

THE BULLETIN

OCTOBER 24TH, 2026

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

CAPITAL SHORT TAKES

- ****In the Firefighter Health and Safety Section read about the changes coming to the NYS Volunteer Firefighter Cancer Benefit Program and new reporting protocols as of January 1, 2027, posted here and on the CAFDA.net web site. Be sure to see Page 7**
- **BUDGET SCHEDULE** PAGE 4 also on CAFDA.net
- **ELECTION SCHEDULE** PAGE 9 also on CAFDA.net
- The Nominal Compensation discussion entries are on the last pages of the Bulletin.
- Next year's Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York will be held September 16th, 17th and 18th.

TRAINING OPPORTUNTIES:

CAFDA

Proudly Serving the Capital & Surrounding Areas

FALL EDUCATION SEMINAR 2026

Date: Saturday, November 7, 2026
Location: Guilderland Fire District
2303 Western Ave, Guilderland, NY 12084

Not limited to Only Commissioners!

Chief Officers, Company Officers, Secretaries, Treasurers, etc. are invited, and encouraged to attend!

SCHEDULE

7:00 – 8:00 am: Registration/Continental Breakfast
8:00 – 2:00 pm: Pledge to Flag & Welcome by CAFDA Officers & Directors
Understanding & Navigating the Pitfalls of Workers' Compensation: Alex Dell
Insurance: "PPE" for Your Fire District: Dustin Hall
Are You Really a Chief: Tim Boel
Lunch with the Expert Panel Participants

Help Us Plan!

Please reserve your seat now by *responding no later than Friday, October 30th*

CAFDA Members: $25.00 **Non-Members: $35.00**

Multiple Registration and Payment Options Available:

1. Online via Credit Card (separate registration required for each individual attending)
2. Check payable to Capital Area Fire Districts Association
3. Pay at the Door (please mail/email completed registration form)

CAFDA

P.O. Box 242
East Schodack, NY 12063

www.CAFDA.net
Secretary@CAFDA.net

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

WWW.CAFDA.NET

2026 REGISTRATION FORM

FALL EDUCATION SEMINAR

Saturday, November 7, 2026

Guilderland Fire District, 2303 Western Avenue, Guilderland, NY 12804

See Attached Training Flyer for Class Schedule and Topics!

CAFDA Members: $25.00 per attendee **Non-Members: $35.00 per attendee**
(Continental Breakfast and Lunch Included)

Fire District/Organization: _____

Membership Status (select one): ___ Member of CAFDA or ___ Non-Member of CAFDA

Attendees (include full name & at least one email so we can confirm registration & prepare certificates, as well as contact phone numbers in case of inclement weather notifications):

Attendee Name & Phone Number:	**Email Address:**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Total Number Attending:_____

Registration Now Open - Assist us with Meal Planning - Reserve your Seat Soon!
Respond no later than Friday, October 30th

Payment Options:

1) Online Credit Card (separate registration required for each individual attending):
   Go To: https://cafda.net/event-registration/
2) Check enclosed payable to ***Capital Area Fire Districts Association*** for: $_____
   Mail To: **CAFDA** PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063
3) Pay at the Door ☐ (check box at left; please mail/email completed form in advance):
   Email to: Secretary@cafda.net

From CAFDA

REGISTER NOW FOR THE FALL EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP at CAFDA.NET

1. ***Join us at the NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING on Thursday October 1st at 7pm, Clifton Park Fire Station and Zoom Link: CAFDA General Membership Meeting Time: Oct 8, 2026 07:00 PM Eastern Time https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82935704354?pwd=mjRF7a9DOKCSkpnHqxkCstMMzrkduQ.1***
2. ***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". SEE PAGE 40 FOR FLYER AND REGISTRATION FORM, REGISTER ON-LINE NOW AVAILABLE AT CAFDA.NET***
3. ***Mark your calendar for the CAFDA Conference '27, Lake George NY, April 8 9-10-11, Fiscal Oversight & Leadership Training (FOIT) by OSC, 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.***
4. ***CAFDA Commissioner Training Dates for 2027 will be held in Averill Park on February 6th, Thomas Corners on February 20th, Clifton Park on March 6th, Schoharie on March 20th, Berkshire on March 27th and Warrensburg on April 3rd.***

CAFDA TRAINING AND EVENT DATES				
Day/Date	**Time**	**Type**	**Location**	**Notes**
FY 2026				
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 9, 2027	9:00 AM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting/Breakfast Buffet
Saturday, January 6	8:00 AM	**Commissioner Training**	Averill Park Rensselaer County	Snow Date 2/7
Thursday February 11	7:00 PM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	
Saturday February 20	8:00 AM	**Commissioner Training**	Thomas Corners Glenville Fire Dist #7 Schenectady County	Snow Date 2/21
Thursday March 4	7:00 PM	**General Membership Mtg**	Clifton Park	
Saturday March 6	8:00 AM	**Commissioner Training**	Clifton Park FD Saratoga County	Snow Date 3/6

Saturday March 20	8:00 AM	**Commissioner Training**	Niagara Engine Co #1, Schoharie Schoharie County	Snow Date 3/22
Saturday March 27	8:00 AM	**Commissioner Training**	Berkshire Fire District Fulton County	Snow Date 3/28
Thursday April 1	7:00 PM	**Board of Directors Mtg**	Clifton Park	
Saturday April 3	8:00 AM	**Commissioner Training**	Warrensburg FD Warren County	Snow Date 4/4
Wednesday April 7	8:00 AM	**Financial & Fiduciary Responsibilities**	Fort William Henry Conference Center	Instructors from OSC
Thursday, April 8 - Saturday April 10, 2027	To Be Announced	**CAFDA Conference '27**	Fort William Henry Conference Center	Lake George
Thursday, April 6 - Saturday April 8, 2028		**CAFDA Conference 2028**	Fort William Henry Conference Center Lake George, NY	

From Other Organizations

Insurance 101: EMS Operations, ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

Join David Snyder, AINS & Sherman "Lee" Price for a deep dive into patient care areas that could get us into trouble from an insurance standpoint and ways to keep claims down.

Date: 11/5/2026 Time: 7:00 PM EST

REGISTER AT THE FOLLOWING LINK

https://us.list-manage.com/Z9B1ZiLk5mv?e=781e9a2c81&c2id=df3ef39abf096be1508115a6ea1a79c8&m=VydlutyiTZ_W3698AWDxViOSbmQrS4UohUg4BlptwTiR4FK02oyOHG8rS74l

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NYSAFC is Bringing Hands-On Training to Your Area!

Open enrollment is available for NYSAFC Regional Hands-On Training this fall. The eight-hour **Fire Behavior On the Inside** course is scheduled for **Albany** (November 14-15), and Ontario County (November 7-8)

THE THREE-HOUR **FLASHOVER** program is coming to East Glenville Fire District and Orange County (November 21-22.

View the Calendar and Register...

2026 Seminar Series with Chief Mike Lombardo Resumes in September

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

Chief Mike Lombardo (Buffalo Fire Department) will present "**Dangerous Spaces: Challenges and Tactics When Dealing with Garage and Basement Fires**" at 16 sites through November. Registration is $35 (NYSAFC members) and $50 (non-members) per person. Registration will be available at the door, but pre-registration is encouraged. Join NYSAFC in Chautauqua 10/28 **Greene 10/26**, Nassau 11/4, Oneida 11/12, and **Rensselaer 11/3**.

FREE FIREFIGHTER WELLNESS SEMINAR SERIES FROM NYSAFC AND PERMA

"In the Mouth of the Dragon: Fire Dynamics and the Cancer Risk on Today's Fireground"

With Director/Chief Frank Leeb

(First Responder Center for Excellence/FDNY)

This two-hour program will help participants develop a clearer understanding of the relationship between modern fire behavior, toxic smoke, and occupational illness – and how informed tactics, disciplined decision-making, and fireground awareness can reduce risk.

2026 Locations and Dates:

On-site and pre-registration available.

Seminar begins at 7:00 p.m.

Registration area opens at 6:30 p.m.

Oneida County – December 9

Fulton County – December 14

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

https://ygc8ha5ab.cc.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001o9hCtluVAB0476vX-cZjVvqHRmCxsoU9KP1ysekKcaUKmTrLIyUm9MYE27KlZGa8SfVj6i_vyF1LCA5NEtJOVP4CsAq1mRK_CqqD37uVsJpqRM7iioF6rda1M28AQPaz3gl9mHrjqcHFSk235YEe1tRRN65ua9bEg9e-SasQTT4HaYcImbZWgOpUBf_YOalJ&c=ts5YTR8fTiZUrzXYf0woGb7NfLL_J2QllZMAXQm8kEvKQgY4u4qZHA==&ch=tChtpqKC9nh6nvNTFs3T9qQIyI_yslbkvSVrvr4mUPXbgI62_Z1NNg==

AAAttention Treasurers - NYS OSC Webinar: Completing Delinquent AFRs for Fire Districts using Cash Basis Accounting

December 2, 2026, 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Click the link below to register NOW!

As a bit of a refresher, cash basis accounting may be used for reporting purposes by fire districts who collect less than $500k of annual revenue. It's a simpler form of accounting that does not use accruals (receivables or payable). It's especially useful when fire districts are trying to catch up on their AFRs since outstanding accruals, which may be many years old, are often difficult to reconcile when the district lacks accounting records from the fiscal year they're trying to prepare. This webinar will address how a delinquent fire district can use available source documents, such as bank reconciliations, to get caught up.

We will demonstrate how to calculate year-end balances for reporting purposes including cash, fund balance, revenues and expenditures. We will also discuss resources including how to contact our Data Management Unit for delinquent filing information and assistance.

REGISTER AT THE FOLLOWING LINK

https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7097924160312762202

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

From Albany

Your Ability to Take the Income and Property Exemption Just Went Up in Smoke!!

The Legislature has agreed to a chapter amendment that: changes the year in which the credit can be claimed to Tax Year 2027; *prohibits claiming both the personal income tax credit and a real property tax exemption simultaneously by requiring taxpayers to choose one or the other*, which is consistent with the original law as enacted in 2007; and, corrects certain technical issues with the bill.

Volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers in New York will receive a significantly larger state income tax credit in 2028. The New York Legislature has passed legislation that would increase the state income tax credit for eligible volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers from $200 to $800 per person, it was signed by the governor during elaborate well planned show for maximum news coverage on October 17.

Waiting for the governor to call for the bills that were passed by both Chambers so that she can sign them into law. Technically she has until December 31st.

- Law passed and signed to require mandatory recycling program for e-scooters/e-bikes.

- The use of "Piggyback Purchasing" extended one more year until June 30, 2027.

S6233A MARTINEZ (D)	A6790A MCMAHON	6/1/26 PASSED SENATE 5/14/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	THIS BILL INCREASES THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' AND AMBULANCE WORKERS' PERSONAL INCOME TAX CREDIT FROM $200 TO $800 FOR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS AND FROM $400 TO $1600 FOR ELIGIBLE MARRIED JOINT FILERS. ALSO ALLOWS FIRST RESPONDERS TO TAKE THE PROPERTY TAX CREDIT ALSO.	10/16/26, SIGNED Chapter 313
S8832 KAVANAGH (D)	A9504 GLICK (D)	1/2/126 PASSED SENATE 2/10/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER AMENDMENT IS TO FACILITATE THE INCLUSION OF E-BIKE AND E-SCOOTER BATTERIES IN THE RECHARGEABLE BATTERY RECYCLING PROGRAM AND TO PROMOTE CONSUMER SAFETY, CONVENIENCE, AND AWARENESS	2/13/26 SIGNED CHAPTER 87
S10075 SOLAGES (D)	A11162 ZELLLNER	6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 5/29/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	EXTEND THE PROVISION OF THE COMPETITIVE BIDDING STATUTE [GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW §103] WHICH PERMITS PIGGYBACK PURCHASING. THE STATUTE HAD A SUNSET PROVISION MEANING THAT IT WOULD EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, 2026. THE BILLS PROPOSE TO AMEND THE STATUTE TO EXTEND THE SUNSET PROVISION UNTIL JUNE 30, 2027	6/26/26 SIGNED CHAPTER 147
S6368B SKOUFIS (D)	A3126B LUNSFORD (D)	4/22/26 PASSED SENATE 3/30326 PASSED ASSEMBLY	AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW, IN RELATION TO REQUIRING THAT WHEN A COMPLAINT IS MADE TO LOCAL CODE ENFORCEMENT OF A VIOLATION OF THE UNIFORM FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING CODE OR LOCAL BUILDING CODES WHICH RESULTS IN THE ISSUANCE OF A COMPLIANCE ORDER, THE COMPLAINANT SHALL ALSO BE PROVIDED A COPY OF SUCH ORDER	PENDING SIGNATURE
S9502A MARTINEZ (D)	A10885B STERN (D)	6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 6/1/26 PASSES ASSEMBLY	*TO AUTHORIZE* LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO ADOPT A PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES OF PAID FIREFIGHTERS WHO ARE KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.	PENDING SIGNATURE PENDING PASSAGE BY EACH LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY RESOLUTION
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.	PENDING SIGNATURE
S5614 ADDABBO (D)	A3681A WOERNER (D)	6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 1/28/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	AN ACT TO AMEND THE GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW, IN RELATION TO REMOVING RESTRICTIONS ON THE FREQUENCY CERTAIN AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATIONS MAY CONDUCT BINGO GAMES	PENDING 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 FIRE-FIGHTERS	PENDING SIGNATURE REQUIRES ADDITIONAL TRAINING

From Washington

ACTION REQUIRED: Upcoming Grants Management System Transition and Limited Availability to Process Financial Transactions

FEMA is transitioning to a new financial management system: Federal Information Management System (FIMS). *This transition will temporarily limit your ability to complete grants management and financial actions in FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO) and other legacy grant systems mentioned below*. You must submit any time-sensitive transactions by November 20, 2026.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR USERS

Beginning in late November, FEMA GO and other FEMA grant management systems will have a period of limited functionality. During this time, users will not be able to process financial transactions, such as draw downs, payment requests, obligations, de-obligations and closeouts.

ACTION NEEDED NOW

All grant systems users, including FEMA grant program staff and grant recipients, must complete time-sensitive grant and financial actions for grant awards ***by 5 p.m. ET on November 20, 2026.*** Transactions completed after that date will not be processed until at least mid-December.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE TRANSITION

Shortly after November 20, 2025, the grant systems will be placed in read-only mode while they are transitioned to FEMA's new financial system. The process will take several weeks. During this period, you will be able to view all existing records.

- **For Mitigation eGrants (MT eGrants), Payment and Reporting System (PARS) and FEMA GO, users will be able to view existing information but will not be able to enter, update, submit, approve or process grants administration or financial transactions, including payments.**
- For National Emergency Management Information System-Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (NEMIS-HMGP), users will be able to view existing information and complete non-financial functions. However, users will not be able to process financial transactions in NEMIS-HMGP. HMGP users will still be able to request payments/drawdowns through the Payment Management System.

BOTTOM LINE

You have until November 20, 2026, at 5 p.m. ET to complete time-sensitive grant and financial actions for grant awards. After that date, financial transactions will not be processed in FEMA GO, NEMIS-HMGP, MT eGrants, or PARS while FEMA completes the transition to FIMS.

FEMA currently anticipates completing the transition in mid-December, but that timeframe is subject to change depending on disaster activity or technical complications.

QUESTIONS

For additional questions during this transition, please reach out to the FEMA GO Help Desk at FEMAGO@fema.dhs.gov or by phone at 877-585-3242. The FEMA GO Help Desk is available Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. ET, except for federal holidays.

From Federal DOL/OSHA

NOTHING NEW TO REPORT

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCIAL NEWS

*****FIRE DISTRICT BUDGET PROCESS SCHEDULE 2026 available on the CAFDA.NET website. CAFDA.net***

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

OSC is asking random fire districts to provide them with the 2026 Adopted Budget, 2027 Preliminary/Adopted Budget, and all documentation and resolutions related to the tax cap override for 2027.

THE FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

Fostering a Culture of Communication as a Fire Chief

Ryan Gray

A fire chief's career is full of ups and downs—great experiences, not-so-great experiences, examples of premier leadership, and examples of terrible leadership. All of it prepares you for the responsibility of wearing five bugles on your collar. So, you pin the badge on your chest, and you're off to the races, but where do you start?

The competing priorities of a fire chief are constant, dynamic, and likely important. If you're fortunate enough to step into a department with a great culture, you're lucky. But what happens when you walk into a department with a negative culture, or worse, no true culture at all?

I believe that everything I deal with as a fire chief comes down to culture, the shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices of our organizations. Consider what our departments are responsible for every day. We exist solely to provide a service to the community. Now imagine how difficult it would be to accomplish that mission if our culture were bad or nonexistent. I don't doubt our crews' ability to adapt and overcome a negative cult cure, but it will not be pretty.

It is difficult to accomplish much as a fire chief without your people. They are the lifeblood of your department; without them, you are simply a person with a shiny badge and title. What you do with that responsibility and authority will define you and your department for years to come. The buck stops with us. Everything that happens within your department is your fault, both successes and failures.

HEARING FROM THE LINE

When I was hired in my current role, I walked into a department that needed some work. The department was full of people who cared and were good at what they did, but something was missing. I spent long hours thinking about how to turn the ship around and move our department into the future. On top of it, I was also dealing with all the other things that come with being a new fire chief: politics, budgeting, finance, human resources, all things that I felt I was not prepared for. But there was one thing I knew: I knew what it was like as a backstep firefighter and company officer. I remember thinking to myself, "I always wanted a voice," so that is exactly what I gave them.

I spent many hours simply communicating with the department's members. Nothing was off the table. I wanted to genuinely know what our folks were thinking. I wanted to hear their ideas, their complaints, what we do well, where we had opportunities to improve, everything! But I soon realized that it is one thing to listen, and another to implement everything that was being discussed. Overwhelmed is a good word to describe how I felt while listening to everyone, but what do I do now? I've heard it all, and now I'm expected to fix it.

It was easy for me to sit in my office and feel the weight of responsibility to do everything in my power to fix things, but I am only one person. *There is no way I can do it all, at least not in a timely manner*. Again, I thought back to my days at the company. All I wanted was the chance for my crew and me to do something meaningful for the department, beyond answering calls for service. I wanted the opportunity to be involved and be a part of the solution. So, I went back out and enlisted our members' assistance. We set expectations and guardrails, but they were fully empowered to do the work and make impactful, intentional changes within our organization.

IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS

That seems like forever ago, maybe because every time I look in the mirror, I find more gray hair. But the foundation we started building four years ago continues to carry us forward today and will undoubtedly carry us into the future. *So, what are some ways you could improve the communication culture in your department?*

1. **Make yourself available to your people.** This does not mean you allow your people to jump the chain of command, but you should make yourself available to them if the chain of command does not address their issues or concerns.
2. **Remove your emotions from discussions.** It can be challenging in a field full of Type-A personalities to remove your emotions from conversations, especially if you are being criticized. *Work to set the expectations and boundaries for these conversations before they happen*. This is a major part of the communication culture. Discipline and respect should be nonnegotiable in all forms of communication.
3. **Empower your personnel.** Your personnel are the backbone of your department. It is imperative that they have the opportunities to grow personally and professionally. By providing these opportunities, you are investing in your department's future. Allowing and expecting involvement will naturally build a succession plan and divide work so it can be accomplished in a timely manner. Set the expectations, provide support when needed, but let them work. Remember, people will do things differently from you and may fail, but it is all required to grow.

4. **Labor management.** Whether you are in a collective bargaining department or not, communicating with your personnel about labor issues or concerns is a must. Consider establishing recurring meetings with representatives to address these issues. I operate on a "no-surprises" rule. This simply means that neither side will hit the other with something unexpected. Recurring meetings allow for two-way communication and the opportunity to address issues before they grow into something bigger. I try to keep these meetings focused solely on labor issues, as *operational concerns should be addressed through the chain of command.*
5. **Command staff.** Communication with your command staff, regardless of how big or small it is, may be the most impactful thing you can do on a regular basis. Depending on the size and complexity of your department, this can be built out however you'd like. In my department, email is the official form of communication, but we meet monthly as a command staff. This is the place where we hash out the direction of the department behind closed doors, and when we leave, we collectively push the decisions. This provides an opportunity to discuss ideas, address concerns, and have difficult conversations. *When a decision is made, it is communicated effectively, and execution becomes nonnegotiable. I*t also provides a set opportunity to evaluate any past decisions and consider changes.
6. **Remove discipline as an option when communicating openly.** Personnel must be comfortable coming to you with things. If there is even a small thought that they might be disciplined for coming forward to have a conversation, they will not come to you. I not only encourage open and direct communication, but I also expect it. Time and place are key factors to consider for this. The time to have a direct conversation is not in front of the group or at the kitchen table. Set a behind-closed-doors meeting and be open to listening. Point number two is essential here—*you must remove emotion. Keep these conversations professional and respectful but also allow members to speak openly without fear of retribution.*
7. **Spend time with your firefighters.** As a fire chief, it doesn't take too much effort to be too busy. We are constantly being pulled in multiple directions, priorities keep shifting, and we don't have enough time in the day to complete our to-do lists. Your members want to see you and have positive interactions with you. If you're fortunate enough to have an office in the fire station, perfect! It should be easy to set aside 30 minutes to an hour for a cup of coffee. *If you have multiple stations, it will be more difficult, but consider blocking off time in your calendar to get out and see your people*.

CULTURE REQUIRES COMMUNICATION

Whatever the reason you decided to join the fire service, when you pinned that badge on your chest and bugles on your collar, your job took a dramatic shift. Gone are the days of running the streets, doing the blue-collar dirty work, firehouse pranks, or deciding on what is for dinner. You are now the chief communication officer in your department. You set the tone, establish goals, identify the path forward, and lay the foundation for growth. But you cannot do it alone, in your office, behind a desk all the time. You must involve your members. This is why communication is essential. Nothing happens without communication. We wouldn't expect our crews to go fight a fire without communication. Why would we think we can have a great culture without it?

Beyond the walls of your fire station(s), external communication is just as important. As fire chiefs, we are responsible to citizens, elected officials, administrators, managers, and other department heads. Our communications to these individuals should follow some of the same guidelines. We want to be forthcoming, transparent, and honest with them. We should want to build these relationships on trust and commit to them by showing our willingness to be part of the team.

Your communication culture can make or break you and your department. If you withhold information, aren't transparent, lie, or simply build a silo around you and your department, your time as fire chief will be short-lived and your department will not succeed. We cannot do what we do without the support of others.

I believe it is a natural human desire to be in the know—to understand what is happening, when it's happening, and how it's happening. I believe it to be more relevant to our roles within the community. In many communities, the fire department is the most trusted institution. We know people call us for anything; they trust us to come in and do the job with respect and expertise. Our members do this every day. They have the community's trust. Are we, as fire chiefs, doing our part? We are the face of our departments, whether we

think so or not. We are the ones speaking to community members through town halls, elected officials at council meetings, other department heads throughout the day, and our bosses, whether it's a board or city/county administrator/manager. We are expected to communicate, and indeed everything we do hinges on our ability to do so.

COMMUNICATION HITS HOME

Don't overlook this final point on communication: Life as a fire chief can feel lonely at times. The weight that we carry on our shoulders can feel heavy and unbearable, as it should. Most of us pour everything we have into our jobs, our people, and our communities. Sometimes that means the people we care most about feel abandoned or unimportant. This is where, in my own experience, I am terrible at communicating—at home. We all have people outside of the job who love and care about us, whether that's a spouse, children, parents, siblings, close friends, mentors, or distant relatives. Someone loves you. What are we doing to make sure we are communicating effectively with them? These people should be the ones we turn to when we are struggling, when we don't know where to go or what to do, or when we are unsure whether we are going to sink or swim. The fire service places a lot of emphasis on mental health, but most of it seems to be directed at the ones riding the trucks, fighting fires, and saving lives. What about the ones behind the desk fighting battles essential to service delivery and the success of the organization? It is too easy to feel alone in this job. *I challenge all who read this, regardless of where you are in your career, to communicate more with those who love you, and for anyone out there who may be thinking to themselves, "I don't have anyone," you have me! You matter, and the work you do every day matters! You don't have to go at it alone.*

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Gone fishing.

Fire District Election Schedule for 2026 available on the CAFDA.net website.

CAFDA.net

Click on this PDF to see notes from DOL related to Prevailing Wage Rates for Construction, Article 8

POSITIVE OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Rensselaer Fire Department hosts live fire demo for BOCES students

The Rensselaer Fire Department hosted over 50 visitors and students for a live fire training on Wednesday.

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) POD Burn event taught Rensselaer students the basics of fighting and investigating fires.

Students observed a burning model home to demonstrate how dangerous it can be when buildings aren't up to code.

New NFPA Standards making Changes to SCBAs

Ryan Baker

Manufacturers, including 3M Scott, Dräger and MSA, are adapting their SCBAs to meet new NFPA standards by integrating modern electronics, enhancing comfort and simplifying decontamination processes.

With the consolidation and changes to the NFPA standards for SCBA, fire departments must take a closer look at the age, capabilities and life cycle of their equipment.

NFPA changes

According to NFPA fire protection engineer and volunteer firefighter Robin Zevotek, the 2025 consolidation of the SCBA standards that were in NFPA 1971, NFPA 1975, NFPA 1981 and NFPA 1982 into *NFPA 1970: Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural and Proximity Firefighting, Work Apparel, Open-Circuit Self-Contained*

Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for Emergency Services, and Personal Alert Safety Systems (PASS) was consequential. The consolidation makes NFPA 1970 a one-stop shop for SCBA requirements including standards changes.

The changes focus on air management, easier decontamination, improved connectivity, enhanced electronic safety and greater interoperability. Updates relate to the **end-of-service-time indicators** (EOSTI), removable soft goods, wireless connection indicators, intrinsic-safety requirements, PASS technology and universal emergency breathing safety systems (UEBSS).

"The soft goods are probably the biggest change," Zevotek tells *Firehouse*. "It all goes around decontamination. Firegrounds are full of carcinogens. Those carcinogens get trapped in the soft goods. The standard now includes the requirement that those soft goods need to be removable from the SCBA to be laundered, like you would launder turnout gear."

EFFECT ON MANUFACTURERS

3M Scott Fire & Safety's Air-Pak XD, Dräger's PSS Airboss and MSA's G1 weren't as affected as one might think. For these manufacturers, soft goods didn't need to change in a major way.

For Dräger, Michael Cheek states that the new standards required "additional engineering iterations, validation work and coordination among product development, certification and manufacturing."

The EOSTI for a 4,500-psi system used to have a setpoint at 35 percent of the cylinder's rated pressure; now, the alarm threshold sits at 31 percent.

"That change involved more than adjusting a number," Cheek explains. "The pressure-sensing system, software, heads-up display indications, audible warning, and associated documentation all had to work together and be validated as a system."

MSA had to tweak its G1 because of the new EOSTI regulations, too. The G1 already had a new control module alarm screen display with pressure and time remaining, but the company added text to the screens to alternate with an alarm icon to meet the new standard.

"We built it from the ground up, and we were planning as much as we could to future-proof this product," Dom Berardinelli says. "We're not reconstructing the product."

To make future changes even more streamlined, MSA added a QR code on the G1 for consolidated user instructions instead of using the traditional CD.

"Any time that QR code is scanned, the most recent late-breaking updates are always available," Patti Tavelli adds.

3M Scott was on a path as MSA as it prepared to release the Air-Pak XD in late 2025, congruent with the new standards. Again, the EOSTI was the biggest change that was needed on its product, according to Jason Cannon.

"Software changes were made so that the audible alarms are tied in as part of the PASS device," Cannon tells *Firehouse*.

Innovation keeps these companies ahead of the game when new standards come out. Technology that keeps them ahead of the rest.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

A key focus for 3M Scott and MSA was upping the ante on how electronics operate and communicate within their SCBAs.

Cannon says that 3M Scott "looked at bringing in more modern technology into the electronics package." This resulted in its SEMS 3.0 wireless SCBA telemetry.

The company's SCBA can communicate via laptop to an incident commander and present data, such as how much air the firefighter has, alarm conditions, and a greater range on the connection between the SCBA and the incident commander (IC).

MSA's G1 has central power, with only one battery that powers all of the electronics. Its Bluetooth and communication system has been a massive hit with the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

"The thought of tracking and clear communications on Bluetooth comms were very exciting for [the ICs and chiefs]," Fire Captain Mike Loput tells *Firehouse*.

Loput also praises MSA's thermal imaging camera that's integrated into the PASS device, or what MSA calls its control module. It gives every firefighter thermal imaging capability for improved situational awareness.

“It was a must, because we have issues with firefighters getting lost in buildings,” Loput mentions. “The integrated thermal imager is a great firefighter rescue device.”

THE FOUNDATION

The groundwork for each manufacturer looks a bit different. For Dräger, it’s about firefighters and the history of the SCBA. For MSA, it’s about comfort, mobility and compatibility. For 3M Scott, it’s about redundant safety features and its wireframe.

“Firefighters do not experience an SCBA as a collection of individual features,” Cheek says. “They experience the entire system on their back.”

He adds that his company heard a lot about muscle memory and how firefighters develop familiar movements through years of training. The location of the features played a big role in creating the PSS AirBoss.

“AirBoss was designed around the realities that follow the incident,” Cheek remarks. “Its harness uses low-absorption, rubberized materials rather than conventional fabric in key areas. Frequently removed components can be disassembled without tools.”

MSA’s G1 has a shorter lumbar pad and doesn’t interfere with the buckles. “We are always looking to make sure that firefighter comfort and experience improvements are top of mind,” Tavelli says.

The SCBA sits closer to the body for a reduced profile, and the focus was on the ability to configure different options that can be mixed and matched with MSA’s catalog of SCBAs.

"L.A. County is not looking for a piece of equipment. We are looking for a partner for the safety of our firefighters,” Loput says. “I feel like I can wear it for hours longer than I could any of our older steel-frame SCBAs.”

Two of the biggest differentiators for 3M Scott are wireframe and cleanability. Due to the NFPA standards, 3M Scott moved away from the wireframe but upon heavy request, the configuration returned in its Air-Pak XD.

"We did a pretty rigorous and extensive trial with our PPE committee, and what they wanted was a pack that was simplified," Oklahoma City Fire Department Battalion Chief Lamont Smith explains. “It fit better to [the firefighters'] bodies and gave them a lower, reduced profile.”

3M Scott uses a stainless-steel wireframe for simplicity’s sake and an unpadded harness for making it easier decontamination.

“The SCBA actually rides closer to the individual's back, and because of that, the weight distribution is different,” Cannon states.

STRIKING A BALANCE

SCBAs are one of the most important pieces of equipment on the fireground. There is a fine line between maximizing the SCBA's use and capabilities and doing too much to it, to the point that it becomes another worry in an emergency.

“You don't want to overcomplicate the SCBA,” Cannon states. You want to keep innovating the SCBA, but you want to make sure it does its primary function: delivering air to the firefighter safely and reliably.”

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

Nothing but challenges!

SATISTICS FOR THE FIRE SER1VICE

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY – PROTECTING OUR OWN

FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

76

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/

Apparatus Accidents in the News:

- A hit-and-run by an Independence, Missouri ladder truck in a cul-de-sac was captured on a security camera. "Nobody knocked on any door, and nobody left no number, nothing," Ashanti Grant, the owner of the damaged Toyota Camry, told KMBC. After the rig hit the car, leaving dents, gouges and scrapes as well as a broken mirror, firefighters down the street showed up to spot the driver. The tail of the ladder truck struck the car as they circled the cul-de-sac and the driver was probably not aware that the car was struck.
- A New Hanover County, North Carolina Fire Rescue vehicle ran a red light and overturned, causing a three-vehicle crash at an intersection in Wilmington. Wilmington police determined that the New Hanover County Fire Rescue vehicle caused the crash. The vehicle overturned during the incident, and its driver was cited for running a red light.

Firefighter Deaths, Injuries, in the News

- Firefighter Kaitlyn "KK" Gallagher, 24, was involved in wildfire operations when she was hit by a falling tree on Oct. 14 . while battling a wildfire in the Kisatchie National Forest in Louisiana.
- A car on smashed into a Troy, city ambulance, hit a parked vehicle, and fled the scene, according to the Fire Department. The ambulance was struck at around 8 p.m., leaving two firefighters with minor injuries, Fire Chief Richard Cellucci said. They were treated at nearby Samaritan Hospital and released. No patients were in the ambulance. "If the ambulance not totaled, it's heavily damaged," Cellucci said.
- A firefighter suffered a serious medical issue during training Wednesday afternoon at a Rutland-Dundee, Illinois fire station. Fellow firefighters immediately provided care to the collapsed colleague who was transported to a local hospital for treatment.

*****The NYS Volunteer FF Cancer Program has changes coming, posted to the CAFDA.net website for your benefit.***

https://cafda.net/changes-to-the-nys-vol-ff-cancer-benefit-program/

If you are qualified please take the time to register for the program so that the benefits can be paid to you or your loved ones.

HE 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	62
10/9/26 Niskayuna, Schenectady Co. Female 81	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	119
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	976
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA 76
	#2 NY 62
	#3 OH 56
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2026: 1483 = 34.4 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?	

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

NOTHING TO REPORT THIS WEEK.

CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS

Maine fire departments stretched thin as emergency calls surge 78%, study finds

Julia Deal

Emergency calls are climbing across Maine, but fire departments are struggling to keep up as staffing shortages, aging equipment, and growing demands strain resources.

A new statewide study from the University of Maine and the Maine Office of the State Fire Marshal found that 47% of responding fire departments reported being too short-staffed to answer some emergency calls over the past three years.

Meanwhile, emergency call volumes have surged 78% statewide over the past decade, with some departments reporting their calls have doubled or even tripled.

The findings underscore growing concerns about Maine's reliance on volunteer firefighters, many of whom juggle full-time jobs, family responsibilities, and emergency response duties.

According to the study, 94% of responding departments rely at least partly on volunteers, while 60% operate entirely with volunteer personnel.

For many departments, finding firefighters who can respond during regular working hours has become a significant challenge.

One volunteer fire chief in Washington County described the growing workload as "too much to be a volunteer," while another in York County called it "too demanding."

Researchers identified lost wages, retirement, lengthy travel distances, and competing work and family obligations as major obstacles to recruiting and retaining firefighters.

Training presents another hurdle, particularly in rural communities where firefighters may need to travel considerable distances to attend classes.

"Being a call company, most work a full-time job, thus no time for training," an Oxford County fire chief said. "They offer very little training in Western Maine. You have to drive a long way to get it."

The staffing crunch comes as firefighters are increasingly called upon to do more than battle fires. Departments also respond to medical emergencies, flooding, severe storms, and other public safety incidents.

"Exploring pathways to sustainable volunteerism will be essential not only to the fire service, but all community resilience-building," Alexander Rezk, a study co-author and researcher at UMaine's Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center, said.

Departments are also grappling with an aging fleet and workforce.

Nearly half of surveyed departments reported fleets more than 20 years old. Respondents said the average cost of a fire engine doubled between 2020 and 2026, while new engines can take three to four years to build.

To fill staffing gaps, departments increasingly rely on neighboring communities for backup. However, researchers found those departments often face similar shortages.

The Hermon Fire Department reported 21 mutual aid relationships, while Kennebunk reported 20.

Despite the challenges, researchers said many departments are finding creative ways to serve their communities with limited resources.

"These are incredibly resilient organizations. They are coming up with creative solutions to meet their communities' needs and often with very limited resources," UMaine researcher Dominic Piacentini said. "In many cases, these local solutions are working, but they just need more support."

The study gathered survey responses from 219 of Maine's estimated 398 fire departments and included interviews with 25 fire chiefs across 14 counties.

Researchers recommend improving statewide firefighter workforce data, expanding access to training, and encouraging employers to give volunteer firefighters greater flexibility to respond to emergencies. State Fire Marshal Shawn Esler said the findings could help guide future policy decisions.

"This work will help lawmakers make informed decisions affecting Maine's fire service for years to come," Esler said. "It documents the challenges our firefighters face and gives us a clearer understanding of the support they need to continue protecting their communities."

The multiyear project was funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program. A comprehensive report is expected in early 2027.

Placing NewApparatus into Service

Tom Shand & Mike Wilbur

Delivery times for new apparatus are at an all-time high. Some manufacturers are quoting 25–36 months for the production of a new vehicle. Apparatus committees must plan for the various benchmarks that must be achieved after the final inspection to place the new rig into front-line service.

Ideally, departments address the roadmap for vehicle acceptance and payment with their specifications and contract language. These areas are critical for the department as well as the manufacturer to alleviate delays in putting the new unit into service. (For example, many contracts include statements that require full payment for the apparatus before it can be placed into service.)

Further streamlining the process is ensuring that your specification boilerplate details your expectations for post-final inspection activities. These include a follow-up inspection at the dealership, a review of technical manuals and as-built electrical drawings, and setting up factory training.

In a circumstance in which a department purchases a make and model of apparatus for the first time, a meeting with the dealership's warranty and service team should be set. This allows department personnel to familiarize themselves with that team's capabilities and system to provide warranty and technical support. Depending on the dealership's warranty certifications, at some point, a department will work with businesses other than the dealership for service work, including regarding the engine, transmission and/or emission components.

IN-SERVICE WEIGHTS

Confirmation of in-service weights often is overlooked, yet it should be accomplished— on certified scales— prior to making final payment on the apparatus. This involves having all hose, tools and equipment placed, a full complement of personnel on board, and water and foam tanks filled. These weights should be verified against the chassis axle, tire and suspension ratings to ensure the safe operation of the vehicle.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

At some point during the final inspection process, coordinate with the dealership regarding the logistics for in-service training on the new apparatus. Vehicle familiarization for an engine or rescue vehicle usually is provided by the local dealership and, generally, can be scheduled for both day and evening sessions.

New aerial apparatus training is provided by the manufacturer. It should span at least 2–3 days, including time that's dedicated for the department's maintenance staff to troubleshoot issues as they arise.

After the initial familiarization with the procedure to set up and stabilize the rig, consideration should be given to training that's conducted at various target hazards in the response district. If the aerial device is equipped with a pump and waterway, the training should include operational testing of this equipment to determine the pump pressures that are required to achieve the desired target flow rates and to confirm the flowmeter calibration.

The number of members who participate in this initial training is critical. Too many personnel in an initial training might diminish the detail that can be disseminated by the trainer.

Consider video recording each session. The recording can be utilized for other department training classes.

Every department should have an apparatus operators training program that encompasses all aspects of the vehicle, including practical, road and operational testing.

Incorporate the manufacturer's component and training manuals into the apparatus training. Include task books that take the prospective operator through all of the critical components of the new vehicle. Many departments require a new trainee to successfully accomplish each specific task in the workbook as well as several emergency responses to be turned over as an operational driver on the apparatus.

TOOL MOUNTING

Depending on local resources and a department's expectations, a new apparatus should be outfitted with tools and equipment, including radios, chargers, meters and other cab-mounted equipment. (Tool mounting and equipment placement should be reviewed at the preconstruction conference to determine where shelves, slide trays and tool boards would be located. This step is critical to accurately determine the chassis axle and suspension components by the manufacturer's engineering group.)

A well-designed and well-constructed apparatus should have all critical equipment properly mounted and secured inside of the cab and body to align with the department's operational guidelines. Equipment that's carried inside of the cab can vary widely depending on a number of factors. Forcible entry equipment, hand tools and extinguishers should be secured in 9G-rated brackets and hardware. That said, there is some debate as to what could or should be mounted inside of the cab. The bottom line is that this is a local decision, and it's more important that the equipment locations meet operational demands, to align with the service levels that will be delivered by the department.

When determining where each piece of equipment should be located within the body compartments, several methods can be utilized to ensure that the project will be a success. If your department operates a fleet of rigs, there likely is a standard layout for what's carried inside of each compartment. If the compartment dimensions on the new rig are similar to those of existing apparatus, the process should be fairly easy.

However, apparatus that have a unique body design (similar to that of a rescue-engine), with a varied tool complement, require other methods. One is to lay out the interior compartment dimensions on a large piece of cardboard and position the tools and appliances to confirm the needed space.

Some departments construct mock-ups of each compartment to capture depth.

If time permits before the new rig is sent to the vendor for tool mounting, all of the tools and equipment should be positioned inside of the compartments to verify that everything fits into its assigned place.

The cost for tool mounting should be included with the final cost of the apparatus, with a fixed sum that's estimated based on type of apparatus and extent of equipment inventory, the latter of which can include custom-made aluminum brackets and hardware. Most upfitting vendors quote a job on the basis of time and material.

DOT THE "I'S," CROSS THE "T'S"

Once the new rig is accepted, verify that the vehicle was placed on the department's fleet insurance and that it meets any local licensing requirements. If you do this and follow the aforementioned guidance, a new rig should be in service very soon after it comes off of the production floor.

GREENENERGYANDTHEIMPACTONTHEFIRESERVICE

Residents Sue to Halt CA 588-Acre Solar and Battery Storage Project

Hannah Elsmore, San Diego Union-Tribune

A backcountry community group has filed a lawsuit to block the construction of a proposed solar and battery storage project that would industrialize about 588 acres in unincorporated East County, arguing the development's environmental review was flawed.

An association of residents of the community of Boulevard and the surrounding Mountain Empire region — dubbed the Back Country Community Alliance for Responsible Development — are objecting to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors' recent approval of the Starlight Solar Project.

First proposed by the developer in 2022, the project includes a solar farm capable of generating up to 100 megawatts and a 217-megawatt battery energy storage system, constructed in two phases.

The community group last week filed a petition in San Diego Superior Court, arguing the project violated the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and failed to disclose or mitigate the risks of toxic plume exposure from a battery thermal runaway event.

Residents of the unincorporated town have opposed the development, citing concerns that clean energy projects continue to put their safety at risk.

The development was proposed by Empire II LLC. A representative for the developer did not respond to a request for comment.

A spokesperson for the Board of Supervisors, which unanimously approved the project in September, said "we are unable to comment on litigation."

At the time of the project's approval, county officials cited concerns that state energy regulators could green-light the project if the county denied the proposal, noting state approval likely wouldn't include benefits for the community.

In the lawsuit, the group said they do not oppose renewable energy projects, noting the backcountry region already hosts multiple wind, transmission and solar projects, but said the proposal failed to properly analyze risks from a potential lithium-battery fire — which are notorious for burning for long periods of time.
Further, their petition argues that county leaders' approval of the renewable energy development relied on a late plume study that contradicted the environmental review process.
The county's recommendations did not require the developer to relocate the project's phase-two battery storage facility from its original northern location. Residents of Boulevard have pushed to move the battery storage farther south, primarily due to fire safety and evacuation concerns.
In a letter to the Board of Supervisors, county staff said "the originally proposed location of the Phase II batteries has seven residences within 2,230 feet" while the alternative Phase II location "will have approximately two residences within 2,230 feet," the group's petition noted.
Starlight Solar was approved with some concessions for Boulevard residents, including groundwater monitoring, community benefits and additional fire safeguards. But the backcountry group urged officials to pause the project's approval, noting the county is actively drafting its own regulations for battery storage facilities.
"The reality is, no one knows the details because this is new technology and this is an extreme risk," said Thomas Wall, a 10-year resident of Boulevard.
Boulevard has experienced three wildfires in the last 130 days, which opponents said only underscores the need for further evaluation before one of the state's largest battery storage energy systems is added to the desert town's landscape.
County documents showed conflicting figures on battery-fire toxic-plume distances, with one claiming a maximum of 366 feet with no homes at risk, while another cited up to 2,230 feet with seven homes at risk, and that contradiction should have been resolved before the project was approved, the petitioners argued.
Many backcountry groups have sued to halt construction of clean energy projects in unincorporated East County in recent years.
In 2024, a pair of ranchers filed a petition to halt the construction of 60 wind turbines on the Campo Indian Reservation. In 2021, a group of Jacumba residents brought an unsuccessful lawsuit against the county and developer to block a proposed 600-acre solar and battery project.

NEIGHBOR'SHELPINGNEIGHBORS,thankyouforyoursupport

HoagsCornersVFD
Allyoucaneatbreakfastbuffet,1st Sundayofeachmonth.$15.008amto11am.
7237NY-66,EastNassau,NY12062

GansevoortFireDepartmentBreakfast
NextBreakfastDate,SundayNovember15th,hopeyoucanjoinus.

CliftonParkFireDepartmentBreakfast
NextBreakfastwillbeheldSundayDecember6from8to11:30am

SpeigletownFireDepartmentBreakfast2nd Sundayofeachmonth
SundayNovember8thfrom7:30to11:30,$10adults,$5children,under5free

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TownofMohawkFireDepartment
Our2027Pancake&FrenchToastBreakfastsareofficiallyonthecalendar:
January10
February14
March14
Pancakes ,French toast, sliced ham, eggs, and plenty of good company.

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.

GENERALINTERESTTOALL

Myths and Facts About Colds,Viruses and How to Avoid Them

Anke Dankers

Colds may be spreading where you are, matched by plenty of tips about ways to stay well.

Are they true, though? We asked scientists whether we should be boiling beer, gargling salt water and knocking back vitamin C.

Is it true you shouldn't let yourself get cold, otherwise you'll catch a cold?

Partly, yes. However, feeling cold doesn't automatically make you ill as viruses are required for that too. "But it is true that your body's defences are weakened to some extent if you get chilled or feel cold," says Eva Hummers, director of the Institute of General Practice at Göttingen University Hospital and President of the German Society for General Practice and Family Medicine (DEGAM).

People also say, don't go out into the cold with wet hair and that makes sense too. "It's true that you lose a lot of heat quickly through your head," says Hummers. However, here too, no viruses, no cold. "Conversely, dressing extra warmly won't prevent you from catching a cold either," she says.

Does taking vitamin C supplements regularly prevent colds?

No. "We have known for a long time from research that vitamin C supplements cannot prevent colds," says Sonja Siegert, deputy editor-in-chief of the Health Information Department at the Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care (IQWiG) in Germany.

However, taking vitamin C regularly can shorten the duration of cold symptoms by around 10%, so from 10 to 9 days for example. "If you only start taking vitamin C once the cold has set in, studies have shown that it has no effect," says Siegert.

As a general rule, it is easy to meet the recommended vitamin C intake through diet, according to the German Nutrition Society (DGE). Good sources of vitamin C include citrus fruits, peppers, cabbage and potatoes. There is no reason to take vitamin C supplements as a matter of routine, say DGE specialists.

Rest and sleep are the best medicine, aren't they?

That is partly true. If you don't get enough sleep, you become more sensitive and susceptible to infections. "When you're ill, it definitely makes sense to listen to your body and get some rest," Hummers says. Conversely, however, this does not mean that you absolutely have to stay in bed with a cold if you don't feel like it. Taking a brief relaxed walk is fine, though she says to avoid strenuous exercise at all costs.

Ice can soothe a sore throat

True. The coldness of the ice has a mild pain-relieving effect and helps many patients with a sore throat and anyone with a fever, according to Hummers.

Try frozen apple sauce or fruit yoghurt as alternatives. However, if you eat so much ice cream that you start to feel cold, you've gone too far.

Is it true that warm beer is an effective home remedy for colds?

No. Doctor Eva Hummers says she is not aware that warm beer helps with a cold. Alcoholic drinks are generally not recommended when you have a cold. Alcohol dehydrates the body and, by increasing blood flow to the blood vessels, causes us to cool down more quickly – which is counterproductive.

Hummer's advice is if you want to drink something warm, "you're better off having a cup of tea."

Is it true that you should watch out with nasal sprays as they can be addictive?

This is partly true. With nasal sprays, check carefully exactly what you're spraying, as the ingredients vary widely.

"Nasal sprays, which often help well with colds, cause the mucous membranes to constrict, clearing a blocked nose and allowing you to breathe more easily again," says Hummers. This is achieved by active ingredients such as xylometazoline and oxymetazoline.

However, over a prolonged period, these active ingredients can damage your mucous membrane. "It actually swells up even more, and you end up needing the spray all the time. It's a kind of addiction."

So don't use decongestant nasal sprays for longer than a week. That is usually the advice in the package leaflet, too. "One trick to wean yourself off them is to always spray into one nostril each time," says Hummers.

You can generally use nasal sprays containing saline solution, nasal rinses and similar products without any concerns. However, they have a slightly different effect – they loosen your mucus and moisturize your nasal mucous membrane, but they do not reduce swelling.

You can 'sweat out' colds, can't you?

No, that isn't true. "If you're already shivering because of the cold, however, a woollen blanket can help the body raise its temperature. The resulting rise in temperature is, after all, a defence mechanism," says Hummers.

Avoid going to a sauna when you have a cold, as it can be too taxing on the body. However, Hummers says people who are healthy and use the sauna regularly accustom their bodies to rapid temperature changes, which may make them less prone to illness overall.

You can't shorten the duration of a cold, many people say

That is true. Colds usually clear up on their own within one to two weeks and unfortunately, there isn't a way to speed up the process. "You can only alleviate the symptoms, for example with painkillers or nasal sprays," says Siegert.

"A cough caused by a cold can last up to eight weeks without this being a cause for concern in otherwise healthy people," says Hummers. If you're suffering from a cold that won't shift, she recommends drinking plenty of fluids, not smoking and ensuring the air is as clean as possible.

Clean indoor air reduces the spread of cold viruses and lessens symptom severity by lowering airborne irritants that trigger inflammation, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

TAKE A MOMENT TO SMILE

Give a person a fish and you'll feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the internet and they won't bother you for weeks, months, perhaps years!!

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.

DUTIES OF THE TREASURER:

I. Shall collect all dues be the custodian of all funds of the association, and shall keep all association funds in such bank accounts as may be designated by the board of directors.

II. Shall send to all member organizations the membership forms and dues invoices for membership.

III. shall pay the bills of the association, keep accurate financial records of all transactions and shall present a brief report at each meeting.

IV. Shall submit a detailed financial report to the Board of Director's at year's end, which is to be audited by the Auditing Committee and approved at the March General Membership meeting.

V. Shall be bonded at the expense of the Association in the amount of $100,000.

VI. Shall transfer money into and out of investment accounts upon approval of the

Board of Directors.

VII. Shall be paid a salary as determined by the Board of Directors.

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 (retired) 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 o rEMAIL: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

Welcome to Ladder&Legacy Wealth Management, LOSAP Managment

Business Partner Applications Available At:WWW.CAFDA.NET

We invite our business partners to submit educational information to be included in this Bulletin for district commissioners and chief officers

We want to thank all of our Business Partners for renewing their partnership.You are invited to our monthly membership meeting and to any of our events..

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The newsletter is a service of CAFDA through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at tom@rinaldi1.com . Content contributions are always welcome.

NominalCompensationDiscussion

Setting the Record Straight – Fire Service Organizations Express Concern Over Lack of Support for Nominal Compensation Initiative

Organizations Renew Call for Collaboration to Address Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Challenges

New York State, August 2026 – Representatives from the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York (AFDSNY), the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs, the County Fire Coordinators' Association of the State of New York (CCASNY), and Long Island Fire Service legislative advocates are expressing concern over what they describe as a lack of meaningful support from the Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) regarding efforts to advance nominal compensation for volunteer firefighters.

The coalition states that volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention remain among the most significant challenges facing the New York fire service. Supporters of nominal compensation believe that providing limited compensation or reimbursement for time and expenses could help address those challenges while preserving the volunteer nature of the fire service.

Volunteer firefighters dedicate substantial time to emergency response, training, meetings, fundraising, public education, advocacy, and maintaining operational readiness. In addition, volunteers often incur personal expenses related to fuel, vehicle use, childcare, meals, clothing, and equipment.

According to a 2020 survey conducted by the County Coordinators' Association of the State of New York, the main reason for the decline in volunteer firefighters is a lack of time. The demands on a volunteer firefighter due to the amount of required training, family obligations, secondary employment, and dual-income schedules often preclude people from joining or sustaining their membership.

"Many volunteers are balancing family responsibilities and multiple jobs while continuing to serve their communities," proponents said. "The concept of nominal compensation is intended to recognize those sacrifices and help remove barriers to service."

Currently, New York state does not allow this option to the authorities responsible for providing fire and emergency medical service. This needs to be addressed legislatively by elected officials in Albany. The Association Fire Districts of the State of New York (AFDSNY), New York State Association of Fire Chiefs (NYSAFC), County Coordinators' Association of the State of New York (CCASNY), and Nassau-Suffolk Long Island Fire Districts Legislative Committee collaborated with state officials to work on legislation to allow, on a voluntary basis, nominal compensation for volunteer fire department personnel.

These organizations, the actual stakeholders, represent the leaders who are responsible for making sure that communities have adequate and timely emergency services when people need it. There was a draft bill that had sponsorship in the New York State Assembly (A10630), along with a similar bill that unfortunately did not get to the New York State Senate in time before the legislative session ended. The aforementioned groups are committed to moving this initiative forward next year.

Supporters note that one of the original concepts discussed was expanding reasonable expense reimbursement for volunteers, an idea that was raised during joint discussions among state fire service organizations.

According to coalition representatives, FASNY was repeatedly invited to participate in meetings and discussions surrounding the development of nominal compensation proposals. While FASNY claims that they have supported this legislation from the beginning, that is totally untrue. On more than one occasion, FASNY has stated they will not support it at all. However, they have also stated they would support it, as amended by the coalition, but then the next day reverted to their position of opposition. Coalition members contend that participation by FASNY leadership has been inconsistent and opportunities for collaboration have not been fully realized.

"We have always believed that meaningful progress requires all statewide organizations to work together," coalition representatives said. "The volunteer fire service is strongest when we present a united front on major issues affecting recruitment and retention."

The organizations also expressed concern regarding what they view as conflicting public messaging concerning the state of volunteer firefighting in New York. While many fire service leaders have openly acknowledged ongoing recruitment and retention challenges, coalition members believe certain public statements have minimized the severity of those issues.

Additional concerns raised by coalition members include:

· The absence of nominal compensation proposals within FASNY's recently released 14-point plan addressing volunteer fire service challenges.

· A perceived lack of member engagement regarding the organization's position on nominal compensation.

· Reports of internal communications that, according to proponents, discuss efforts to oppose or delay nominal compensation initiatives.

· Public comments and social media interactions that seemingly discouraged open discussion among volunteer firefighters with differing viewpoints.

Despite these concerns, coalition members emphasize that their goal is not to create division within the fire service. "This issue is bigger than any single organization," coalition representatives stated. "Every volunteer firefighter in New York deserves to have their concerns heard and their service valued. We remain committed to working with any organization that is willing to engage in constructive dialogue about solutions."

The coalition also believes it is important to address a recent article published in the July/August edition of The Volunteer Firefighter magazine. Unfortunately, the article presents a significantly different picture than what coalition members have experienced firsthand throughout this process. Several statements and characterizations in the article are inaccurate, incomplete, untrue or fail to reflect the reality of the discussions, negotiations, and actions that have occurred.

As a result, readers should be aware that the article does not fully represent the facts surrounding the issue of nominal compensation and the efforts undertaken by coalition members to advance this important legislation on behalf of New York's volunteer firefighters.

FASNY's mission, as stated on their website is, "To serve the volunteer fire and EMS services, and the public they serve, through education, advocacy, recruitment and retention, recognition and community service." Their organizational vision is, "To be the respected voice for legislation, regulation and standards while serving as the preeminent resource for recruitment, education and retention for the fire and EMS personnel." FASNY was established in 1872 and has provided an important voice for the volunteer fire and EMS service in New York state. However, they have no responsibility to provide fire and EMS service delivery. That is the responsibility of local government entities (towns, villages, fire districts) throughout the state. Respectfully, FASNY can be more accurately compared to a "union" for the volunteer fire and EMS service with a responsibility to advocate for benefits to support our brave first responders.

Unfortunately, they believe that because of the amount of financial assets they have, they are THE VOICE for the fire and EMS service at large. Although they do have a strong presence in the halls of Albany and political influence, they are not THE VOICE of the entire fire service. They are just "A" voice. Although they were at the table and agreed to support the nominal compensation initiative, it became evident that a small minority of FASNY representatives decided to undermine the effort being undertaken by the "stakeholders." They lobbied against the legislation and were able to stall its progression. Their main argument was that funding provided by the state is necessary so that all fire departments would have the ability to provide nominal compensation. The stakeholders are not against the need for funding; however, it was felt that it was most important to get the legislation passed so we could begin to assist our volunteer firefighters and fire departments and then go to the Governor and the Legislature during the budget process to obtain funding. By then, we had hoped to share success stories to use as evidence in the fight for funding. FASNY's shortsightedness, asking for funding with only days left in the session, caused the bill to die in committee.

New York state is a home rule state. Fire and EMS service delivery is a local responsibility, including its funding. Nominal compensation may not be necessary in all communities based on a local risk assessment, but for those fire departments that have a need or desire to provide that incentive, the legislation simply gives that authority on a voluntary basis. This is a win-win for both the community and for the members of those fire departments.

The coalition is encouraging volunteer firefighters, fire officers, fire district commissioners, and elected officials to review the nominal compensation concept and participate in discussions about the future of volunteer emergency services in New York state.

Provided by the NYS Fire Coordinators Association and Task Force and was this week sent out to all the fire coordinators in the state.

The Truth About the Status of Nominal Compensation Legislation for Volunteer Firefighters in New York: *FASNY Response to the August 18, 2026 NYSAFC Statement*

The Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) is compelled to respond to the recent statement issued by the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs (NYSAFC), in conjunction with the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York (AFDSNY), and the County Fire Coordinators' Association of the State of New York regarding nominal compensation legislation. While NYSAFC is entitled to its own opinions, it is not entitled to invent its own facts to support such opinions. Among its many falsehoods, the NYSAFC statement mischaracterizes both FASNY's role in the legislative process and the benefits contained within the bill now advancing in both houses of the New York State Legislature.

We encourage you to review the article in the July-August 2026 issue of *The Volunteer Firefighter magazine.* Apparently, it is this article which prompted the public statement from NYSAFC and its so-called "coalition" cohorts. The article about the proposed legislation published in *The Volunteer Firefighter* was accurate when published and remains true today. It contains a straight-forward and detailed description of the benefits that volunteer firefighters in this State will realize when the legislation is passed. How that article became the basis for NYSAFC's vitriol and feigned outrage remains a mystery.

While the article in *The Volunteer Firefighter* gave credit to the aforementioned fire service organizations for our collective work on this initiative, the acknowledgement and accolades for collaboration went unappreciated. Some members of "the coalition" apparently took exception and chose to express their maligned thoughts publicly, rather than expressing them directly to FASNY leadership. The NYSAFC statement is both disappointing and disingenuous. Their claim for the need to present a "united front" for the fire service contained in the same statement that launches false and slanderous allegations against FASNY is a breathtaking example of their hypocrisy. Apparently, in their minds the unifying concepts of communication, collaboration, and cooperation are on a one-way street that runs only in the direction they are headed.

The most unfortunate part of the NYSAFC statement is that it fumbled away an opportunity to share the most important message to the reader, which is that the nominal compensation legislation that was endorsed by FASNY is now farther along in the legislative process than we have ever been with nominal compensation legislation, with identical bills sponsored in both the State Senate and State Assembly.

The Original Bill Promoted By The "Coalition" Was Never Going to Pass as Written

At a meeting on April 16, 2026 with legislative sponsors and every fire service organization— including FASNY — at the table, we were all told by legislative leadership that the original Assembly bill (A.10630) as introduced and as promoted by the coalition, was never going to pass as written. That bill required the authorizing local government "to fund the program" entirely on its own, with no opportunity for state assistance of any kind. It offered no payment option other than an arbitrary cash per-call or on-call stipend for interior firefighters, it did not include a state income tax exemption for the volunteers who received it, and it omitted any measure of oversight to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse. In addition, the original bill was only introduced in the Assembly and there was no companion bill being sponsored in the Senate.

The Big Lie

The NYSAFC statement attributes the original bill's inevitable failure as being a result of FASNY "asking for funding with only days left in the session". That claim ignores the truth, which is that representatives from all statewide fire service organizations were told on April 16, 2026 that the original bill would not pass as written. The shortcomings contained within the original bill itself caused it to be withdrawn. The fact that the original bill would have left smaller and financially constrained departments unable to compete with affluent ones — one of the gross inequities FASNY identified from the outset – was only one of a host of problems with the original bill.

The Current Bill Advancing Is a Stronger, Better Bill

Unlike the prior version, the current bill is sponsored in both houses of the Legislature — as Senate Bill S.10597 (Senator Monica Martinez) and its Assembly companion, A.10630-A (Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages), the chairs, respectively, of each house's Local Government Committee. Assemblywoman Solages sponsored the original bill, and then modified her bill in May 2026 to substitute it with the much-improved version of A.10630-A that is pending. The current Senate and Assembly bills are substantively identical, reflecting genuine, coordinated support behind the legislation now moving forward. We appreciate the diligence and

thoughtfulness that Senator Martinez and Assemblywoman Solages have demonstrated throughout their work on this bill.

It should not be lost upon the reader that the bill described and lamented in the NYSAFC statement does not exist. Rather, it was withdrawn and replaced in full by its sponsor to the current, improved version.

The current bill gives departments a wider range of compensation options that the original bill did not have. It expressly defines a "nominal fee" to include "a stipend, fee, gift card or gift certificate, gratuity, or other qualifying item of monetary value," so departments of every size can structure a program that fits their budget and their members' needs.

The current bill exempts these nominal fees "from payroll and income taxation under New York State law", in that it excludes the benefit from being included in a volunteer's income for New York State tax purposes. This was not in the original bill referenced by NYSAFC.

The current bill creates the State funding mechanism the original bill lacked entirely: the Volunteer Fire Service Nominal Compensation Assistance Fund, initially authorized at $15 million and prioritized for departments with demonstrated need and lower revenues under $400,000 annually. Where the original bill would have made every department pay for its own program out of local funds alone, the current bill ensures that a volunteer's ability to receive nominal compensation does not depend on the wealth of the community he or she serves.

Advocating for a Workable Program Is Progress, Not Opposition

FASNY has consistently supported the implementation of an effective, comprehensive, and thoughtful program for nominal compensation as a tool for both recruitment and retention. FASNY opposed endorsing a proposal that lacked responsible oversight and reporting responsibilities, failed to authorize a broad range of benefits including gift cards and other types of compensation, lacked income tax protections, and would have let departments in affluent communities outbid their neighboring working-class departments for the same volunteers, with no state-funding mechanism to level that playing field.

Each of the improvements now in the bill — sponsorship in both houses of the Legislature, the broader range of payment options, the State income tax exemption for recipients, and the State funding piece — are provisions the original bill did not contain and are exactly the safeguards that FASNY – and to our understanding, the other fire service organizations – identified as important to make this legislation work for every fire department in New York, not just those in the wealthy communities that can afford it. There is still more work to be done on the current version of the bill to further refine it and enhance it for New York's volunteer fire service.

FASNY remains committed to working with the Legislature and with every bona fide regional and statewide fire service organization to see this bill enacted as part of a broader recruitment and retention strategy. That strategy also includes an increase to the tax credit for volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel, real property tax relief for volunteers, greater workplace protections for volunteers, and incentives designed to attract future generations of volunteer firefighters. That work is best done at the table, not through public tantrums and missives posted on blogs that deliberately misstate FASNY's longstanding positions and advocacy on key issues affecting the volunteer fire service.

While coalitions that seek to align various groups to promote their own self-interests and agenda will come and go, FASNY is and will remain as the only state-wide fire service organization whose mission is to serve the men and women that do the job that every other fire service organization depends on for its success and existence, you, the volunteer firefighters of the State of New York.

Association of Fire District's of Rockland County

Response to the FASNY Response

Rebuttal to FASNY's State Assistance Fund - Leave Funding Decisions to Local Authorities

While supporters of the revised nominal compensation legislation point to the addition of a $15 million state assistance fund as a major improvement, that provision should be removed. Decisions regarding volunteer firefighter compensation are best made and funded at the local level by the Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs), which are the municipalities, fire districts, and fire protection districts directly responsible for providing fire service.

Volunteer fire departments operate under vastly different circumstances across New York State. A one-size-fits-all state funding program assumes that every community has the same needs, financial capacity, and staffing challenges. In reality, local officials are in the best position to determine whether nominal compensation is necessary, how much should be provided, and how it should be funded.

The inclusion of state funding creates an unnecessary burden on taxpayers statewide.

Residents in communities that choose not to offer compensation, or whose volunteer systems are functioning effectively without it, should not be required to subsidize compensation programs elsewhere. Local taxpayers already fund their fire protection systems through property taxes and district budgets. If a community determines that compensation is needed to recruit and retain volunteers, that community should decide whether it is willing to bear the associated costs.

Additionally, state aid programs often create long-term financial dependence. A $15 million fund may be available today, but there is no guarantee that future legislatures will continue the funding. Departments that structure recruitment and retention strategies around state subsidies could find themselves facing budget shortfalls if those funds are reduced or eliminated in the future. Local funding provides greater accountability and sustainability because decision-makers are directly responsible to the taxpayers who pay the bill.

Removing the state assistance fund would also preserve local control. Communities that support nominal compensation would remain free to implement it through their local budgets, while communities that oppose it could continue operating under the traditional volunteer model. This approach respects home rule principles and avoids having Albany influence local fire service compensation policies through state funding incentives.

If nominal compensation is a worthwhile recruitment and retention tool, local governments should have the authority to adopt and fund it according to their own needs and priorities. The legislation can still provide the legal framework that permits compensation, but it should not require taxpayers across New York to finance a program that is ultimately a local operational decision.

To AFDNYS Board Members,

If FASNYs intention is truly to set the record straight, then it is important that the full story be shared so that individuals can review all of the facts and draw their own conclusions.

On the morning of September 4, 2026, NYSAFC President Bill Owen hosted a meeting at the association's office outside Albany. In attendance were the sitting presidents of FASNY, AFDSNY, NYSAFC, and NYSCFC. The meeting was requested by FASNY President Don Farrell to discuss concerns surrounding the response issued by the other state fire service organizations regarding FASNY's article on Nominal Compensation.

The organizations represented at the meeting collectively expressed that they believed the FASNY article contained inaccuracies and did not fully or fairly represent the events leading up to that point. President Farrell stated that he felt the subsequent response from the other organizations was intended to damage his opportunity to serve as President of FASNY. He also emphasized that disagreements between organizations should not be aired publicly on social media and instead should be addressed professionally and constructively. Those in attendance appeared to share that sentiment.

A common theme throughout the discussion was the recognition that the New York State Fire Service is best served when its organizations work together rather than in opposition to one another. President Farrell stated that he did not wish to dwell on past disagreements and that the meeting represented an opportunity for a fresh start. He emphasized that, as President, his goal was to move beyond prior conflicts and focus on advancing the interests of the fire service.

The group engaged in a productive discussion regarding Nominal Compensation, OSHA 1910.156, the legislative process, and opportunities for greater collaboration among the state's fire service organizations. As a result, meetings were scheduled for October, November, and December to continue those conversations. Participants also discussed the importance of direct communication, including addressing concerns and asking questions before disagreements escalate into public disputes.

During the meeting, there was also candid discussion about prior efforts to improve collaboration. Several attendees noted that on at least three previous occasions, they had left meetings believing meaningful progress had been made, only to be surprised by subsequent actions that appeared inconsistent with those discussions. Assurances were given that future interactions would be different and that all parties were committed to moving forward in good faith.

The meeting concluded on a positive note. Handshakes were exchanged, pleasantries were shared, and those in attendance left Albany optimistic that a new chapter of cooperation had begun.

Unfortunately, that optimism was short-lived. Less than four hours after the meeting concluded, leaders from the participating organizations began receiving numerous calls, messages, and emails from members expressing concern over a FASNY email and Facebook post that they believed sought to discredit the other New York State fire service organizations. Initially, many assumed the communication had been sent in error or without full context. It soon became apparent that this was not the case.

We are deeply disappointed that events have reached this point and that an opportunity for meaningful collaboration was so quickly undermined. The challenges facing the New York State Fire Service are significant, and they are best addressed through cooperation, mutual respect, and honest communication. Continued public conflict between organizations serves no constructive purpose and ultimately harms the very firefighters and communities we all exist to support.

AFDSNY Continues Efforts to Advance Nominal Compensation Legislation

The Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York (AFDSNY) is disappointed by the outcome of the 2026 legislative session regarding nominal compensation for volunteer firefighters. Despite the dedicated efforts of AFDSNY, the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs, the County Fire Coordinators Association of New York State, and many supporters across the state, the legislation was not enacted this year.

While this result is disappointing, it does not diminish our commitment to addressing the recruitment and retention challenges facing volunteer fire departments. AFDSNY will continue working with our legislative partners and stakeholder organizations to advance this important issue during the 2027 legislative session.

AFDSNY firmly believes that the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ), is best positioned to determine whether nominal compensation is an appropriate and necessary tool to help ensure adequate staffing levels for the communities they are charged with protecting. The legislation we have supported would simply provide locally elected officials and fire commissioners with the authority to make that determination.

Fire districts, along with villages and cities that rely on volunteer firefighters, are the governmental entities responsible for providing fire protection services. These local officials are accountable to the taxpayers and voters they serve and should have the flexibility to evaluate all available options and funding to meet community needs. This proposal does not mandate nominal compensation, nor does it require any municipality to implement such a program. Rather, it provides local governments with the ability to make that decision based on their own circumstances and in consultation with their volunteer members.

The decision whether to implement nominal compensation should remain a local choice. AFDSNY and its partners will continue advocating for legislation in 2027 that empowers fire districts, cities, and villages to make that determination at the local level and ensure they have the tools needed to provide effective and sustainable fire protection services.