THE BULLETIN

JUNE 20, 2026

The Voice of CAFDA since 2004
Editor, Tom Rinaldi – tom@rinaldi1.com since 2014
When you see **, highly recommended article

CAPITAL SHORT TAKES

- **Congratulations to Assistant Chief William Owen III who was sworn in as the new President of the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs. If is name sounds familiar, Owen's father, William Owen Jr., served as president of the organization from 2008 until 2009.**
- A recording of the video Future of the Fire Service, panel discussion and open forum is available on the AFDNYS.org website.
- Firefighters responding to a **blaze that destroyed** a 1M square foot medical equipment warehouse in Northern California and sent embers flying for miles were hindered by sprinklers and hydrants that weren't working, authorities said Friday. Authorities said they don't yet know why the water system failed during the blaze but it appeared to be a problem with the facility's system, not city supply. *Are the private hydrants at facilities your department protects working properly? How do you know??*

TRAINING OPPORTUNTIES:

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=H9Wzo77bprmGQd5beFEjODUJxebjJC.1

2. Mark your calendar for the CAFDA Conference '27, Lake George NY, April 9-10-11, dinner/vendor show Friday April 10th Fort William Henry Carriage House. Sponsored Mixer the evening of Thursday April 9th 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 Guilderland Fire Department, 2303 Western Ave. (US Route 20), Guilderland, NY. 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 7th, in the Picnic Paddock Area, lunch included.

CAFDA TRAINING AND EVENT DATES				
Day/Date	**Time**	**Type**	**Location**	**Notes**
FY 2026				

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**	Guilderland FD	2303 Western Ave.
Thursday, November 12, 2026	7:00 PM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
DECEMBER 2026	**NO MEETING**			
FY 2027				
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

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 Party 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 the survival of the volunteer fire service. Out of all the substantial bills related to the fire service introduced; only six made it through both chambers and one of those bills requires something that has a negative impact on membership; 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, than the health of the volunteer fire service in this state.

There were 25K bills introduced during the 25/26 session; how many can the legislators 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	1/21/26 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)	6/2/26 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 surviv ing 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 AHJ PASSING ITII
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

📌 AFG, SAFER, and FP&S Grant Programs Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is now OPEN! Applications for all three grant programs are currently open and will be closing on June 22nd.

📌 National Fire Academy Resumes In-Person Emergency Management Trainings. The National Fire Academy 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!

📌 NIOSH Publishes **Gear Laundering Guidance**. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recently released two bulletins on methods for reducing firefighter exposure to contaminated gear. Both Laundering Gear to Protect Firefighters and Protecting Firefighters from Contaminated Gear evaluates exposure controls departments can use to prevent health risks associated with exposure to fireground contaminants. https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/bulletin/2026/contaminated-ff-gear.html?

The Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) is seeking input from local fire departments, state associations, and other stakeholders on a recently proposed rule from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Your perspective is important as we assess the potential impact of these proposed changes.

The proposed rule, "Medicaid Program; Medicaid Managed Care State Directed Payments and Medicaid Fee-for-Service Targeted Medicaid Practitioner Payments," includes changes that could affect supplemental payments for ground emergency medical transportation (GEMT) providers and others.

DATES: We encourage stakeholders to submit comments to CFSI by June 26, 2026, to help inform our analysis. Feedback received after that date is also welcome and will continue to support our understanding of this issue. Responses submitted through the feedback form will also help us identify those who would like to stay informed and remain engaged with CFSI's ongoing work related to GEMT reimbursements.

Please see the Federal Register Notice for more details:
https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/22/2026-10292/medicaid-program-medicaid-managed-care-state-directed-payments-and-medicaid-fee-for-service-targeted

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Cameron Hamilton, President Donald Trump's nominee to lead the Federal Emergency Management Agency, pledged to senators Wednesday to be "fair and reasonable" in assessing requests for disaster aid as he seeks to run an agency roiled by the administration's threats to dismantle it.
Hamilton appeared before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee at a hearing where lawmakers assessed a group of 10 nominees for administration posts.
"My focus will be to ensure that FEMA is objective, is fair and reasonable, follows the law, and is consistent" in how it reviews disaster declaration requests, Hamilton told Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, the top Democrat on the committee. Peters had asked about partisanship in granting major disaster declarations.
Hamilton expressed confidence in the FEMA staff and praised the recent opening of 350 positions to counteract some of the cuts. He said that if confirmed by the Senate, he would do what he could to speed up disaster declaration decisions and reimbursements to states, tribes and territories.
Hamilton, a former Navy SEAL, has never worked as a state or local emergency manager and has publicly criticized FEMA in the past. He has held positions at DHS and the State Department related to emergency response. Federal law requires the FEMA administrator to have "a demonstrated ability in and knowledge of emergency management and homeland security" and at least five years of "executive leadership and management experience", yet no senator at the hearing questioned his suitability for the position.

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
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

TOWN OF TOMPKINS FIRE DISTRICT – AUDIT FOLLOW-UP

Purpose of Review

The purpose of our review was to assess the Town of Tompkins Fire District's (District) progress, as of January 2026, in implementing our recommendations in the audit report *Town of Tompkins Fire District – Board Oversight (2023M-33),* released in June 2023.

The audit determined the Board of Fire Commissioners (Board) did not provide adequate oversight of the District's financial activities. The Board did not:

- Establish controls over the work of the Treasurer, which include receiving and disbursing cash, signing District checks and maintaining the accounting records.
- Annually audit the Treasurer's records or audit all District claims before payment.
- Ensure the Treasurer filed the District's required annual update document (AUD) for fiscal years 2021 and 2022. As of May 10, 2023, the 2021 AUD was 435 days late and the 2022 AUD was nine days late.
- In addition, two certificates of deposit (CDs) totaling $75,789, were not recorded in the District's accounting records. The CDs date back to at least 2014 and were automatically renewed each year.

The audit included 12 recommendations to help the Board and Treasurer improve oversight of the District's financial activities.

Background

The District provides fire protection and emergency services to the Town of Tompkins in Delaware County. The elected five-member Board governs the District and is responsible for its overall financial management. The

Board-appointed Treasurer is the chief fiscal officer and is responsible for receiving, maintaining custody of, and disbursing all District funds, recording all financial activities and preparing periodic financial reports.

Results of Review

Based on our limited procedures, District officials fully implemented two recommendations, partially implemented two recommendations, and did not implement seven recommendations.

Read Full Report Here:

https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2026/pdf/tompkins-fire-district-2023m-33-f.pdf

Fire District audits are available at osc.ny.gov/local-government/audits/fire-district

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WRIGHTS CORNERS FIRE COMPANY, INC., NIAGARA CO – TREASURER'S RECORDS AND REPORTS

Audit Objective

Did the Wrights Corners Fire Company, Inc. (Company) Treasurer (Treasurer) maintain complete financial records in a timely manner?

Audit Period

January 1, 2024 – January 9, 2026

Understanding the Audit Area

A fire company's treasurer should maintain complete financial records in a timely manner to enable informed decision-making by a fire company board, prevent fraud and misappropriation of funds, comply with reporting requirements and maintain public trust. Complete and timely records are essential for establishing financial accountability and proper financial management, oversight by a fire company board and membership, and the protection of public funds.

The Company's budgeted revenues totaled $624,654 for fiscal year 2025.

Audit Summary

- The Treasurer did not maintain complete financial records and record all financial transactions in a timely manner.
- The Treasurer did not record financial activity with sufficient detail, including the source of the deposits and the purpose of disbursements, and did not prepare and submit accurate financial reports, bank reconciliations and budget status reports to the Company Executive Board (Board) monthly. In addition, more than $1.1 million in checks were recorded in the accounting records, on average, 59 days after receipt. As a result, the Company's financial records were incomplete and necessary reports were not developed and submitted in a timely manner, increasing the risk that improper or unauthorized activity could occur without detection or correction.

Although our testing did not identify any improper or unauthorized activity, the Treasurer's inadequate recordkeeping prevented the Board from obtaining sufficient information to effectively oversee the Company's financial operations, make informed decisions and fulfill reporting requirements. If the Board had prepared the annual director's report to members and ensured that an independent auditor annually audited the Treasurer's records, officials could have identified and corrected the omissions and discrepancies we identified.

Specifically, the Treasurer did not:

- Maintain complete accounting records with sufficient detail such as the source of 100 deposits totaling $369,012 and purpose of 123 disbursements totaling $108,312 in a timely manner.
- Prepare and submit accurate bank reconciliations and budget status reports to the Board monthly.
- *File accurate and timely federal tax forms, which subjected the Company to potential fines totaling $24,660. Failure to file the forms could jeopardize the Company's tax-exempt status.*

The report includes eight recommendations that, if implemented, would improve the Treasurer's records and reports. Company officials generally agreed with our recommendations and their response is included in Appendix B

Read the full report here:

https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2026/pdf/wrights-corners-fire-company-2026-12-.pdf

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MIDDLESEX HOSE COMPANY, INC., YATES CO. – FUNDRAISING

Audit Objective

Did Middlesex Hose Company (Company) officials ensure that fundraising collections were properly recorded, reported and safeguarded?

Audit Period

January 1, 2024 – December 16, 2025. We extended the audit period back to January 1, 2022, to review the Company's U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990.

Understanding the Audit Area

Company officials must ensure fundraising collections are properly recorded, reported and safeguarded to prevent financial mismanagement, ensure accountability, preserve public trust and maintain regulatory compliance, which helps the Company retain its tax-exempt status. Individuals involved in fundraising activities are responsible for accounting for and remitting all money received to the Company's Treasurer (Treasurer) who is responsible for recording and depositing cash and preparing bank reconciliations and fundraising reports.

From January 1, 2024, through August 31, 2025,[1] the current and former Treasurers' fundraising collections totaled $108,893.

Audit Summary

- Company officials did not ensure that fundraising collections were properly recorded, reported and safeguarded. As a result, the Executive Committee did not have reliable information, such as detailed fundraising reports, to oversee the Company's fundraising activities.
- Also, the Company has an increased risk that fundraising collections could be lost or stolen without detection.

We determined that the Treasurers did not:

- Maintain adequate supporting documentation or issue receipts or tickets for any fundraising activities.
- Prepare bank reconciliations.
- File IRS Form 990 for 2022, 2023 and 2024 in a timely manner

Also, Company officials did not ensure that:

- Company members issued tickets, or implemented other forms of tracking, to record the number of roast beef suppers that were sold.
- The Treasurers maintained monthly reports or documented the reports within the monthly meeting minutes. As a result, Company officials could not ensure that all money was accounted for and deposited.

The report includes six recommendations that, if implemented, will improve the Company's fundraising records and reports. Company officials disagreed with certain aspects of our findings and recommendations but indicated they have initiated corrective action. Appendix C includes our comments on issues raised in the Company's response letter.

Read the full report here:

https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/local-government/audits/2026/pdf/middlesex-hose-company-inc-2025-148.pdf

THE FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

***Chiefs Against Virtually Everything: Escaping the CAVE mentality

Chief Brain Schaeffer

If you're a fire chief, you've definitely seen it. And if we're honest with ourselves, we have probably, at one time or another, embodied it.

A new idea gets raised. It is not reckless, unserious or even really unsupported. It may even solve a problem the organization has complained about for years. But before the conversation can mature, the resistance starts. You immediately hear phrases like, "That won't work here." "We tried that once." "Our people aren't ready." "That may be fine for a big city department, but not us."

That mindset deserves a name. I call it CAVE: Chiefs Against Virtually Everything.

CAVE is not about prudence. It is not about thoughtful skepticism or deliberation. Good chiefs should test ideas, ask hard questions, and protect their people from fads dressed up as strategy. CAVE is actually something far different. *CAVE is a leadership posture rooted in comfort, habit, fear of criticism, and attachment*

to the familiar. It is what happens when the preservation of the current state quietly becomes more important than improving the organization. That posture does not just slow progress; it halts it. Over time, it can hold an organization back to the point that the cost becomes cultural, operational and moral. Research on organizational learning, psychological safety and decision-making under risk helps explain why this happens and why it matters.

RISK AVOIDANCE VS. RISK MANAGEMENT

In our industry, **risk is a complicated word**. For emergency scenes, we teach risk management. We talk about disciplined aggression, survivability profiling and matching action to conditions. ***But in administrative leadership, many chiefs drift into something else entirely: risk avoidance***. They stop distinguishing between a reckless decision and a calculated one. They treat political discomfort as operational danger. They confuse criticism with utter failure. And because the fire service is full of tradition, identity and strong internal norms, that tendency can morph into culture. *So while firefighters pride themselves on adapting to chaos on the fireground, many resist change back at the station — a pattern shaped by identifiable barriers and facilitators, not just personality flaws or generational complaints.*

One reason chiefs fall into a CAVE mentality is that, put simply, leaders are human, and humans are not wired to evaluate risk cleanly. Prospect theory tells us that people weigh potential losses more heavily than equivalent gains (**Kahneman & Tversky, 1979**). In plain language, the pain of what might go wrong often feels stronger than the value of what might go right. That matters in the chief's office. The possible downside of trying something new is vivid: a labor grievance, a city manager's criticism, a bumpy rollout, an ugly post on social media, a budget hearing that turns into a roast — those are all real. The upside can be slower and less dramatic: better readiness, a healthier culture, better deployment, fewer preventable calls, stronger succession, smarter use of money. *When chiefs are overfocused on visible short-term losses, they become biased toward preserving what already exists, even when the current model is underperforming.*

James March's work on exploration and exploitation is useful here. Healthy organizations can actually do both. They exploit what they know works, but they also explore new possibilities. Departments need proven tactics, standard operating guidelines, training discipline and repeatable systems. But if all a chief does is exploit old certainties, the organization gradually loses its capacity to adapt. It becomes efficient at yesterday's vision. *It gets better and better at protecting a model that no longer fits the environment.*

This is one of the quiet dangers of recurring senior leadership without either an external influence (i.e., education or challenging assignments that get leaders outside of their norms) or a leader from the outside that is brought in to take the risks and move forward. The longer a chief has been successful in one way, the more tempting it is to assume that method is *the* method. March warned organizations about overinvesting in the familiar at the expense of exploration. That warning should hit home for the fire service. *Our hazards are changing. Our workforce is changing. Our communities are changing. Our chiefs cannot lead as if none of that is true.*

CAVE IN CRR

CAVE shows up in community risk reduction, too. *A department will say that it believes in the 5 Es of CRR — Education, Engineering, Enforcement, Economic Incentive and Emergency Response — but its entire internal identity still connects to emergency response.* The department waits for calls, then congratulates itself for being busy. Meanwhile, data shows a call slate of repeat lift assists, recurring nuisance properties, predictable cooking fires and chronic false alarms, often in neighborhoods with disproportionate risk. The opportunity is sitting there in plain view, but the department will not invest because prevention feels less immediate and sometimes less comfortable than sending big red trucks. We perpetuate this model, even as the U.S. Fire Administration and the NFPA frame CRR as a proactive, data-informed process for identifying and mitigating hazards before they escalate into incidents (**USFA, 2018**).

My own anecdotal evidence suggests that many chiefs still view CRR as a side program rather than a department philosophy. They will assign a CRR division or organizational section — a move that sounds good but actually limits progress before it starts. The CRR focus should be woven throughout the organization, not separated as something "different." But, that resistance to changing our legacy is classic CAVE behavior: not openly opposing innovation but starving it of leadership.

RESISTANCE TO TECHNOLOGY AND DEPLOYMENT CHANGE

I have also seen CAVE in technology and deployment decisions. A department stays with paper-heavy processes, resists analytics or avoids changing station response models because the current system is familiar. Another department refuses to revisit run cards, specialty team alignment, or dispatch integration because someone fears the conversation more than the inefficiency. In another case, a chief rejects a pilot program before it starts because "the troops will hate it," even though no one has actually tested that assumption.

Organizational risk aversion can delay or prevent innovation, and it shows something more profound: Leaders are not trapped. Even in risk-averse environments, agencies can work around those constraints by using deliberate strategies. In other words, the presence of risk does not excuse paralysis. Leadership still matters.

WHEN CULTURE SHUTS DOWN CANDOR

Another place CAVE thrives is organizational culture. A chief says they want honest feedback, then punishes candor. They say problem-solvers are wanted, then label people as difficult when they raise uncomfortable truths. The chief says they want innovation, then requires every idea to survive a gauntlet of informal vetoes from those most invested in the status quo.

Amy Edmondson's work on **psychological safety** is directly relevant here. Teams learn when people feel safe enough to ask questions, raise concerns, discuss errors and challenge assumptions. ***When leaders are authoritarian, punitive or defensive, people stop taking interpersonal risks. They withhold ideas. They stay quiet about weak points. They protect themselves.*** In a fire department, that does not just hurt morale, it ruins learning, succession and operational resilience. Some chiefs think they are protecting order when they shut down dissent. What they are really doing is teaching the organization to stay shut up until problems become expensive.

REPUTATION PROTECTION VS. REAL LEADERSHIP

One of the most damaging forms of CAVE is what I would call reputation protection masquerading as stewardship. This is when a chief will not move because they are overly concerned with being blamed if a change does not go perfectly. So the organization remains stuck with outdated practices that everyone privately knows need to change. I would argue this is where leadership becomes moral, not just managerial. Chiefs do not get paid to preserve their own comfort. They get paid to improve the organization, reduce risk to the community and prepare the department for conditions that are coming, not conditions that used to exist.

Research on threat rigidity is instructive here. Under threat, organizations often narrow information processing and tighten control, reverting to familiar responses even when those responses no longer fit the moment. That pattern may feel safe to the leader, but it often makes the organization less adaptive when adaptation is exactly what is needed (**Staw et al., 1981**).

DISCIPLINED COURAGE: THE PATH FORWARD

To be clear, the answer is not reckless change. The answer is disciplined and pragmatic courage. Chiefs should pilot under clear parameters before scaling. They should communicate everywhere before mandating. They should involve labor, develop metrics, define success and create room for adjustment. Rapid, poorly managed change can create confusion and backlash. That is real, and we have all been there. But that reality cannot become an excuse for endless delay. Good chiefs do not change things just to look innovative. They change what needs to be changed, for the right reasons, with enough humility to listen and enough backbone to keep going when the first reaction is resistance.

The hardest truth in this conversation is that CAVE rarely announces itself. It often sounds responsible, rooted in experience. It can sound cautious, even politically savvy. That is why it is dangerous. It can hide within reasonable-sounding phrases while preserving mediocrity. It can convince a chief that delay is wisdom, that control is strength and that avoidance is stewardship.

It is not.

The fire service does not need more chiefs who are against virtually everything. We need chiefs who can tell the difference between reckless risk and necessary change. We need chiefs who can hold onto what is timeless without becoming captive to what is familiar. We need chiefs who are willing to ask a hard question in the mirror: *Am I protecting the organization or am I protecting my own comfort inside it?* That question matters

because the greatest risk for many departments is not moving too fast. It is that they will stand still while the world around them keeps moving.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

The Annual Financial Report (AFR)

Reprinted from Fire District Affairs - AFDNYS

The Fire District Treasurer is required to complete the annual financial report (AFR), commonly referred to as the Annual Update Document (AUD) prior to 2023, at the conclusion of each fiscal year. The Office of the State Comptroller changed the name of the report from Annual Update Document (AUD) to Annual Financial Report (AFR) for fire districts and other municipalities effective for fiscal years ending in 2023. Fire districts operate on a calendar-year basis, meaning each fiscal year ends on December 31st. The AFR is required by §177 of NYS Town Law and is a frequent finding of non-compliance in OSC Audits!

Under the fire district budget statute, it is noted that:

> *The treasurer of each fire district shall prepare and file annually in the office of the town clerk of each town in which any part of such fire district shall be located, and in the office of the state comptroller, a financial statement setting forth in detail the receipts and expenditures of such fire district. Such statement shall be filed in such offices within sixty days after the close of the fiscal year of the fire district. N.Y.* Town Law § 181 (McKinney)

From the statutes we can make the following observations:

- The Board of Fire Commissioners may provide the Treasurer with a sixty (60) day extension for filing the annual financial report or Annual Financial Report ["AFR"] from the January 1 st deadline at its annual organization meeting making the submission/ filing date March 1 st each year for the prior fiscal year's report. The extension must be obtained from OSC.
- The report must be filed with the **Board of Fire Commissioners**, **Office of the State Comptroller** and the **Office of the Town Clerk**(s) for each town in which the district is situated.
- The report must be placed on the district website for public viewing if the district maintains a website.

A review of multiple recent fire district audits for 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 conducted by the Office of the State Comptroller indicates a continuing trend where numerous fire districts audited were found to have neglected to file their Annual Financial Report (AFR) for several years prior to the year of the audit.

Fire District Boards of Fire Commissioners have been advised on the importance of establishing a system of internal financial controls to safeguard their districts against financial fraud, waste, and mismanagement. A key component of such controls is regularly obtaining and reviewing detailed financial reports from the Treasurer.

If the Treasurer fails to file the Annual Financial Report (AFR) in a timely manner or has not filied it at all, it is a clear indication that the fire district lacks an effective system of internal financial controls.

- Has the Treasurer's AFR report been submitted to the Board of Fire Commissioners?
- Has the Treasurer provided proof of filing the report with the Office of the State Comptroller and the Office of the Town Clerk(s) for the towns in which your fire district is located Has the Board of Fire Commissioners reviewed and analyzed the report?

Fire Districts can check their Annual Financial Report (AFR) filing status at
https://www.osc.ny.gov/local-government/required-reporting/annual-financial-report-afr-filingstatus#:~:text=Annual%20Financial%20Report%20(AFR)%20Filing%20Status%20%7C%20Office%20of%20the%20New%20York%20State%20Comptroller.

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

- Seven cities across mid St. Louis County are taking the first steps to merge their fire departments into one regional force. Officials from Olivette, University City, Clayton, Richmond Heights, Maplewood, Webster Groves and Shrewsbury *have finalized an agreement to pay up to $40,000 each to study how they could merge departments into one regional agency, as early as 2028*. "If we can go back in time and design the fire service for municipalities in the St. Louis region, no one would ever pick the way we currently do it," Clayton City Manager David Gipson said in an interview. St. Louis County is currently served by 19 municipal fire departments, run by local cities, and 24 fire districts, each run by an elected board of directors and funded through property taxes approved by voters. A regional fire department would build on collaboration already taking place, officials say. All first responders in the region jointly respond to calls to help one another. Six cities — Clayton, Maplewood, Richmond Heights, Brentwood, Shrewsbury and Webster Groves — built and use a joint training facility, the Central Core Fire Training Center in Shrewsbury. Several cities process 911 calls through shared dispatch centers. "If the study comes back that this isn't a viable option," said Shrewsbury's Ziebold, "then we'll at least know that, too."

- Kids and teens from 12 to 16 years old had a chance to attend a fire camp in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania this weekend. Held in Glenshaw and hosted by Southern Allegheny Valley Emergency Services, *the camp teaches kids basic fire skills*, with the goal that one day some become junior firefighters and eventually fully-fledged first responders. "You have such an important role on the outside of the fire grounds – being able to tap into a hydrant, provide hose lines to the firefighters going into the building," Jean Daniher said. "You can't go into a building; there are restrictions on car accidents, things like that, but you can absolutely be a very big supporting role." *Stations at the camp on Saturday included working with hoses, ladder placement and climbing, how to break down a door, and even drones and water rescue.*

- The town of Watertown Fire District hopes to add two full-time positions, with the help of a federal SAFER grant. Right now, the town has two full-time firefighters. The rest are part-time. Promoting a part-timer to full-time and adding another would bring the town to *four full-time firefighters*, which is the national average.

- Two fire companies in York County, Pennsylvania will soon become one and will share resources, personnel and equipment. Southern Area Fire and Emergency Rescue (SAFER) and Goodwill Fire Company No. 1 of Spry announced their intention to merge on Tuesday. The new organization will have more than 60 active volunteers with officials saying the two, on average, respond to more than 1,600 calls a year, serving Dallastown, Yoe, Yorkana and parts of York and Windsor Townships.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

- A fire suppression system at a Loudon, New Hampshire gas station accidentally discharged Wednesday when a service technician activated it, releasing a large cloud of extinguishing agent that drifted over a state highway and contributed to a five-vehicle crash, authorities said. A strong wind from the west carried the agent obscuring visibility and causing the collision, according to the Chichester Fire Department. Customers fueling cars and motorcycles at the station were caught in the discharge. One person was taken to a hospital as a precaution. No other injuries were reported. The scene was cleared in about two hours, officials said. These systems are no longer required in the NYS Fire Code.

- As state and federal bans and restrictions on PFAS-containing firefighting foams take effect, many fluorine-free alternatives are making bold performance claims, creating an increasingly complex landscape for fire departments to navigate. Such terms as "UL-Listed," "NFPA-compliant," and "third-

party tested" can be helpful but are not always well-defined or understood and can be the difference between sourcing a product that performs and a product that may fall short of expectations in the field. For decision makers, the challenge is about identifying a foam that actually works and understanding which quality and credibility signals truly matter. The implications are significant: Misinterpreting those signals can lead to selecting a product that performs differently than expected in real-world conditions. With a new entrant into the synthetic fluorine free foam (SFFF) category—Vorbeck O3™ Firefighting Foam—Vorbeck realized quickly that a new brand in the fire service could not effectively compete on big claims alone and must first prove performance to build the trust of chiefs and officers making the decisions to support and protect their crews. So, the Vorbeck team worked to secure the right certifications to give departments confidence that the product would deliver. Too often, fluorine-free foams are brought to market with promising internal data but without full certification, leaving departments to interpret performance claims on their own. For Vorbeck O3™, this meant taking a different approach: prioritizing certification before any commercial launch. The goal was to ensure the product entered the market already validated against the same rigorous benchmarks departments rely on to evaluate foams, providing clear, credible, and externally verified signals of performance from the outset. As the firefighting industry continues to transition toward fluorine-free solutions, understanding certifications and product claims will only become more important. Ultimately, certifications are not just labels; they are tools to help departments make informed, confident decisions about the products they rely on in critical moments. Vorbeck O3™ was developed and brought to market with that standard in mind: not solely to meet requirements but to provide departments with a level of confidence grounded in independent validation and real-world performance.

- The community was hit with shockwaves this June after police announced Mack David Roberts II, 43, has been charged with theft, alleging he stole $11,300 in Volunteer Firefighter Relief Association funds from the Thorndale Volunteer Fire Company located in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General's Bureau of Fire Relief Audits discovered the criminal activity, police said. The department distributes state aid for Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Associations across the commonwealth to provide equipment, insurance and additional support to volunteer firefighters and their respective services.

- Adam Walker, founder of United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, was charged after allegedly spending $83,000 for personal use. The ex-secretary of a Los Angeles labor union representing firefighters was charged with grand theft and forgery after he allegedly transferred money from the union foundation's bank account to his own accounts to make mortgage payments, RV loan payments and participate in online gambling, authorities said. Walker was booked into jail on $50,000 bail, according to an arrest warrant document provided by the California Attorney General's Office. The investigation into Walker began after someone flagged concerns in October 2024 about improper record-keeping to the parent organization, authorities said.

SATISTICS FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY – PROTECTING OUR OWN

FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

34

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.emergencyvehicleresponse.com/

Fire Apparatus Accidents

- A Colorado Springs fire engine collided with a passenger bus Saturday, sending nine people to the hospital four firefighters and five Bustang passengers were injured in the crash. The engine was responding to a possible overdose call with its lights and sirens activated. It has been determined that the Engine is totaled. Preliminary findings from police indicate that the front passenger side of the bus struck the fire engine.
- Firefighter Andrew Hayward, 20, a Wells River, Vermont Volunteer Fire Department was taken into custody after being involved in a crash while responding to an emergency incident. Officials say Hayward allegedly failed to stop at a stop sign at an intersection in Newbury and collided with another vehicle. A 53-year-old woman who was in the other vehicle was transported to the hospital for injuries. Police arrested Hayward and charged him with negligent operation.

Firefighter Maydays, Serious Injuries and Deaths

- Assistant Fire Chief Wayne Woodbury died a month after he was injured by an explosion and fire at Robbins Lumber, which also claimed the life of a Morrill, Maine firefighter.
- An Odessa, Texas Fire Rescue lieutenant died battling a trailer fire Sunday evening. The fire department said conditions deteriorated rapidly, resulting in injuries to three firefighters. Lt. Isai Huerta, 29, and two others were transported to Medical Center Hospital where Huerta succumbed to his injuries.

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	579
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: 940 = 37.6 weekly	
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 31st 2025 although the implementation of the energy code provisions have been withdrawn until further notice.

FIRE STATIONS

Built for Today, Ready for Tomorrow: Futureproofing Volunteer Fire Stations for the Career Transition

Patrick Stone, Rachael Grodzki

Fire stations are long-term civic investments, often expected to serve their communities for 50 years or more. Many of these facilities were originally designed to support volunteer fire departments, particularly in suburban and rural areas. However, the realities of fire and emergency medical services are changing rapidly. Increasing call volumes, evolving training requirements, and shifting workforce dynamics are placing a growing strain on the traditional volunteer model.

Across the country, fire departments are increasingly transitioning toward combination staffing models that blend volunteer and paid personnel or are moving entirely to career staffing. These shifts are often gradual

and driven by operational necessity rather than through long-term planning. As a result, many existing fire stations are not equipped to support overnight or duty crews, shift work, or expanded staffing.

Futureproofing is a concept that offers a practical solution. By incorporating flexibility and scalability into design and construction, fire stations can meet current needs while preparing for future transitions. This approach allows communities to adapt without costly renovations, ensuring that facilities remain effective and resilient as service demands evolve.

REASONS FOR DECREASED VOLUNTEERS

The decline in volunteer firefighters is driven by a combination of economic, social, and operational factors that continue to intensify.

One of the most significant challenges is the shift in workforce patterns. In many communities, particularly rural areas, volunteers often commute longer distances due to housing affordability and regional job distribution. They also tend to have less flexible work schedules, especially during daytime hours, limiting their availability to respond to calls. Dual-income households have further reduced the time individuals can dedicate to community service.

Economic pressures also play a key role. As the cost of living increases, many individuals must prioritize paid employment over volunteer commitments. What was once a feasible contribution to the community has become more and more difficult to justify without compensation.

Training requirements have increased substantially as well. Firefighting demands proficiency in a wide range of disciplines, including fire suppression, EMS, hazardous materials, and technical rescue. With the world becoming more litigious, fire departments have been forced to significantly enhance well documented training in an effort to reduce risk and meet standards. While these standards improve safety and effectiveness, they also increase the time commitment required to participate.

This issue becomes further exacerbated by the reality that call volume is at an all-time high. As outlined in a previous article by David Pacheco, AIA, NCARB, departments are increasingly asked to do more with less. According to the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), there was roughly a 25 percent decrease in volunteer firefighters in the U.S. between 1984 and 2020. However, the increased emergence of EMS, rescue, and service calls has resulted in call volume tripling in that time frame.

Recruitment and retention challenges further compound the issue. Younger generations often seek structured, predictable commitments, and the open-ended nature of volunteer service can be less appealing. Existing volunteers also face administrative responsibilities and fundraising demands, contributing to burnout.

As a result of these overlapping pressures, many departments are reevaluating their staffing models. While volunteer service remains essential, the shift toward combination or career staffing is becoming increasingly common.

FUTUREPROOFING TECHNIQUES TO CONSIDER

As departments navigate these changes, designing for adaptability is essential. Futureproofing does not mean overbuilding, but rather making strategic decisions that allow facilities to evolve with minimal disruption and cost.

Planning for future residential use is one of the most critical considerations. Introducing overnight crews brings the building under International Building Code requirements for sleeping areas, classified as Group R occupancy. Even in a volunteer-only station, incorporating these provisions early can greatly simplify a future transition. This includes providing appropriate fire-rated separations between the Group R occupancy, ensuring compliant egress from sleeping spaces, and integrating smoke and carbon monoxide detection. Evaluating potential sprinkler requirements as defined by the building code is also essential, as incorporating these systems during initial construction is far more efficient than retrofitting later.

Mechanical systems should also be designed with future capacity in mind. Systems that are adequate for a lightly occupied volunteer station may not support a fully staffed, 24-hour operation. Designing HVAC systems to accommodate increased occupancy, and provide zoned control, supports both flexibility and long-term efficiency.

Electrical and technology infrastructure is another key component. Fire stations continue to rely more heavily on communication systems, alerting technology, and data networks. Installing spare conduit pathways,

allowing for additional electrical capacity (such as extra space in an electric room or capacity in panelboards), and providing expandable IT space enables departments to integrate new systems without major upgrades.

Space planning plays a central role in adaptability. Offices, training rooms, and support spaces can be designed with future conversion in mind, allowing them to transition into bunk suites or living quarters as staffing models change. Structural layouts that support modification, along with the use of demountable partitions, make these conversions more efficient and less disruptive. One example is the ready room (or day room). In a volunteer station, this is a hub for volunteers to gather before or after a call, allowing for camaraderie, information sharing, sign-in location, and more. Upon conversion to career, this space may become a more traditional alarm room or house watch. If the space and infrastructure is in place, minimal changes to the furniture, fixtures and equipment within the space can make the transition very cost effective.

To help manage initial construction costs, certain areas can be left as “white box” spaces for future build-out when funding becomes available. These spaces are often allocated for some other temporary use in the meantime. If bunk accommodations are not included in the initial program, planning for future additions is equally important. This includes identifying expansion areas on site, maintaining efficient circulation between additions and the apparatus bay to preserve response times, and accommodating parking for overnight crews or future parking expansions. Whenever a future addition is planned, there are ways to accommodate the structure, such that the addition can easily be connected to the primary building without major modifications, such as providing planned openings with lintels already in place.

Equally important is designing for firefighter health and well-being. Modern stations should incorporate clear separation between apparatus bays and living areas, along with dedicated spaces for decontamination, gear storage, and laundry. Separating the laundering of personal linens from operational gear supports a clean living environment through hot-zone design and aligns with current standards such as NFPA 1585.

Beyond functionality, the station environment should reflect the reality that career firefighters often spend extended periods in the building. Incorporating durable yet comfortable materials and thoughtfully designed living spaces helps create an environment that supports both performance and well-being.

CASE STUDY: FRIENDSHIP ENGINE AND HOSE COMPANY

The new station for the Friendship Engine and Hose Company, currently under construction in Merrick, NY, demonstrates how futureproofing can be successfully integrated into a volunteer station.

Originally built in 1931, the existing station faced numerous limitations, including undersized apparatus bays, limited circulation space, and a lack of modern support areas. The new facility addresses these deficiencies while anticipating future operational needs.

Although the station is designed to support a volunteer department, it incorporates key features that allow for a transition to shift-based staffing. A dedicated bunk suite provides accommodations for three private bunk rooms and is designed for flexibility, allowing either individual beds or bunk beds. Lockers promote overnight use by offering offer storage for personal belongings and linens.

The bunk suite includes a private bathroom, enabling comfortable operation for overnight crews while maintaining separation from public and operational spaces. A shared living room provides an area for rest and informal interaction, encouraging use of the primary station kitchen to reinforce camaraderie while avoiding redundant spaces.

A dedicated laundry area for bunk linens further supports a clean-living environment. By separating these functions from gear and other potentially contaminated materials, the design reinforces the distinction between operational and residential zones.

In addition to these features, the station includes updated apparatus bays, improved circulation, decontamination areas, and expanded support spaces. These improvements address immediate operational needs while positioning the department for future staffing changes.

The result is a facility that functions effectively today while remaining adaptable for tomorrow. The department has previously introduced overnight crews and a creative partial staffing system that accommodates college students and other firefighters who are only in town for short periods of time. The transition to a more formal combination or career model is now supported by the infrastructure already in place.

CONCLUSION

The fire service is undergoing a significant transformation driven by changing demographics, increased service demands, and evolving expectations. While volunteer departments remain essential, the shift toward combination and career staffing is likely to continue in many communities.

Futureproofing provides a proactive approach to managing this transition. By incorporating flexibility, scalability, and long-term thinking into fire station design, communities can ensure their facilities remain functional and relevant over time.

Rather than reacting to change, futureproofed stations are prepared for it. They allow departments to adapt their staffing models, maintain service levels, and support firefighter well-being without major disruption or expense.

Ultimately, designing for the future is about creating resilient, adaptable spaces that serve both the community and the firefighters who protect it, today and for decades to come.

FIRE APPARATUS

FDIC Provides Some Clarity on 2027 Engine Impact

Chris McLoone

First, I was hoping to see some of the stock rigs that various manufacturers are producing to help departments get rigs faster and at lower costs. Second, I was sure to ask every manufacturer I visited about 2027 EPS-compliant engines and if there is any more clarity on how these engines will impact fire apparatus design. As I've mentioned before, the fire company I run with has put together a truck committee to begin planning our next rescue truck. So, I made sure to take pictures of the rescue trucks that were out there to send back to committee members as they begin to decide what features they will incorporate into the new vehicle and decide on walk-in vs. walkthrough vs. walk-in with a crew cab.

As far as stock rigs, exhibitors did not disappoint. I've gone from one exhibitor telling me a few years ago, "You might have walked by a stock ladder truck," to, "Here are our stock aerial products." What I was hoping for was to get a look at these fire trucks that incorporate 80% of what their customers spec in their rigs. We talk about using data all the time to help justify the purchases we need to make. Manufacturers have had the 80/20 data and are now incorporating this data into the rigs they build. And, in some instances, dealers are providing data specific to their sales territories. They won't be solutions for every department, but there are many departments that are using stock rig purchases to get the trucks they need quicker while planning for their custom rig purchases. There were many of these apparatus on the show floor already lettered for their destination.

Pierce had one pumper at the show with a 2027 engine and an example of how it packaged the engine components. The caveat here is that this is one manufacturer's solution. Every manufacturer will likely have a slightly different approach to packaging these engines in their cabs. There is still a lot of work being done, and each manufacturer I spoke with does have a little more clarity in terms of the impact they expect. It's critical that you look at what your department's needs are going to be and match those needs to the manufacturer that can meet them after packaging these new engines. Generally, ask how the OEM will handle the additional alternator placement and aftertreatment system canister location. Ask how these locations will impact cab space and compartment space. One vendor told me they had recently used their last pre-2027 engine, so these changes are coming.

If you're spec'ing a rig now, ask about the engine. There is still a lot of engineering being done for these, so the solutions today could be different tomorrow, but make sure you have a clear understanding of what could be coming.

GREEN ENERGY AND THE IMPACT ON THE FIRE SERVICE

Another Case of Burning Rooftop Solar Panels

L.A. fire officials said Wednesday evening that crews had gained the upper hand on a massive warehouse fire that involved an ammonia gas leak in Boyle Heights as they extinguished flames burning atop the roof.

The fire ignited shortly after 2:30 p.m. at a nearly 500,000-square-foot cold storage facility owned by Lineage Logistics. A smoke advisory was also issued for a broad swath of East Los Angeles, with members of the public urged to limit outdoor exercise and people with health issues to remain indoors.

Crews responded to the incident at 2:35 p.m., when they took an offensive position battling the *fire burning solar panels* atop the 1,000-by-500-foot commercial building, according to the L.A. Fire Department. Although crews made strong initial progress dousing the roof with water, the leak was then discovered inside the building, and several small explosions reinvigorated the flames and smoke. Within the hour, all firefighters were called off the roof and out of the building because of the danger posed by the intense flames and the ammonia leak.

As the fire consumed more of the roof, hose lines were unable to reach all areas of the blaze, and three firefighting helicopters were called in and used to dump thousands of gallons from above. These drops helped reduce the amount of smoke being generated by the blaze.

Its Boyle Heights warehouse also caught fire in August 2024, although that incident was significantly less dramatic. Crews quickly established hose lines on the roof and contained the blaze to a portion of the solar panels atop the structure, achieving knockdown in 48 minutes with no injuries reported, the Fire Department said at the time.

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

Gansevoort Fire Department Car Show

Saturday August 8th, 10am until 2pm, rain date August 9th
1870 Route 32 Gansevoort, NY
Chick BBQ, Raffles, T-Shirt sale, Trophies in several categories
Registration $15, Day of Show $20

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

See you in the fall.

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

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

Speigletown Fire Department Breakfast 2nd 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

Changing Face of Volunteerism of the Fire Service

Sarah Lee

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- What one generation might want or expect out of volunteering, including for the fire service, might look a lot different than that of the next or previous generation.
- Some positions with a volunteer fire department can be done remotely. This provides opportunities to attract younger people who want to volunteer but aren't interested in being located on site.
- Volunteer fire departments that are struggling to connect with young people should showcase the personal connections, camaraderie and strong bonds that are inherent in the fire service. Many young people want human connections.

If your department struggles to recruit and retain volunteers, you're far from alone. Volunteerism today doesn't look like it did even five years ago. Cultural, demographic, sociological and technological changes influence how people volunteer and what they expect out of volunteer opportunities. Departments must be curious, flexible and innovative.

NOT RIGHT OR WRONG

Different generations have different lived experiences. Some grew up with no technology; others have been digital natives since birth. Generations have experienced different cultural events and shifting cultural norms that shape how they view, experience and behave.

These differences don't make one generation right and another wrong; they just make them different. This means that what one generation might want or expect out of volunteering might look a little different than that of the next generation and the generation after that.

What are differences that can make your department more appealing to the younger generations?

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERING

With changes in technology, more people are volunteering online rather than in person. Whether managing social media for a nonprofit, helping to fundraise or tutoring, numerous needs can be met online and don't require a volunteer to physically be in any one location.

This isn't necessarily bad news for the fire service. How many jobs exist in your department that can be done remotely? With today's digital tools, it even is possible to pay bills and manage finances online, so even a treasurer position can be mostly virtual.

Not every volunteer must be operational. Nonoperational volunteers help shoulder the load of running a department and lighten the work of those who are training and responding to calls.

DESIRE FOR HUMAN CONNECTION

Typically, members of Generation Z want opportunities to network with colleagues and to feel less lonely. This is prime opportunity for fire departments to meet this need through volunteerism.

The younger generation is seeking balance. In addition to virtual work, these people want human connections and opportunities to increase their skills.

Further, many realize the downside of too much time spent on technology.

How are you communicating your volunteer needs? When you put out your call for volunteers, consider how you can tap into this need for balance by showcasing the personal connections, camaraderie and strong bonds that are unique to the fire service. Images, words and even inviting people into your station for a visit or ride-along can go a long way toward demonstrating how you can help them to meet this need.

FLEXIBILITY

Younger generations look for flexibility and to make the most of the only nonrenewable resource that they have: time. Unforgiving schedules and forced in-person learning can deter a generation that already is very skilled at learning through digital media and collaborating online.

How much of Firefighter I/Firefighter II and other core skills can be delivered online or via flexible, self-paced learning, with cohorts meeting periodically for focused review and hands-on training?

Unlike older generations that didn't grow up with a digital world at their fingertips, younger generations are accustomed to researching topics, locations and brands before they even show up, and they're coming in with some level of existing knowledge. (Go out to dinner with nearly any younger person and chances are they already examined the menu and know what they want.)

Further, starting and ending on time and providing flexibility in how/when training occurs shows respect for time, allows people to work around busy schedules and can go a long way in meeting evolving needs.

PURPOSE AND COLLABORATION

Younger generations show a strong desire for leadership and ownership, with an emphasis on purpose, collaboration, diversity and inclusivity. These people want to know how what they are doing has an effect, and they value teamwork, wanting to work with, rather than for, a manager/leader.

This doesn't mean that there isn't a place for clear roles and leadership, but departments that want to appeal more to younger generations can provide opportunities for growth and leadership now rather than in years to earn that privilege. For example, if your department will host an open house, put a younger member in charge of creating signage and social media content/promotional plans or of designing and implementing activities for young children. Provide a clear path for volunteers to follow to obtain that coveted officer level or to meet other personal goals to gain knowledge and skills.

When recruiting, communicate with existing members to identify and quantify how their service helps the community. Share this in recruitment messaging.
Cite the number of calls handled, publicize personal stories or calculate cost savings that volunteers bring to the community.
Although the fireground calls for a strict hierarchy and command infrastructure, seek opportunities outside of the fireground to emphasize mentorship and coaching. Create opportunities for teamwork and collaboration to balance out the more hierarchical nature of the fire service.

RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Older generations might have started to volunteer because they saw a sign outside of the station or a flyer or because of family connections to the service. These methods still can be part of a recruitment plan, but younger generations look online for volunteer opportunities. A digital presence will speak volumes to them about what a department can offer while streamlining onboarding and helping to target recruitment messages within your community.
Younger generations are accustomed to researching topics online, so make sure that your digital presence is welcoming and informative. Younger generations are used to online forms (rather than paper applications) and using social media to engage and learn. If your department isn't up to speed in these areas, this is an opportune time to bring in a younger member who can take ownership over the project to see the immediate effect of their efforts.

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

It bears repeating: Different generations have different expectations and needs. What's noted above are just a handful of ideas to help your department to appeal to a broader audience without losing the wisdom and expertise that you have on hand. The first step is a willingness to learn what these differences are. If you read this far, you have a head start. Get curious, be willing to evolve, and be willing to learn.
This is an incredible time to be part of the fire service. Seasoned veterans can pass their wisdom and skills to those who follow in their footsteps while gaining insight from a whole cohort of digital natives who know how to leverage technology to streamline processes, expand outreach and set up the fire service.

TAKE A MOMENT TO SMILE

Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

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.

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!!

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 in!
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
Financial issues should be addressed to: TREASURER@CAFDA.NET
518-407-5020

Wish to become a member of CAFDA, go to CAFDA.net/membership to apply.

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Business Partner Applications Available At: 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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FIRE STATION & FACILITIES ARCHITECTS AND ENENGINEERS

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Engineering, Surveying, Architecture, Landscape Architecture & Geology, D.P.C.
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