

THE BULLETIN

OCTOBER 31ST, 2026

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

CAPITAL SHORT TAKES

- **Our Deepest Condolences to Jim Burns family and friends on his Passing. Jim served as the Past NYS Fire Administrator, former FASNY President, president of the Westchester County Fireman's Association, Hudson Valley Fireman's Association and past chief of the Verplanck Fire Department among other titles and activities. May Jim rest in eternal peace.**
- ****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.
- OSC is asking random fire districts to provide them with the 2026 Adopted Budget, 2027 Preliminary/Adopted Budget, and all documentation and resolutions related to the tax cap override for 2027.
- Don't forget the time fell back one hour today.

TRAINING OPPORTUNTIES:

CAFDA

Proudly Serving the Capital & Surrounding Areas

FALL EDUCATION SEMINAR 2026

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

Not limited to Only Commissioners!

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

SCHEDULE

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

Help Us Plan!

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

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

Multiple Registration and Payment Options Available:

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

CAFDA

P.O. Box 242
East Schodack, NY 12063

www.CAFDA.net
Secretary@CAFDA.net

CAPITAL AREA FIRE DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION

WWW.CAFDA.NET

2026 REGISTRATION FORM

FALL EDUCATION SEMINAR

Saturday, November 7, 2026

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

See Attached Training Flyer for Class Schedule and Topics!

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

Fire District/Organization: _____

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

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

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

Total Number Attending:_____

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

Payment Options:

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

From CAFDA

REGISTER NOW FOR THE FALL EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP at CAFDA.NET

1. ***Join us at the NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING on Thursday November 12 at 7pm, Clifton Park Fire Station and Zoom Link: CAFDA General Membership Meeting Time: NOV 12th, 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 8 9-10-11, Fiscal Oversight & Leadership Training (FOIT) by OSC, dinner/vendor show Friday April 10th Fort William Henry Carriage House. Sponsored Mixer the evening of Thursday April 9th at the Holiday Inn Resort, food, games, beverages. The response has grown each year and we are in the process of identifying the subjects for 2027.***
4. ***CAFDA Commissioner Training Dates for 2027 will be held in Averill Park on February 6th, Thomas Corners on February 20th, Clifton Park on March 6th, Schoharie on March 20th, Berkshire on March 27th and Warrensburg on April 3rd.***

CAFDA TRAINING AND EVENT DATES

Day/Date	Time	Type	Location	Notes
FY 2026				
Saturday, November 7, 2026	8:00 AM	**Annual Fall Workshop**	**Guilderland FD**	**2303 Western Ave.**
Thursday, November 12, 2026	7:00 PM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	Officer/Director Elections
DECEMBER 2026	**NO MEETING**			
FY 2027				
Saturday, **January 9**, 2027	9:00 AM	**General Membership Mtg.**	Clifton Park	Organizational/Morning Meeting/Breakfast Buffet
Saturday, **February** 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	Snow Date 3/22

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

From Other Organizations

Insurance 101: EMS Operations, ESIP WEBINAR SERIES

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

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

REGISTER AT THE FOLLOWING LINK

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

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NYSAFC is Bringing Hands-On Training to Your Area!

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

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

View the Calendar and Register...

2026 Seminar Series with Chief Mike Lombardo Resumes in September

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

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

FREE FIREFIGHTER WELLNESS SEMINAR SERIES FROM NYSAFC AND PERMA

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

With Director/Chief Frank Leeb

(First Responder Center for Excellence/FDNY)

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

2026 Locations and Dates:

On-site and pre-registration available.

Seminar begins at 7:00 p.m.

Registration area opens at 6:30 p.m.

Oneida County – December 9

Fulton County – December 14

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER AT THIS LINK:

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

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

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

Click the link below to register NOW!

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

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

REGISTER AT THE FOLLOWING LINK

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

ESIP
EMERGENCY SERVICES INSURANCE PROGRAM
BY McNeil&Co.

2027 ESIP EVOC Train the Trainer course schedule

A valuable risk management resource you can share with both your current ESIP insureds and prospective ESIP accounts.

The EVOC Train the Trainer course is designed to prepare qualified instructors to provide high-quality training to their agency members in the safe operation of vehicles in both response and non-response modes. Topics include risk management, intersection safety, response driving, defensive driving, vehicle-operation hazards and challenges, maintenance inspections, and safe driving skills.

A great ESIP value-add:

- **ESIP insureds: FREE**
- **Non-ESIP insureds: $200 per student**
- Fire and EMS sessions are offered throughout 2027

2027 Schedule – Eastern Standard Time

- January 5: 3:00 PM Fire | 7:00 PM EMS

- April 6: 3:00 PM EMS | 7:00 PM Fire
- July 6: 3:00 PM Fire | 7:00 PM EMS
- October 5: 3:00 PM EMS | 7:00 PM Fire

Please feel free to share the attached flyer fellow colleagues in the emergency services. For course questions or additional Risk Management offerings, please reach out to me or contact RiskManagement@mcneilandcompany.com or **(607) 246-7532**.

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

From Albany

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

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

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

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

- Law passed and signed to require mandatory recycling program for e-scooters/e-bikes.
- The use of "Piggyback Purchasing" extended one more year until June 30, 2027.

S6233A MARTINEZ (D)	**A6790A MCMAHON**	**6/1/26 PASSED SENATE 5/14/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**THIS BILL INCREASES THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' AND AMBULANCE WORKERS' PERSONAL INCOME TAX CREDIT FROM $200 TO $800 FOR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS AND FROM $400 TO $1600 FOR ELIGIBLE MARRIED JOINT FILERS. ALSO ALLOWS FIRST RESPONDERS TO TAKE THE PROPERTY TAX CREDIT ALSO.**	**10/16/26, SIGNED Chapter 313**
S8832 KAVANAGH (D)	**A9504 GLICK (D)**	**1/2/126 PASSED SENATE 2/10/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**THE PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER AMENDMENT IS TO FACILITATE THE INCLUSION OF E-BIKE AND E-SCOOTER BATTERIES IN THE RECHARGEABLE BATTERY RECYCLING PROGRAM AND TO PROMOTE CONSUMER SAFETY, CONVENIENCE, AND AWARENESS**	**2/13/26 SIGNED CHAPTER 87**
S10075 SOLAGES (D)	**A11162 ZELLLNER**	**6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 5/29/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**EXTEND THE PROVISION OF THE COMPETITIVE BIDDING STATUTE [GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW §103] WHICH PERMITS PIGGYBACK PURCHASING. THE STATUTE HAD A SUNSET PROVISION MEANING THAT IT WOULD EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, 2026. THE BILLS PROPOSE TO AMEND THE STATUTE TO EXTEND THE SUNSET PROVISION UNTIL JUNE 30, 2027**	**6/26/26 SIGNED CHAPTER 147**
S6368B SKOUFIS (D)	**A3126B LUNSFORD (D)**	**4/22/26 PASSED SENATE 3/30326 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW, IN RELATION TO REQUIRING THAT WHEN A COMPLAINT IS MADE TO LOCAL CODE ENFORCEMENT OF A VIOLATION OF THE UNIFORM FIRE PREVENTION AND BUILDING CODE OR LOCAL BUILDING CODES WHICH RESULTS IN THE ISSUANCE OF A COMPLIANCE ORDER, THE COMPLAINANT SHALL ALSO BE PROVIDED A COPY OF SUCH ORDER**	**PENDING SIGNATURE**
S9502A MARTINEZ (D)	**A10885B STERN (D)**	**6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 6/1/26 PASSES ASSEMBLY**	***TO AUTHORIZE* LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO ADOPT A PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES OF PAID FIREFIGHTERS WHO ARE KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.**	**PENDING SIGNATURE** PENDING PASSAGE BY EACH LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY RESOLUTION
S7316 HINCHEY (D)	**A8008 LUNSFORD (D)**	**5/18/26 PASSED SENATE 6/1/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY**	**REQUIRES THE FORFEITURE OF BENEFITS TO BE PAID PURSUANT TO A SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM TO VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS WHO HAVE BEEN CONVICTED**	**PENDING SIGNATURE**

			OF FELONIES COMMITTED AGAINST A VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, FIRE DISTRICT, OR FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT.	
S5614 ADDABBO (D)	A3681A WOERNER (D)	6/2/26 PASSED SENATE 1/28/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	AN ACT TO AMEND THE GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW, IN RELATION TO REMOVING RESTRICTIONS ON THE FREQUENCY CERTAIN AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATIONS MAY CONDUCT BINGO GAMES	PENDING SIGNATURE
S4675 JACKSON (D)	A688 BUTTENSCHON (D)	5/6/26 PASSED SENATE 4/29/26 PASSED ASSEMBLY	AN ACT TO AMEND THE EXECUTIVE LAW, IN RELATION TO PROVIDING MINIMUM BASIC TRAINING RELATED TO HANDLING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS INVOLVING INDIVIDUALS WITH ANY PHYSICAL AND/OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY TO ALL FIRE-FIGHTERS	PENDING SIGNATURE REQUIRES ADDITIONAL TRAINING

From Washington

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

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

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR USERS

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

ACTION NEEDED NOW

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

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE TRANSITION

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

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

BOTTOM LINE

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

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

QUESTIONS

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

From Federal DOL/OSHA

NOTHING NEW TO REPORT

FIRE DISTRICT FINANCIAL NEWS

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

Local Government and School Accountability Contact Information:

Phone: (518) 474-4037; Email: localgov@osc.ny.gov
Address: Office of the State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability
110 State Street, 12th Floor; Albany, NY 12236

NYS-OSC Fire Service Audits

NOTHING TO REPORT FOR THIS WEEK.

THE FIRE CHIEF'S OFFICE

*****A New Fire Chief's First 100 Days: Establishing Command, Credibility & Direction***

Christopher Parker

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Many new fire chiefs walk into a department believing that they immediately must make major changes to prove leadership. That approach usually creates unnecessary resistance. Before new fire chiefs can improve a system, they must understand it. That means taking a hard look at staffing, response models, apparatus conditions, certifications, training records, operational readiness and organizational culture.
- It's critical for new fire chiefs to build relationships with neighboring departments, county agencies, EMS partners, dispatch personnel and law enforcement agencies. A mistake in this vein is only communicating during conflict. Relationships that are built solely around problems rarely become strong partnerships.
- New fire chiefs must set nonnegotiable standards. Often, members pay more attention to what leadership tolerates than to what leadership says. If accountability disappears during difficult conversations, the department culture weakens immediately.

Stepping into the role of fire chief is a complete shift in responsibility that affects every part of an organization. You no longer are responsible for a crew, a station or a shift. You're responsible for the entire system. Your decisions affect personnel, operations, budgets, training, morale, and, ultimately, the safety of your firefighters and the community that you serve.

The first 100 days matter, not because every problem must be solved during that time but because that's when your personnel, officers, governing body and community begin to form their opinion of who you are as a leader. Those first few months establish your credibility, priorities and direction.

AT THE START OF THE JOURNEY

I started in the fire service as a volunteer in a county fire department system in central Florida, serving in a structure that was made up of multiple volunteer stations that were spread across the county. Like many young firefighters, I came in motivated, eager and convinced that I had something to prove. Over time, I transitioned to the career side of the fire service, worked through the ranks and eventually became fire chief.

Looking back now, one thing stands out more than anything else: I didn't get where I was on my own. ***Senior firefighters, officers and mentors invested their time in me. They taught me the right way to do the job, corrected me when I needed correcting and, at times, humbled me when I believed that I had all of the answers.*** Some of the most important lessons that I learned in the fire service didn't come from a classroom or a certification program. They came from sitting in stations, listening to experienced firefighters, watching how they handled people and paying attention to how they carried themselves under pressure.

If I'm to be honest, there were times early in my career when I probably didn't listen the way that I should have. That's common with younger firefighters, particularly in volunteer systems. It's easy to feel as though

you must prove yourself. *It's easy to talk too much, try too hard to stand out and* ***believe that having certifications automatically means that you understand the job.***

The best thing that a new firefighter can do is become a sponge: keep their ears open and absorb everything possible. Every station has knowledge in it. Every apparatus has lessons attached to it. Every senior firefighter who spent years doing this job has experience that can't be learned from a PowerPoint presentation.

If you're fortunate enough to have people who are willing to invest in you, pay attention to them and appreciate it. Those individuals help to shape not only your skill set but also your mindset, professionalism and leadership style.

ESTABLISH YOUR PRESENCE EARLY

One of the biggest mistakes that a new fire chief can make is disappearing behind a desk. Yes, the position comes with an office, meetings and administrative responsibilities, but leadership still happens in the stations, in the bays, during training and on emergency scenes. Your personnel need to see you. More importantly, they need to know that you're paying attention.

Being visible doesn't mean showing up simply to give speeches or announce changes. It means walking through stations without an agenda. It means riding along occasionally, observing operations and having honest conversations with your people.

One of the most crucial things that I learned early on is that firefighters rarely tell a new fire chief the truth immediately. Particularly in organizations that have experienced instability, inconsistent leadership or years of unresolved problems, personnel tend to wait and see who you really are before they open up.

If every conversation feels formal or disciplinary, personnel never speak honestly. You must create an environment in which they can communicate openly without feeling as though every concern will be held against them.

Some of the most valuable information that you will receive during your first 100 days won't come from reports or meetings. It will come from casual conversations at the kitchen table, in apparatus bays or after training. That's where you begin to learn what the real issues are.

You also learn very quickly who your informal leaders are. Every department has firefighters who influence the culture, regardless of rank. Some positively influence others, while some negatively affect morale and accountability. Identifying those individuals early is critical, because they either help to move the organization forward or quietly resist every change that you make.

LEARN THE SYSTEM BEFORE TRYING TO FIX IT

Many new fire chiefs walk into a department believing that they immediately must make major changes to prove leadership. That approach usually creates unnecessary resistance. Before you can improve a system, you must understand it. That means taking a hard look at staffing, response models, apparatus conditions, certifications, training records, operational readiness and organizational culture. More importantly, you must evaluate what exists beyond paper records. Paperwork doesn't match reality always.

A volunteer or combination department staffing roster might show adequate personnel assigned to stations, but are those personnel actually responding consistently? Overall, certification records might show members meeting minimum requirements, but are they truly able and confident on emergency scenes? Apparatus maintenance logs might look complete, but are the rigs operationally dependable?

One of the most important things that I did was evaluate the system physically myself. I want through apparatus compartments. I looked at hose loads, equipment conditions, expired medical supplies, SCBA maintenance records and accountability systems. I observed training. I watched scene operations. I paid attention to radio discipline, command presence and firefighter performance under stress.

What proved crucial during that process was remaining objective. It's easy to walk into an organization and immediately criticize everything that's wrong. That approach damages credibility quickly. Instead, I found it more effective to identify operational strengths while honestly acknowledging weaknesses that needed improvement.

One thing that proved detrimental was making assumptions too early. Every department has history behind why certain practices exist. Some systems are outdated because of complacency, but others exist because personnel simply were doing the best that they could with limited staffing, funding or leadership support. If

you fail to understand that difference, you risk alienating good firefighters who spent years trying to hold the organization together.

EVALUATING TRAINING, CERTIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCY

One area that deserves close attention during the first 100 days is training and certification compliance. Certifications matter and national standards matter, but these alone don't equal competency automatically.

I have seen firefighters with impressive résumés struggle on emergency scenes and experienced firefighters who have fewer credentials that other members have perform exceptionally because they understood the job operationally. A new fire chief must evaluate both.

Look closely at officers. Are they able to lead incidents? Can they communicate clearly? Can they make decisions under pressure? Do they train their people consistently, or do they simply meet minimum requirements?

Evaluate the department's overall training culture. Are firefighters engaged during drills, or are they simply attending because they must? Is training realistic and relevant to your response area? Does the organization prioritize operational competency or merely check boxes for compliance?

Further, consistency matters more than occasional large-scale training events. Departments improve when expectations become routine. Small, consistent training sessions build stronger firefighters than sporadic training that's conducted simply to satisfy documentation requirements does.

On the flip side, allowing inconsistent standards between stations, shifts or divisions can be detrimental. Once firefighters see different expectations being enforced for different people, accountability begins to disappear.

LEADING IN ISOLATION FAILS

Internal leadership matters, but external relationships often determine whether an organization receives support, funding and political backing when difficult decisions arise. Administrators and elected officials want honesty and consistency. They don't expect perfection, but they do expect transparency.

Don't walk into every meeting presenting only problems. Bring solutions. Bring realistic plans. Explain operational needs in a way that leaders who are outside of the department can understand.

It also is critical to build relationships with neighboring departments, county agencies, EMS partners, dispatch personnel and law enforcement agencies. Emergency services function best when those relationships exist before major incidents happen.

One mistake that some new fire chiefs make is only communicating during conflict or funding requests. Relationships that are built solely around problems rarely become strong partnerships. The strongest relationships are built through communication, professionalism and follow-through over time.

ADDRESS CULTURE EARLY

Every department has a culture, whether leadership acknowledges it or not. In combination departments particularly, culture can vary significantly between career personnel, volunteers, shifts and stations. Some stations might operate professionally with strong accountability, while others might have become comfortable with inconsistency and low expectations. A new fire chief can't ignore those differences.

Culture changes only when expectations become consistent. *Personnel watch closely to see whether leadership actually means what it says.* If safety standards only are enforced occasionally, firefighters notice. If response expectations apply to some people but not to others, firefighters notice. If poor performance is tolerated because "that's how it has always been," firefighters notice.

Culture is shaped by what leadership allows. This doesn't mean that leadership should become overly disciplinary or heavy-handed. *In fact, one of the most detrimental things that a new fire chief can do is walk in trying to "clean house" immediately.* That usually creates division and resentment.

Instead, focus on professionalism, accountability and consistency. Make expectations clear and enforce them fairly. Support your personnel but hold them accountable when necessary. Over time, firefighters begin to understand that the standards apply to everyone equally.

SET NONNEGOTIABLE STANDARDS

PPE compliance, training requirements, response expectations, firefighter safety and professional conduct must be nonnegotiable. These are safety issues.

One lesson that I learned quickly is that personnel pay more attention to what leadership tolerates than what leadership says. If unsafe behavior is ignored once, firefighters begin to assume that the standard is optional. If accountability disappears during difficult conversations, the culture weakens immediately.
At the same time, accountability must remain professional and fair. *Discipline should never be emotional or personal. The purpose of accountability is to ensure that firefighters operate safely, professionally and effectively.*

COMMUNICATE A CLEAR DIRECTION
Firefighters want leadership that provides direction. That doesn't mean that a new fire chief must arrive with a complete five-year strategic plan already written, but personnel must understand what matters moving forward.
Be honest about where the department currently stands. Acknowledge operational strengths while addressing areas that need improvement. Set realistic goals and communicate them consistently.
One of the biggest mistakes that new chiefs make is promising major changes too quickly. Large promises create expectations that might not be financially or operationally realistic. Strong organizations are built through steady improvement, consistency and long-term commitment.

CONSISTENCY, PROFESSIONALISM, HONESTY
The first 100 days aren't about proving yourself through rapid change or dramatic speeches. They're about establishing credibility, learning the organization, understanding the people and creating a foundation for long-term success.
Leadership in the fire service isn't built through rank alone. It's built through consistency, professionalism, honesty, and the willingness to listen and learn.
Always remember where you came from and the people who helped you. The best fire chiefs usually are the ones who never forget this.

THE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Duties & Deadlines Webinar: Elections & End or Year Wrap Up

The AFDSNY Secretary Training Team will host another Duties & Deadlines Webinar to review Fire District Elections, discuss end-of-year wrap-up requirements, and answer any last-minute questions.
Thursday, November 5th at 6:30 pm
REGISTER AT THIS LINK:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sbv_x3rJTBuDbhPGYlp4Ew#/registration

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Judge rules against reinstating Poland Fire Company

Sean Mills

The Poland Volunteer Fire Department will not be coming back. Herkimer County Supreme Court Judge Mark Rose ruled on Monday, Oct. 26 to dismiss the department's efforts to overturn the suspension decision by the Poland Joint Fire District.
"The adequacy of fire protection depends not only on response time, but also on the administrative, operational, and safety-related functions that ensure a department is prepared and legally authorized to respond in the first instance," wrote Judge Rose.
"A department cannot provide adequate and prompt fire protection if the structural and administrative foundations necessary for safe operations are not in place."
Concerns with department
The Board of Fire Commissioners of the Poland Joint Fire District decided on Aug. 19, 2025 to suspend its service agreement with the Poland Volunteer Fire Department, effectively shutting down the department, which had been in operation for 122 years. Among the complaints,

- the District stated that the Department was not providing the District with necessary records, including membership and training documents.

- The Department "caused the fuel account to be frozen for lack of payment and failed to provide the names and nominations of new officers," Rose wrote, based on meeting minutes and statements from District members.
- "More alarming, the (Department) failed to ensure that firefighters without insurance clearance or with medical restrictions did not respond to calls.
- Additionally, it failed to ensure compliance with insurance requirements, including active membership lists, training records and clearance documents."

Along with the insufficient paperwork, Rose wrote about the District's more personal concerns.

"The (District) alleges that department personnel have engaged in insubordinate behavior, including breaching decorum at meetings by using profane language; refusing to cooperate and becoming confrontational; intimidating board members; yelling; throwing a chair during meetings; and leaving an executive session," Rose stated.

After cutting ties with the Department, the District instead reached out to neighboring fire departments to provide fire protection for the Poland area.

Department responds

In response, the Fire Department filed a petition in court in November 2025 to overturn the District's decision. The petition stated that the district's decision was in violation of state law concerning town fire protection. The petition stated that the district's decision was "arbitrary and capricious" and not supported by evidence.

In February 2026, a public vote was held to dissolve the District and the residents in Poland voted against that idea. The legal battle continued until Judge Rose issued his decision on Monday to deny the Department's attempts to overturn the District's decision.

"The decision was not made on a whim but was based upon several months of concern and is consistent with" state law, Judge Rose wrote.

Counterclaim

Meanwhile, a counterclaim from the District regarding equipment the Department possesses remains active. A hearing is scheduled for Dec. 17.

"Our decisions are guided by our obligation to the community, our responsibility to the taxpayers, and our commitment to ensuring that the District's fire and rescue services meet the needs of those we serve," District members wrote on its Facebook page.

"The Board will continue to focus on these priorities and work to ensure that the Poland Joint Fire District provides the highest level of fire and rescue protection possible for our residents. We thank the public for its patience throughout this process and reaffirm our commitment to the safety and well-being of our entire community."

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

- After a devastating fire, the Menands Fire Department is working to rebuild. This all comes after they were awarded $99,200 through the state's V-Fire Grant Program. The department says they aren't just rebuilding the facility, they're rebuilding with stronger support than ever from their community. The department originally applied for grant funding for their HVAC system before the fire early this year. Now, they're working with the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services and the village to determine how the funding can help rebuild.

- When fire commissioners voted to dissolve the Fishers Fire District, which covered Victor's northern reaches, they left the district's volunteers with a problem. After more than a century of fire protection, Fishers had accumulated quite the collection of items that told the district's story. A giant metal triangle once used to summon firefighters, a bell that sat atop the first fire hall, and, chief among them, a 1947 fire truck that made appearances in parades. Fortunately, the fire association has found a home for the truck. It'll soon head west to be displayed at the Buffalo Transportation Pierce-Arrow Museum. The rest of the items can be stored, but there is still no place to display them.

FIRE SERVICE CHALLENGES

- Forty-three percent of on-duty firefighter fatalities over the last 35 years were attributed to cardiac causes, according to a new study published in JACC.

SATISTICS FOR THE FIRE SER1VICE

FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY – PROTECTING OUR OWN

FIREFIGHTER FATALITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

72

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:

- Police say a man is dead after he allegedly ran a red light and crashed into a fire truck in central Edmonton, Ontario, Canada. The Edmonton Police Service believes speed and alcohol are possible factors in the 44-year-old man's death.
- According to Memphis Fire Department officials, four firefighters were on board when a crash occurred just before 10:30 a.m. at South Highland Street and Southern Avenue. Three firefighters were transported to a nearby hospital in stable condition. A driver in another vehicle involved in the collision refused medical treatment on the scene. Officials say the fire truck appears to be a total loss.
- WICHITA, Kan. — Police say a 79-year-old man has died after crashing into a fire truck that was responding to an emergency call on Tuesday morning. a WFD engine was traveling northbound on Greenwich with its lights and sirens activated while responding to a difficulty breathing call. A Honda CR-V was heading west on Lincoln, and the driver attempted to turn left onto Greenwich. The fire engine then struck the CR-V's driver's side. The driver of the CR-V was pronounced at the hospital.
- A Sandy Ridge Fire Department truck was involved in a single-vehicle crash Saturday afternoon in Dickenson County, according to Virginia State Police. Police said the crash happened along Ralph Stanley Highway when the fire department truck went off the road and overturned. Authorities said the truck was not responding to an emergency call at the time of the crash. Police said four people were taken to a hospital after the crash. Their injuries were described as non-life-threatening.
- At least one firefighter was injured after a tow truck crashed into a Wheeling, WVa Fire Engine and a Wheeling firefighter was injured in stable condition at Wheeling Hospital. The engine will be out of service due to major front end damage.

Firefighter Deaths, Injuries, in the News

- A St. Lucie County Fire District firefighter died while on duty. Firefighter Paramedic Austin Hodge, who had been with the department for nine years, died just 15 months after his firefighter brother, Jarius, succumbed to a medical issue after falling ill at work.

- Firefighter Greg Witt, suffered a serious medical issue during training at a Rutland-Dundee, Illinois fire station. Fellow firefighters immediately provided care to the collapsed colleague who was transported to a local hospital for treatment. He has since succumbed to his cardiac arrest.

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

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

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

HE BUILDING AND FIRE CODE ISSUES – WEEKLY REPORT ON FIRE FATALITIES

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

Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings in NYS	65
10/29/26 Syracuse, Onondaga Co. Male 2 years old	
Fire Deaths in any type of Dwelling in NYS	123
Fire Deaths in 1&2 Family Dwellings Nationally	1001
Top 3 States with the greatest 1&2 Family Deaths	#1 PA 76
	#2 NY 65
	#3 OH 57
Civilian home fire fatalities in 2026: 1524 = 34.6 weekly	
Both the states of Maryland and California as well as Wash. DC require sprinklers in 1&2 family dwellings. According to realtors and builders only old homes burn, so sprinklers are not needed in new homes: so my question to you is; when does a new home become an old home?	

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

*****Why Should Your Department Have a Junior Firefighter Program?***

Cash Sawyer

Junior firefighter programs are a powerful way to get youth interested and involved in the fire service. They not only help increase department roster numbers but also begin building the next generation of fire service members. The volunteer fire service has seen a significant drop in membership since 2019 (1). Why not invest in your community's youth by recruiting and retaining young men and women to join your department?

A successful junior firefighter program won't just improve your department's membership–it will also give young people the opportunity to learn valuable skills like teamwork, communication, and leadership, all while exploring a future career in fire and emergency services.

WHAT'S KEEPING YOUR DEPARTMENT FROM STARTING A JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER PROGRAM?

I often hear firefighters in my department and the fire service as a whole ask something to the effect of: "What will we do when we 'get gray and old' and can't fight fires like we used to?" My answer? "That's what I'm here for…that's one of the key reasons we have a junior firefighter program!"

These programs are about more than just certifications or training site evolutions (although those are important, too). *They're about teaching the next generation through experience, not just instruction.*

Training is one of the most important things we do. If we're not training, we're not able to give our citizens the professional service they deserve. So, give youth real-world experience. Let them assist on the fireground. Let them be part of fireground operations. One phrase I like to use is: "*Let them get their hands dirty."*

To be clear, I'm not saying you should send a crew of junior firefighters into an interior attack. But you can absolutely let them assist with safer exterior operations. Send a couple of juniors with an experienced firefighter or officer. Let that individual teach them in the moment.

Junior firefighters can learn a lot just by watching others work, but they can learn *so much more* by doing things themselves–under immediate supervision. That's how the "old guys" pass down their knowledge. That's how we build the next generation.

HOW CAN YOUR DEPARTMENT REACH THE NEXT GENERATION?

Times are changing. Kids are on social media more than ever. I'm a "kid" myself and I'm on my phone way more than I'd like to admit. *So meet us where we are. Launch a social media campaign. Create online flyers for your department's junior firefighter program.*

The men and women of the fire service probably asked the same questions about the generation before mine: How do we recruit younger members? And they adapted. They found new ways to connect with youth.

Another effective method: Visit local high schools. Give presentations about your junior firefighter program. Bring in some equipment. Let students try on bunker gear if they're interested. It's similar to setting up for a community event, but the focus is on recruitment.

OPERATIONAL BENEFITS OF A JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER PROGRAM

What a junior firefighter can do on the fireground is often a controversial topic. That's why it's important for your department to have well-structured standard operating procedures or guidelines in place. Be sure to follow your state's child labor laws, as they will impact what tasks junior firefighters can legally perform (2).

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) offers helpful resources to guide you in creating a successful program (3).

Junior firefighters can contribute in many ways, like swapping out self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) bottles, retrieving tools from the truck, setting ladders, or even pumping the truck if you're short-staffed and the engineer needs to assist elsewhere.

A well-trained group of junior firefighters can be the extra set of hands that every fire scene needs but doesn't always have. Not only does this give them real-world experience, it also helps them feel like a vital part of the team. That sense of belonging keeps them engaged and coming back to training. Even if they can't do everything on the fireground, being assigned even the smallest task can inspire them to stay involved.

WHO LEADS THE JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER PROGRAM?

In my department, we've had great success by making our junior firefighter program a team effort led by our officers. As the saying goes, "Teamwork makes the dream work."

In February 2024, during one of the regular officer meetings, the officers of my department asked me to serve as junior captain and oversee the junior firefighter program. I was honored to accept. They shared the resources available to me and encouraged me to grow the program.

I started planning small training sessions and drills outside of our department-wide training nights. I had a small group of motivated, hardworking young men. They inspired me to keep learning so I could teach them more.

We spent countless late nights at the fire station donning gear, running SCBA fitness challenges, and holding roundtable discussions about all things fire service. *I would give them scenarios, explain what their roles would be, and let them ask questions.* It helped prepare them for the real thing.

After about three months of training, we were dispatched to what would be the new junior firefighters' first structure fire. I rode the first due engine and was the youngest person on the truck. My uncle and cousin, both captains, let me take the nozzle. Initial attack on a structure fire at 16 years old with my family backing me up: Unforgettable.

Other junior firefighters arrived on scene and were told to pack up. They went in on a secondary search with another officer and rescued a cat on their first fire. What a start to their careers! The feedback I received about our junior firefighters was nothing but praise. They put their hands-on training into action. They got their hands dirty.

HOW DO YOU START A JUNIOR FIREFIGHTER PROGRAM?

That's the million-dollar question: How?

Here's how it started in my department: I was raised in the fire service. I grew up going to the firehouse with my grandpa. At six years old, the department gave me a locker for my gear. Yes, six years old.

Now, that is not likely feasible for most departments. I went on calls back then, but I mostly sat on the bumper or in the cab and watched. I *watched* everything. I paid attention to the details. I watched the senior firefighters' every move. After the fire was out, I asked questions. As the years went on, those discussions became informal training sessions, and I soaked it all in.

So maybe that's the "how." Start with one kid who is interested. Maybe they have a family member on the department. Maybe they bring a friend to a meeting. Maybe it starts a chain reaction. Sure, there are a lot of "maybes." Not everything in the fire service is predictable. *What is certain is that if you don't try, nothing will change.*

The future of the fire service looks bright. The men and women who came before us built a strong foundation. Now it's up to us to keep building that path, brick by brick. The future depends on the next generation, and it's our responsibility to recruit, retain, and train them. This is your chance to influence the next generation in a positive way. Don't let time-honored traditions die. Don't let the stories fade away.

A junior firefighter program is your department's chance to inspire, equip, and accelerate the future of the fire service.

CHANGING ORGANIZATIONS

Major Shakeup at Monsey Fire Department as New Fire Company Recruits Members

A major shakeup is unfolding at the Monsey Fire Department after the Monsey Fire District announced plans to end its longstanding relationship with Brewer Fire Engine Company No. 1 and transition fire protection services to a new organization, Monsey Fire Rescue Company.

The decision, announced Tuesday, October 20, has sparked controversy, with a public petition now circulating in support of the longtime volunteer fire company and raising concerns about the potential financial impact on local taxpayers.

Brewer Fire Engine Company has served the Monsey community for more than 145 years, operating as a volunteer organization whose members respond to fires and other emergencies throughout the area.

In an official letter dated October 20, the Monsey Fire District Board of Fire Commissioners explained that differences between the district and Brewer's leadership had become increasingly apparent in recent months. According to the commissioners, discussions between the two sides revealed disagreements over their respective roles, responsibilities, and priorities for the future of fire protection services.

While the board acknowledged that disagreements are natural in an organization with such a long history, it said recent circumstances led commissioners to conclude that establishing a new fire company would be the most constructive path forward.

The district announced that Monsey Fire Rescue Company would operate under its policies, procedures, and established command structure, with the goal of strengthening coordination, accountability, and emergency response operations.

Despite the organizational changes, commissioners emphasized that emergency services would continue without interruption, saying that response arrangements, personnel resources, and operational procedures have already been established to support the transition.

In a separate letter dated Friday, October 23, obtained by Rockland Daily, the newly formed Monsey Fire Rescue Company reached out directly to members of Brewer Fire Engine Company, inviting them to transfer to the new organization.

The letter explains that a streamlined application process is currently available for experienced firefighters who wish to join, allowing them to transition more easily into the new company.

However, beginning in November, applicants will be required to undergo a more comprehensive application process.

Interested Brewer members were instructed to contact the new company by Monday, October 26, at 10:00 a.m., ahead of a company meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 27.

*Meanwhile, opposition to the restructuring has begun emerging publicly, with a **petition launched** on Change.org calling for continued support of Brewer Fire Engine Company and questioning the financial implications of the district's plans.*

The petition, titled "Keep Monsey Fire Taxes Down, Support Our Dedicated Volunteers," argues that the community has long benefited from the dedication of volunteer firefighters who respond to emergencies without receiving regular salaries.

Its organizers claim that the Monsey Fire District has increased its proposed 2027 budget by approximately $1.6 million in connection with plans to introduce paid firefighting personnel. However, the approved budget for 2027 is increasingly by only $80,000.

The petition questions whether the additional spending is necessary and warns that a paid staffing model could create ongoing salary, benefit, and other personnel expenses for taxpayers.

The petition also argues that Brewer's existing volunteers remain willing to serve and should be allowed to continue their work.

The specific disagreements that led to the breakdown between the commissioners and Brewer's leadership have not been publicly detailed, and Brewer's official position on the proposed transition has not yet been independently confirmed.

Amid the ongoing developments, the Monsey Fire District has announced a public hearing for Thursday, November 5, at 8:00 a.m., giving residents an opportunity to weigh in on proposed changes to fire protection services.

According to an official notice issued by the Board of Fire Commissioners, the hearing will address proposed arrangements and contractual services involving supplemental fire protection, emergency response readiness, professional staffing support, and other public safety services.

The proposals include a potential one-year agreement with an outside service provider, although the notice does not identify the provider or specify the financial terms of the arrangement.

The hearing will take place at the Monsey Fire District offices, located at 381 Route 306 in Wesley Hills.

Sea Breeze Fire District to dissolve after 100+ years

After more than 100 years of serving Irondequoit residents, the community's oldest fire district will officially dissolve at the end of the week.

The Sea Breeze Fire District's Board of Commissioners passed the resolution to dissolve at a public hearing on Thursday evening. Many residents of the district attended the meeting to express their disappointment and appreciation for its volunteers.

Sea Breeze Chairman Charles Casadante shared what led to this decision.

"We reached a point where we ran out of volunteers," Casadante said. "It just got to a point where we needed to address things for the future."

The Commissioners evaluated whether or not they had enough personnel to ensure full coverage for emergencies throughout the district. With only eight volunteers on staff, it was determined they did not.

Casadante explained that the district's outlook did not appear promising.

"Things started to take a turn for the worse," Casadante said. "People got jobs and moved on with their lives, so we came around in February to a decision that we could no longer field a team that could go out and fight fires effectively and safely."

Casadante added that the district has spent the past four years efforting volunteer recruitment with little to no success.

Irondequoit resident Sally Steinwachs was one of the first to speak during public comment and addressed recruitment efforts.

"I never realized that volunteers were needed, or else," Steinwachs said. "Maybe you're not obligated by law to let people know that, but I would have appreciated knowing more in advance."

All residents who spoke expressed their disappointment with the district's anticipated closure and their appreciation for the dedicated volunteers at Sea Breeze.

"You guys have done tremendous work, a lot for this district. I wanted to say thank you, I appreciate it and I hate to see you guys go," Irondequoit resident Anette Fulford said.

The soon-to-be former Sea Breeze District will now be covered by Point Pleasant Fire District, stationed less than a mile away from the Sea Breeze firehouse. Commissioners say this will decrease the fire tax burden for Irondequoit residents.

Vehicles utilized by the Sea Breeze Fire District are being sold to other fire districts in Ontario County, Wayne County and North Carolina. Most other apparatus is being designated to the Point Pleasant Fire District. By the time of dissolution, Commissioners say there will be no outstanding debt.
The Sea Breeze Volunteer Firefighters Association will continue to own and operate the Sea Breeze firehouse for various yearly events, fundraisers and party space rentals.
Casadante, a member of the association, is optimistic about its future.
"In the long term, I see nothing but success, but you got to hope that it works out the best way that it can," Casadante said.
The district will officially dissolve at the end of the day on Saturday, October 31.
A statement from the Point Pleasant Fire District says this marks a new chapter for them. Beginning November 1, the district will expand to include the area previously covered by Sea Breeze Fire District. Point Pleasant says that as this decision moves forward, they want to recognize and respect the Sea Breeze Fire Department's long history.

FIRE STATIONS

Station Design: How to Know It's Time to Replace Your Fire Station

Jeff Katz

Today, some things from 1975 might be considered vintage, such as disco, bell-bottoms and station wagons with wood paneling. Other things haven't found another life: for instance, 8-track players and rotary phones. OK, maybe station wagons with wood paneling, too.
Because essential services facilities ideally are built with a lifespan of 50 years, fire stations that were built before 1975 are among those items that have become "old" rather than "vintage."
With rapid advancements in technology, sustainability and best practices for fire personnel health and safety, station designs from even the past 10 years evolved drastically. Although we know that departments can't update their stations with every industry trend that arises, there comes a time when a department can't afford to continue to operate out of an outdated facility.
For those who live in the facility day to day, this time often is apparent. Cramped bunkrooms, apparatus bays that aren't large enough to support new apparatus, and a lack of gender-inclusive spaces can be obvious. Some necessary updates might not be as visible, such as poor air circulation, lack of best Hot Zone design practices and failing infrastructure. Not only can these items impede service to the community, but they put the health and wellness of fire personnel at risk.
In some cases, a station renovation is sufficient to serve a department's immediate needs and the budget that's available to it. In other circumstances, a replacement of the station is the only viable solution to provide a state-of-the-art space for fire personnel.

INDICATIONS

Signals that your station is fit to be replaced include:

- The station doesn't meet best practices for Hot/Warm/Cold Zone design.
- There's a desire to incorporate more sustainable and/or all-electric features.
- The department and crew will grow significantly in the next 10 years.
- The station doesn't comply with current building codes, including design to meet essential services requirements.

Because the cost of new construction can be a deterrent to replacing a station, it often is necessary to develop creative design solutions to work within budgetary constraints. Choosing between a renovation or a replacement requires a detailed discussion of the cost-benefit of renovating the shell of what exists versus the long-term functional and operational benefits of building new. In many cases, the cost of renovation approaches the cost of replacement. In those cases, replacing the station might make the most sense.
A feasibility and needs assessment analysis for the Livermore-Pleasanton, CA, Fire Department's (LPFD) aging Fire Station 3 was conducted. Items that were analyzed included the potential for a renovation; seismic upgrades; mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems; roofing, doors and windows; flooring; energy-efficiency modifications; apparatus bay enhancement; living quarters; and Americans with Disabilities Act and

safety modifications. The assessment led to the decision that an immediate replacement of the station would be the best choice for the future of the department and the surrounding community.
The aging infrastructure wasn't capable of supporting the extent of renovations that would be necessary to bring the station up to usable conditions. Moreover, the estimated cost of attempting to renovate the station would have approached or exceeded the cost of a replacement.
With a full replacement, programming and a facility layout that would best support the department into the future were created.

A CASE STUDY

A feasibility and needs assessment analysis for the Livermore-Pleasanton, CA, Fire Department's (LPFD) aging Fire Station 3 was conducted. Items that were analyzed included the potential for a renovation; seismic upgrades; mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems; roofing, doors and windows; flooring; energy-efficiency modifications; apparatus bay enhancement; living quarters; and Americans with Disabilities Act and safety modifications. The assessment led to the decision that an immediate replacement of the station would be the best choice for the future of the department and the surrounding community.
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With a full replacement, programming and a facility layout that would best support the department into the future were created.

TIME TO REPLACE YOUR STATION?

If your aging station no longer meets the needs of your department, it's essential to determine whether the building is capable of supporting extensive renovations or a replacement of the facility better serves long-term needs. This process can be approached in two ways. The design team can "budget to a design" or "design to a budget." In the first case, you must determine what the overall best solution is and obtain a cost estimate that's reflective of that scope of work. In the second case, you must be provided with a scope that fits within the identified budget.
Replacing an old station with a new facility allows a department to recognize the benefit of the most logical site layout and accommodate future growth needs. If you believe that your station might need to be replaced, the following steps are recommended:

- Hire a qualified design team that has experience in the design of new and renovated fire stations.
- Perform a full assessment of your existing facility.
- Develop concept sketches for renovation and/or replacement.
- Develop cost estimates for each option.
- Present the pros and cons of each.
- Decide which option will best support the department for the next 30–50 years.

GREENENERGYANDTHEIMPACTONTHEFIRESERVICE

Three more relatives die from tragic NYC apartment fire sparked by e-bike battery — raising death toll to 4

Daniel Cody

The devastating Bronx apartment fire sparked by an e-bike battery has now claimed the lives of four relatives — as three of them died days after the horrific blaze, officials said.
The inferno erupted around 12:50 a.m. Wednesday in the kitchen of an 11th-floor apartment at NYCHA's Patterson Houses, trapping residents inside as the flaming e-bike blocked their only escape route, according to the FDNY.
A 10-year-old boy — identified in reports as Zion Maine — was the first person killed by the fire.
Four of his family members were hospitalized in grave condition, and on Friday three of them — two boys, ages 15 and 16, and a 33-year-old woman died from their injuries, officials said.
The family's apartment became a death trap due to the doomed e-bike, fire officials said. "An e-bike was placed in the pathway of the exit door," FDNY Commissioner Lillian Bonsignore told reporters early Wednesday.

"It was placed at a spot in the kitchen that made it impossible for the residents to leave safely."
FDNY Chief of Department John Esposito said firefighters had to force open the unit's front door, which was blocked by the burning battery and bike.
"When that door opened, it opened into a heavy fire," Esposito recalled.

Delayed WY Solar Project Burdened Area Fire Departments with Costs

Hannah Ward, Casper Star Tribune

After years of delays and multiple permit extensions, a long-planned solar energy project near Bar Nunn is moving closer to construction, with a new deadline that would give developers until March 2029 to get started.
The Natrona County Planning and Zoning Commission recommended extending the project's construction start deadline to align with an extension already granted by the state. The proposal now awaits a final decision from the Natrona County commissioners, who will consider the extension at a future meeting.
The project — originally proposed by Dinosolar LLC and later acquired by NextEra Energy — is a utility-scale solar project proposed just west of Bar Nunn that would generate 240 megawatts of electricity and battery storage.
The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality's Industrial Siting Council extended the company's permit earlier this year, allowing construction to begin no later than March 3, 2029.
Continued delays have forced the company to seek extensions from Natrona County and the state to begin construction. *Pushing back construction has also burdened local fire departments with advance costs without immediate reimbursement, which the company aims to rectify, project director Glenn Shober told the commission Tuesday.*
Natrona County commissioners first approved a conditional use permit for Dinosolar in 2020 and extended it in 2022.
The latest extension would give the company more time to adapt to shifting market conditions and coordinate construction with the expected availability of materials, planning technician Madeline Pennington told the commission.
The project would also be built in a single phase rather than two, project director Glenn Shober said, a change he said would make it more competitive.
"Together, we can proceed with the long-awaited, improved and much-needed energy generation project," Shober said.
The redesigned project would shrink the planned solar array from more than 3,500 acres to roughly 2,400 acres. The smaller footprint represents an "efficient and better land use plan," Shober said.
Shober attributed the delays to the project's commercial timeline and the process of securing an interconnection agreement to link the facility to the electrical grid.
"We believe we have solved both of those through our large generating interconnection agreement with the utility owner, which puts us on a correct timeline," Shober said.
Construction would require around 18 to 20 months and temporarily employ 400 workers, Shober said. He added that the company would pay for any necessary improvements to Melodi Lane and Renauna Avenue.
Since 2020, NextEra has invested $2 billion into Wyoming, including seven energy centers, and is the fourth largest non-mineral taxpayer in the state, Shober said.

- At about 5:35 p.m. Tuesday, the Tesla big rig caught fire in the southbound lanes of I-880 near Route 92. By 5:45 p.m., the CHP had shut down both north and southbound lanes from Winton Avenue to Route 92 due to potential risks from hazardous smoke. The northbound lanes were reopened at 8:40 p.m. Around 3:30 a.m. Wednesday, the CHP announced the southbound lanes were fully accessible again to motorists. According to the CHP, the semi's lithium battery flames were incredibly difficult to extinguish. The trucks driver only told patrol officers that the rig simply caught fire and didn't know why. [THE GOVERNOR DOESN'T WANT DIESEL POWERED TRUCKS, SO LET HIM DEAL WITH IT INSTEAD OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT]

NEIGHBOR'S HELPING NEIGHBORS, thank you for your support

Hoags Corners VFD

All you can eat breakfast buffet, 1st Sunday of each month. $15.00 8am to 11am.
7237NY-66,EastNassau,NY12062

Gansevoort Fire Department Breakfast

Next Breakfast Date, Sunday November 15th, hope you can join us.

Clifton Park Fire Department Breakfast

Next Breakfast will be held Sunday December 6 from 8 to 11:30am with a visit from Santa.

SpeigletownFireDepartmentBreakfast2ndSundayofeachmonth

Sunday November 8th from 7:30 to 11:30, $10 adults, $5 children, under 5 free

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TownofMohawkFireDepartment

Our 2027 Pancake & French Toast Breakfasts are officially on the calendar:
January10
February14
March14
Pancakes, French toast, sliced ham, eggs, and plenty of good company.

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

GENERAL INTEREST TO ALL

***First Due: Requiem for a Firefighter I Never Met*

Ed Rush

As dawn breaks, I stare at my Class A uniform and get ready to put it on once again to head to a funeral for a firefighter who I never met. How many times have I done this? Way too many to remember, although once is way too many.

The sunrise signals the start of a new day, with all of the hopes and dreams that most people have and trying to figure out what's ahead. For that firefighter who lies there waiting to be honored, there are no more new days, no new hopes and dreams.

Hundreds, maybe thousands, of firefighters will gather to pay their last respects to a member who made the ultimate sacrifice who they didn't know. Not many professions do this. That's why we say the fire service is a brotherhood and sisterhood like no other. **Never met the firefighter, don't know the firefighter, doesn't matter.**

MAINTAIN THE TRADITION

There always is discussion among the keyboard warriors about the negative aspects of the fire department culture. Is the way that we "welcome" rookies hazing or harassment? Is the way that we operate considered aggressive tactics or unsafe acts? The debate goes on. *However, paying last respects to a fallen fellow firefighter is the one part of the culture and tradition that we absolutely must maintain*. The younger generation must understand the significance of honoring our fallen brothers and sisters and must keep the tradition alive. It doesn't matter that a fallen member was from a different department, town or state or was a different race or religion, or whatever might not be the same. They wear the blue and, therefore, they are your brother and sister. Show up and honor them.

FAMILY

A sea of blue many rows deep lines up outside of the church. Nothing ever will leave a more lasting impression on me than that silence as the procession approaches, punctuated only by the echo of the marching feet and the sound of bagpipes.

The entire detail stands at attention and salutes as the casket is carried into the church, followed by the family and friends. The detail is dismissed, and many file in to attend the service. Invariably, the church can't hold nearly enough of the members who are in attendance. The overflow mingles around outside, listening to the service as it's broadcast over large speakers that are set up in front of the church. Maybe they find the local "rehab" establishment to ensure that they remain "properly hydrated."

On this day, whether linked by blood or uniform, we are all part of one family. A wife, child, cousin, uncle, someone gives a eulogy, and the brothers and sisters in blue learn a little. A fellow firefighter, officer or union official gives another eulogy, and the blood family learns a little. We all laugh a little and realize that the fallen firefighter displayed the same beloved qualities whether at home or at work.

We "flip the line" and pay tribute again as the procession leaves the church and heads to the cemetery. We repeat the silence, the salute, the bagpipes. We then head to the union hall, restaurant or fire hall for the collation, where we all raise a glass to toast the memory of our fallen fellow member. This is the part that many who are outside of the fire service might not understand. How do you have a party to "celebrate" a death? Isn't it inappropriate to "drown your sorrows" when something bad happens? However, that isn't what we do. ***We celebrate their life, their accomplishments, their spirit. We can't lose this tradition***.

LEARN

As days pass, life goes back to normal for most of us who attended the funeral. For the family, it will never be the same. There is a new normal, a void that never can be filled.

The members of the deceased firefighter's department will do whatever must be done to help to fill that void, whether it's raising money, building a deck, escorting a child to the first day of school or "vetting" a new boyfriend before a first date.

One of my favorite sayings is "The best thing an old firefighter can teach a young firefighter is how to become an old firefighter." We must learn from every line of duty death. The ultimate memorial for our lost brothers and sisters is to learn from their tragedy, so it never happens again.

TAKE A MOMENT TO SMILE

I'm at the age where the next day my body whispers to me, don't do that again!

CLASSIFIED

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

Our current excellent treasurer has announced that he will be giving up the position as soon as we find a replacement due to increased workload with his own business. Any candidate should be familiar with quick books and the structure and operation of a not-for-profit organization as well as some familiarization with the operation of fire districts in New York state. CAFDA offers a stipend which won't make you rich,but you get to hang out with some great people, get free meals prior to meetings and trying to provide a service to fire district officials. The association requires our treasurers to be bonded. If you are interested let us know by providing a resume and cover letter to secretary@cafda.net.

DUTIES OF THE TREASURER:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHO ARE YOUR CAFDA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2026?

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

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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!

If your Fire District is a member, you are a member!!

Please advise your secretaries that all correspondence should be mailed to:

All correspondence & Capital Area Fire Districts Association Mailing Address should be directed to:

CAFDA PO Box 242 East Schodack, NY 12063 o rEMAIL:SECRETARY@CAFDA.NET

Financial issues should be addressed to:TREASURER@CAFDA.NET

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

CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS PARTNER'S

Welcome to Ladder&Legacy Wealth Management, LOSAP Managment

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

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

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The Weekly Capital Bulletin is reaching well over700+subscribed fire district members and now other members of the fire service on a regular basis.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Additional concerns raised by coalition members include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Big Lie

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

The Current Bill Advancing Is a Stronger, Better Bill

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

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

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

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

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

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

Advocating for a Workable Program Is Progress, Not Opposition

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

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

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

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

Association of Fire District's of Rockland County

Response to the FASNY Response

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To AFDNYS Board Members,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AFDSNY Continues Efforts to Advance Nominal Compensation Legislation

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

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

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

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

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