firefighter Maydays, Serious Injuries and Deaths*

- Rockdale County Firefighter Juan Antonio Smith was riding in a jump seat of the tower ladder when it rolled onto its side in Conyers, Georgia. The firefighter was ejected and pinned under the rig as it rolled onto its side.

**THE BUILDING AND FIRE CODE ISSUES – WEEKLY REPORT ON FIRE FATALITIES**

- Home Fire Fatalities in the News: <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/civilian-fatalities/>

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	39
6/2/26 Irondequoit, Monroe Co. Male 88 and Female 77	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	86
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	575
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/ 49
	#2 NY 39
	#3 OH 37
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2026: <b>922</b>	
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 my question to you is; when does a new home become an old home?	

**NOTE: The New ICC Code-NYS Edition went into effect on December 31<sup>st</sup> 2025 although the implementation of the energy code provisions have been withdrawn until further notice.**

**FIRE APPARATUS**

***\*\*Performance vs. Appearance: How Was Your New Rig Designed?***

Tom Shand and Mike Wilbur

Over the past few years, there’s been a trend in the apparatus industry to change the appearance of new rigs, with varying degrees of black color treatments, including on wheels, stepping surfaces, body attachments and aerial devices. Recent trips to regional and national trade shows as well as inspection trips to apparatus manufacturing facilities revealed that the trend is increasing.

*The root cause for this “blackout” seems to be the desire of apparatus committees to change the appearance of the apparatus, at times without regard to safety, operations performance or increased cost.*

**COSTLY COLORATION**

During the past few months, the cost of new apparatus accelerated dramatically because of a number of factors. These sometimes-double-digit increases have affected many departments’ fleet replacement plans. Furthermore, deliver time frames of all models of rigs have been lengthened, to as long as 18–24 months. Some manufacturers added price escalators into their contracts because of the volatility of metals and materials costs. In addition, where bid specifications would request that the quoted price be valid for at least 60 days—to allow time to review proposals to determine which manufacturer most closely meets the technical specifications—departments are finding that a price is valid only for 30 days or fewer.

Apparatus committees generally are responsible for developing requirements that complement the department’s operations while following local jurisdictional purchasing requirements. *The most important step*

*in this process is to define the mission of the vehicle, to ensure that the completed apparatus will function as planned and will be capable of safely accessing all areas that are within the response district.* Apparatus that are poorly conceived, particularly combination units, such as rescue engines and quints, tend to end up larger and heavier than originally planned and do a lot of things but nothing particularly well.

With the increased use of nationally recognized purchasing consortiums, fewer departments actually write a detailed specification or determine their preferred manufacturer at some point in the process. This methodology allows the apparatus committee to choose from an almost unlimited number of options to configure the vehicle, including specific areas of cab, body and aerial device paint, aftermarket coatings and graphics. There is nothing wrong with some degree of vehicle customization, including company patches, slogans and identification numbers to promote company pride in the apparatus. However, when a vehicle no longer can be identified easily as a fire apparatus, somewhere along the line the mission failed.

The following includes two accounts in which the appearance of an apparatus took precedence over the performance and functionality of the rig.

While conducting a final inspection on a new rear-mount ladder, a department was reviewing its new pumper, which featured blacked out wheels, front bumper, scene and warning lights and pump panels, including black reflective lettering and stripping. What was most striking was that this department also chose to black out all step surfaces, the rear hosebed and dividers with an aggressive black coating. Not much of this design made sense to us, and when we inquired about the cost of these features, *we were told that the additional cost was \$54,000.*

Apparatus committees should consider that they are called on to design apparatus that are consistent with the department's mission while being responsible for the total cost of the vehicle, which, in most cases, is paid for with some level of public tax-supported funding. Ultimately, apparatus are built to protect the public that's served, and the vehicles should be designed to enhance safety, training and fireground operations.

Back in the day, aerial ladders were painted gray, with an occasional rig having the tip of the fly section coated with a bright fluorescent color for visibility. With the introduction of articulating elevating platforms, along with rear-mounted aerial towers, white became a popular color for the boom and ladder sections. The painted surfaces on a steel aerial device generally were easy to clean, although they did require more maintenance than an aluminum device and its lack of painted surfaces.

During a recent preconstruction conference on a mid-mount tower ladder, the apparatus committee had to determine the desired color of paint on nine different parts of the device, including the ladder sections, the platform, the turntable, the operator's pedestal, and the elevation and extension cylinders. Several multicolored aerial devices were reviewed, and the decision was made to duplicate one of these liveries on the new tower. Once the change order was received, it was noted that some of the different colors that were selected were nonstandard metallic colors that incurred an additional cost.

Another department that selected a dark gray for the aerial device found that this color brought an upcharge of \$3,200.

Some departments have opted to paint the aerial sections and platform in black, which significantly affects the visibility of the device when operating in heavy smoke or during nighttime operations. This correlated with a trend over the past few years to abandon the traditional white-over-red paint scheme in favor of black-over-red, with additional blacked out components on the vehicle. More recently, this expanded to include blacked out wheels, aluminum tread plate and stepping surfaces. At some point, it might make sense just to paint the entire vehicle black and rely on reflective lettering and graphics to have some degree of identification on the apparatus.

*Although there have been many comments and excuses made for why blacked out components were provided on the apparatus, few, if any, make much sense, other than the committee was permitted to make these changes, despite cost increases that do little to enhance safety or operational readiness.*

Perhaps it's time for a reset, to evaluate where priorities should be placed when developing specifications, including functional requirements, for new apparatus. Although the appearance of a rig is important and can enhance department pride in the new unit, the performance of the apparatus should be just as important, particularly in the areas of safety and operational readiness.

## **OUT OF SIGHT?**

The phrase “being combat-ready” has been utilized to describe the level of training that should be provided to departments to enhance their operational capabilities. Staffing and training are equally important in regard to effectiveness on the fireground, as are the equipment and apparatus that are provided. What follows are examples of where performance-based apparatus designs could affect day-to-day operations more so than the appearance of a rig: Safety always should be the first priority when designing a new apparatus to ensure every opportunity to complete the “Everyone Goes Home” objective.

*Apparatus components, such as frontal and side air bags, electronic stability controls, 360-degree cameras, enhanced seating and seat belts along with reinforced steel front bumpers, should be provided on new apparatus as a priority.* Apparatus designs by which personnel can access attack and supply line hosebeds and equipment without having to climb onto the vehicle are inherently safer as are those that use aggressive nonslip surfaces on all stepping surfaces.

The size and weight of new apparatus might be significantly different than the 20-year-old rig that it replaces, so consideration should be given to reviewing the response district, to ensure that there are no impediments to effectively positioning the apparatus at an incident. This is particularly critical for engine company units, with respect to where large-diameter intake lines and attack lines are located on the rig, to enable crews to rapidly deploy the lines without blocking egress for other incoming units.

With aerial apparatus, the outrigger placement and stance affect the tip load as well the allowance that’s provided for additional components on the device or platform.

*No matter how many scene and LED strip lighting components that you install on the aerial ladder, if the device is painted black, there will be times when the operator can’t see the tip of the ladder or the outline of the platform. Performance-designed aerial devices should focus on the horizontal reach, tip-load rating and operational footprint that’s required to position the rig for use at an incident.*

Additionally, the location and deployment of a sufficient number of ground ladders to cover three to four sides of a building on all elevations should be a priority when determining the appropriate body configuration.

#### **PRIMARY FOCUS**

Fire apparatus design has been an evolutionary process, migrating from open-cab units that lacked doors, to canopy-cab rigs that had jump seats, to today’s four-door cabs that have multiple seating and interior cab options. *We should continue to strive to design and operate with mission-capable vehicles, where the primary focus is on performance and safety enhancements.* Once these concerns are addressed, we then can worry about what shade of paint is applied on the rig and the overall appearance.

No matter what someone might perceive, the color of the rig does factor into how the unit performs on the fireground.

## **GREEN ENERGY AND THE IMPACT ON THE FIRE SERVICE**

### ***Electric vehicle explodes in Massachusetts driveway, causing fire that burned 2 homes***

An electric vehicle exploded in a driveway in Winthrop, Massachusetts, sparking a massive fire that burned two homes Sunday. The vehicle, parked between the two houses on River Road, caught fire around 4:30 p.m., drawing a number of firefighters to the scene, including from the surrounding cities of Chelsea, Revere and Boston.

Two people, including a pregnant woman, were taken to the hospital but are expected to be OK, according to firefighters. A teenager who lives in one of the homes tells NBC10 Boston she’s concerned about everyone affected by this fire. “Our windows just completely melted and burned inside of our house...in my room I have so much memories made. I don’t know what it looks like in there, but I know it’s definitely bad,” she said. “I’m very, very scared and not only just for me, but for my family and everyone else who lives in these two buildings.”

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### ***Lithium-Ion Battery Fire Burns for Nearly 14 Hours After Wild CA Train Heist***

A rail car carrying lithium batteries caught fire Wednesday night in Southern California while it was being burglarized, officials said.

Lena Kent, a spokesperson for Burlington Northern Santa Fe, told SFGATE that crew members saw trespassers burglarizing the Chicago-bound train following its departure from the San Pedro Bay Ports. The crew then detected a fire in one of the cars carrying lithium-ion vehicle batteries, stopped the train immediately and called the San Bernardino County Fire Department, Kent said. The blaze was reported around 1:15 a.m. and [contained about 13.5 hours later](#) at 2:45 p.m., a spokesperson for the San Bernardino County Fire Department, Eric Sherwin, told SFGATE. The fire was centered in one of the train's cars, but it did not spread to the other 120 cars, Sherwin said.

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### **[Two NY Towns Pass Moratoriums on Energy Storage Systems](#)**

Two towns in Cayuga County have passed moratoriums against battery energy storage systems in recent weeks, one in response to a solar developer's proposal to build a Tesla model there. According to minutes from its May 14 meeting, the Aurelius Town Board that night unanimously passed a local law prohibiting Tier 2 and larger systems. Aurelius Town Supervisor Paul Pinckney did not respond to requests by The Citizen for comment on the reason for the town's decision. Past fires were the subject of a few questions at a public hearing held May 5 by the Cato Town Board in response to a battery energy storage system proposal. Developer Abundant Solar Power sought to build a 5-megawatt Tesla Megapack model at the town's former landfill site on Baker Road. The system would have occupied a quarter to a half of an acre. According to a project narrative posted on the county's website, the town would have received lease payments of over \$1 million over the system's 45-year lifespan, as well as property taxes. Local utility customers also would have saved 5%-10% on their bills through a NYSEDA program, and an Abundant Solar representative said at the meeting that the power stored by the system would stay local. While some residents at the meeting expressed support for the proposal due to those economic benefits, a member of the Cato Fire Department said he's opposed due to the challenges of responding to battery fires and the environmental impact they have. In response to another question, Abundant Solar representatives said the developer would be responsible for the cost of any cleanup due to a fire. [\[IF THEY ARE STILL IN BUSINESS!!\]](#) The representatives added that they sought the lease in order to submit an application to RG&E to connect to its utility lines. [\[HOW THEN DOES THE POWER STAY LOCAL?\]](#) If the application was denied, the project would not have moved forward.

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### **[Warrensburg Fire Department Chicken Dinner](#)**

Our Famous Chicken Barbeque, [Saturday June 20, 2026](#), Serving Time 3:30PM  
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### **[Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast](#)**

[Sunday June 21st](#) Breakfast will be served starting at 8AM. Last breakfast until the fall.

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### **[Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast](#)**

Next Breakfast will be held in October at a date to be announced.

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### **[Speigletown Fire Department Breakfast 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month](#)**

Sunday October 11th from 7:30 to 11:30, \$10 adults, \$5 children, under 5 free

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***We salute all of the kitchen help who hustle, giving up their Sunday mornings, to make these events special for all the attendees and work hard to support their fire company's. Thank you for your tough work and dedication.***

## **GENERAL INTEREST TO ALL**

### ***NVFC releases volunteer firefighter recruitment, retention research report***

The National Volunteer Fire Council has [released new research](#) examining why people choose to volunteer with fire departments, what prevents them from joining and what factors influence whether they stay in the volunteer fire service. The research, conducted through surveys and focus groups with prospective, current and former volunteer firefighters, is intended to help departments strengthen recruitment and retention efforts amid ongoing staffing challenges.

According to the [report](#), *awareness remains one of the biggest obstacles to recruiting new volunteers*. More than half of survey respondents said they did not know they could volunteer as a firefighter, while nearly two-thirds were unsure whether their local fire department was actively seeking volunteers.

*The study found that prospective volunteers want clearer information about the realities of service, including expected time commitments and day-to-day responsibilities*. Participants also expressed a desire to understand what support departments provide to help members manage the physical and emotional demands of firefighting.

*The NVFC said the findings underscore the importance of communicating not only the need for volunteers but also the resources and support systems available to them.*

To gather the data, the NVFC conducted four phases of research. Recruitment-focused research included an online survey of members of the general public who expressed at least some interest in becoming volunteer firefighters, as well as online focus groups with key audiences interested in volunteering. Retention-focused research included an online survey of current volunteer firefighters and online focus groups with former volunteers who had left the service.

The research sought to better understand who is interested in volunteering, what motivates them to serve, what barriers prevent participation and whether there are untapped audiences that departments should target in recruitment campaigns. The study also explored the characteristics of department environments that encourage volunteers to remain active.

*Among current and former volunteers, organizational culture emerged as a significant factor in retention. Respondents indicated they want to serve in departments where they feel valued and supported. The report found that programs emphasizing social and emotional support, including mentorship opportunities and family engagement initiatives, can improve volunteer retention.*

The NVFC said the research will inform the development of future recruitment and retention resources for volunteer fire departments nationwide. The organization noted that maintaining a strong volunteer workforce is critical to ensuring communities continue to receive effective fire and emergency services.

## **TAKE A MOMENT TO SMILE**

**The more I get to know people, the more I understand why Noah only let animals on the Ark.**

## **CLASSIFIED**

### ***CAFDA IS SEEKING A TREASURER FOR OUR FIRE SERVICE NOT-FOR-PROFIT ASSOCIATION.***

Our current excellent treasurer has announced that he will be giving up the position as soon as we find a replacement due to increased workload with his own business. Any candidate should be familiar with Quick Books and the structure and operation of a not-for-profit organization as well as some familiarization with the

operation of fire districts in New York State. CAFDA offers a stipend which won't make you rich, but you get to hang out with some great people, get free meals prior to meetings and trying to provide a service to fire district officials. The Association requires our treasurers to be bonded. If you are interested let us know by providing a resume and cover letter to [secretary@cafda.net](mailto:secretary@cafda.net).

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### **Station Keeper Position Available**

Station Keeper position is available at **Niskayuna Fire District Two, Schenectady County**. Starting salary and medical benefits negotiable. For information email [sk2@nfd2.com](mailto:sk2@nfd2.com) Please include email and phone contact info.

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## **WHO ARE YOUR CAFDA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2026?**

### **OFFICERS**

President, Tom Rinaldi, Commissioner, Stillwater Fire District  
1st Vice President, Ellen Martin, Deputy Treasurer Clifton Park Fire District

### **DIRECTORS:**

Les Bonesteel Past Commissioner, Burnt Hills/Saratoga,  
Skip Smith, Commissioner, West Crescent/Saratoga  
Joyce Petkus Treasurer Greenfield/Saratoga,  
Ed Woehrle Commissioner Niskayuna #1/Schenectady  
Art Hunsinger, Ex-Officio Member Clifton Park Fire District.

***We would consider expanding the number of Directors if individuals from other counties would volunteer to participate!!***

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### **APPOINTEES**

Secretary Molly Jenkins, Region 1 Director, Assoc of Fire Districts, NYS  
Treasurer: Tony Hill  
Sargent at Arms: Tom Wood, Commissioner, Northumberland Fire District  
Chaplain: Dane Fagan  
Legal Counsel: Greg Serio, Safety Officer, Verdoy Fire District

***The Capital Area Association represents any fire district that wishes to join CAFDA. Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, and Deputy Treasurers. Secretaries and Chiefs are also invited to join!  
If your Fire District is a member, you are a member!!***

***Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence should be mailed to:  
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](mailto:SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET)  
Financial issues should be addressed to: [TREASURER@CAFDA.NET](mailto:TREASURER@CAFDA.NET)  
518-407-5020***

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**[Wish to become a member of CAFDA, go to CAFDA.net/membership to apply.](http://CAFDA.net/membership)**

# CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Business Partner Applications Available At: [WWW.CAFDA.NET](http://WWW.CAFDA.NET)

Stay tuned for some new Business Partners for 2026.

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 2026. You are invited to our monthly membership meeting and to any of our social events..

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*The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over 700+ 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](mailto:tom@rinaldi1.com) for comments and content contributions are always welcome.*