

THE BULLETIN

OCTOBER 3RD, 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.
- Our friend and acquaintance **Nikki Haskins** (nikki@ladderlegacy.com) has departed RBC and is now principle with a wealth management company called Ladder Legacy wealth management at 125 Wolf Road, Suite 403, Albany, NY 12205, phone 518.242.7076, https://www.raymondjames.com/ladderandlegacywm
- NYSAFC's new Career Center is now live on the association website. New York state fire and EMS agencies can list job openings and announce student bunk-in program openings at no cost. Employment opportunities in the emergency services education field will also be listed. The Career Center will transition to NYSAFC's updated website, which will launch in early October.
- Congratulations to Ridge Road Fire District on your ISO Class 1 designation.

TRAINING OPPORTUNTIES:

From CAFDA

REGISTER NOW FOR THE FALL EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP at CAFDA.NET

1. ***Join us at the NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING on Thursday November 12th 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/88183334993?pwd=wQazKana6AZ3k3fbwumPbH6rHFXDVP.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 9-10-11, dinner/vendor show Friday April 10th Fort William Henry Carriage House. Sponsored Mixer the evening of Thursday April 9th at the Holiday Inn Resort, food, games, beverages. The response has grown each year and we are in the process of identifying the subjects for 2027.***
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 2, 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

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), Ontario County (November 7-8), and **Schenectady** (October 17-18) Counties.

THE THREE-HOUR **FLASHOVER** program is coming to **Albany** (September 26-27) Guilderland Fire Chief's Association, Ontario (October 10-11), **Schenectady** (October 17-18) East Glenville Fire District and Orange (November 21-22) Counties.

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, Chemung, Cortland, Dutchess, Erie, **Fulton**, **Greene**, Monroe, Nassau, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego, **Rensselaer**, Rockland, and **Saratoga** Counties.

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.

Suffolk County – October 7

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_CqqD37uVs

JpqRM7iioF6rda1M28AQPaz3gl9mHrjqcHFSk235YEe1tRRN65ua9bEg9e-SasQTT4HaYcImbZWgOpUBf_YOalJ&c=ts5YTR8fTiZUrzXYf0woGb7NfLL_J2QllZMAXQm8kEvKQgY4u4qZHA==&ch=tChtpqKC9nh6nvNTFs3T9qQIyI_yslbkvSVrvr4mUPXbgl62_Z1NNg==

Beyond the Sirens, Rethinking Emergency Response

As first responders we receive extensive training in an effort to ensure we operate vehicles as safely as possible. Our goal is to get to an incident quickly, but without a collision. Despite efforts to make emergency vehicle operations safer, we see many accidents that could be prevented. We will review and discuss best practices that should be followed to prevent what could be a nightmare for your department. We will also explore mounting evidence that suggests unnecessary use of red lights and sirens is problematic, and the need to change our habits to better serve our communities. Please Join us for this interactive session and leave with real solutions to this national problem.

Wednesday October 21st, 2026 at 7PM

Rotterdam Fire District #6, 6 Old Mariaville Road, Schenectady, NY 12306

*Pre registration requested, Scan the QR Code to Register

Scan Me

ALSO at:

The City of Watertown Fire Department at the following dates and times:

October 14 @ 1:30 PM or
October 14 @ 6:00 PM or
October 15 @ 1:30 PM or
October 15 @ 6:00 PM

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

From Albany

Volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers in New York *could* soon receive a significantly larger state income tax credit under legislation awaiting action by Gov. Kathy Hochul. 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.

The legislation would also make another important change. Under current New York tax rules, volunteers generally cannot claim the $200 income tax credit if they also receive a property tax exemption based on their volunteer service. The new legislation would allow eligible volunteers to receive both the income tax credit and the applicable property tax exemption.

The legislation provides that the increased $800 credit would apply to taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2026. Supporters of the legislation have characterized this increased tax credit as a tool to help address recruitment and retention problems facing volunteer fire and ambulance organizations across New York State.

The legislation still requires action by Gov. Kathy Hochul before the changes can take effect.

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.

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
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.**	**PENDING SIGNATURE**

From Washington

NIOSH Releases Safety and Health Advisory on Fires and Explosions in Oxygen-Limiting Silos

The National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program has released a safety and health advisory to prevent fatalities and serious injuries from fires and explosions in oxygen-limiting silos. The advisory outlines the hazards as well as firefighting tactics and considerations to prevent explosions. **View the advisory** HERE.

NFPA 455 – What You Need to Know

NFPA 455, Standard for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) consolidates NFPA 450 and 451 into a single, all-purpose document. The 2026 edition of **NFPA 455** is now available, providing EMS leaders with a more consistent framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating the full range of services their agencies

provide. Wondering why this consolidation occurred and what has changed? Check out **this one-pager** from the NVFC EMS/Rescue Section to learn more.

From Federal DOL/OSHA

- **Keith Sonderling was confirmed by the Senate to lead the Department of Labor, he has served as Acting Director since April of this year.**

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

LOCKWOOD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT – FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Audit Objective

Did the Lockwood Volunteer Fire Department (Department) officials ensure that financial activity was properly supported, authorized, recorded and reported?

Audit Period

April 1, 2024 – April 30, 2025. We extended the audit period back through March 30, 2024, to determine whether contractual fire protection collections were recorded in the accounting records.

Understanding the Audit Area

A fire department (department) treasurer should record and report financial transactions in a complete, accurate and timely manner to enable the department board of directors (board) and department membership to make informed decisions, prevent fraud or misappropriation of funds, comply with reporting requirements and maintain the public's trust. Accurate and timely records are essential for establishing financial accountability and proper financial management, enabling effective oversight by the board, department membership and taxpayers and protecting public funds. The board also must ensure that disbursements are adequately supported, for appropriate fire department purposes and authorized before payment.

Department disbursements totaled $96,765 and fundraising and other collections totaled $110,266 during the audit period.

Audit Summary

Department officials did not ensure that financial activities were properly supported, authorized, recorded and reported or provide the Department Board of Directors (Board) with complete, accurate and timely information needed to effectively oversee the Department's financial operations. As a result, the Board did not have reliable information on which to base financial decisions, and the Department had an increased risk that its resources could be wasted, misused or stolen. Although the financial activities that we reviewed were generally recorded in the accounting records, *Department officials and the Department Membership (Membership) did not:*

- *Ensure that the Department Treasurer (Treasurer):*
  - *Maintained complete financial records and reports that supported collections and disbursements,*
  - *Provided accurate monthly financial reports to the Board and Membership that included monthly bank statements, bank reconciliations, canceled check images, support for the collections deposited and budget-to-actual variance reports.*
- *Ensure that the meeting minutes for the monthly Board and Membership meetings contained adequate details and documentation, such as the annual report presented to the Membership.*
- *Update the Department's bylaws or develop and enforce financial procedures.*

In addition, *officials did not maintain any documentation indicating that the Board conducted periodic financial audits of the Department's accounting records or reported annually to the Membership. Furthermore, the Board and Membership did not ensure that the Treasurer filed the annual report for the Department's 2024, foreign fire insurance (FFI) tax proceeds with the New York State Office of the State Comptroller (OSC) and the 2024 annual Form 990 with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS).*[1]

Because the Treasurer did not perform monthly bank reconciliations, and no one reviewed bank statements and canceled check images, the Department had an increased risk that its resources could be wasted and stolen.

The report includes 11 recommendations that, if implemented, will strengthen Department officials' oversight of financial activities, improve the accuracy, completeness and reliability of the Department's financial records and reports, enhance accountability and help safeguard Department resources.

THE FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

Knowing Your Lane

David Stone

The fire service has never had more access to knowledge than it does today. With a phone in your pocket, you can learn from firefighters across the country and around the world. We can attend conferences without traveling, listen to podcasts on the way to work, watch videos demonstrating new techniques, and read articles from instructors whose experiences are vastly different from our own. I believe that is one of the greatest advantages this generation of firefighters has ever had. Good information has never been easier to find, and because of that, our profession continues to improve.

SERVICE AND BUILDING A REPUTATION

At the same time, I have found myself thinking about something that has quietly changed over the years. The path to becoming a respected instructor or recognized voice in the fire service is no longer what it once was. Years ago, there was a natural vetting process that occurred before someone became widely known. It wasn't formal, nor was it controlled by any single group, but it existed nonetheless. Before someone was given a microphone or invited to teach at conferences, they typically spent years serving others behind the scenes. Their reputation wasn't built on self-promotion but on years of demonstrating competence, humility, and experience, with respected instructors ultimately vouching for them before they were given an opportunity to teach. They volunteered to help established instructors, set up training props, hauled pallets for live burns, cleaned up after classes, and looked for opportunities to contribute without expecting recognition. Looking back, it resembled an apprenticeship, even if no one ever called it that.

Those years of service accomplished far more than simply helping another instructor. They allowed experienced instructors to observe your work ethic, your humility, your willingness to learn, and eventually your competence. Your knowledge was constantly being tested through conversation, through practical application, and through the reputation you built among people who had already earned credibility in the profession. *When respected instructors eventually recommended someone to teach, that recommendation carried weight because it was based on years of observation rather than a polished social media profile*. It certainly wasn't a perfect system, but it provided something valuable. It ensured that influence was generally earned before it was given.

Today, the Internet has changed that process. Social media has created opportunities that simply didn't exist 20 years ago. A firefighter with passion and a willingness to share ideas can reach thousands of people almost overnight. There is tremendous value in that. Many outstanding instructors have gained opportunities they may never have received under the old model, and many firefighters now have access to information they otherwise never would have encountered. I would never argue that those are bad things. However, I do think we should recognize that the distance between learning something and teaching something has become much shorter than it used to be.

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

One of the questions that naturally arose during the old process was, "How do you know?" That question wasn't intended to challenge someone's intelligence or discourage them from teaching. It simply sought to

understand where their knowledge came from. Had it been earned through years of doing the work? Had it been developed through repeated successes and failures on the fireground? Had it been refined by making mistakes, adjusting, and finding better ways over time? Or was it something they had recently learned from another instructor, a conference presentation, or an online video? None of those sources are wrong. In fact, they are how all of us continue learning throughout our careers. The important distinction is understanding the difference between acquiring knowledge and acquiring experience.

Experience provides context that is difficult to duplicate in any other way. It teaches why a technique works, when it is likely to fail, and what adjustments become necessary when conditions are different than expected. Those lessons rarely appear on a PowerPoint slide or fit neatly into a social media post. They are learned by repeatedly solving the same problems under different conditions until patterns begin to emerge. *That is why experience continues to matter so much in the fire service. It doesn't make someone infallible, nor does it mean others cannot contribute valuable ideas. It simply provides perspective that only comes from having done the work over and over again.*

Take hose movement as an example. Many firefighters can demonstrate how to stretch a hoseline because they have attended quality training or studied experienced instructors. There is tremendous value in that education. However, there is also a difference between understanding the mechanics of a hose stretch and spending years advancing hoselines with a two- to three-person engine company through apartment buildings, around multiple corners, up stairwells, and into scenarios that rarely ever cooperate. The technique may look identical to the observer, but the experienced firefighter understands the countless small adjustments that are required when reality doesn't match the textbook. Those adjustments are often what separate successful operations from frustrating ones. Nuanced tips that are birthed from experience.

The same principle applies to forcible entry. A firefighter can become extremely proficient on a door prop, and that repetition is incredibly valuable. Yet there is a difference between forcing the same predictable prop hundreds of times and forcing hundreds of different doors in occupied buildings where every frame, lock, and occupancy presents a slightly different challenge. Experienced firefighters understand why one technique works beautifully on one door but struggles on another. They can explain why a frame bends, why multiple locks change the problem, or why a technique that looked great in training suddenly becomes ineffective under real conditions. Those lessons are difficult to teach in detail without having first experienced them.

CREDIBILITY, GIVING CREDIT, AND SHARING

None of this is intended to discourage anyone from teaching. In fact, I believe the fire service needs more instructors, not fewer. We need firefighters who are passionate about sharing knowledge, bettering themselves, and helping others improve. The responsibility lies in honestly representing where that knowledge comes from. There is nothing wrong with saying, "I learned this from someone who has spent 20 years doing it," or "I've spent the last several years studying this topic, but my experience is limited." That level of honesty does not diminish your credibility. If anything, it strengthens it because people know exactly what perspective you are bringing to the conversation.

That is what I mean by knowing your lane. It isn't about limiting yourself or suggesting that firefighters should only speak about the calls they have personally experienced. It is about understanding where your credibility comes from and allowing that credibility to support the message you are sharing. Every firefighter has something valuable to contribute. Some have operational experience that others will never have. Others have invested thousands of hours researching, developing training programs, or solving unique problems within their own departments. Both perspectives matter. The important part is being transparent about which one you're offering.

If there is a subject you aspire to teach but haven't yet developed the experience to support it, don't view that as a barrier. Instead, view it as an invitation to continue learning. Seek out instructors who have earned credibility in that area. Volunteer to help with their classes. Carry equipment, build props, assist with hands on training, and ask thoughtful questions. The Internet has made it easier than ever to connect with instructors across the country, but relationships are still built the same way they always have been—through humility, service, curiosity, and a willingness to contribute before asking for recognition.

The fire service is both remarkably large and surprisingly small. Reputations travel quickly, and credibility is built over years, not posts. If your goal is simply to gain followers, there are countless ways to accomplish that.

If your goal is to genuinely influence the profession for the better, the path is much different. It requires patience, honesty, and a commitment to continually learning from those who have walked the road before you.

Knowing your lane ultimately comes down to understanding your strengths, acknowledging your limitations, and having the humility to recognize the difference. Share the lessons you have earned through your own experience. Give credit to those who have shaped your thinking. Continue pursuing opportunities to expand your knowledge and your experience. Over time your lane will naturally become wider, your credibility will continue to grow, and the influence you earn will be built on something far more lasting than popularity. It will be built on trust, and in our profession, trust and respect have always been the strongest foundations any instructor can stand on.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Monterey Fire Department President and Her Daughter Indicted for Allegedly Stealing Funds from the Department

New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli, Schuyler County District Attorney Jeremy Hourihan, and New York State Police Superintendent Steven G. James announced today that Kelly S. Groves, the president and interim treasurer of the Monterey Volunteer Fire Department and her daughter, Kali Horton, were indicted on charges of grand larceny in the third degree and official misconduct in relation to their alleged theft of $20,000 from the department. Groves, 49, and Horton, 27, both of Beaver Dams, were arraigned before Judge Matthew Hayden in Schuyler County Centralized Arraignment Part Court.

"Instead of safeguarding funds meant to protect their community, Kelly Groves and her daughter betrayed their trust by allegedly pocketing money for personal gain," **DiNapoli** said. "***Unfortunately, this is the second time the department has been victimized by corruption among its leadership***. My office will work with our law enforcement partners to ensure they will be held accountable. My thanks to District Attorney Hourihan and the New York State Police for their work on this case."

DiNapoli's office received a complaint regarding Groves' handling of funds and subsequently opened a joint investigation with the New York State Police Financial Crimes Unit. The investigation determined that Groves, as treasurer, did not deposit any cash collected from the fire department's fundraisers or member dues into department accounts for three years (2019 through 2021). Rather, Groves allegedly stole over $20,000 from the department from 2018 until 2022 by withdrawing cash from the department's bank account and making personal purchases with its debit card between Sept. 19, 2018 and Dec. 31, 2022. Horton acted as secretary and also collected money from fundraisers that was not deposited.

After joining the department in 2003, Groves held various positions and is currently its president. She served as both the president and interim treasurer from August 2018 through Dec. 31, 2022. She became president again in January of 2024 after a year of absence from the department.

In 2013, based upon an investigation by DiNapoli's office, the department's former chief, Larry States, and his wife, Kimberly States, who was treasurer, were convicted of embezzling over $100,000 from the department. Larry States was sentenced to one and one-third to four years in state prison, while Kimberly States was sentenced to one year of incarceration.

Groves and Horton are due back in court on Oct. 22.

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

- The impact of Amazon coming to the township will be felt before a shovel even goes into the ground at the former Atlantic City Race Course. Amazon, through its community partnership agreement with the township, is funding the $2.3 million purchase of a new ladder truck and other fire apparatus. The Township Committee is expected to introduce an ordinance for the funding during its Sept. 21 meeting. A public hearing on the ordinance is schedule for Oct. 5. Amazon plans to build a roughly 1-million-square-foot, one-story warehouse featuring automated storage and retrieval technology on a 145-acre portion of the former race course, which has been closed for more than a decade.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

There are challenges everyday for the fire service.

SATISTICS FOR THE FIRE SER1VICE

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY – PROTECTING OUR OWN

FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

63

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:

- SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Three people sustained minor injuries after a CAL FIRE training engine rolled over near Sloughhouse, according to Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District. Three people had safely exited the engine with minor injuries, and they were taken to a local hospital for evaluation as a precaution, the wildland engine was severely damaged.

Firefighter Deaths, Injuries, in the News

- A Saratoga, California man drove his Tesla into an emergency zone on the freeway, seriously injuring a firefighter, the California Highway Patrol said. The driver, a 30-year-old Saratoga man, was arrested on suspicion of felony driving under the influence of alcohol causing injury. As officers were wrapping up the investigation, another car drove through the flare pattern, the CHP said. Its driver, a 64-year-old Simi Valley man, was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol.
- A firefighter was hospitalized with major injuries after a driver blew through a freeway blockade and crashed into a Ventura County, Calfornia fire engine early Sunday in Simi Valley, authorities said. Authorities said emergency crews had established a blockade at the scene when the driver of a red Tesla drove through it and struck a Ventura County fire engine and a firefighter.
- Two Albuquerque, New Mexico firefighters dodged injuries after falling through a floor that collapsed at a residential fire. Engine 13 gave a Mayday call and crews rescued the two firefighters, who didn't need to be taken to the hospital after being evaluated at the scene.

*****The NYS Volunteer FF Cancer Program has changes coming***

The program was formerly managed by the Hartford Ins Co. is now going to be managed by Chubb Insurance, which is owned by its shareholders as a publicly traded company. Coverage limits will remain the same and all 3 components remain the same: lump-sum, LTD and death benefit. Firefighters will be divided into 4 classes; Class 1 Interior Firefighters, Class 2 retired interior firefighters, Class 3 exterior firefighters and Class 4 retired exterior firefighters.

Like everything else the price is going to increase with some exceptions. Chubb rates will be as follows:

Option 1: Enhanced Basic Coverage

Class 1 $190.00 per person/year

Class 2 $171.00 per person/year
Class 3 $190.00 per person/year
Class 4 $171.00 per person/year

Option 2: Enhanced Basic Coverage with Supplementary Enhanced Cancer Rider:

Class 1 $261.00 per person/year
Class 2 $236.00 per person/year
Class 3 $261.00 per person/year
Class 4 $236.00 per person/year

Or:

- -Basic Coverage increase of $42.93
- -Enhanced Coverage increase of $73.29

The Enhanced Basic Coverage with Supplementary Enhanced Cancer Rider is Chubb's all-inclusive plan that covers all cancers, as opposed to just the cancers that are named in the original law (GML 205-cc).

Those listed as retired will have lower premiums than current classifications. As a result, working with your agency administrator and your insurance agent/provider your members will need to be divided into the 4 classifications. The good news is that we will be looking forward to easier claims processing with pay outs within 24 hours.

For more information speak with your insurance agent.

Chubb will be establishing and host a New York website with policy information.

Plus, Changing Reporting Requirements from DHSES – OFPC: Dates due have changed!

Note that this rule change was published in the New York State Register on June 3rd, 2026.

- The reporting year will be January 1st through December 31st rather than December 1st through November 31st.
- A fire district, department or company must submit to the Office of Fire Prevention and Control by **MARCH 15 *and annually thereafter*** an attestation (**form-EOSB 210.5**) that the fire district, department or company will provide the enhanced cancer disability benefit by:
    - carrying an insurance policy issued by an insurance company authorized to engage in the business of insurance in this State sufficient to cover its eligible volunteer firefighters and provide a death benefit to their beneficiaries; or
    - proof that the authority having jurisdiction: (i) possesses taxing authority; and (ii) has agreed in writing to fund any and all claims of eligible volunteer firefighters and their beneficiaries through existing and future revenues (*self-insured, assumes the responsibility to pay claims*).
- Annual claims report (**form-ESOB.8C**). The fire district, department or company shall report to the Office of Fire Prevention and Control, no later than **MARCH 15 *and annually thereafter***, on the claims and benefits payments for the reporting year using forms prescribed by the Office of Fire Prevention and Control.
    - This report must be signed by the head of the department or company, sworn to under penalty of perjury as true, correct and complete ***and shall be notarized***.
- Annual roster of interior firefighters (**form-ESOB-210.8R**). The fire district, department or company shall report to the Office of Fire Prevention and Control, no later than **MARCH 15 *and annually thereafter***, a complete list of its ***interior firefighters*** for the reporting year.

COMPLETE DOCUMENT WITH CHANGES FROM DHSES/OFPC RULE MAKING OPEN THIS LINK:
https://cafda.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Changes-to-Cancer-Reporting-2026-22-N.Y.-St.-Reg.-22.pdf

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NIOSH Report on 2025 EV Fire Where CA Firefighters Were Exposed to Toxic Vapors

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) released a report on a 2025 incident in which Sacramento (CA) firefighters were exposed to toxic smoke while responding to an electrical vehicle (EV) fire.

On April 11, 2025, at approximately 22:00 hours, a Tesla Model 3 struck a tree in a single-vehicle crash in a residential neighborhood. Firefighters were dispatched for a motor vehicle accident with major injury. Soon

after arrival on scene, responding personnel realized that the vehicle's lithium-ion battery pack had been severely damaged, with battery cells scattered across the roadway. Damaged lithium-ion batteries can experience thermal runaway, a self-accelerating failure that produces heat and can release flammable gases, toxic fumes, or cause fire or explosion. *Due to the concern for potential thermal runaway, the incident was upgraded to a Level II (moderate) HAZMAT response*.

With the arrival of HAZMAT team members, there were approximately 15 fire department personnel on scene. After extricating the vehicle's driver, firefighters began cleanup efforts, placing battery cells into 55- gallon water-filled drums. after the battery cells were removed from the roadway, firefighters were instructed that they could begin doffing their personal protective equipment (PPE). Simultaneously, a tow truck arrived and began moving the damaged vehicle. ***As the vehicle was being loaded onto the tow truck, the portion of the damaged battery that remained in the vehicle entered thermal runaway and released a large smoke plume.*** *The plume enveloped some of the firefighters who had removed their PPE and were no longer breathing from a controlled air source, or "on air".* Firefighters reported immediately experiencing a "metallic" "acrid" taste. The duration of firefighter exposure to the smoke plume varied by firefighter, ranging from a few seconds to five minutes. Shortly afterward, five firefighters began experiencing serious health effects, with three receiving treatment in the emergency department that night and two the following morning. ***At the time of this investigation in the spring of 2026, four of the affected firefighters remained out of work due to ongoing symptoms from this exposure.*** Their primary symptom has been shortness of breath on exertion that prevents them from performing essential firefighting job functions. The department has reviewed and updated their standard operating guidelines to prevent similar future incidents, as the number of EVs on the road continues to increase.

NIOSH made the following key recommendations:

- Ensure firefighters operating within established hazard control zones at all damaged vehicle incidents are protected from respiratory hazards by requiring the use of SCBA in potentially hazardous, unknown, or immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH) atmospheres. For confirmed EV and lithium-ion battery (LIB) incidents, maintain respiratory protection for personnel within the hazard control zones throughout EV/LIB suppression, handling, and removal when thermal runaway or battery offgassing remains possible.
- Fire departments should identify hazard control zones for each EV/LIB incident using a risk assessment method, such as HAZMAT incident modeling software, that incorporates environmental and structural factors.
- Train firefighters on the signs and indicators of a thermal runaway event in EVs/LIBs and the associated physical and chemical hazards.
- Firefighters should be familiar with symptoms of EV/LIB exposure and should seek medical care immediately if experiencing symptoms after a response. Fire departments should develop procedures for reporting, documenting, and medically evaluating firefighters who experience symptoms following potential exposure during EV/LIB incidents consistent with NFPA 470 and OSHA 1910.
- Firefighters should conduct on-scene preliminary exposure reduction, isolate PPE, and store contaminated gear outside of the passenger compartments of vehicles according to NFPA 1850.
- Ensure standard operating procedures for handling damaged EVs/LIBs follow NFPA standards and manufacturers' recommendations.
- Firefighters should undergo an annual physical examination to assess fitness for duty. Existing departmental policy regarding annual examination for HAZMAT team members should be enforced.

DOWNLOAD THE FULL REPORT HERE:
https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/firefighters/programs/pdfs/f202511.pdf

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	60
9/27/26 Troy, Rensselaer Co. male 37, female 11, female 39	

Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	114
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	899
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA 67
	#2 NY 60
	#3 OH 48
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2026: 1375 = 34.3 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?	

If it Wasn't Enough, Now We Have Flammable Refrigerants

As the industry shifts towards more environmentally friendly solutions, A2L refrigerants are leading the way. Learn how these mildly flammable refrigerants are changing the landscape of HVAC systems and why they're crucial for the future of refrigeration.

The Air Conditioning and Refrigeration industry in the US is phasing out the use of higher Global Warming Potential (GWP) refrigerants beginning in 2022, which will necessitate different refrigerants with lower GWP ratings. Most, if not all, of these refrigerants will have an ASHRAE safety classification of A2L.

A2L refrigerants are in a newer classification on the lower part of the Lower Flammability scale of the ASHRAE 34 standard that is often referred to as "mildly flammable". This designation means that flame propagation occurs at a flame velocity of less than 10 cm/second (3.9 in/second). The low flame speed means that combustion of an A2L gas does not sustain after the ignition source is removed. For reference, R-290 (Propane) has a burning velocity of around 46 cm/second (18.1 in/second) with a much higher heat of combustion than an A2L. Because the new refrigerants have a small chance of ignition, new standards have been developed for tools and equipment intended to work around refrigerants that have flammability classifications. Labeling of refrigerant piping helps to prevent serious accidents where piping is damaged or opened by mistake. This has become more important with the transition to A2L refrigerants.

The 2024 International Mechanical Code requires additional markings for A2L refrigerants. The identification on refrigerant lines must include the statement, "WARNING—Risk of Fire. Flammable Refrigerant." In addition to these labeling requirements for piping, equipment manufacturers are required by the product listing to include warning labels on their equipment alerting owners, contractors and technicians that the equipment, s well as the refrigerant piping, contains flammable refrigerant.

For the fire service this means that if there is a suspected or possible refrigerant leak, PPE & SCBA should be indicated.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Nothing to report this week.

CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS

Follow up on the Village of Minoa, hiring 20 Part Time Firefighters

With little public debate and a unanimous village board vote, the department went from one part-time paid firefighter to having almost as many paid firefighters (20 part time paid firefighters) as volunteers. *The change added more than half a million dollars to the village's $5.7 million budget. Mayor William Brazill said no single emergency prompted the decision to staff up the department, which gets about 15 calls a week*. Those new firefighters are going to cost an extra $560,000 a year. That means the fire department's budget, which includes ambulance services, is nearly $2.3 million – or 40% of the village budget. But the village department was missing some calls, especially during the day when most volunteers are working other jobs. That meant other nearby departments had to respond in their place. "Even the volunteers were asking for help," Mayor Brazill said. "They don't want to miss calls. We were probably missing a handful of calls every week." None of the new hires are current Minoa volunteers. But they all have at least five years of firefighting experience. Many already have fulltime firefighting jobs. The plan is to have the paid firefighters work four-hour shifts during the day, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., up to 20 hours a week. The village also hired Auggie Matt as part-time paid chief to

oversee the daytime, paid staff. Matt's salary is about $34,000. Grevelding has a full-time job at the 911 center but will still serve as part-time chief for about $37,000 annually.

Minoa, one of three villages inside the town of Manlius, is in the midst of talks about creating a town-wide department. They've considered this before. Starting in 2008, the villages of Manlius, Fayetteville and Minoa spent months studying a merger. In 2012, the idea was abandoned, and instead the villages began to purchase equipment together and share some services.

But the village's 3,600 residents have help when it comes to paying that firefighting bill. That's because the department contracts with the town of Manlius to cover a much larger area that goes beyond the village's 1.2 square miles. Minoa firefighters actually cover the village plus the northern part of the town, an area that's 33 square miles and has about 11,000 residents. In return, Manlius town taxpayers send about $1.8 million to Minoa each year for that coverage.

FIRE STATION DESIGN

HVAC 201: Keeping Fire Station System Designs Moving as Codes, Systems Evolve

Joe Balicki & Patrick Stone

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- HVAC system selection for fire stations depends on project-specific variables including climate, utility availability, and aesthetic considerations.
- *Transition to newer A2L refrigerants introduces new safety and design requirements, impacting piping, ventilation, with the possible need for atmospheric monitors and system layout early in the design process.*
- Climate significantly influences HVAC choices; cold regions may require boilers, while milder climates benefit from heat pumps for efficiency.

Last year, we explored the fundamentals of HVAC selection for fire stations. This article included traditional system types, newer variable refrigerant flow (VRF) options, and the many project-specific variables that influence performance, comfort, efficiency, and cost. Those considerations remain crucial, however, the conversation has continued to evolve. As refrigerant regulations change, heat pump technologies advance, and stations continue to balance aesthetics with long-term functionality, HVAC design is becoming even more dependent on early coordination and informed decision-making.

As emphasized in our previous article, *there is no one-size-fits-all HVAC solution for every station*. A constant air volume rooftop unit, heat pump split system with a dedicated outdoor air system, boiler plant, evaporative cooling system, VRF heat recovery system, and hybrid approach can all make sense depending on the facility's needs.

The right choice must support the comfort and safety of first responders while accounting for budget, available utilities, climate, building envelope requirements, maintenance, available space, aesthetics, zoning, and recovery time after apparatus bay doors open and close.

NEW REFRIGERANTS BRING NEW DESIGN RESPONSIBILITIES

How do new refrigerants and codes factor into this decision-making process?

One of the most significant developments affecting HVAC design today is the industry's transition to A2L refrigerants. In many new systems, including VRF options, new codes require manufacturers to move away from older refrigerants and toward A2L. These refrigerants support broader environmental goals, but they also introduce new code-driven safety considerations.

For engineers, this means refrigerant selection can no longer be treated as a background manufacturer decision. It can influence pipe routing, ventilation, detection, controls, equipment layout, commissioning, and coordination with architectural spaces. ***Depending on the system and the way refrigerant piping is distributed, projects may require gas detection, refrigerant shutoff valves, or ventilation strategies for enclosed shafts and other areas where refrigerant piping or components are located.*** In some cases, exceptions or alternate compliance approaches may apply, but these considerations must be evaluated early rather than addressed late in design, as they can have considerable spatial consequences.

This is especially important for VRF heat recovery systems. Branch controllers, which have traditionally been associated with heat recovery configurations, are now playing an even more central role, functioning as part of the refrigerant safety strategy by helping isolate portions of a system when needed. As a result, design teams must think beyond heating and cooling capacity and consider where branch controllers are located, how they are accessed, how they interact with occupied spaces, and how the system will respond if a refrigerant leak is detected.

CLIMATE STILL DRIVES THE RIGHT HVAC SYSTEM CHOICE

While heat pump and split system technologies have improved significantly, geography and climate remain key factors in HVAC selection. In milder climates, heat pump systems can offer efficient, flexible heating and cooling with reduced reliance on fossil fuels. However, in extremely cold regions where temperatures may drop to minus 20 or minus 30 degrees, a boiler system may still be the more dependable choice. The question is not simply whether a system is modern or efficient on paper, but whether it can reliably serve the building under the extreme weather conditions it may face.

For fire stations, this reliability is especially important. Apparatus bays, living quarters, administrative areas, training rooms, and support spaces each have different comfort and operational needs. A station in a cold-weather region with frequent calls may lose large amounts of heat each time bay doors open, making recovery time and heating capacity critical. A station in a warmer, or more humid climate may prioritize dehumidification, ventilation, and cooling efficiency. These geoclimatic considerations should help shape the system selection from the beginning.

EARLY ENGINEERING INPUT PREVENTS LATE DESIGN CHALLENGES

Today's HVAC decisions touch so many parts of a project, so engineers should be brought into the process as early as possible. A *new facility or renovated station needs to look great, but it also needs to function properly while meeting current codes, comfortably supporting its occupants, and accommodating the infrastructure required for the selected system.* Early engineering involvement helps the team define boundary conditions, understand owner expectations, identify code implications, and avoid being forced into reactive decisions after major architectural layouts are already established.

This process often begins with asking the right questions:

- What spaces need independent temperature control?
- Are there areas with higher ventilation needs?
- How much space can we dedicate to ductwork in a given area?
- Is the owner prioritizing cost, aesthetics, sustainability, or ease of maintenance?

By discussing these questions with the owner, architect, and engineering team early, system selection becomes more intentional and less disruptive.

Choosing an HVAC system type is often one of the most difficult decisions of the process. Once that decision is made, however, coordination becomes much smoother between the architecture and engineering teams. Ductwork, refrigerant piping, shaft locations, ceiling heights, ventilation requirements, and controls can all affect the building layout. When those conversations happen in real time between collaborative disciplines, potential conflicts are easier to identify and resolve before they affect schedule, cost, or construction.

CONCLUSION

As HVAC systems become more advanced and code requirements continue to evolve, successful station design becomes increasingly less trivial. It requires a coordinated approach that considers comfort, safety, climate, operations, compliance, maintenance, aesthetics, and long-term performance. For fire stations, where first responders depend on building systems that provide reliable comfortability 24/7, that level of coordination is essential.

Fire department personnel carry significant responsibilities, from daily operations and emergency response to helping guide critical design decisions for their facilities. Engaging architects and engineers early in the process can help ease that burden by translating operational needs into practical design solutions, ensuring the station looks and functions as intended while remaining adaptable as codes and technologies continue to evolve.

FIRE APPARATUS

Designing the Modern Heavy Rescue: Matching Apparatus to Mission

Alex Moody

KEY TAKAWAYS

- The design and specifications of heavy rescue vehicles are influenced by their intended mission, which determines factors like axle count and equipment weight capacity.
- Budget considerations for heavy rescue apparatus can significantly increase due to the costs associated with additional axles, components, and fluctuating metal prices.
- Proper weight management is crucial to avoid exceeding safety limits, as stipulated by NFPA standards, which can affect vehicle stability and safety during operations.
- The choice between walk-in and walk-around body styles impacts equipment storage, crew seating, and overall maneuverability, necessitating careful consideration by the apparatus committee.
- Understanding crash testing standards and ensuring compliance with safety regulations is essential for the design of heavy rescue vehicles to protect firefighters during operations.

Maybe your department has been in the heavy rescue game for a while. Perhaps you've decided that your department or community has grown to the point where you want to expand the service you provide. Whatever the reason, if you find yourself going down a path that will lead to a huge financial investment in a heavy rescue apparatus, you have a lot of questions to answer first.

In my article, "Heavy Rescues: It's What's Inside That Counts" (August 2024), I made a strong argument for all the "stuff" we carry to emergency scenes being more important than the unit that does the carrying. While I stand by that, I'd be doing everyone a disservice if I didn't break down all the decisions that go into the vehicle itself. Body styles, crew location, axle ratings, and safety considerations all play a pivotal role in allocating resources effectively for both the community you serve and the firefighters assigned to the rig.

THE MISSION OF THE VEHICLE AND WEIGHT

I finished that last article with a rule of thumb that will start us in the right direction: *"A single-axle unit can carry 6,000 to 8,000 pounds of equipment. A tandem-axle rescue can carry 10,000 pounds plus*. One way to think of it is that a single-axle rescue is a great option for vehicle extrication. If this unit is going to be used regionally or for any special operations, the tandem-axle vehicle is probably a better fit."

Like any apparatus, the mission you define for this vehicle will determine the number and type of axles, wheels, and tires it requires. *If you want a vehicle that will respond to fires and vehicle accidents, you can design yourself a solid single-axle vehicle and accomplish that goal quite easily. If you plan to incorporate another task, such as technical rescue, hazmat, or water rescue, you may need to add another axle.*

This decision will certainly impact your budget, and in this apparatus market, the people controlling the money will want to know exactly why you need more money for that second axle. Depending on weight ratings, and what the market is doing, you could be looking at $10,000 to $15,000 for the additional axles and associated components and another $15,000 to $20,000 for air-ride. Don't forget the added length will also increase the amount of metal your unit will need. Prices for both aluminum and stainless steel are fluctuating because of the current tariffs, with the price going up and the gap between the two metals potentially narrowing. This could ultimately increase the cost of your vehicle by more than $100,000. Although it may not seem significant in the context of a $1 million-plus apparatus, it could mean that some of the other options your committee wanted will have to be eliminated.

To accurately make this decision, you need to know what equipment you want to carry, how much of it you need, how much it's going to weigh, and how many people you are going to put on the unit to operate said equipment.

There are a couple of ways to determine this weight. If you already have a heavy rescue or rescue engine variation, head out into the bay and weigh your existing equipment to see where you stand. Alternatively, you can get behind a computer and do some research. As I write this article, I took five minutes to put some questions into everyone's favorite search engine. I obtained weight comparisons for a few common brands of stabilization struts and extrication equipment. Go ahead and open the search engine of your choice, then type, "How much do (*insert strut brand and model of strut*) weigh?" I'm already familiar with the weights of my particular search, and I can confirm that the results were accurate in this case.

If the search method isn't as reliable as you would like, most fire and rescue equipment manufacturers can provide you with the exact weight of their tools, which can generally be found on their Websites. Your apparatus committee can easily, if not tediously, research every piece of equipment you want to carry and help you justify exactly why you need that second axle and four additional tires of capacity. The Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association (FAMA) also has a free-to-download spreadsheet called the Fire Apparatus Weight and Cube Calculator that can also be of assistance.

This is also where you can start thinking strategically about where to place that equipment. If you determine that a tandem is necessary, consider placing some of your heaviest equipment behind the rear axle. This will work as a counterbalance and remove some of the load from your front axle.

Last, you must carry firefighters. Remember, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1900, *Standard for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Vehicles, Automotive Fire Apparatus, Wildland Fire Apparatus, and Automotive Ambulances*, accounts for 250 pounds per seat. So, if you're only staffing with four people at 250 pounds, that's 1,000 pounds of weight assumed to be on that apparatus, whether these seats are occupied at all times or only occasionally. This means that if you design an apparatus with 10 seats, you place 2,500 pounds of weight on that apparatus and its axles. I urge you and your committee to be honest with yourselves about the number of people riding that apparatus, especially in volunteer departments. *If you only get ten people to show up for a call twice a year, but the other 363 days you're lucky to have three, you may want to consider reducing the number of seats.*

Additionally, NFPA 1900 section 7.14.5.4 states, "The fire apparatus, when loaded to its estimated in-service weight, shall have a side-to-side tire load variation of no more than 7% of the total tire load for that axle."

Applied to heavy rescues, it can be incredibly easy to overload one side of a walk-in with seating. If the firefighters are sitting on the driver side of the apparatus and all the stabilization struts, extrication equipment, and chain are also stored in the driver side compartments, you could easily exceed this 7% limit.

I have personally advised departments to either reduce their equipment load or completely remove seats from their apparatus because they are overweight. More than one have chosen to completely remove seats from their apparatus because they never have bodies in them. Take the time to research properly, and you can avoid this issue. Take the time to review the weight of your equipment and the staffing model for your organization; it will help you avoid designing an overweight vehicle that will prove to be unsafe.

BODY STYLE

After completing the research above and determining the weight you need to carry, you can decide where to carry all the equipment and your firefighters. This is where the apparatus committee meeting starts to get contentious. While you dive into this section and work with your committee, keep this in mind: Your citizens expect you to show up quickly and safely to help them in their time of need. Where the firefighters sit means nothing to them.

The first major decision: to walk-in or not. This will determine how you use the cube of space that constitutes the body of your heavy rescue. Whether you have a 16-, 18-, or 25-foot body, that walkway will account for roughly 30% of your cube. You can't fill your walkway with equipment except for some space along the walls below the shelves. This means you will have bare floor space carrying no equipment, which reduces the depth of your outside compartments and prevents multiple transverse compartments. What you gain with a walk-in is the ability to store more types of equipment for different call types in a more organized fashion by using both interior compartments and exterior compartments, which lends itself to departments that provide more than just fireground and vehicle accident response.

Another variation features stairs leading to coffin compartments on top of the vehicle. The concern with this design is the potential increase in vehicle height and change to the vehicle's center of gravity, depending on the equipment stored in those compartments. Just like engine companies with high hosebeds, placing firefighters at the top of the apparatus needs careful thought because injuries can and will happen. These rescues can also have the staircase designed to raise, allowing for walk-in functionality or additional storage space. Some departments opt for a long pull-out tray to accommodate various types of equipment in this area instead. For departments with limited resources or those relying on mutual or automatic aid from farther away, this can be a great place to store ground ladders, whether or not there are stairs to the roof

Another variation includes a “walk-through,” where the crew can move from their seating in the cab area back into the body of the rescue or even a “ready room.” This can be useful for departments that have rapid dive or water rescue capabilities and need to access that personal protective equipment (PPE) separately from their firefighting PPE. Some designs include an area for a computer/workstation in this space for either command or hazmat research/laboratory functions.

If your committee decides the walk-in style isn’t what your department needs, and to go with a walk-around design, you’ve made the default decision that the entire crew will sit in the cab. In my opinion, a single-axle heavy rescue, whose mission will be to respond to fires and vehicle accidents, can be designed effectively to avoid the need for a walk-in of any kind.

If your committee decides that a walk-in is necessary, you will then need to determine where to position your firefighters. This decision is more complicated than most committees would like to admit, for several reasons that include situational awareness, safety and crash test considerations, and unit maneuverability.

In the interest of full disclosure, I should say that my current assignment is a walk-in-with-seating-style heavy rescue. Two firefighters sit in the back of the body, typically with the rear door open, separated from the cab where the driver and officer sit. While many on social media would argue that this is the epitome of heavy rescue design, I’m here to tell you that every design has its pros and cons, both from an operational perspective and, potentially, a safety perspective. The previous generation of heavy rescue I was assigned to was a single axle walk-in with a crew cab, so I have a unique perspective on how these two configurations can significantly impact operations.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

When the entire crew is in the cab together, they can typically see and hear the same things at the same time. This is helpful when responding to calls because the entire crew gets eyes on the call at the same time and can start their size-up immediately. Whether it’s a structure fire or a vehicle accident, the entire crew can start making decisions based on their training, tactics, and procedures on how to solve the problem. For structure fires, there is less difference between the two seating configurations because, in my personal opinion, the seat and tool assignments can and should be predetermined before the shift or designated on the riding assignments for that seat position.

For vehicle accidents, when riding in the walk-in, the firefighters in the back can see very little beyond the back door of the vehicle. This problem can be mitigated through effective communication between the driver and officer and the firefighters in the back. On my crew, the officer uses the headset to paint a picture for us in the back. For vehicle accidents, the officer will communicate the number of vehicles involved, the orientation of the vehicles (on all fours, on its roof, etc.), and the location of the vehicles relative to the heavy rescue (in front, on the officer’s side, on the driver’s side). With that simple sentence, the two firefighters know which equipment to grab from the heavy rescue and in which direction to carry it.

CRASH TESTING

It is essential to understand exactly which parts of the apparatus you are designing are definitely crash-tested. The answer is simple: the cab. *Right now, there is no guarantee that the body of any fire apparatus is crash-tested in any fashion. Only recently has there been a greater effort to crash-test the tiller cab of a tractor-drawn aerial.*

Along with probably not being crash-tested, you also can’t put air bags in the walk-in seating area. For some departments, this will automatically rule out this as an option. But you can reduce the risk by electing to include roll protection, strictly enforcing seat belt use, and ensuring that all tools are secured with 9 G-force-rated mounting systems as specified by the NFPA. Anecdotally, I have researched two accidents in which walk-in rescues with the crew in the back rolled over, and every occupant walked away with minor injuries.

MANEUVERABILITY

Tom Shand once said, “Any fire truck can fit on an 8.5- × 11-inch sheet of paper.” This applies to numerous aspects of apparatus design. In this case, I’m using it to point out that any apparatus will look great when they post the picture of the drawing on social media, but the real test is when your firefighters start driving it.

Every decision you make concerning the body will impact the overall length and wheelbase of your heavy rescue. If you choose to design a tandem-axle walk-in rescue with a crew cab, you must pay very close attention

to the overall length of the apparatus. It is entirely possible, with the best of intentions, to design a rescue with these qualities that is barely able to drive through your first-due area. While your committee's discussion about overall length is important, careful consideration of the angles of approach and departure needs to be included in that decision.

The NFPA calls for a minimum of 8° for both the approach and departure angles; in fact, most of the drawings you look at will say just that. This does not mean you have an 8° angle of approach or departure; rather, it means the angle will not be less than 8°. Unless you request to see the specific number, you will only know that it meets the NFPA standard. *Many committees are unaware that they can request a specific approach or departure angle or even specify a performance standard for a particular piece of terrain in their initial specifications, detailing exactly what these angles should be.*

This is where being very upfront with your sales rep about your specific needs comes into play. You do not want your rescue to show up on delivery and find out it won't back into the station without scraping the tailboard, let alone discover it can't make it to an entire section of your first due.

THE BIG PICTURE

Choosing to purchase a heavy rescue is a deceptively simple proposition. Sure, it's a toolbox on wheels. But that leaves the buyer with so many options to choose from that the decisions can become paralyzing. I cannot stress enough that you must have honest conversations within your department and your apparatus committee about the mission of this vehicle.

Building a tandem-axle heavy rescue is simply not the right decision to make for every single fire department. If you are upgrading from a combination apparatus, like a rescue-engine, it is very possible that a well-designed single-axle walk-around heavy rescue will carry more than enough equipment for your department. If you are looking to make the leap into the realm of tandem-axle heavy rescues, you have a ton of work ahead of you to get that purchase right the first time.

In either case, there are many resources available to do the research and get you and your committee started in the right direction. In the current climate of price increases and change orders, if you don't know the apparatus as well as the person selling it to you, reach out and ask for help.

GREEN ENERGY AND THE IMPACT ON THE FIRE SERVICE

- *For more than three days, fire crews have worked to address a lithium-ion battery fire in La Verne that has forced the evacuation of hundreds of residents* and raised questions about the safety of California's rapidly expanding energy storage systems.

  The state has invested heavily in battery storage — which holds on to energy captured by solar panels during the day so it can be used when electricity demand peaks in the evening — as it pushes to meet its ambitious goal of 100% clean-energy usage by 2045. But these sites also come with dangers, as demonstrated by the massive Moss Landing battery fire in January 2025, *which prompted the evacuation of about 1,500 residents and deposited heavy metals in a nearby estuary.*

  The La Verne battery fire is much smaller in scale but nonetheless alarming for those who had to leave their homes or deal with the closure of schools due to the potential of hazardous fumes.

  "It's really disheartening that our schoolchildren continue to be put at risk like this over and over," said Democratic Assemblymember Dawn Addis, who pushed for stricter safety regulations around battery storage in the aftermath of the Moss Landing fire. Thus far in La Verne, air quality monitoring has not detected any hazardous emissions, but the unstable nature of the batteries and potential risk of toxic fumes have led officials to keep evacuations in place in the immediate area around the site, Fire Department Battalion Chief Mark Savage said.

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GENERAL INTEREST TO ALL

Changes and Developments in Fire Apparatus Since 9/11

Al Petrillo

It has been 25 years since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and these events have changed how the fire service responds to large-scale emergencies. Many fire service officers believe the September 11, 2001, attacks fostered changes in the fire apparatus that departments are running and the equipment they carry on their rigs. Mark Aronberg, vice president of Rescue 1 and former assistant fire commissioner of the Bureau of Fleet Services for the Fire Department of New York (FDNY), *says FDNY changed to pumpers with 2,000-gallon-per-minute (gpm) pumps* as a direct result of the World Trade Center attack. "When the towers went down, they took out all the water mains in the immediate area," Aronberg says. "We had an FDNY fireboat pull up to a marina behind an annex building to fight a fire in Tower 7 where the fireboat was relaying water to a series of pumpers."

Aronberg says that after 9/11, FDNY went to pumpers with 2,000-gpm pumps and even considered the use of 12-inch and 8-inch large-diameter hose (LDH) as supply line. "The problem with that size hose meant that traffic would be shut down and you would have to have ramps to negotiate over them," he points out. "FDNY ended up with 6-inch LDH supply line where we would be able to go from engine to engine to engine if the water mains failed."

He maintains that the technology of fire service apparatus and equipment changed a great deal after 9/11. *"With rescue trucks, we went from opening a roof with an ax to using rotary saws and chain saws," Aronberg observes.* "*Rescues are now carrying meters instead of calling on a hazmat unit, engine companies have multiple gas meters, and firefighters have radiation detectors clipped to their gear. 9/11 woke up the fire industry to concerns about terrorism."*

Aronberg continues, "Compare an engine from the 1980s or 1990s to one of today where the roof is covered with boxes to store hazmat suits, cold water rescue suits, and other specialized equipment. We're seeing that on pumpers and rescues across the board." He adds that "*hydraulic rescue tools have gone electric and aren't tied to the trucks anymore,* and equipment is fastened in specific trays and shelving instead of being strapped down in an open compartment. But, now the electrical demand on trucks is so much greater because of all the chargers for meters, rescue tools, hand tools, and portable lighting. But, 9/11 was an awakening for the fire industry and caused it to come out with new and better tools and more efficient ways of doing things with fewer logistical problems."

Rick Fiester, legacy product manager for Rosenbauer, who has been in the fire industry for many years and who worked for American LaFrance years ago, believes that technology has changed fire apparatus in many ways. “We’ve gone from manual pump valves to electronic valves, manual monitors to electronic monitors, electronic governors, electronic smart controls on aerials, and even fully electric pumpers like Rosenbauer’s RTX.”

Fiester notes that Rosenbauer debuted a fully electric aerial ladder truck at Interschutz this year. “It’s built on a MAN electric truck chassis and has an L32A-XS electric aerial that’s equivalent to the L32A five-section 105-foot aerial on the King Cobra in the United States,” he says.

“The electric aerial will end up in the U.S. in some shape or fashion in the future.”

Another change in apparatus after 9/11 was a requirement for more compartment space, Fiester says. “Fire departments wanted more compartmentation where they could carry a greater amount of equipment on their apparatus,” he points out. “Also, battery-powered hydraulic tools have changed the face of rescue trucks and rescue-pumpers, and *there have been major changes in apparatus lighting with LEDs configured for brightness, intensity, color changing, and flashing patterns.*”

Joe Messmer, president of Summit Fire Apparatus, says, “The standout change that I’ve noticed since 9/11 is fire departments going to lower hosebeds. It was occasional before then, but now most departments want their hosebed low, so that’s the single biggest change in my opinion.”

He notes that fire departments have always wanted as much compartmentation as possible but believes that more departments are opting for fewer discharges on their pumps. “Many of them are satisfied with discharges just at the pump module instead of adding front and rear discharges,” Messmer observes. “Departments may not be having as many structure fires where they need every discharge on a pump to extinguish it, so maybe they are not having that many big fires. They must be doing a good job of fire prevention.”

Messmer adds that other changes since 9/11 include a movement away from fixed deck guns to portable monitors that can be moved to places where the pumper might not be able to reach; pump panels that are getting narrower, offering a shorter wheelbase or more compartmentation; and an increase in the capacity of axles and suspensions with larger tires that are able to handle heavier loads.

Michael Cox, vice president of sales for Emergency Vehicles Inc. (EVI), says the biggest change in rescue trucks since 9/11 is the use of battery-powered extrication tools. “There’s no need for hydraulic reels and power plants anymore,” he points out, “which frees up compartment space for other uses. Also, battery-powered hydraulic tools can be placed anywhere on a rig instead of being limited to a cabinet with a hydraulic hose reel.”

Cox says that since 9/11, “*There’s been a lot more emphasis on the clean cab concept on fire apparatus*. There’s a health and safety consciousness and a strong concern for providing cleanliness both on apparatus and in fire stations. And, we’re also doing a lot more straight rehab trucks and other specialty vehicles.”

Mark Brenneman, assistant sales manager for 4 Guys Fire Trucks, says customers are purchasing pumpers with higher-capacity pumps and larger water tanks as well as dual-use rigs such as rescue-pumpers and pumper-tankers.

“Improvements in cordless tools have allowed more equipment to be carried in the same spaces on apparatus,” Brenneman observes, “and battery-powered hydraulic tools have eliminated the need for most hydraulic power units. *Also, improvements in LED lighting technology have eliminated the need for most onboard generators.*

These improvements all free up space on the apparatus for additional equipment, enabling each unit to do more with the same manpower, which can be critical when drivers are in short supply and volunteer crew members often are unavailable to answer calls for much of the day.”

TAKE A MOMENT TO SMILE

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

CLASSIFIED

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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?

All the current officers and directors have self-nominated for 2027. Elections to be held at the November meeting.

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The Capital Area Association represents any fire district that wishes to join CAFDA. Fire District Officials include Commissioners, Treasurers, and Deputy Treasurers. Secretaries and Chiefs are also invited to join in!
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Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence should be mailed to:
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The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over 700+ subscribed fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis.

This is a service of CAFDA through the effort of Tom Rinaldi who can be reached at tom@rinaldi1.com for comments and content contributions are always welcome.

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.

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.

CAFDA

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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)

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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: _____

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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:**

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

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