



# THE BULLETIN

MAY 9TH, 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

- Happy Mother's Day to all of our mothers living or deceased. "Thank you, Mom, for being the light in the darkest moments and my biggest cheerleader."
- See information on Prevailing Wage Rates and how they apply to Fire Districts on our website at CAFDA.net.
- Hey Everyone!  
The Chief's show is just around the corner and ESIP and Penflex will be the same location as previous years – Booth #600-602-604 as soon as you walk through the entrance at the end of the main foyer. Attached, please click on the PDF for a One-Day FREE pass to the expo. Please feel free to share this with your membership. You can print the pass or save it to your phone so stop by to



FIRE 2026 One Day  
Ticket (1).pdf

say Hello and register for our giveaway.

- Expo hours are:
  - Thurs., June 11th: 1pm – 5pm
  - Fri., June 12th: 9am - 4pm
  - Sat., June 13th: 9am – 1pm
- Immediately following the expo on Thurs, join us at the Dinosaur BBQ, starting at 5pm, for the FREE ESIP Hospitality dinner. We look forward to see you at the Chiefs Show !!
- Tony Blackwell,
- Territory Sales Manager

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

### From CAFDA

***1. Join us at the NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday May 14th features dinner for attendees. Please join us.***

ZOOM LINK FOR THE May MEETING at 7pm:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86413237058?pwd=MauWziwckK2pyIWGVwYGUqxQLCwzHq.1>

2. Mark your calendars now, CAFDA Fall Seminar, Saturday November 7<sup>th</sup>, at a location in Colonie to be announced.
3. CAFDA Conference '27, Lake George NY, April 9-10-11, dinner and a vendor show Friday April 10<sup>th</sup> Fort William Henry Carriage House. Sponsored Mixer the evening of April 9<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn Resort, food, games, beverages.
4. CAFDA Commissioner Training for 2027 will be held in Rensselaer County, Schenectady County, Saratoga County, Schoharie County and Warren County. Dates and locations to be announced.

**CAFDA TRAINING AND EVENT DATES**

Day/Date	Time	Type	Location	Notes
<b>FY 2026</b>				
Thursday, May 14, 2026	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
Thursday, June 11, 2026	7:00 PM	General Membership Mtg.	Clifton Park	
July, 2026	NO MEETING			
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>

***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

#### **Additional Tax Credit Bills Introduced this session:**

**S298 OBERACKER/A5221 TAGUE**, but they are Republicans, if I were a betting man I'd say this is going no where.

**A28 BURDICK, NO SAME AS IN THE SENATE**, this one has a chance if it gets a senate sponsor, the sponsor is a Democrat.

**S6019 BASKIN, A288 BARRETT**, both democrats and essentially would allow first responders to take the property tax exemption and the income tax deduction.

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**The 2026 Issues of United Concern are posted on the CAFDA.net website.**

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#### **Supporting First Responders: Expansion of New York's Volunteer Firefighter Training Stipend**

See our website for details at: <https://cafda.net/supporting-first-responders-governor-hochul-announces-expansion-of-new-yorks-volunteer-firefighter-training-stipend/>

### From Washington

#### WASHINGTON WATCH

✓ Bill Introduced in Congress Would Keep National Fallen Firefighter Memorial Open During Shutdowns

✦ **FEMA Reform Report is Finalized.** On May 7th, a task force directed by President Trump to recommend reforms to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) finalized its report following its final council meeting. The final recommendations included a focus on shifting disaster response to the state and local level, staffing levels in FEMA, and the speed of federal disaster relief funds.

🔔 **View the Final Report Overview [here](#).**

✦ **DHS Shutdown Status Report.** Last week, after a 76-day shutdown, the majority of the Department of Homeland Security was reopened. This includes FEMA, USFA and the National Fire Academy, FEMA grant programs, and more. The House had waited over a month to pass the DHS funding bill until the Senate had begun its process of budget reconciliation; a step that provided a greater guarantee that immigration portions of DHS would eventually be funded as well.

✅ During the shutdown, CFSI worked, and will continue to work, to ensure that critical fire service programs and agencies are appropriately funded.

✦ **National Fire Academy Reopens.** With the DHS shutdown ending, the National Fire Academy (NFA) has immediate openings for students and is looking to fill classes beginning as early as May 24th. To view class openings and to apply, visit the [NETC Online Admissions application](#) website today!

### 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)

## **NYS-OSC Fire Service Audits**

**No New Audits this week.**

### **THE FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE**

#### **\*\*Perfection where it counts: Focus on the core competencies that prevent small errors from becoming fatal ones**

Greg Weimer

In "[Outliers: The Story of Success \(2008\)](#)," Malcolm Gladwell describes how it takes a series of small mistakes — seven, on average — to cause a plane crash. He writes:

"In a typical crash, for example, the weather is poor — not terrible, necessarily, but bad enough that the pilot feels a little bit more stressed than usual. In an overwhelming number of crashes, the plane is behind schedule, so the pilots are hurrying. In 52 percent of crashes, the pilot at the time of the accident has been awake for twelve hours or more, meaning that he is tired and not thinking sharply. And 44 percent of the time, the two pilots have never flown together before, so they're not comfortable with each other. Then the errors start ... These seven errors, furthermore, are rarely problems of knowledge or flying skill. It's not that the pilot has to negotiate some critical technical maneuver and fails. The kinds of errors that cause plane crashes are invariably errors of teamwork and communication." (p. 184)

*Gladwell is onto something here. A [2019 article analyzing NIOSH firefighter fatality investigations from 2006 to 2014](#) identified the top 10 categories of contributing factors:*

1. Medical screening
2. Fitness and wellness programs
3. Training
4. Medical clearance
5. SOPs/SOGs
6. Incident command
7. Strategy and tactics
8. Communications
9. PPE
10. Staffing

At first glance, these seem like basic — even obvious — factors. But perhaps that's exactly the point. Are we missing the bigger picture?

#### **WHAT CAN YOU CONTROL?**

Looking at this list, it's clear that some of these factors are within our control. But too many people will shift blame to others or even the vastness of these factors — a "where do we even begin?" mindset of non-action. But each of these factors can be broken down into meaningful actions.

*Ask yourself, what is within my sphere of control? Fitness, training, command, strategy/tactics and communication are all within our own abilities to improve.* You can start a fitness routine; it doesn't have to be a big production. Push-ups, squats and jogging work great; a little yoga is always fun, too. Then incorporate that with a mask-up drill under duress and before you know it, you've completed two tasks toward your bigger goal. Where else can you chip away, working to become a master of your craft?

#### **ATTACK THE KEY FACTORS**

*Remember, we want to master the basics, not be a Halligan baton twirler. Mastery allows us to free our minds and look at the bigger tasks at hand.*

Get with your supervising lieutenants, captains and battalion chiefs — [whoever runs your scenes](#) — and pick their brains. Even if you don't run a formal communication/command system like Blue Card, there is logic to how these officers run their show. If you can understand the who, what, when, where and whys, you will have

a better grasp of how command will work. And if for some reason there is no plan, now is a great time to start correcting that.

The same goes for tactics. Make those conversations happen with the senior people in your department, and bring forward the latest research. The **UL Research Institute's Fire Safety group** is doing wonderful studies along with the **Firefighter Rescue Survey** — two hubs of intel that can inform the creation of new SOGs.

*With communication, the factor that seems most critical is simply presence of mind. Take a breath, think about what you are going to say, hold the radio at the correct location, and talk slowly and calmly. Take time to make time.*

## MASTER YOUR CRAFT

If these things all seem squared away, ask yourself these questions:

- Is our training effective and rooted in quality content?
- Are we emphasizing the fundamentals or glossing over them?
- [\*Are our SOPs and SOGs aligned with today's fire environment, or are we still operating on concepts from the 1970s?\*](#)
- Have we learned from those who came before us, and from the hard lessons revealed in reports published on **FirefighterCloseCalls.com** or NIOSH firefighter fatality reports?

The truth is, we must always remain students of our craft. We must take these lessons, adapt them, and make them our own so we can prepare our members for the next fire.

Some may argue that the job is too broad, too complex, and requires mastering too many disciplines. I'm not here to debate departmental demands or how you should prioritize them. What I am challenging you to do is this: Be perfect in the core competencies the public expects from you.

Be able to force a door. Throw a ladder. Conduct an efficient search. Stretch a line. Make a rescue. Do these things with professionalism, precision and pride. These should be daily drills for your crews, just like truck checks.

- Week 1: Ladder throws
- Week 2: Call outs and review search priorities
- Week 3: Walk through the gap-set-force with a door and bungee cord (if you have a simulator, even better).
- Week 4: Stretch a line.

Be 1% better today than you were yesterday, which is about 15 minutes of your day spent improving.

Now, I am fortunate enough to work with firefighters who have literally hurdled over our other crews because they couldn't mask up fast enough and were slowing us down. We are fortunate not to have a motivation problem, but if you do, incentivize the drill. Make it a point of company pride, make a race out of it, give the crew extra downtime if they meet a time standard.

*Of course, not every operation or drill will go perfectly. But professionalism is not measured by flawlessness, but rather by how we recover through intelligent, deliberate decision-making.* How we go about getting better and adapting to every challenge. **Jones and Bartlett's Fire Officer book** (Chapter 3, p. 87) calls this a *learning culture*. I call it professionals being professional.

## FINAL QUESTIONS

When you strive for perfection, your mindset shifts. "The fire went out, and we went home" is no longer the metric of success. Instead, you start asking, "How can we do even better next time? What small flaws did we miss?"

*As Gladwell reminds us, it's the accumulation of small errors that brings down a plane — or, in our world, leads to a mayday.*

## THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

### HOT TOPIC

[\*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:](#)

## **Former Rensselaer volunteer firefighter charged with stealing \$62K from fire company**

Tyler NcNeil – Times Union

A former Rensselaer firefighter has been charged with stealing about \$62,000 from a local fire company while serving as an official with the organization. Robert K. Fink, 50, turned himself in to Rensselaer police on Tuesday following an investigation over allegations that he stole from Chemical Hose No. 4, also known as Engine Company 4. City Police Chief Warren Famiglietti said Fink allegedly stole the money over the last three years. He served as treasurer of the fire company.

Before presiding Rensselaer City Court Judge Linda Blom Johnson on Tuesday, Fink pleaded not guilty to a felony charge of second-degree grand larceny, Famiglietti said. Fink was released afterward.

He is due back in City Court at 8:30 a.m. on May 13. An attorney from the Rensselaer County Public Defender's Office could not be immediately reached for comment Tuesday. Fink resigned from the company last week, according to city Fire Chief William Brookings.

## **POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FIRE SERVICE**

### **POSITIVE OUTCOMES**

- EMT students at Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton Wisconsin realized quickly the instructor was no longer role playing the instructor was now the patient. Within seconds, the students placed him on a backboard and removed him from the ambulance. "CPR was started within 40 seconds of recognition, the AED was retrieved and applied in 90 seconds and two shocks were delivered, And at 4:30, we had a pulse back, and he was talking to us," Les James, an instructor, said.
- The Albany Firefighters Museum is hoping to secure a new space at 358 Broadway, the old trailways bus station, as part of the broader redevelopment effort. The current location is at 384 Broadway just a couple doors down. "The challenge is the size of the equipment that we're dealing with and the current apparatus that we have in the inventory, the two pieces that we do have, we just couldn't get them in here," said Bill Tobler, Albany Firefighters Museum Director and a retired firefighter of nearly 40 years.

### **FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES**

#### **Malakwa Volunteer Fire Department, BC Canada, face litigation over 2024 mobile home fire**

The Columbia Shuswap Regional District and Malakwa Fire Department are being sued by the owners of a mobile home park who claim firefighters failed to ensure a trailer fire was fully out before they left.

A notice of claim has been filed against the CSRD by Jeff Bryan Holdings, the business that owns Green Acres Mobile Home Park in Malakwa.

In the court document, Jeff Bryan said the Malakwa Fire Department left the scene before a mobile home fire was fully extinguished, which resulted in the blaze re-igniting and causing further damage.

The claim arises from a fire that began in the mobile home park at about 8 p.m. on June 15, 2024.

The court filing says after being called to the mobile home park to fight the fire, the Malakwa Fire Department allegedly left the park at about midnight after determining the fire was out. However, about an hour later, residents called the fire department again after noticing smoke coming from the site of the extinguished fire.

A fire department representative allegedly returned to the park at about 3:30 a.m. and inspected the area.

"Shortly after the fire department left the home, the fire reignited, causing further injury, damage, loss and expense," Bryan said in the court document.

He claimed when the fire department returned to fight the re-ignited fire at 4 a.m., there wasn't enough water in the fire truck to effectively fight the blaze. Bryan alleges the CSRD and the fire department were negligent and breached their duty of care, resulting in injury, loss, damage and expense.

***FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES*****16**

***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.emergencyvehiclereponse.com/>

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- EMMITSBURG, MD -- As large flags whipped in the brilliant sunshine, thousands from around the country gathered here Sunday to remember 204 firefighters for giving the ultimate sacrifice.
  - A Glens Falls firefighter is continuing to recover from serious injuries after falling from a firetruck in April. According to Glens Falls Firefighters IAFF Local 2230, Micki Guy has been moved to a rehabilitation facility. The 50-year-old sustained severe head trauma and was hospitalized at Albany Medical Center in critical condition, city officials said. She has since gradually begun to recover from her injuries. "Glens Falls Firefighters IAFF Local 2230 want to express our gratitude and appreciation for the outstanding care FF Micki Guy received while at Albany Medical Center," the union said on social media. "Keep the prayers coming as FF Guy continues on her road to recovery!"

***Fire Apparatus Accidents***

- Two firefighters were injured — one critically — after a fire truck crashed in Muskingum County, Ohio. One firefighter was flown by helicopter to Grant Medical Center in Columbus in critical condition. The second firefighter was rushed to Genesis Hospital in Zanesville and was said to be stable. The crash involved a lengthy extraction to get the driver out, a spokesman for Muskingum County said. He added that the fire truck dropped off the edge of the road while coming down a hill, and when the driver tried to correct, the tanker "flipped over before striking a tree and ending up back on its wheels." The truck is a total loss.
- According to Muskingum County, Ohio Emergency Management Agency Director Jeff Jadwin, an Adamsville tender was headed to the scene of a fire when it was coming down the hill and lost control. He said the truck then rolled and hit a tree causing it to spin around and then land. Jadwin said the driver of the truck was taken from the scene by medical helicopter to Columbus and that the passenger was taken to Genesis Hospital. The truck was totaled.

***Firefighter Maydays, Serious Injuries and Deaths***

- A Medina, Ohio firefighter was trapped when a ceiling collapsed during a house fire. Brunswick Hills firefighter issued a Mayday call, and crews quickly removed the trapped firefighter.
- Firefighter Neil Schnaible of the Lake Valley Fire Protection District died in the Line of Duty Monday after suffering a medical emergency while on duty. His fellow firefighters acted immediately, performing CPR and successfully restoring a pulse, but during the incident, FF Schnaible fell and struck his head on the pavement, causing multiple severe brain bleeds.
- *More than 30 years after suffering "catastrophic" injuries at the scene of a fire*, New Haven fire officials said Tuesday former Firefighter Thomas Kelly has died in the Line of Duty. FF Kelly was 33 years old at the time, working as a tillerman with Truck 4 Dixwell for 13 years.
- Walker (MI) Fire Chief Russell "Rusty" Shoultz died early Friday morning following a medical emergency.

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***NIOSH: Safety Inspections Lapsed at Easton, PA, Boarding House Where Firefighter Hurt***

Kurt Bresswein

A federal investigative report details how a seven-year veteran firefighter sustained serious injuries in the Feb. 20 fire that destroyed the Hotel Hampton boarding house in Downtown Easton.

*Investigators found the building had not undergone a fire-safety inspection since 2017 due to limited staffing in the Easton code enforcement office,* according to the 30-page National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) report.

*Historical records showed previous violations including nonfunctioning smoke detectors, fire doors propped open and fire escape windows nailed shut, according to the report.*

NIOSH, part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, makes numerous recommendations in the report filed under its Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program.

Authorities previously identified the firefighter who was seriously injured as Robert “Bobby” Lewullis, a career member of the Wilson Borough Fire Department who was assisting on the call.

He remains on leave as he undergoes rehabilitation for his injuries, Wilson Fire Chief Joseph Sipel said Friday. Sipel said federal investigators reached out to him and a lot of other local officials for the report. He credited NIOSH with bringing a neutral eye to the investigation.

“It’s definitely helpful for the fire service overall, and hopefully everybody can learn from it,” he told lehighvalleylive.com.

Easton City Administrator Luis Campos did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday. Easton Fire Chief Henry Hennings deferred comment to Campos, who told WFMZ-TV 69 News that city officials would review the report and discuss it before the city council.

*The fire also resulted in injuries to three more firefighters, an EMT and four civilians.* Over 30 tenants were displaced, with the American Red Cross and U.S. Small Business Administration stepping in to assist local, Northampton County and Pennsylvania aid efforts.

*The firefighter who was most seriously injured fell more than 20 feet from a ladder while attempting to escape the fast-moving fire, according to the federal probe.*

*The firefighter lost consciousness while descending from a fourth-story window after running out of air during rescue operations* at the 462 Northampton St. converted commercial building housing 48 rooms. He suffered a broken back, broken ankle, injured shoulder, and significant respiratory injuries from smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide saturation, investigators said.

The incident began around 10:45 a.m. when dispatchers received reports of an electrical fire in the basement of the structure dating to 1900. Though crews initially knocked down the basement fire, smoke conditions changed drastically and flames spread vertically through the building’s balloon-frame construction.

Hennings and other officials previously detailed the fire response, and how the building’s construction complicated efforts, during a news conference the day after the incident.

*The Wilson firefighter had entered to conduct a primary search but became separated from his partner while attempting to rescue multiple residents,* according to the report. *Data from his self-contained breathing apparatus showed he entered with 4,435 PSI and **depleted his air supply in 15 minutes.***

In zero-visibility conditions, the firefighter realized he did not have enough air to exit and located a room with a window on the fourth floor.

“As he broke and cleared the window, his facepiece sealed tightly to his face,” NIOSH states in the report. “He removed his regulator, placed his hood over the facepiece connection to filter breathe and hung his head out of the window.”

The firefighter made several radio transmissions reporting he was out of air before declaring a Mayday at 11:15 a.m. *Ground crews initially struggled to locate him due to heavy smoke and mistakenly raised a ladder to the wrong window, according to the investigation.* After crews repositioned the ladder, it was placed under cable lines and near live power lines that had not been disconnected by the utility company, investigators found.

At 11:21 a.m., the firefighter stepped onto the ladder. *He lost consciousness as he reached the top of the second-story windows and fell. The NIOSH report noted the “Ladder 24 firefighter was out of air and spent over 10 minutes inhaling smoke and byproducts of combustion while he waited for a ladder.”*

*The federal investigation identified several factors contributing to the injury, including the failure of crews to assist the Mayday firefighter down the ladder when his medical status was unknown. The report also cited issues with air management, crew integrity and inadequate staffing.*

NIOSH recommended fire departments ensure personnel are trained in air management and survival procedures, and that municipalities enforce fire codes at high-risk occupancies like boarding houses. Following the incident, the fire departments involved implemented enhanced radio discipline training and new protocols for assigned tactical channels during complex emergencies, according to NIOSH. Read the [full report](#) via the [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) website for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program.

**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	21
Last fire death 5/7/26, Little Falls, Herkimer Co, females 56 & 82	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	67
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	482
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA/ 41
	#2 OH 32
	#3 NY 27
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2026: <b>786</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.**

**THE LATEST ON THE CHANGING FIRE SERVICE**

***\*\*9 Lessons in the Transformation from Volunteer to Combination Fire Department***

Richard Wilson

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- A gap in coverage of its response district prompted the Monroe Township Fire Protection District to go beyond its installation of a paid-on-call structure to staff daytime firefighter/EMTs.
- Engaging the governing board, reviewing response data, establishing daily duties and apparatus checks, implementing station duties and maintenance, setting clear qualifications for new staff, involving paid-on-call staff, organizing an introductory event, comprehensive onboarding and a Day 1 orientation were the nine steps that the Monroe Township Fire Protection District utilized to develop a sustainable daytime staffing program.
- Ensuring that a fire department culture evolves to meet the needs of its community requires the backing of a supportive fire chief and governing body and a collective effort.

When we speak of changing fire service culture, what comes to mind? Is it how you handle incidents, staffing apparatus to meet NFPA 1710: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments or becoming an all-hazards fire department? The list can go on. *For the Monroe Township Fire Protection District, changing culture has involved the struggle that all fire districts and departments feel: meeting the service needs of the fire response area.*

Changing the fire service culture involves a deliberate process of modifying entrenched behaviors, department attitudes and what’s considered normal within a department. This requires strong leadership, open communication with all of the members, and a focus on members’ safety and inclusiveness of those who might feel left out. At the same time, one must manage the resistance to change as well as ensure that new practices

are integrated effectively into the daily operations, all while respecting the traditions of the profession. It isn't about pushing the past aside; it's about recognizing those traditions and enhancing them with the involvement of the current members.

## **TRANSITION AND CHALLENGES**

*For my all-volunteer department, this wasn't an overnight process. It took time to come to fruition. The very first glaring issue was that many calls weren't being responded to by our members, because firefighters were out working their career job.* Many people work more than 30 minutes away from the station. Identifying this occurred by running reports on incidents and reviewing them to see what calls for service weren't capable of being provided.

*This immediately created another issue: the draw on mutual/automatic aid from neighboring towns. This might not sound like a huge issue until one realizes that you have no backup crews to respond within one's district.*

After I retired from my career department (Bartlett, IL, Fire Protection District) in January 2024, I sought to bring a daytime staffing program to light in the paid-on-call Monroe Township Fire Protection District.

As a career firefighter who retired as a battalion chief, my journey through the fire service was a deeply rewarding and transformative experience. I have had the privilege of serving both as a firefighter/paramedic and as an instructor (holding the title of training officer) and being involved in various specialty areas, such as fire investigations, MABAS teams, technical rescue and hazmat response. I also was an adjunct instructor at our local college for the fire science and EMS courses.

In 2009, while still with the Bartlett Fire Protection District, I joined the all-volunteer Monroe Township Fire Protection District. My goal was simple: to give back to the community by sharing the skills and knowledge that I gained over the years. I knew firsthand the power of training. (Many members of volunteer organizations lack the time, resources or funding to attend formal classes.) It became clear that one of the most impactful ways to give back was to offer that training and spark enthusiasm in those who are eager to serve.

In 2010, the Monroe Township Fire Protection District transitioned, after Fire Chief Scott Jaeger recognized that a change was needed from an all-volunteer organization to a paid-on-call structure. Although necessary, the transition didn't come without its challenges. Some members resisted the change, holding on to the identity and pride that's associated with volunteer status. I understood their perspective. It reflected a deep-rooted tradition. However, there was one moment in particular, one comment, that drove the decision to implement a paid-on-call system. During a period of high gasoline prices, one of our volunteers shared with the chief and me that there was choice to be made: pick up a grandson from school or respond to a call. The realization hit us hard: These dedicated individuals were sacrificing too much just to serve. *The idea of compensating our members for their time seemed like the right thing to do.*

That said, the shift to paid-on-call wasn't just about compensation; it was about ensuring that our community remained protected and that we could offer the support that our members deserved. Over time, the program evolved, with training nights compensated and, eventually, an entirely paid-on-call structure in place.

## **DAYTIME STAFFING**

As we adapted to the new system, we found ourselves facing another hurdle: staffing during the daytime. Many of our members worked full-time jobs, and it became increasingly difficult to respond to calls during the day. Neighboring departments often were forced to cover our calls, sometimes as much as 50 percent of the time. This puts a strain on resources and caused delays in response times. As a result, I realized that we needed to think critically about how to address this gap in coverage while minimizing the financial burden on taxpayers. I proposed a daily staffing idea. Even with data supporting a need, the fire chief was reluctant because of financial constraints. As the years progressed, we requested an ambulance tax increase from our residents. The increase brought in minimal funds that would assist in replacing an ambulance at today's exorbitant pricing 15 years down the road.

As we started more dialog about the program and how the model would work, the fire chief bought into the idea "We need to protect our residents, and a cost comes with it." *This immediately would stop the bleeding of drawing on resources from neighboring communities as well. It also would be the start of inducting "Pride in Ownership" of our fire district.*

The start of the process to staff daytime firefighter/EMTs was involved and had many moving parts. Once the fire chief and I developed a plan, his comment was “Go make it happen. We have to do something to help our residents.” Thus, the daytime staffing program was born.

## 9 KEYS

*After analyzing data over five years*, I set out to develop a sustainable daytime staffing program. The following steps were key to its success:

1. *Engage the governing board.* To secure funding for the daytime staffing program, we worked closely with the Fire District Board of Trustees. I shared our data on response times and the increased reliance on mutual aid, which helped those people to understand the urgency of the situation. Additionally, I proposed a tax increase to fund the program. With their buy-in, we moved forward with the plan.
2. *Reviewing response data.* We reviewed five years of call data to identify the peak days and times when coverage was needed most. These data helped us to design a schedule with optimal coverage, focusing on the busiest hours while keeping costs low.
3. *Establishing daily duties and apparatus checks.* To ensure that everything was ready for use at a moment’s notice, members were assigned to check equipment, tools and vehicles daily or weekly. This system helped to maintain operational readiness while providing opportunities for skill-building.
4. *Station duties and maintenance.* We also implemented a station maintenance routine, by which staff on shift were responsible for cleaning and minor repairs. This allowed us to identify any issues early, to prevent expensive repairs later.
5. *Hiring and onboarding new staff.* To support the program, we needed additional staffing. We set clear qualifications (Certified Firefighter and EMT-B), and our county’s Facebook group became a valuable resource for attracting applicants. This streamlined the hiring process, to ensure that we could bring in qualified individuals quickly.
6. *Involving paid-on-call staff.* Keeping our paid-on-call members involved was crucial. We held meetings to discuss the expectations of the new daytime staff and to foster a sense of collaboration. It was important that both paid-on-call and daytime staff understood their roles and responsibilities to minimize conflict during operations.
7. *Team integration and building camaraderie.* We organized an introductory event for daytime staff to meet the existing paid-on-call members. Sharing experiences, stories and training helped to build camaraderie, trust and a strong team dynamic. A local bar-be-que business generously provided lunch, further enhancing the sense of community.
8. *Comprehensive onboarding process.* Onboarding was critical to ensure that new hires fully were prepared. From insurance forms to apparatus training, we provided a comprehensive orientation to set them up for success. This process also included training on EMS operations, firefighting tactics and other essential skills. Weekly apparatus checks and hands-on practice were integral to this training.
9. *The first day of staffing.* The first day of our daytime staffing program focused on orientation, apparatus familiarization and hands-on training. Members participated in inventory checks, tool usage and driver training to ensure that everyone could handle all apparatus and equipment. This approach is meant to build trust and ensure competency, even when an officer isn’t present at an incident.

## IMPACT OF DAYTIME STAFFING

Creating a daytime staffing program was a challenging, yet incredibly rewarding, process. *From its inception to its implementation, the program took more than two years to bring to fruition. However, with careful planning, data analysis and strong community support, it became a success.* As of the time of the writing of this article, the program was in its 11th month. With an average of 150 calls for service, we were able to establish coverage for three weekdays, with plans to expand to two additional days in the future. *This coverage drastically reduced the number of requests for mutual/automatic aid to four as of March 2025 from 56 during the previous calendar year.*

*The success of the program proves that with proper funding and community support, we can continue to provide exceptional service to our residents.*

“If you build it, they will come” might apply to many ventures, but for us, it became “If you fund it, we can support our community.” Ensuring that our fire service culture evolves to meet the needs of our community is

the key to our future success. It requires not just the backing of a supportive fire chief and governing body but also a collective effort to keep our mission in focus: saving lives and property.

### **'Unsustainable': Minn. officials close FD in move to be served by neighboring 24/7-staffed department**

Kristi Miller, Pioneer Press

The city of Lexington has entered into an agreement with a neighboring fire department to provide emergency services *after terminating its fire chief and determining that its own department is no longer sustainable*.

Fire Chief Mike Mohler was terminated March 26, the same day the city enacted an interim management and operations agreement with the Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department (known as SBM), which took over services. Mohler, who had been with the department since 2011, became chief in 2025 after Chief Erik Edwards retired.

"The Lexington Fire Department is no longer sustainable," Lexington City Administrator Bill Petracek said. "Times have changed and Lexington needed to change direction with who provides fire protection for our community."

SBM Chief Dan Retka said after conducting a review of Lexington's operations, staffing and readiness under an administrative agreement, SBM assumed full responsibility for emergency response when the city took its department offline.

"Due to ongoing staffing challenges within the Lexington Fire Department, the city decided to take the department offline for emergency response," Retka said. "At that point, SBM assumed responsibility for providing fire and emergency services to ensure there was no disruption in coverage for the community."

Retka said residents will now be served by a 24/7 staffed response model with trained personnel and an established command structure.

He said SBM's station in Circle Pines allows for fast response times to Lexington.

"Our priority throughout this process has been to maintain a safe, consistent and professional level of service for Lexington residents," Retka said.

Lexington is still evaluating long-term options for fire protection services. SBM said it will continue providing service under the current agreement while those discussions continue.

"We want to recognize the Lexington Fire Department's long-standing service and commitment, and that of its firefighters," Retka said. "Their dedication to the community over the years has not gone unnoticed."

The Lexington Fire Department was founded in 1954.

"We remain committed to collaboration, transparency and the delivery of high-quality emergency response to the communities we serve," Retka said.

## **FIRE APPARATUS**

### **When Large Is Too Large for a Fire Department Apparatus**

Tom Shand

#### **Key Takeaways**

- Although fire apparatus manufacturers' migration away from single design builds provides one-of-a-kind vehicles that deliver the utmost in specialty, the result can be unnecessary strain on a fire department's budget.
- Stock model pumpers are configured to meet the widest range of commonly built vehicles for both urban and rural fire departments.
- Defining the mission of a fire apparatus should include a detailed review of the first-due area for obstacles that could inhibit response patterns and placement of the apparatus on the fireground.

Students of fire apparatus history will find that when they research vehicle designs over the years, current model rigs are considerably larger than their previous counterparts.

As cab-forward apparatus designs were embraced by departments, the typical pumper gravitated to a wheelbase of 150 inches, an overall length of 25 feet, 4 inches and a width of approximately 93 inches. Standard configurations included a 1,000-gpm, two-stage fire pump and a 300-gallon booster tank.

Aerial rigs trended to a 100-foot midship design that was built on a 220-inch wheelbase and had an overall length of 43 feet, 5 inches. All aerials were outfitted with 228 feet of ground ladders.

Quint apparatus gravitated toward dimensions that were similar to those of aerial rigs and used the space that was under the aerial turntable for the fire pump and were equipped with a 200-gallon booster tank.

As rear-mount aerial ladders were developed, these designs enabled departments to acquire a 100-foot vehicle that has an overall length of a little more than 35 feet and travel heights that range from 120–129 inches, depending on the style of cab. (Many of these rigs were built with open cabs, aka no roof, to permit lower overall travel heights.)

## THE FALLOUT

Today, because apparatus designs offer multiple options for cab and body features and aerial device components, fewer base model apparatus are being procured. Over a period of years, the apparatus industry migrated away from single design builds for pumpers and aerials, to meet the perceived needs of departments that have multiple cab configurations, pump panel widths, body lengths and water tank configurations. This produced an almost infinite number of combinations for the overall design, with each unit requiring engineering effort to integrate the various components into a buildable vehicle. This production process provides one-of-a-kind apparatus design to meet the needs of each department. However, often, this results in a higher cost for the completed unit.

In response to the longer build times for new apparatus—which in some instances extend beyond three years—there are alternative programs to acquire stock models, or program apparatus, that have limited option content that can be delivered within a shorter duration.

Particular to pumpers, these are configured to meet the widest range of commonly built units for both rural and urban departments. One frequent design combines a 1,500-gpm, single-stage fire pump, a 1,000-gallon water tank, and an extended-length body to accommodate enclosed ground ladders and rollup shutter doors. The pump panel instrumentation and piping arrangements are preengineered, which permits manufacturing efficiencies.

Dimensionally, these pumpers have wheelbases that are in the 180–200-inch range and an overall length of 32–33 feet, which often is larger than the older vehicle that's being replaced. In some respects, if the new rig fits the bay space in the station, there's little to worry about.

## RESPONSE AREA & EQUIPMENT

*Early on in the acquisition process, defining the mission of the apparatus should include a detailed review of the first-due area for obstacles that could inhibit response patterns and placement of the apparatus on the fireground.* These include roadway widths, access to garden apartments and townhouse complexes, traffic-calming devices, points where there would be angle-of-approach concerns and overhead obstructions. In addition, the apparatus committee should consider the staffing and training levels for the personnel and the desired tools and equipment to be carried.

[NFPA 1900: Standard for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Vehicles, Automotive Fire Apparatus, Wildland Fire Apparatus, and Automotive Ambulances](#) stipulates that the authority having jurisdiction is responsible for providing the listing of tools and equipment that will be carried on the apparatus. This equipment inventory, which should include the weight of these items, enables the manufacturer to choose the appropriate chassis components, including axles, wheels, tires and suspension, to carry the intended load.

*With this information, a detailed weight analysis should be requested from the vendor to verify the components that were selected for the vehicle.* This is important for apparatus of all types, but critical for any type of combination unit, including rescue-pumpers and quints, for which the tool and equipment weight might exceed the minimum allowances that are detailed in Table 9.1.2 in NFPA 1900. Depending on the planned life cycle for the apparatus, additional margin for weight and space within the compartments should be provided for future expansion as new equipment and procedures are developed.

## LENGTH

The title of this article was selected to align with the thought that apparatus should be viewed from overhead, similar to a shoe box with the top removed. The packaging of the body, water tank, ground ladders and hose load configuration all must fit into this space.

***Changing one component affects the overall configuration.*** For example, if an apparatus committee desires to have a low rear hosebed by which attack lines can be deployed without a member having to climb onto the rear step or a higher position, this goal should be a priority when compared with maximizing rear body compartment space. Rear body discharges and large-diameter intakes also affect the height of the hosebed, particularly when this piping must be sleeved through the water tank.

When considering cab configuration and seating arrangements, a department's past experience can provide guidelines with respect to the equipment that must be carried inside of the cab and whether the unit will be ALS capable; the location of the equipment and the degree of accessibility take precedence. Space within the cab or body for forcible entry tools, water extinguishers and room for the crew's PPE must be determined, with this equipment weight affecting front axle weight ratings. All chassis and apparatus manufacturers offer different lengths of cabs; the critical dimension that affects vehicle length is from the centerline of the front axle to the rear of the cab.

Choosing which components and equipment will be provided in the area of the front bumper and specifying the depth of the rear step are variables that not only affect the overall length of the apparatus but the angle of approach and departure. Incorporating a front intake and space for a bumper-mounted attack line can be provided within an 18–22-inch extension. Extrication equipment or transverse attack lines require additional space.

Back when personnel rode the tailboard, the rear step was 24–26 inches deep. *Today, the standard rear step is 8–10 inches, which doesn't allow personnel to safely operate on this space, even when racking hose after an incident.*

Although maintaining a reasonable vehicle overall length is important, safe stepping surfaces around the vehicle are critical for operating personnel, including having appropriate designs for step and handrail locations to access the top of the vehicle. ***If you can't safely access the apparatus in street clothes, the rig probably is poorly designed for personnel who are wearing their PPE.***

Examples of well-designed pumpers include a 2022 Sutphen Monarch that was built for Kennebunk, ME, Fire Rescue. Engine 2 is built on a 185-inch wheelbase, has an overall length of 31 feet, 4 inches, and is equipped with a 2,000-gpm pump, a 1,000-gallon, low-profile water tank and a 30-gallon foam cell. The 147-inch-long aluminum body has full-height compartments on each of its sides, using drop-down racks for easier access to the hard sleeves and ground ladders.

The Mechanicsville, MD, Volunteer Fire Department operates a 2024 Pierce Enforcer pumper that was designed with a short wheelbase and a short overall length for its response district. Engine 22 carries a 1,250-gpm pump and a 750-gallon tank and has a low rear hosebed, four discharges and a 5-inch rear intake. The 22-inch front bumper extension accommodates a front intake with swivel and bumper attack line.

## **MEETING YOUR NEEDS**

Apparatus continues to be produced in many configurations. There is a trend in some areas to reassess the size of replacement apparatus because of the increased congestion and build out in communities. At a recent apparatus fleet seminar, a presenter mentioned that the vehicle blueprint of every apparatus project that he worked on fit onto an 11½ x 18-inch piece of paper. *Carefully consider all of the aspects that affect the proportions of your next apparatus. Decisions that you make during the design process will affect your operations for many years.*

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

### ***Foes of Proposed NY Battery Storage Project Cite Problems at CA Facility***

William Kemble – Daily Freeman

TOWN OF ULSTER, N.Y. — Opponents of Terra-Gen's proposed 15-acre lithium-ion battery facility say it should be turned down based on what they call operational mismanagement. They base their stance on a string of tech-based false alarms and two actual fires at the company's 4,600-acre Mojave Desert lithium-ion battery storage and solar array facility in 2024.

Preparing information as part of upcoming environmental reviews, opposition organizer Jillian Fried said security promises involving the project proposed at the site of the former John A. Coleman Catholic High School at 430 Hurley Ave. are undermined by reports from Kern County Fire Department officials in California.

“Reputation cannot be used in determining a project decision, (but) operational history can,” she said. “Foreseeable future events ... can be used. (Environmental law) does want you to look at ... the whole picture that needs to be connected.”

Those comments came in response to a town official saying the \$5.6 million in fines assessed against Terra-Gen by federal regulators for violating laws at a separate facility could not be used to make decisions in the town of Ulster. Fried referred to New York state environmental law decisions and town law as being the basis for assessing a company’s past actions.

Under Town Law subsection 274-b(1) for special use permits, board members are required to determine that a project “will not adversely affect the neighborhood.” That position tracks with a 1999 state Department of Environmental Conservation decision on allowing an applicant’s character and fitness to be considered when rejecting projects. That decision involved the former Al Turi Landfill, which was closed based on evidence obtained by the late U.S. Rep. Maurice Hinchey when he was a state Assembly member.

“DEC may deny a permit application based on the character and fitness of the applicant even when that determination has no basis in human health or environmental protection,” state officials wrote. “DEC has denied landfill permit applications in the past based on the criminal record of the applicant ... holding that it is well established that agencies with licensing authority have implicit discretion to determine the fitness of an applicant and deny a permit when the applicant is unsuitable due to convictions for crimes involving conspiracies to defraud the government.”

According to records Fried said she uncovered, fire calls and estimated damages involving Terra-Gen in 2024 included:

\* Feb. 22, when a battery container caught fire, causing \$1.05 million in equipment loss and resulting in firefighters spending 4 hours and 9 minutes at the scene.

\* Feb. 29, a fire in an inverter box caused an estimated \$50,000 in damage, with fire crews spending 52 minutes at the scene.

\* May 5, an alarm panel apparently malfunctioned and could not be reset by fire officials. There was no loss reported, and 48 minutes were spent on the call.

\* July 14, a battery container caught fire and smoke in the air led firefighters to assess potential effects on nearby homes. County officials estimated a total loss of \$2 million in equipment and \$2 million in property.

\* Aug. 20, a fire alarm sounded when a sprinkler went off inside the solar array, but nothing was found. No fiscal loss was estimated for the company. Fire crews spent 33 minutes on the scene.

\* Sept. 18, a smoking battery container became difficult due to a water system valve being turned off due to a problem. It caught fire as fire personnel were about to leave the scene. Fire officials reported it amounted to a total loss of \$9 million for battery equipment and related property. Fire crews spent four hours and 15 minutes at the scene.

Those problems came after incidents in 2021 that came to light last month when the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission described Terra-Gen as engaging in a “scheme” that “operated as a fraud” involving the same Mojave location. That activity involved manipulating electricity distribution, according to the commission, leading to a \$4.95 million civil penalty and a \$681,007 disgorgement penalty.

Terra-Gen Vice President Mark Turner previously said the federal action resulted in the company enhancing its “compliance culture” over the past two years. Regarding the 2024 incidents, he wrote in an email on Friday, May 1, that the effects were confined to the specific equipment in each call for fire crews and no hazardous condition went beyond the facility’s boundaries.

“The events were linked to a specific equipment-related issue, and in each case impacts were contained within a single enclosure on the project site,” he wrote. “That issue has been addressed, and the equipment involved is not part of the configuration proposed for the Town of Ulster. For that reason, these events are not representative of the technology and configuration proposed.”

However, not knowing specifics of the technology is the problem that project critic Tim Kelly said he has come to expect from Terra-Gen. He has contended the Mojave fires underscore problems that can be expected for town of Ulster, Hurley and Kingston residents due to a lack of information.

“What stands out to me about the (fire loss) dollar figures is that it’s a whole lot of millions for one container,” he said.

Kelly added that while Terra-Gen's Mojave project, which is the nation's largest system at 3.3 gigawatts of lithium-ion storage, dwarfs the 250-megawatt system that would be New York's largest facility, there are many more people who could be affected in a much smaller area.

"These fires are at a facility that has a huge amount of setback from the nearest neighbor," he said, "and (here) we're going to shoehorn this thing in," he said.

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## NEIGHBOR'S HELPING NEIGHBORS, thank you for your support!!

### *Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast*

**Sunday May 17** Breakfast will be served starting at 8AM

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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 May 10<sup>th</sup>** from 7:30 to 11:30, \$10 adults, \$5 children, under 5 free: **Last Breakfast until October 11<sup>th</sup>.**

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## GENERAL INTEREST TO ALL

*An Entertaining Article on Rear Mounted Steamer Connections, with practical applications.*

### *Cantankerous Wisdom: More on Rear Steamers*

Bill Adams

Having a rational discussion with some Raisin Squad members reminds me of the day I came home and found my wife, all five of our daughters, one sister-in-law, and two nieces—all in argumentative moods. It was like Custer's Last Stand, and I was Custer. Neither one of us had a chance.

Over morning coffees, Squad members kept talking about the pros and cons of rear steamer connections and their locations. Several geezers appeared serious when they kept asking why they did this or why they did that. Showing more rear end photos kept them fired up, so that objective was accomplished. Amazingly, some wanted to talk (argue) about firematics rather than which manufacturers built the shiniest rigs. I eventually agreed to write more about the topic. Our combined comments were caffeine stimulated. Fire departments and vendors offered "thoughts and observations" on the subject, the latter doing so without giving sales pitches. My column about piping interference and rear compartmentation storage has to wait until next time.

### **BUSHNELL'S BASIN, NY**

The Bushnell's Basin Fire Department provided Photos of a recently delivered pumper with an "auxiliary suction inlet" in the rear compartment. It's piped 5-inch IPT terminating with a 5-inch Storz large-diameter hose (LDH) adapter and a preconnected pony length. Used for connecting a forward LDH lay, it can also facilitate a big fire hookup if close enough to a plug. *It does not have an NST fitting and is not intended for drafting.*

### **HAZLET, NJ FIRE DISTRICT**

Toyne's National Sales Manager Mike Watts provided a photo of a LDH connection in the rear compartment. The rear compartment didn't look finished, so I contacted Toyne's dealer, New Jersey Emergency Vehicles, who got me in touch with Chief Bill McCarron of the West Keansburg Fire Company, one of three departments (companies) in the township's Hazlet Fire District.



*Do you also use this inlet for making a big fire hook-up on a plug?* “We have a 15-foot section of soft suction attached to the rear intake. If the hydrant is close enough, we can hook directly in.”

*Is this your first pumper with the rear inlet?* “No, our other engine also has a rear intake. Only difference is that this one is in the compartment.”

*Is it a 5-inch or 6-inch pipe feeding it?* “6-inch.”

*Do other FDs around you have similar setups?* “A number have the rear intakes. Not many, if any, with this design.”

*Have you ever drafted from the rear inlet?* “No, we have not, but it’s definitely something to try.”

*The removable door attached with hook-and-loop is a neat idea. What material is it?* “It is heavy duty vinyl attached at the bottom and seatbelt-clipped at the top for quick access.”

*Any comments?* “When the committee designed and built this engine, we decided to run all handlines off the back. This led us to recess the rear intake within the compartment. Having the 15-foot length of soft suction preattached allows connecting to a supply line away from the back of the engine, keeping the rear clear to pull handlines as needed.”

The pumper’s four rear preconnects have their connections on the front wall of the main hosebed. *Most of the Dquad white hairs agreed that keeping LDH supply lines away from the pump operator’s position is a good idea.*

#### **4GUYS**

Frank Riccobono, a salesman for the local 4Guys dealer provided a photo of one of twin pumpers delivered to Altoona, Pennsylvania. They have five exterior discharges on the rear panel.



Riccobono says, “The rear compartment door opening width is reduced and shifted to the driver’s side to provide a straight shot into the fire pump without reducing the depth of the right-side compartment behind the rear wheels. *Rear suction is becoming increasingly popular. They provide better flow than a front suction and are significantly less costly.*”

He also provided a photo of a pumper-tanker for the Howard VFD in Avoca, New York. He says, “The FD picked the location at the rear to keep the rear compartment as large as possible. This is often the deciding factor where the piping exits at the rear. Their specifications describing the transition from the victaulic coupling at the end of the piping run to the rear panel reads, ‘This line shall have victaulic type couplings, front and rear, with drains located, where necessary, at the lowest points of the piping.’ ”

*He continues, “From an operational standpoint, rear suction really shine. Being able to make a forward lay and immediately connect a supply line at the tailboard reduces setup time and eliminates the need to drag hose long distances. That efficiency can make a critical difference in getting water moving quickly. Keeping a lane open allows additional apparatus to access the scene, which can be critical in rural areas where tanker shuttle or nurse tanker operations are common.*

Where departments run into trouble is when the rear suction is treated as an afterthought. The reality is the plumbing has to go somewhere. Large-diameter piping, valves, and sweep bends will take up valuable space. Whether in the rear compartment or the side compartments, every inch dedicated to plumbing is an inch lost for equipment. That’s why it’s essential to clearly define the primary purpose of the rear suction, and decide up front, what you are willing to sacrifice to make it work.”

The Howard rig has swing-out doors at the rear and maintained the flat back design on most rigs with rear hose connections and multiple rear preconnects.

### **SUMMIT**

Joe Messmer, president of Summit Fire Apparatus sent a photo of a unique pumper layout with a rear steamer connection for Williamstown, Kentucky. When I asked why the hose connections are so high off the ground, Messmer replied not interfering with side and rear compartments was a priority for the department. Note the wide access area on top between the rear panel and hosebed. This is another rig with a full-width deep tailboard well as the oversized permanent auxiliary steps—*easy to climb up for those with advanced maturity levels.*

### **ROSENBAUER**

Rosenbauer provided photos showing three ways of providing rear steamer inlets. The pumper for Niagara Falls, New York, has a wide rear step compartment with the inlet mounted low and offset to the right side. Another photo shows a rig for Solomons, Maryland that has an LDH intake valve mounted outside the rear panel. The last photo is a rear-mount pumper for Madera, California. If a rear steamer, two rear preconnects (in the bumper), and three exterior rear discharges are desired, it seems logical to put the pump back there too.



### **PIERCE**

I took a photo at the FDIC International 2019. It's obvious that a large rear step compartment was not a necessity on this rig. Having the rear steamer inlet mounted low directly beneath the LDH bed and away from the rear preconnected discharges on each side seems logical and prevents head bumps.

### **CRIMSON**

Found in my archives, is a Crimson (a Spartan legacy manufacturer) pumper showing a low rear steamer and a high rear discharge—but not too high.

*There's no reason why you can't do that today. Water in on the bottom and water out on the top has been around for a long time. In case old people are riding the load, install large labels saying **IN** and **OUT**.*

## **TAKE A MOMENT TO SMILE**

**Chocolate is the duct tape of life: it fixes nearly everything!!**

## **CLASSIFIED**

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

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*Skip Smith, Commissioner, West Crescent/Saratoga*

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*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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Stay tuned for some new Business Partners for 2026.

Welcome back Stawnychy financial services and the Hannigan Law Firm, serving fire districts in New York State.

*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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