

Volume 69 Issue 1

January - March 2026

# FFAM










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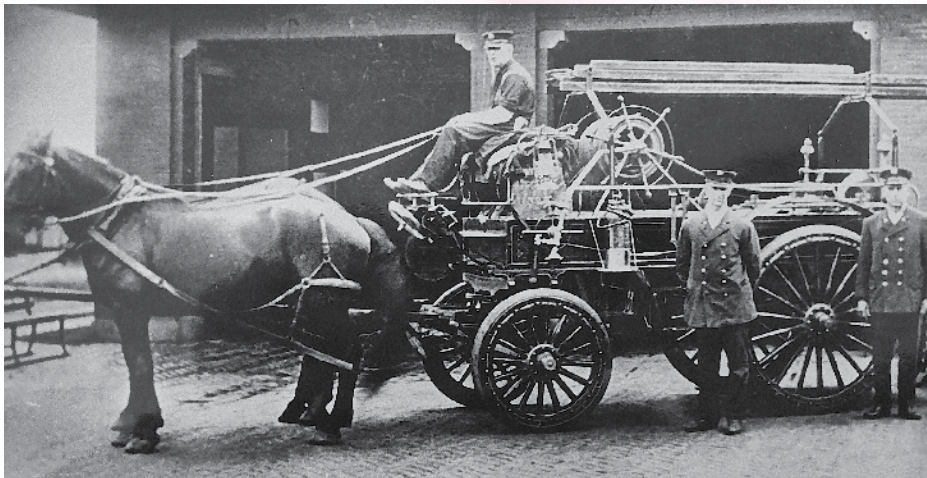
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**FFAM BOARD MEETING:** 9:00 a.m., April 26 • Sedalia, MO

## Fire Fighters Association of Missouri



### ABOUT THE COVER

Firefighter walking in snow pulling fire hose during a snowstorm.  
By Valmedia on Adobe Stock Images

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Send your high resolution image and information to [ffam.jmiller@gmail.com](mailto:ffam.jmiller@gmail.com)

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### CONTENT

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### SUBMIT ADDRESS CORRECTIONS TO:

FFAM  
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# President's Remarks

A Full Year Ahead



Larry Jennings

**H**ow did 2026 get here so fast? It seems like only yesterday I was penning my January 2025 submission to the magazine. I hope each of you took the necessary time this past year to be with family and friends and have been able to share your many life experiences with them. In this profession, we all tend to focus on service to our community and those in need and sometimes we forget to spend time on the very relationships that allow us the opportunity to serve. Although we need to keep serving the community, I challenge each of you to spend more time with family and friends and make sure you are also meeting their needs.

If you are like me, you have already gotten your 2026 calendar about half-filled with various obligations. I hope you remembered when laying out your calendar that the 2026 FFAM Convention will be April 24-26, in Liberty, and we hope you will join us. Remember the annual meeting of the Association will be on the morning of the 26th. We always welcome the delegates and other members as we conduct the business of the Association. Information about the Convention is available under the "Convention Committee" tab on the FFAM website.

Scholarship applications and award nominations are due February 28th. Make sure you get that paperwork submitted on time. Getting financial assistance towards your education is always welcome, and we have many members doing exceptional work throughout the state who are deserving of recognition. Submit the paperwork and join us at the banquet during the Convention on the 25th to see the awardees recognized.

Change is on the horizon for the Missouri State Fair Volunteer Fire Department, and with a little luck, good weather, and a dedicated construction crew, we will all see the transformation from the old "well-used" building that has housed operations for many years into a new modern structure. The old building was removed as planned, and work continues to get the new one operational before the start of the fair in August 2026. If you would like to work at the fair,

remember to watch for the application and make sure you get yours submitted on time.

As we start this year, I have asked that a modification be made in the frequency of our regular meetings. To help ease the burden of attending meetings, we will only meet once per quarter in 2026 and will evaluate that rotation for future years. The meetings are planned for February 1st, April 26th (in conjunction with the Convention), August 2nd, and November 1st. Moving the meetings will hopefully allow more people to travel to the meetings fewer times each year to participate in the business of the Association.

It is extremely important that you are paying attention to the actions taking place in

Jefferson City in the legislative session. Many bills were pre-filed that deal with taxation in one form or another, some of which could have severe consequences if you are a special district operating on property taxes. Most of the bills would not only affect fire districts but also all special districts, raising concerns on many fronts about the possible local effects these state-level actions may have if implemented. You need to make sure you read up on these proposed bills and reach out to your legislators to make sure they understand the repercussions that could be realized for the local services expected by those we serve.

Be safe in all you do. If the Board of Directors can be of assistance, please contact us.

## Firefighters' Day at the Capitol • April 1, 2026

Join your fellow firefighters to meet and discuss issues with your legislators.

**10:00 am: Fire Service Alliance Report at Division of Fire Safety  
205 Jefferson, 13th floor.**

**11:00 am: Meet with Legislators**

**12:00 pm: Rotunda Event for Firefighters**

**Special Guest "Fire Service Instructors and State Training Providers"**

**Hosted by**

**The Missouri Fire Service Alliance, IAFF, St. Louis Metro Fire District Alliance, PFFIA, Fire Fighters Association of Missouri, Missouri Association of Fire Chiefs, Fire Marshals' Association of Missouri, Missouri Association of Fire Protection Districts, IAAI**





# Fire Marshal's Update



Tim Bean



**H**appy New Year to my fellow brothers and sisters in the Missouri Fire Service! From the smallest volunteer departments to our largest metro agencies, we all share the same mission. May your 2026 be filled with “all clear”, safe returns to the firehouses and bays, and the kind of station house camaraderie that makes this the Best Job in the world. Stay safe, continue being “The Best Boots” on the ground, “Leaving things better than you found them,” looking out for one another, and let’s have a great year in our Missouri Fire Service! A couple of friendly reminders that we push out every year at this time:

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT REGISTRATION.**

By state statute, each fire department must register annually at the beginning of the year. Your information is extremely valuable to us in several ways. A couple of examples: in March 2025, when the entire state was experiencing fires. We were at the State Emergency Operations Center, trying to connect you with other departments that could assist. We were using the data you provided in the fire department registration. The second example is the recent fire department grant opportunity. We were able to categorize the departments that were eligible and focus on them, and not overwhelm the departments that were not eligible. Please provide thorough and accurate information. Names, emails, and phone numbers really matter! Help us help you! I have provided the fire department registration link here: [dfs.dps.mo.gov/programs/resources/mo-fire-depts.php](https://dfs.dps.mo.gov/programs/resources/mo-fire-depts.php)

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION GRANT**

The state legislators have allocated funds to support our Volunteer Fire departments' workers' compensation insurance. This grant will pay up to \$2000 to offset your workers' compensation insurance. Visit the link to see if you're eligible: [dfs.dps.mo.gov/programs/other/vfpa-wc-insurance-grant-program.php](https://dfs.dps.mo.gov/programs/other/vfpa-wc-insurance-grant-program.php)

## **FIREFIGHTERS DAY AT THE CAPITOL**

Save the date for April 1, 2026. We are on the books to host our annual *Firefighters' Day at the Capitol*. This year, our theme or special guest will be our *Fire Service Instructors*, along with our contracted fire service educational vendors. If you are a *Fire Service Instructor 1* or 2, please attend. We want to recognize you. If you are a contracted training provider for the Division, please attend. We want to recognize you.

This is a great time to come to Jefferson City and interact with your fellow fire service brothers and sisters. On the morning of April 1, at 10 a.m., we will hold a legislative update meeting on the 13th floor. At that time, we will provide you with topics of interest to engage your legislators.

On December 19, 2025, the President signed the Honoring our Fallen Heroes Act, enabling certain cancers to be considered eligible

I am excited to share a landmark win for firefighters and first responders nationwide. On December 19, 2025, the “Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act” was signed into law as part of the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, finally expanding the federal Public Safety Officers' Benefits (POSB) program to include occupational cancer as a line of duty death or disability for firefighters and other public safety officers.

For decades, the PSOB programs provided federal death and disability benefits for firefighters killed or permanently disabled in traumatic incidents, but did not recognize most job-related cancers, despite cancer being the leading cause of line-of-duty deaths in the fire service. This omission left many families without the federal support they deserve.

## **WHAT CHANGED?**

Under the new law, when a firefighter's cancer is linked to on-the-job exposure to carcinogens and meets the statute's eligibility conditions, it is presumed to be a line-of-duty injury for PSOB. This presumption applies if:

- The firefighter's exposure occurred during official duties
- The firefighter's served at least 5 years before diagnosis
- The cancer was diagnosed within 15 years of last active service, and
- The cancer directly and proximately resulted in death or permanent and total disability
- The law is retroactive for the past 5 years

## **CANCERS COVERED UNDER THE NEW PSOB LAW**

The law defines “exposure-related cancer” to include the following types: Bladder cancer, Brain cancer, Breast cancer, Cervical cancer, Colon/Colorectal cancer, Esophageal cancer, Kidney cancer, Leukemia, Lung cancer,

Malignant melanoma, Mesothelioma, Multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Ovarian cancer, Prostate cancer, Skin cancer, Stomach cancer, Testicular cancer, Thyroid cancer.

In addition to these, the law also established a process to add additional cancers in the future as science evolves.

What this means for firefighters and families

This legislation acknowledges the harsh reality firefighters face – repeated exposure to smoke, chemicals, carcinogens, and hazardous environments – and finally aligns federal benefits with that reality. Surviving families of firefighters who lost their lives to one of these covered cancers now may be eligible for the same PSOB benefits long available for traumatic line-of-duty deaths.

## **NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION SYSTEM “NERIS”**

First, I will start with “Thank You Joshua Couture” for your work, along with all the fire departments who have done their part in transitioning to the new federal fire reporting system. I know Joshua averaged 8 hours a day on the phone for several weeks to help get your old information moved over to this new system. We will continue to be here for the departments that need to get on board with the NERIS fire reporting system. The new system is a much better platform for reporting your fire calls. What I appreciate about NERIS is that the data will be available instantaneously. You do not need an off-the-shelf fire reporting program to use the NERIS system. For those who have not heard about the NERIS system, here is information.

The National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) is a modern, cloud-based platform that enables fire departments nationwide to collect data faster, report more effectively, and perform deeper analytics. Designed as a mobile-first solution, NERIS replaces the legacy National

*Continued on page 19.*

President Larry Jennings called the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Fire Fighters Association of Missouri to order at 9:00 AM Sunday, December 7, 2025, at the Missouri State Fair Youth Building, Sedalia, MO.

## ROLL CALL OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OTHER OFFICIALS

### OFFICERS

President Larry Jennings, Johnson County FPD; First Vice President Charlie Peel, Southeastern Randolph FPD; Second Vice President Grant Oetting, Higginsville FD; Secretary/Treasurer Jaime Miller, Johnson County FPD #2; Sergeant-at-Arms Jonathan Evans, Lincoln Comm FD.

### DIRECTORS

District 1, Terry Wynne, Galt FPD (V); District 2, Vernon Cash, Shelbina FPD; District 3, Rob Erdel, Little Dixie FPD; District 4, Joe Vaughn, Central Cass FPD (V); District 8, Bob Floyd, El Dorado Springs FD; District 9, Mark Arnold, Thayer Rural FD; District 11, Billy Smith, North Central Carroll Co FPD; District 14, Rick Dozier, Southern FPD of Holt Co.

### ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

District 1, Janet Cain, Shoal Creek FPD; District 3, Dale Ransdell, Madison West Monroe FPD (V); District 3, Josh Loyd, Martinsburg Area FPD (V); District 6, Mike McNeill, Moreau FPD; District 7, Andrew Caldwell, Boles FPD; District 11, Kris White, Mayview FPD; District 11, Josh Koepke, Kansas City FD.

### GUESTS

David Hedrick (V), Gail Hagans, University of Missouri Fire and Rescue Training Institute; Tim Bean, Missouri Division of Fire Safety; Keith Smith, Warrenton FPD; Larry Eggen, Johnson County FPD; Greg Wright, MO EMS Funeral Assistance Team.

\*(V) denotes Virtual Attendance

### AGENDA

President Jennings asked for additions to the agenda. Rick Dozier moved to approve the agenda as presented. Andrew Caldwell seconded the motion and all approved.

### MINUTES

Present Jennings asked for a review of the October 12, 2025, meeting minutes. Rick Dozier moved to accept the minutes as presented. Billy Smith seconded the motion and all approved.

### FINANCIAL REPORT

President Jennings asked for a review of the Sept-Oct 2025 financial report. A discussion was held, and the board was advised to file the report for the annual compilation.

### REPORT OF OFFICERS AND SPECIAL GUEST(S)

Gail Hagans with the University of Missouri Fire and Rescue Training Institute reported that they just finished the Instructors Conference. They had 150 people in attendance.

They have recently released a new Lithium Ion Battery class. The Fire Officer 4 pilot program started last week and went very well.

MFA Grant reviews will be sent to all of the FFAM Directors for scoring and are due back by December 23. 78 applications were received.

Tim Bean with the Missouri Division of Fire Safety reported that 40+ applications were received for the \$1.4 million volunteer fire service grant. This grant is available for volunteer membership-based departments and associations with less than \$50k revenue. This is a matching funds grant for equipment and supplies.

Legislators are coming back in session on January 7. There are 500+ bills filed in the House and 500+ bills filed in the Senate. There is still work on a bill relating to personal property tax elimination. This bill will have a serious impact on taxing entities, so reach out to your legislators with your concerns.

*Firefighter Day at the Capitol* will be on April 1. More information to come.

The annual fire department registration is now open, so please get your registrations in.

### DISTRICT REPORTS:

#### DISTRICT 3

Josh Loyd reported that he spoke with two departments that recently merged.

#### DISTRICT 4

Joe Vaughn reported that he met with Pettis Co. to discuss benefits and will be meeting with Rich Hill next week.

#### DISTRICT 7

Andrew Caldwell reported that he attended the Potosi Fire open house and spoke with several departments there.

#### DISTRICT 8

Bob Floyd reported that he has met with several new fire chiefs in his district.

#### DISTRICT 11

Billy Smith reported that Malta Bend is now on board. Jason Deitch has been working with Shawn Ritchie, scheduling meetings with Aarow Rock and Black Water. Josh Koepke reported that he has been running into local issues and has also spoken with MCC Blue River and the Excelsior Springs Career Center.

#### DISTRICT 12

President Jennings advised that Rob Francis has retired, and he is working on someone to replace him as district director.

#### DISTRICT 14

Rick Dozier reported that he attended a wildland fire training in St. Joseph and visited with several departments.

### CORRESPONDENCE

None

### OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

### NEW BUSINESS

Keith Smith presented information on behalf of the 10-33 Foundation, which focuses on mental health and catastrophic events. Their goal is to ensure every first responder has free access to mental health resources. There is a 3-day training course available for those interested in helping or responding.

Treasurer Miller presented the 2024 Accountants Compilation Report and Financial Statements from Gillum & Gillum, CPA. Discussion followed. Rick Dozier moved to accept the report as presented. Grant Oetting seconded the motion and all approved.

A discussion was held on the frequency of the 2026 meetings. President Jennings advised that quarterly meetings will be held in 2026 to help ease the strain on those who attend from very long distances, as well as other factors. The aim is for 100% Director and Assistant Director attendance. The meetings will be in February, April/May (convention), August and November. A discussion was held on hosting a meeting in Kingdom City. President Jennings tabled that discussion until a later meeting.

Vice President Peel presented the proposed 2026 budget. A discussion was held on the continued increase in expenses and our income, which cannot meet the continued rising costs. The proposed budget would eliminate two magazines for 2026 to save money. Andrew Caldwell moved to accept the 2026 budget as presented. Rick Dozier seconded the motion and all approved.

Vice Present Peel presented several options for a proposed dues increase beginning in 2027. The last dues increase was in 2018. Discussion followed. Mark Arnold moved for a dues increase of the following beginning in 2027: Fire Department only dues \$300; Fire Department dues when including individual members \$100; Fire Active Member dues \$20; Junior Firefighter dues \$20; Retired Member dues \$0; Directors/Council dues \$0; Associate Member dues \$25; Sustaining Member dues \$25; EMS Department only dues \$300; EMS Department dues when including individual members \$100; EMS Active Member dues \$20; 911 Department only dues \$300; 911 Department dues when including individual members \$100; 911 Active Member dues \$20; Educational Institution \$100; Educational Members \$20; Corporate Members \$50. Rick Dozier seconded the motion and all approved.



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## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### AWARDS COMMITTEE

Joe Vaughn advised that the nomination deadline is February 28.

### BUDGET COMMITTEE

No report was given.

### BYLAWS COMMITTEE

Jonathan Evans reported that they are discussing and reviewing some proposals.

### CHAPLAIN COMMITTEE

Dave Hedrick reported that MFCC Dues for 2026 are due. Also, a reminder of the Winter Training session in Columbia before MU FRTI Winter Fire School and the class at WFS "Grief Following Trauma" as training options. For more information, contact Chaplain Ed Hatcher at edhat@earthlink.net.

### CONTEST COMMITTEE

No report was given.

### CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Josh Loyd reported that planning is going

well. They are finalizing some details and will get information out soon.

### EDUCATION COMMITTEE

No report was given.

### FIRE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Andrew Caldwell reported that posters are due April 24 and the theme is "Charge into Fire Safety: Lithium-Ion Batteries in Your Home".

### LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Charlie Peel reported that there will be an FSA meeting on January 16 in Jefferson City. If you have questions for the Alliance, please contact him or Tim Frankenberg. For those elected to an EMS board, the Certified Fire and Ambulance Board Training is now required.

The legislative session starts January 7. The property tax bill could have a serious financial impact on fire departments that receive tax funds.

*Continued on page 38.*



# LIFE IN THE EARLY CAREER FIRE DEPARTMENT

By David E. Hedrick, Fire Service Director (RET)

The Age of the Volunteer Firemen laid the groundwork for cultural traditions in the Fire House, but the early career Fire Departments would set the customs and initial work schedules that still impact today's Fire Service. As has been covered in the chapter on "Irish-American Firefighters", the ethnic culture of early career Firemen was responsible for establishing some of the traditions found in the Fire Service today. This chapter will continue examining the circumstances and work conditions that helped shape the early career Fire Service. First, we need to review a brief history of the establishment of the first career departments in the United States.

As may be recalled from the chapter on "The Age of Steam Fire Engines", Cincinnati, Ohio, was the first city to establish a career fire department on April 1, 1853.<sup>1</sup> The change from a volunteer fire force to a career department was precipitated by a major fire in town that was poorly handled by the volunteer fire companies. During the response, the hand engines and hose companies fought over the closest fire hydrant, which quickly escalated into a brawl while the fire went unchecked, greatly upsetting the Mayor and City Councilmen.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the creation of the first practical steam fire engine by Shawk and the Latta Brothers in 1852 in the City of Cincinnati itself provided an efficient, low manpower answer to staffing a full-time Fire Department. The new career department consisted of over 400 personnel staffing fifteen Fire Companies (consisting of steam and hand pumpers), one Hose Co., and one Ladder Co.<sup>3</sup> The initial step had been taken that would significantly change the United States Fire Service. The City of Cincinnati would lead this change as the first all-paid fire department. Continuing to be a leading innovator, the Cincinnati Fire Department (CFD) would become the first to institute all steam fire engine companies when, in 1863, they retired their last hand-pumper.<sup>4</sup>

On a different historic note, some references list Boston, Massachusetts, as the first paid Fire Department in the American Colonies. The city bought a "Newsham" hand-engine from England and in 1678 appointed Thomas Atkins as Chief Engineer, who was authorized to appoint 12 assistants. Early documents note that they were "to be paid for their pains about the worke."<sup>5</sup> There

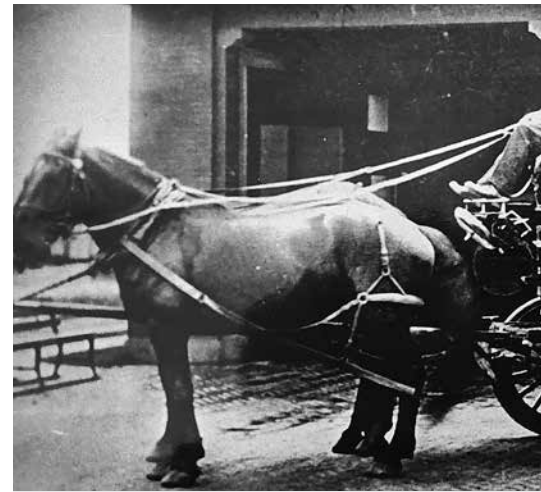
is some dispute as to whether they ever received any remuneration for their "worke". Though they were paid Firemen, they were paid on call, not full-time Firemen. So from this perspective, Boston was not the first career-staffed Fire Department.

Within eleven months of Cincinnati, the Providence Fire Department in Rhode Island became the second career Fire Department on March 1, 1854.<sup>6</sup> Providence faced similar issues with Volunteer Fire Companies as had Cincinnati. However, the city kept hand engines for a while longer, switching to using draft hand engines to eliminate the need for bucket brigades for water supply, thus reducing manpower needs. Steam fire engines would initially be added in 1859 and finally replace all hand pumpers by 1867.<sup>7</sup>

St. Louis, Missouri, would become the next career Fire Department in the United States. Perhaps following Cincinnati's lead, St. Louis purchased their first steamers (three) from the Latta brothers in 1857, with the City Council passing an ordinance establishing the City Fire Department that same year.<sup>8</sup>

New York City has been used in this historical series as a leading example of a progressive city regarding fire protection and firefighting practices. And there is no doubt that they earned that reputation. However, they did not establish a career Fire Department until 1865. As covered previously, at the end of the Civil War, the New York state government enacted a law to create "a Metropolitan Fire District (MFD) and Establish a Fire Department Therein." (Footnote: 9) This included Brooklyn's east and west divisions and replaced the problem-plagued volunteer fire companies, establishing the M.F.D. Because of the war, the volunteer departments in New York were short on manpower, having trouble turning out on calls, and were politically mismanaged. The replacement of volunteers actually took until 1869, and in 1870 the city regained control of the fire department from the state and changed the name to "Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY)."<sup>10</sup>

New York Volunteer Fire Companies had already begun using steam fire engines before the move to a career Fire Department. With the change to a career department, additional steam engine



Battle Creek (MI) Fire Department - Station 3, 1900's combination (chemical, hose, and ladder) apparatus.

companies were added. In 1865, the Board of Metropolitan Fire Commissioners authorized the procurement of an additional ten "second-class" steam fire engines from the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, in the transition from Volunteer Fire Companies to the MFD, a number of volunteer companies were disbanded, some fire houses sold, and others remodeled, along with the appointment of new or existing Firemen into career positions.

## EARLY CIVIL SERVICE POSITIONS

As cities added these new career (paid) positions to the city's roster of jobs, they instituted new rules and regulations that specified the type of applicant who was required to perform the job. Historic documents from New York City provide an example of early civil service rules for Firemen. In 1898, New York Civil Service Commission Regulations required Fire Department applicants to have signed affidavits from references that the applicant was "a man of good moral character" and "of sober and industrious habits". The applicant also could not "be guilty or convicted of any criminal act", and that "he is not a keeper of a liquor saloon."<sup>12</sup> Apparently, bar owners were not held in high esteem by the citizens of the time period. A physical exam standard was applied to the civil service hiring process in most cities. In 1891, New York tested applicants on physical and rescue skills, including climbing and balance tests, Fireman carry, and scaling ladder (pompiers) exercise.<sup>13</sup>



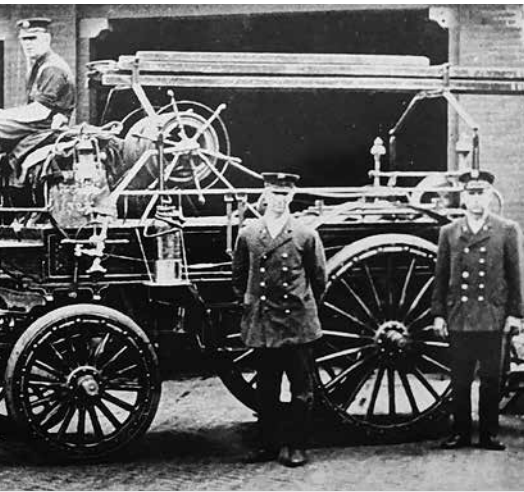


Photo from Capt. (ret.) Don Lauer presented to author.

Though quite a number of the Volunteer Firemen went on to apply for jobs with the new career Fire Department, many local businessmen and tradesmen of the community did not want to give up the businesses they had created and with which they had prospered. For it would be found that the new career departments would require a demanding and austere life. A number of the first career Fire Chiefs looked to the military for work models, and the duty of career Firemen was based on the stringent military service of the day. In addition to the requirement to risk one's life on an almost daily basis, in the early days of the career-departments, like New York, Firemen were required to always be on the job with the exception of a meal break at home each day and one day off each week.<sup>14</sup>

Providence (RI) Fire Department also started with a single platoon that had an around-the-clock duty assignment every day, similar to the military. The Firemen had two days off a month and mealtimes away from the station.<sup>15</sup> However, like other departments, should a fire call occur, their leave time was canceled. Providence Deputy Assistant Chief (Ret.) Curt Varone shared with the author an interesting insight regarding Firefighter seniority. The senior Fireman got their choice of mealtime off. A rotation of senior personnel to rookie Firemen followed, with the new man sometimes left to eating lunch at 9:00 AM or 4:00 PM.<sup>16</sup>

With many Volunteers declining to seek full-time positions, these new career positions, despite the work conditions, were



Early 1900s Bunkroom & Fire Pole. Keystone View Co Magic Lantern Glass Slide - Firemen Responding to Fire Alarm. Photo author's collection.

attractive jobs for the swelling immigrant populations in the United States at the time. For a review of immigrant impact on the Fire Service, refer to the chapter on "Irish American Firefighters and Bagpipes".<sup>17</sup> The Celtic immigrants, especially, would further shape the culture of the Fire Service through ethnic family practices.

### PAY AND BENEFITS

The remuneration or pay of the early career Firemen varied by department, but this section will use the Metropolitan Fire Department (MFD) of New York as an example. A published article in the New York Times in 1865 listed some expenses of the new MFD, including personnel costs. Fire Companies were composed of twelve men. The Fire personnel were paid an annual salary. The company Foreman (Captain) salary was \$800, and the Assistant Foreman (Lieutenant) had a salary of \$750. The steam fire engine engineer's salary was \$900, amazingly more than the Company Foreman's. Perhaps this was because of the technical expertise required of the steam engine operator. Drivers (Teamsters) were paid \$700, along with the Privates

(Firemen).<sup>18</sup> In comparison, the average carpenter's wage in 1860 in New York was \$1.62 per day or about \$507 per year.<sup>19</sup> Though the carpenter made less, they could go home to family and had each night to themselves.

By 1913, salaries in the Fire Department of New York had risen to \$1,000 per year for a Probationary Fireman, and with promotions to a 1st grade Firemen a salary of \$1,400 per year. Engineers were paid \$1,600 and Captains \$2,500 per year.<sup>20</sup>

Early on career Firefighters not only served in difficult and austere conditions, but they had few benefits and little to no relief protection should they be injured on the job. Though the Fire Department administration might try and find limited duty assignments for injured Firemen, there was no official guarantee. As an example, St. Louis Firemen served in hazardous situations with only a volunteer charity fund to provide for relief in case of injury or death. Finally, in 1893, Missouri legislation provided for municipalities to establish Pension Funds.<sup>21</sup>



Example of early 1900's Fire Officer quarters at Fire House. Room used for both bunkroom and office by the officer. Picture taken at the Denver Station No. 1, Firefighters Museum. Photo by author.

By 1913, most departments had established benefits that included free medical care by the Fire Department Doctor and a modest pension. Firefighter gear was provided in some Fire Departments, but generally, personnel were required to pay for their own uniforms and protective gear. While some departments provided bed linen and laundering, in other departments, the expense was on the Firefighter.<sup>22</sup> It should be mentioned for consideration that with the continuous duty schedule, the unmarried personnel had no cost lodging in the Fire House six nights out of seven each week.

### LIVING AT THE FIRE HOUSE

Though living at the Fire House for some new career Firemen may have been a novel concept, the practice actually began during the "Age of the Volunteer". The development of the first hand-pump engines quickly created the mystique of the Volunteer Firemen and the first Fire "Enjine" (Engine) Companies in the early American Colonies. Camaraderie and Esprit de Corp, of the community's Volunteer Firemen was high, and competition to be first on a fire was a major goal. Many Firemen started sleeping or "bunking" at the firehouse, at least several nights a week.<sup>23</sup> First, from simply sleeping beside the "engine" in cramped quarters, to converting upstairs meeting rooms or recreation halls into bunkrooms. This practice would escalate with the adoption of the first steam fire engines and the need to maintain

house boilers and later horse teams as part of the new methods of fire response. Even the Fire House seemed to be adapting to the coming cultural change to the Fire Service and the first full-time staffed Fire Stations.

Though some of the Volunteer Fire Companies had outfitted their Fire Houses with minimum bunkrooms and a few had kitchens, many did not, or were insufficient for the transition to career Fire Service occupation. In houses with two companies (engine and hose or ladder), there was an average of twenty personnel on duty. The changes in personnel and equipment required the renovation of existing Volunteer Fire Houses or the building of brand new ones.

With the move to career Firemen, the new steam fire engines, and horses to pull the apparatus, more space was required in the Fire House or Station. The densely packed urban environment of most cities caused land to be at a premium, and Firehouses were constructed with apparatus and horses occupying the first floor, and Firemen occupying a second floor.<sup>24</sup> Of course, in most multi-story Firehouses after the 1890's, one finds the presence of the ubiquitous fire pole or sliding pole to quickly get from the upstairs bunk rooms to the apparatus floor. For more information on Firehouses and fire poles, see the chapter "Fire Poles, A Historic Tradition in the Fire Service"<sup>25</sup>

The Firemen were provided sleeping quarters in large dormitory-style bunk rooms. The Company Officers, and if a Chief Officer was assigned to a house, were quartered in individual rooms that served as both bedroom and office space for them.

In addition to normal station duties, Firemen rotated standing a watch period at the Firehouse watch desk located in the apparatus bay, usually near the front doors. The common practice was to divide watches into four-hour periods. Though Drivers (teamsters) saw to the well-being of the horses, the Probationary or newer Firemen usually were responsible for mucking out the stalls and feeding the horses. Various fire apparatus required special care, such as steam fire engines, which required cleaning, lubrication, and servicing of the pump, and resetting and prepping the boiler and fire box after each fire. Leather fire hose required cleaning, lubrication, and hanging to dry while fresh hose was loaded on wagons or reels. For more information on Firehouse care and maintenance of early apparatus and equipment, see previous chapters in this series.



W.P. Snyder, artist, "Scaling Hook Exercise", "The Civil Service Examination for New York Firemen", Harper's Weekly, Vol. XXX, No. 1555, p. 656. Assumed to be in the public domain.





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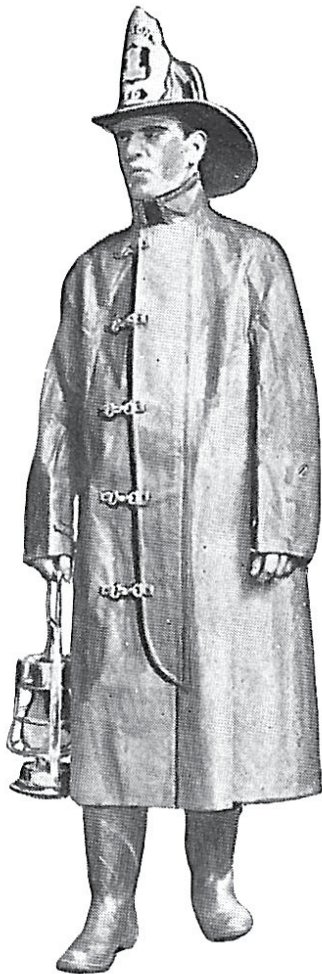
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**SUPERVAC** 

Initially, meal furloughs once a day were allowed so Firemen could go home to eat. Probably, this practice originated due to limited kitchen facilities in the originally acquired Volunteer Firehouses. Unlike the military, these new Fire Platoons had no commissary (cafeteria) to provide meals for the troops. Sometimes Firemen used runners (neighborhood boys) to pick up meals for them at local eateries or from local homes, for which they paid the runner. Later, with renovations and kitchens added, Firemen began cooking meals in the Firehouse.

Some cities provided their Firemen transit passes that allowed them to ride for free on city street trolleys or inter-city railways. This provided transportation for the Firemen to home if not living nearby their Firehouse, travel to other station assignments, or other fire department facilities (i.e., training academy or headquarters)



Firemen protective gear 1930's, leather helmet, rubber coated quick hitch coat, and rubber boots. Cairns & Brother, Firemen's Equipment, catalog 27, New York, p. 39. Assumed to be in the public domain.

## UNIFORMS AND FIRE FIGHTER GEAR

### UNIFORMS

The iconic "red" shirt that identified Firemen came into vogue during the 1840's with the Volunteers, and quickly spread across the American Fire Service.<sup>26</sup> As career fire departments began to be instituted, the tradition of the red shirt carried over to the full-time firefighters. New York's Metropolitan Fire Department (MFD) rules and regulations of 1865 required the firemen to wear uniforms as follows: "Chief Engineer and other Engineer officers (chiefs) were instructed to wear a red flannel, double-breasted shirt, dark blue pilot cloth coat (knee length), vest and pantaloons of the same material, blue cloth cap and white fire hat."<sup>27</sup> In 1868, the "General Orders" changed the uniform requirements with chief officers wearing white shirts, while "red shirts then became part of the uniform for the company officers, with firemen and engineers of steamers continuing to wear blue shirts."<sup>28</sup> Later, Fire Departments would standardize on a dark blue color for all Firemen, perhaps achieving a more military look. Fatigue or garrison caps would become standard headwear when in uniform (the accepted practice of the day for men to wear hats). The cap's dark blue cloth follows a U.S. Navy pattern with a short black patent leather visor. Rank insignia or badges were traditionally worn on the cap.<sup>29</sup> Later, the hat location for badges and rank would transition to the coat badge and coat or shirt collar for rank insignia.

### FIRE FIGHTER GEAR

The practice of sleeping (bunking) in the Fire House by Volunteer Firemen began the custom of wearing oversized pants that would allow the cuffs and pant legs to slip over the tops of high-topped boots. This allowed the Volunteers at night to quickly dress for a fire response. This practice led to the term "bunker pants" or later "bunker gear", a term that is still commonly used by more senior aged Firefighters today. In some areas of the country, the term turnout gear is used for Firefighter gear. The origin of the term is similar to bunker gear. The Volunteer Firemen would be said to "turnout" for a fire, thus the extra clothing they would don to fight fire came to be known as "turnout gear".<sup>30</sup> The oversize pants were carefully folded down over loose-fitting leather boots, or later, the first rubber boots, and the awakened Firemen could quickly slip



Example of a Chief Engineer Hat with red leather front. Photo by author. (optional)



FF Dress Uniform 1916, Cayuta Hose, New York. Manufactured by Henderson and Company, Philadelphia, PA. Uniform courtesy Dir. Harry Ward. Photo by author.

*Continued on page 28.*



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By Jaime Miller, Secretary-Treasurer

There are some big changes coming to FFAM in 2026 and 2027. This is a bit lengthy, but contains very important information, so PLEASE READ!

## MEETINGS

For 2026, we will move to quarterly meetings. The meeting dates for 2026 will be:

- February 1 - 9:00 am in Sedalia
- April 26 (Convention April 24-26) - 9:00 am in Liberty
- August 2 - 9:00 am in Sedalia
- November 1 - 9:00 am in Sedalia

Meeting locations are subject to change and any changes would be announced on our Facebook page.

## MAGAZINE

Our budget faced some serious constraints for 2026. The amount requested by committees versus the projected income was -\$22,381.78. The cost of doing business continues to rise and we can't continue to operate as is without some major cuts.

In order to maintain our higher budgeted areas (department grants, scholarships, state fair, etc), the Budget Committee made the difficult decision to cut two magazines for 2026, saving approximately \$24,000. This allows those committee budgets and special projects to remain funded.

The magazine for 2026 will be quarterly.

- January/February/March - submission deadline January 23
- April/May/June - submission deadline April 17



- July/August/September - submission deadline July 24
- October/November/December - submission deadline October 23

Submission deadlines will be sent out prior to each issue. The magazine will increase back to 6 annually (bimonthly) in 2027.

## DUES INCREASE

The cost of business continues to rise and our budget clearly shows the need for additional income if we want to continue our benefits and programs. We have not increased membership dues since 2018. Keep in mind that of the \$10 active member dues, only \$7 remains for FFAM operations and \$3 goes to the Firefighters Memorial Foundation in Kingdom City.

One example is the rising cost of business - in 2018, it cost \$35k to print and mail six magazines to our members. In 2025, it cost \$76k to print and mail six magazines to our members. The cost of printing and postage has increased tremendously. We have also added \$10k in department grants since our last dues increase and we continue to look for new benefits to offer to our members.

Different dues increase options were discussed at length and the Board of Directors voted on the following increase is effective for the 2027 membership year.

- Fire Department only dues \$300
- Fire Department dues when including individual members \$100
- Fire Active Member dues \$20
- Junior Firefighter dues \$20
- Retired Member dues \$0
- Directors/Council dues \$0
- Associate Member dues \$25
- Sustaining Member dues \$25
- EMS Department only dues \$300
- EMS Department dues when including individual members \$100
- EMS Active Member dues \$20
- 911 Department only dues \$300
- 911 Department dues when including individual members \$100



- 911 Active Member dues \$20
- Educational Institution \$100
- Educational Members \$20
- Corporate Members \$50

## THERE WILL BE NO INCREASE TO THE AD&D INSURANCE.

This increase will provide additional funding for more grants, scholarships and other projects.

It will also allow us to go back to publishing six magazines per year, which is a very important part of our membership and dissemination of information.

We are sharing this information early and as much as possible in 2026, so you can plan your budget accordingly for next year.

## MEMBERSHIP & ADDITIONS

Forgot to submit your application and dues for 2026? Not a problem! The FFAM membership is based on a calendar year (January 1 - December 31), but you can join at any time throughout the year, as well as add new/additional members throughout the year. The application is available at [www.ffmpeg.org/members/](http://www.ffmpeg.org/members/).

Please reach out to your District Director, Assistant Director(s), or me if you have questions.

Check out our website for member benefits!

FFAM.org





# IN THE EVENT OF A PIPELINE EMERGENCY **ARE YOU PREPARED?**

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- Speak with your local pipeline operators
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- No cost safety program
- Attending agencies will be registered to win one of nine regional \$500 attendance drawings

To learn more about our pipeline safety programs, visit [www.showmepipeline.com](http://www.showmepipeline.com). The annual meeting schedules will be shared on the website by mid-summer.

## 2025 PAM Regional Attendance Winners

Franklin County 9-1-1 - PSAP  
Grandin Rural Fire Department  
Laclede County LEPC  
Mexico Public Safety Department  
Monett Police Department

Nodaway County Ambulance District  
Northeast R - IV Rural Fire Protection District  
Raymore Emergency Management Agency  
Scott County Emergency Management Agency

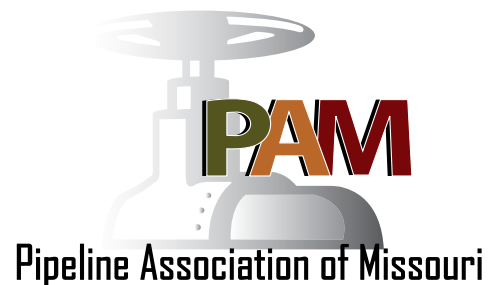
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Training Center is a self-paced online training available 24/7 for those unable to attend in-person meetings, or as an enhancement to annual programs. Register for access at [trainingcenter.pdigm.com](http://trainingcenter.pdigm.com) and use code: **CORE**



By Brian Zinanni, Supporting Heroes

On December 18, 2025, the President signed into law provisions of the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act, enacted as part of the National Defense Authorization Act. This legislation expands eligibility for federal benefits under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program by establishing a presumption for certain *exposure-related* cancers affecting firefighters and other first responders. Under the law, deaths and disabilities resulting from specified types of cancer may qualify for PSOB benefits when defined criteria are met. These provisions apply retroactively to eligible deaths occurring on or after January 1, 2020.

While we do not know all of the rules and regulations yet, what is known at this time is that, to be eligible under the presumption, a public safety officer must have completed five or more years of service prior to diagnosis and must not have been separated from active service for more than fifteen years prior to diagnosis. Importantly, the statute makes no distinction between paid and volunteer service.

For purposes of this law, the term “*public safety officer*” means a first responder who serves a governmental entity or a qualifying not-for-profit organization that functions as an extension of government. Most first responder agencies that do not have owners,

stockholders, or others who profit financially from their operations meet this definition. If you have any uncertainty, please contact us.

The following primary cancers (not metastatic) are covered under the new law:

- Bladder
- Brain
- Breast
- Cervical
- Colon
- Colorectal
- Esophageal
- Kidney
- Leukemia
- Lung
- Malignant Melanoma
- Mesothelioma
- Multiple Myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- Ovarian
- Prostate
- Skin
- Stomach
- Testicular
- Thyroid

In addition, any form of cancer considered a WTC-related health condition under section

3312(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. § 300mm-22(a)) is also covered.

Supporting Heroes has extensive experience assisting agencies and families with PSOB claims, and we provide this assistance at no cost.

If you are a public safety leader or a family member who believes a death or disability may qualify under these new provisions and would like our assistance, please submit the requested information online at: [golamacinc.formstack.com/forms/supporting\\_heroes\\_cancer\\_presumption\\_registry](http://golamacinc.formstack.com/forms/supporting_heroes_cancer_presumption_registry). We anticipate filing a significant number of claims and would like to begin gathering information as soon as possible.

If you do not wish to request assistance at this time but would like to stay informed as additional guidance becomes available, we encourage you to visit [www.SupportingHeroes.org/Federal-Benefits/](http://www.SupportingHeroes.org/Federal-Benefits/) for updates.

Questions? Please contact us at [HonorAndBenefits@SupportingHeroes.org](mailto:HonorAndBenefits@SupportingHeroes.org).





# Fire Fighters Association of Missouri

## 69th Annual Convention

April 24-26, 2025 • Liberty Missouri

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### REGISTRATION



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### DETAILS



[ffam.org/committees/  
convention/2026-convention/](https://ffam.org/committees/convention/2026-convention/)



Igniting Passion, Protecting Communities



By Larry Eggen, Public Information Officer

Help FFAM celebrate 65 years of serving as the Fire and EMS Department for the Missouri State Fair by volunteering with your FFAM-sponsored fire department. The State of Missouri Legislature has approved funding for a new facility in Sedalia, and construction is planned to be finished for the upcoming fair. We are excited for the news and invite anyone who can participate to get in their first tour of duty in the new facilities. We have been planning for a great fair and need your assistance in filling out our roster to serve and protect the 2026 fair. We can use your talents in the department, and you will need to apply at <https://www.ffam.org>. Click on the committees tab, choose State Fair, MSFFD application 2026-adult, or Junior application. You will need to be a current member of the FFAM to be eligible to apply.

The Missouri State Fair Volunteer Fire Department (MSFVFD) provides fire and medical response during the Missouri State Fair. The MSFVFD is operated by members of the Fire Fighters Association of Missouri (FFAM). The MSFVFD is the only known fully operational fire department in the United States that operates for only 11 days a year. The Department is staffed with dedicated volunteers 24 hours per day throughout the State Fair, providing fire suppression and advanced life support emergency medical services.

We staff engine, squad, and ambulance crews rotating shifts as activities require. We attend all grandstand events and have several training sessions available during the fair. We do daily public relation demonstrations and give truck tours and public education. We have opportunities to help with grilling meals and cooking if you like to share your skills, as we cook all our own meals. We staff a first aid facility and provide our own dispatch for calls. Wearing the Smokey Bear and Sparky the Fire Dog costumes and interacting with the attendees. You will be busy and enjoy activities, and we try to arrange your wishes to do the concerts you want to attend in the evenings. This is your chance to meet new emergency services personnel from around the State of Missouri and make friends for life. In 2025, we had personnel from 74 FFAM member departments serve at the fair. If you have any questions, please email me @ [leggen@jcfpd.net](mailto:leggen@jcfpd.net). I hope to see you at the Fair!



By RB Brown, Chairman

I hope you are doing well! I want to express my gratitude to Larry and Roy for their insightful update on the new firehouse construction. It's exciting to see our community's efforts taking shape, and I encourage everyone to check out the photos on the Missouri State Fair Fire Department Facebook page! As we continue to support our fire department, I'd like to remind you that applications are currently open until May 31st. If you know anyone who would be a great fit, please encourage them to fill out the application! On another note, I received a wonderful call from Kyler Oliver, who shared that the Missouri State Fair Volunteer Fire Department (MSFVFD) has been awarded a state grant for new AEDs. A big thank you to Kyler and to all the members of the firehouse committee for your dedication and hard work. It truly highlights how teamwork can lead us to achieve great things. While the construction has just begun, I want to start planning ahead. The anticipated completion date is June 30th, and I'm reaching out for help during the weekend after the Fourth of July. My goal is to have everything unpacked and organized before our August meeting. Your support in this effort would mean a lot! Lastly, let's not forget about the upcoming convention from April 24-26. It promises to be an excellent opportunity for us all. Thank you for your time and commitment! Together, we can make a difference in our community. Warm regards.







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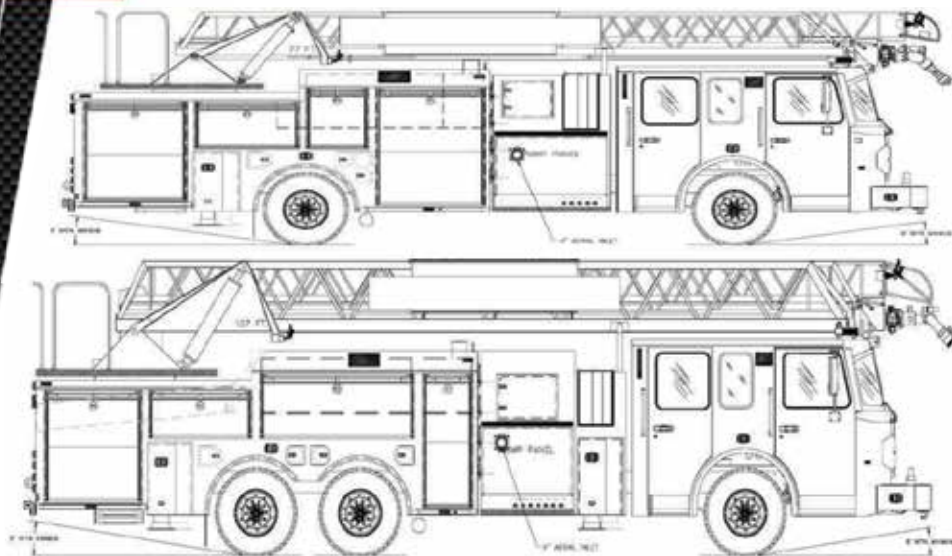


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*Fire Marshal's Update continued from page 5.*

Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and provides timely intelligence to improve emergency response. Backed by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T), NERIS empowers departments to make data-informed decisions that enhance resource management and coordination. Here are the links to the system and resources:

- [safetyscience.my.site.com/neris/](https://safetyscience.my.site.com/neris/)
- [neris-dev-public.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/docs/NERIS%2B-Vendor-Integration-Enrollment.pdf](https://neris-dev-public.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/docs/NERIS%2B-Vendor-Integration-Enrollment.pdf)
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- [neris.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portals](https://neris.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portals)

### MISSOURI FIRE FATALITIES ARE UP

The fire fatalities across our state ticked up in 2025. The numbers I share are from our collected data system. We do not collect every fire death (I wish we did), so this number is likely higher. Across Missouri, 118

people lost their lives due to fire. In 2024, we had 107. It concerns me that there is an increase. I know on a number of these deaths it was discovered there were no smoke alarms, or they were not working. I know that the Missouri fire service consistently pushes the message "Smoke Alarms Save Lives", and they do, because we have examples of Missourians who have received the early alert and were able to get out of their home safely. You can still get free smoke alarms for your residents in your communities. Let's continue educating our communities about fire prevention; it will make a difference!

### MISSOURI FIRE SERVICE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Several years ago, I implemented a program designed to recognize members of the Missouri Fire Service in these categories:

- Any firefighter who has passed away and served the Missouri Fire Service
- Any firefighter who has retired or will be retiring from the Missouri Fire Service

These certificates will be mailed to the fire department for presentation to the firefighter or family on my behalf.

If you have anyone in your organization who meets the above criteria, please use the link below and submit the information to our office so that a recognition certificate may be issued: [arcs.is/0DCiSz](https://arcs.is/0DCiSz)

Also, take a moment to read this article. It has good insights on hiring volunteer firefighters: [firerescue1.com/recruitment/how-to-hire-new-nontraditional-volunteer-firefighters](https://firerescue1.com/recruitment/how-to-hire-new-nontraditional-volunteer-firefighters)

In closing, I am excited about what opportunities 2026 will bring. I am here to serve you! If I can be of any assistance, please reach out by email ([tim.bean@dfs.dps.mo.gov](mailto:tim.bean@dfs.dps.mo.gov)) or by cell at 573-645-2069. I'm available 24/7. It is an honor and a privilege to serve alongside our Missouri Fire Service. Let's continue to be the "Best Boots on the Ground" and "Leave Something Better Than You Found It".

By Keith Smith, Chairman

I will get into some current information of importance and then take a reflective look back at 2025. For the first time since the memorial was dedicated in 2002, we are revising the price for all engraving. When you think about it, offering the same service at the same price for 23 years was a significant accomplishment, but everything costs so much more since then. July 1, 2026, is the cut-off for all engraving prior to the October services. If you will be attending Winter Fire School on February 6th, please come by our table.

2025 is in the books, and we look forward to the work ahead in 2026. A few bullet points of importance, looking back at 2025, deserve honorable mention or repeating.

We previously allowed up to 58 total characters on the service walls for name and department engraving. That was reduced to 38 because we ran into some serious overlap of line spacing into our future ability of completing 3 vertical columns per panel.

We discontinued the annual chair rental expense by purchasing 500 high quality folding chairs. Fun fact, we used all of the 500 and arrived at standing room only for the 2025 Sunday Service.

We changed to one printed program covering both services for the first time in 2025. Those attending the Candlelight service on Saturday evening were asked to bring their program back for the Sunday morning service. This seemed to work well and will be continued for 2026 services.

Memorial and future Museum By-Laws were updated to reflect our evolution of revised operations. This was their first major revision since both were originally adopted.

We were blessed this past year with some large individual donations that exceeded \$75,000 and fundraisers that exceeded \$10,000, both going toward the future Museum. Special shout-out for the work Larry Eggen and friends accomplished with fundraising.

Doc Kritzer was re-appointed to the Foundation after a brief respite and continued all engraving responsibilities. That was a welcome return due to the complexities of managing all engraving work. Tracy

Gray accepted the responsibility of building and grounds and has done an outstanding job with several projects, especially phase II framing. Bill Albus continued with outside flag management, and Gail Hagans continued the coordination of our flag sponsor program. Chief Hoover continued as Vice Chair, and Stephen McLane completed the Foundation Secretarial duties.

The Treasurer for the Foundation continues as an outside contracted position. We were pleased to introduce our new Treasurer, Courtney Shiverdecker, in May. Her assistance with the routine and many other things not previously provided was a breath of fresh air for the Foundation and our expanding level of operations.

Your memorial was 23-years old in May, and surface mounted things that are in the weather 100% of the time began to show their age. A series of repairs started in March and continued throughout the year.

Another construction phase was completed, which focused on most of the general framing in the north half of the building. Two large truckloads of lumber arrived this summer and now in place thanks in no small part to all volunteer assistance. It also added additional electrical and took a serious look at the HVAC phase that is coming up.

The 2025 Candlelight and Sunday Services honored 104 Firefighters, 10 of whom were in the line of duty. Live streaming of the Sunday Service using Facebook and YouTube platforms was further improved plus several family and visitor services were added in the delivery of honors.

Engraving orders for the 2025 services totaled 125 vs. 100 in 2024. Memorial shirts, including the 2nd printing, exceeded 425 vs. 275 in 2024.

Our Facebook page continues with the largest viewing numbers to date. Between October 1st and November 1st, we documented 8,438 views and now have over 1,200 followers.

Our location at the intersection of Interstate 70 and State Highway 54 looks very different, as many are along the I-70 widening project. The full transformation of this new interchange will not be completed until 2027, so we will likely have one more service adjacent to this construction zone. We do not know if the changes will reduce or bring higher levels of noise, but we will adapt and overcome if necessary, as we always do.

We were honored to be selected as the recipient of the Firestorm Charities annual funding event for 2025, coupled with their 911 Tribute to Heroes ride. They have already approached us concerning 2026.

The Statue which the Memorial Foundation gifted to New York City following September 11th was moved again. What looks to be its final home is the FDNY Training Center. Those details were outlined in the Nov-Dec magazine and are worth a closer look if you missed it.

If you need to contact us, we have several options. For general information, engraving and shopping, our website is [mofirememorial-museum.org/](http://mofirememorial-museum.org/) Our mailing address is 5550 Dunn Drive, Kingdom City, MO 65262. For email, please use [info@mofirememorial-museum.org](mailto:info@mofirememorial-museum.org). This is a shared platform in checking on messages, so please give it a few days to respond. If it is urgent or you prefer to save time, please call 314 709 0760.

Thank you for your time and continued support of your memorial and future museum.



## NEW ENGRAVING PRICING

Deadline for Engraving Submissions • July 1

4x8 Brick Engraving • \$175

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Distinguished Wall Engraving • \$175



# SAVE THE DATE

## Firefighter Memorial in Kingdom City

**Candlelight  
Services**

**October 3  
7:00 pm**

**Deadline for  
engraving  
submissions  
is July 1.**

**Memorial  
Services**

**October 4  
10:30 am**

**More details at  
[mofirememorial-museum.org](http://mofirememorial-museum.org)**



Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.



# CELEBRATING SERVICE MILESTONES

By Cole County Fire Protection District

The Cole County Fire Protection District recently held their 2025 annual service awards banquet. The annual event shows appreciation to the fire fighter's for their years of service and dedication to the district.

There is another aspect that really stands out with the 2025 service awards. The District recognized 10 fire fighters who have given 300 combined years of service at the end of 2025. The combined years of service of district personnel are over 1300 years. This in itself shows the commitment to the district by its personnel in the aspects of training, call response and the rewards of helping others in their time of need.

The following fire fighters were recognized for years of service in 2025. Awards were presented by Chief Wayne Hammann.

- 5 years, Luke Braun
- 25 years, Nathan Luebbering, Josh Luebbering, Shawn York
- 30 years, Doug Luebbering, Myron Luebbering, Norman Otto
- 40 years, Gary Braun, Gary Berendzen
- 45 years, Steve Barnes, Mike Hart

The following firefighters were recognized for their dedication in 2025.

- *Fire Fighter of the Year*, Diana Rutledge
- *Officer of the Year*, Tim Kennedy
- *Special Recognition Award*, Bradley Kempker
- *Outstanding Community Service Award*, Gary Berendzen
- Deputy Chief's Dirty Dozen, Mike Hart, Luke Braun, Justin Braun, Tim Kennedy, Gary Berendzen, Ben McGrail, Jason Hammann, Max Campbell, Diana, Rutledge, Ben Adams, Ed Savage and Tony Vanderpool

Doug Luebbering for 30 years



Josh Luebbering 25 years



Bradley Kempker Community Service Award



Shawn York 25 years



Luke Braun 5 years



Steve Barnes 45 years



Gary Braun 40 years



Diana Rutledge Fire Fighter of the Year



Tim Kennedy Officer of the Year



The District also recognized the spouses and families for their dedication and understanding for the job we perform.



Norman Otto for 30 years



Nathan Luebbering 25 years



Mike Hart 45 years



Gary Berendzen 40 years



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**MAY 30TH 2026 GERALD LEGION PARK**

**START TIME: 11:00 AM**

**FIRE DEPARTMENT SIGNUP LINK**



# FIRE TRAINING FACILITY NAMED IN HONOR OF POTTER

By Miranda Jamison, Lead Reporter, The Standard

Excelsior Springs firefighters marked a new era in public safety this week as the city dedicated a sprawling training facility built with steel, sweat and vision. What began as a far-off idea has grown into a nearly 4,000-square-foot structure made of shipping containers that now sits behind the fire station, offering more than 50 different training opportunities.

Fire Chief Joe Maddick noted the moment was about more than a dedication event.

“Four short years ago, this ambition seemed like a distant dream, but through hard work, collaboration and valuable support has become a reality,” said Maddick. “The need for a dedicated training facility for our firefighters was clear. It was imperative that we equip our team with the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure their safety and the safety of our citizens.”

The department named the facility the Assistant Chief John Potter Training Facility in recognition of the man who designed and built almost every inch of it. Maddick recalled the conversation began with a simple question.

“Once settled in, I presented John with plans I had come across, saying, ‘John, I want something like this out back. Can you do it?’” stated Maddick. “His initial response was to take some time to think about it, but it wasn’t long before he returned with a renewed spirit and said ‘Yes, I think I can build that.’ I asked him what it will cost.”

About 10 days later, John reported back, saying the facility could be built for \$200,000.

That figure was a fraction of the \$1.5 million price tag Maddick had seen for a similar prefabricated facility. The city’s capital improvements committee approved the request, and Potter began fabricating a structure with features the outside design never included.

The building now covers almost 4,000 square feet, with 11 40-foot-high cube Conex containers forming the main structure. Another 40-foot container houses supplies, ventilation, a garage door prop and breaching equipment. Potter noted nearly everything was fabricated on-site.



Excelsior Springs Firefighters Camden Dickey (left) and Jonah McKennon cut through a roof prop as part of a vertical ventilation demonstration.

“There are only a few small things left to add,” stated Potter. “Beyond that, there’s very little that hasn’t already been built.”

The project required hundreds of hours of labor, which Potter admitted left him with permanent reminders. He described the effort as “many challenges to overcome, some new scars, some blood, a lot of sweat, but no tears.”

Inside the building are mockups of seven different settings: single-story residential, two-story residential, office building, apartment building, retail store, warehouse and high-rise apartments. The attached towers allow 23 additional training opportunities, from attic rescues and rope operations to wall breaching, aerial truck operation and smoke removal.

Potter noted one of the most striking features is the vertical ventilation prop he designed himself.

“My favorite feature is the vertical ventilation training prop,” explained Potter. “I designed it with a hydraulic system so we can adjust the pitch and angle of the training roof. It ranges from a 4/12 pitch, like many houses, to a 12/12 pitch, which is very steep, as seen on some houses in our community, with the push of a button. The towers turned out great and include many different props throughout the floors.”

The main building itself allows 17 different training exercises, including apartment victim search, firefighter through floor training, smoke removal, hose streams, salvage, overhaul, electrical and gas isolation, and search and rescue in both residential and retail settings. The towers add 23 more opportunities such as ceiling breach, attic access, firefighter maydays, ladder operations and sprinkler head control. Another four exercises are available in the detached building, including forcible entry through a garage door and flat roof ventilation. Seven more outside props allow training on car fires, propane tanks, dumpster blazes, flammable liquid fires and vehicle extrications.

“This facility gives us the opportunity to refresh our basic skills and add advanced ones as well,” stated Potter. “While many of our calls are routine, this space allows us to practice high risk scenarios like search and rescue, firefighter maydays, and roof ventilation. It equips all of our firefighters, new and experienced, with the knowledge, confidence and skills needed to keep themselves and the community safe.”

Training began even before the final touches were finished.

“We began with ladder operations and search and rescue exercises as soon as the inside rooms and windows were in place,” explained Potter. “The shifts have been conducting many types of training here as I continued to work on it.”



The convenience of having the facility directly behind the station has already proven invaluable.

“Having this facility on site has been a gamechanger because it allows training to be completed as planned,” said Potter. “In the past, we often had to cancel or postpone training due to calls. Now, even if we’re interrupted, we can return and pick up right where we left off. It’s been rewarding to be inside working and hear ladders being placed outside, crews conducting searches upstairs, or climbing stairs for physical training, using the facility even when it’s not on the schedule.”

The towers have doubled as fitness equipment, with firefighters running stairs and hauling gear for endurance. Potter noted it has changed the rhythm of shifts and built confidence among newer members.

“We go through an academy for only a few months, receiving many skills and a lot of knowledge in a short time,” stated Potter. “These basic skills not only help us perform our jobs but also keep us safe in real life situations. This facility gives us the opportunity to refresh our basic skills and add advanced ones as well.”

The specialized props built into the towers and confined spaces are intended for situations that occur rarely but carry the most significant risk.

“We will use this facility for high-risk, low-frequency situations,” explained Potter. “It allows us to train safely in uncommon scenarios and try different tactics to add to our mental toolbox. If we find ourselves in a self-rescue situation, having trained for it will help us stay calm and apply what we’ve learned for a better outcome.”

The project has also been designed with mutual aid in mind, since Excelsior Springs relies on nearby departments during large emergencies. Potter said by training together, firefighters will build trust and improve teamwork before responding to calls.

“Our department has a small number of personnel per shift, so we depend on neighboring departments for assistance,” said Potter. “We plan to invite those departments to train with our members to improve



Assistant Chief John Potter Training Facility

teamwork so everything clicks on scene, keeping the community safer, saving lives and property and ensuring everyone goes home at the end of their shift.”

He added other city departments can benefit from the space as well.

“The police could conduct violent scene response training, close quarters training, or even active shooter exercises,” stated Potter.

Future plans also extend beyond Excelsior Springs, as leaders hope to position the new site as a regional training center. Potter emphasized the design was meant to serve firefighters for decades and the department intends to open the doors to other agencies.

“We plan to train with neighboring communities and are considering the option of leasing it to smaller departments for affordable training and intercity department sessions,” said Potter.

He noted the department is already preparing new props to meet emerging challenges.

“Planned additions include an electric vehicle and garage training prop for EV-related fires, a trench rescue prop to train with Public Works and completion of our confined space rescue prop,” stated Potter. “We still need to install fire hydrants near the building and pour a concrete drive and pad to utilize the aerial truck better.” Support from the

community and local businesses made many of the props possible. MFA Oil and Propane donated tanks and provided discounted fuel. Rite Way Auto donated a car for fire training. Ameren UE provided electrical props and Platte Clay Electric gave poles and equipment. Asphalt companies donated millings used around the site. Republic Services supplied dumpsters, while Public Works contributed equipment and labor. Additionally, Jackson County and Scotty’s Tow helped with moving the containers. Potter said every member of the department also had a hand in the effort, from holding steel in place to cleaning and hauling.

Most of the interior finishes were donated and the department continues to seek assistance. Needed furnishings include two or three twin bed setups, a queen mattress, small dressers and nightstands, old flat screen TVs with stands, kitchen tables and chairs, coffee tables, baby beds, lamps, wall pictures and dishes. Potter noted furnishing the mock apartments and offices will make training scenarios more realistic.

“We are ready to finish outfitting the interior to be furnished to be more realistic to meet our training needs,” stated Potter.

Anyone interested in donating furniture or supplies can reach him by email at [jpotter@esfire.org](mailto:jpotter@esfire.org) or by phone through the fire department.

Maddick emphasized the decision to dedicate the facility in Potter's name was about honoring more than just construction.

"What sets this project apart is not just the structure itself, but the incredible dedication and labor that John poured into it," stated Maddick. "He has single-handedly constructed this facility with only a few hands to help lift and hold various components. About 99% of this structure, John did all by himself."

Potter emphasized he did not work alone every moment, but the project consumed his time and energy for years.

"He said I did most of the work, but I had a lot of support and guys helping," said Potter. "It took me over a month to build all the stairs and platforms in the tower. I was climbing from the four-story to the six-story stairs every day, carrying steel and other materials. I lost a little weight, got scars, a bit of blood and sweat, but I'm so glad we're finally able to start using it."

The dedication included demonstrations of roof ventilation and other drills to showcase the props. Crews highlighted ways the facility will allow preparations for the exact emergencies firefighters face on calls.

Potter emphasized the impact on morale is already evident.

"This facility has made my role as Training Chief far more effective," explained Potter. "It offers numerous hands-on learning opportunities that crews find engaging and meaningful. Members look forward to training here, which has boosted both morale and enthusiasm for learning. Retention has also improved."

Maddick closed his remarks by pointing to the legacy the new structure represents.

"Because of his work, we've named the training facility in his honor, the Assistant Chief John Potter Training Facility, so his legacy can live on through lives he will continue to touch," said Maddick. "Every time the facility is utilized, we will remember his dedication, perseverance and passion for equipping our firefighters with the tools they need to serve and protect our community."



## BALANCING MISSION & PERCEPTION

By RB Brown

In organizational contexts, particularly within the fire service, the intersection of professional decision-making and personal relationships often presents significant challenges. Decisions that prioritize the overall welfare of an organization can elicit adverse reactions from individuals who may feel marginalized or threatened by such changes. This phenomenon is not uncommon; it manifests as attempts to circumvent established protocols or influence leadership decisions through informal channels.

The fire service, like many other sectors, is susceptible to these dynamics. Personnel may express dissatisfaction with leadership choices, leading to accusations of mismanagement or poor judgment directed at those in command. However, it is crucial to recognize that such accusations are frequently rooted in differing perspectives on operational effectiveness rather than objective failures.

The primary objective of any fire department should be the delivery of high-quality services to the community it serves. This necessitates a commitment to professionalism and a focus on maintaining standards that ensure public safety and care. Achieving this goal requires strong communication

among all ranks within the organization. While verbal communication via radio systems is prevalent, there remains a notable deficiency in information sharing across different levels of personnel. Such gaps can foster misunderstandings and inhibit collaborative problem-solving.

Moreover, withholding information that could potentially mitigate conflict or clarifying operational directives undermines organizational integrity and effectiveness. When personnel engage in discussions with leadership without tangible outcomes or changes in policy, it raises critical questions about the alignment between individual concerns and organizational objectives.

Ultimately, navigating these complexities demands a balanced approach that emphasizes transparency and inclusivity while remaining steadfastly focused on the mission at hand. Leaders must cultivate an environment where open dialogue is encouraged, ensuring that all voices are heard while also prioritizing actions that serve the best interests of both the organization and its constituents. In doing so, they reinforce the principle that effective management transcends personal grievances and aligns with broader organizational goals.

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Apply Now

The scholarship funds will be applied directly toward the recipient's account at the designated college/university after verification of enrollment is received by the FFAM Secretary. Scholarship funds can be used for tuition, books, supplies, and equipment required for courses at the educational institution. The FFAM reserves the right to verify proof of acceptable expenditures of the scholarship funds (i.e. receipts, etc.).

**Deadline is February 28**





## JOHNSON COUNTY FPD AWARDS

The Johnson County Fire Protection District held a reception recognizing members' years of service.

Left to Right: Chief Jennings; Firefighter Dawn Keenan – 40 years; Firefighter Elane Runyon – 5 years; Firefighter Emma Smith – 5 years; Lieutenant

Doug Brookshier – 20 years; Firefighter Domanic Voss – 5 years; Lieutenant Jerrad Kelly – 10 years; Firefighter Kenaniah Feltenstein – 15 years; Firefighter Jonah Kovac – 10 years; Assistant Chief Bennett

Not Pictured: Firefighter Sam Henning – 5 years; Lieutenant Andrew Rotter



## Around the State

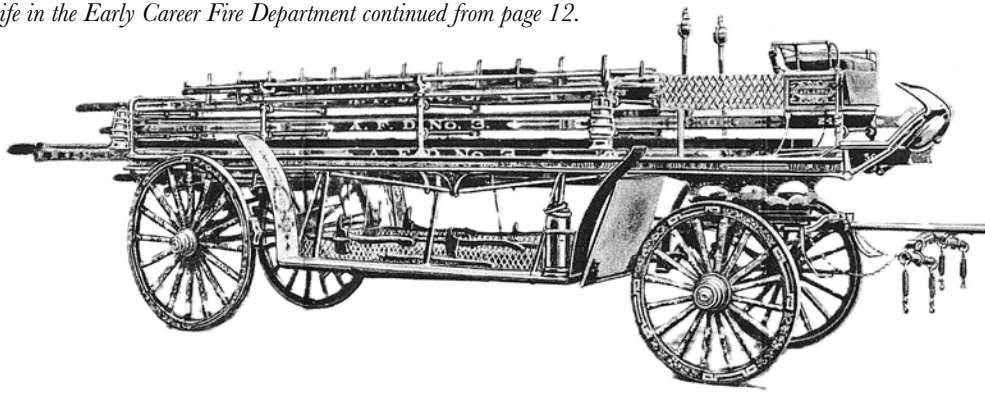
– 5 years; Firefighter Caroline Riese – 5 years; Firefighter James Ries – 5 years; Firefighter Dolan Hammons – 10 years



## SULLIVAN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT MILESTONE

The Sullivan Fire Protection District is excited about hitting this historic milestone. We are proud to share that we now have two stations staffed full-time, allowing us to provide even better service to the community we serve. Resulting from the tax increase that was passed in 2024, we were able to hire six new full-time firefighters, giving us the ability to staff a second fire station 24/7. On January 1, 2026, Ladder Truck 8812 went into service at House 1. The attached photos are pictures of the six new firefighters, all of which were already long-time volunteers with the District, bringing over 50 years of combined experience with them already! Our plan is to hire an additional three firefighters in January 2027 and our final three firefighters in January 2028.





1890's Light Hook and Ladder, Rumsey & Co., Photo from Willoline. Assumed to be in the public domain.

into them and be dressed to respond. The Firemen suspenders are coming about to hold the loose fitting pants up without having to take time to fasten a belt. Some of the career Firemen would come to call this gear a “night hitch” or “quick hitch”.<sup>31</sup> Oddly enough, in some departments this resilient type of clothing was usually only worn at night responses, with conventional clothing worn during the day, with perhaps the exception of boots. Of course, for firefighting protective headgear, the iconic Gratacap style leather fire helmet was used, being preferred by volunteers and career Firemen alike. Today, this bunker gear or turnout gear is referred to as Firefighter Personal Protective Clothing or Firefighter PPE.

Traditionally, for protection from the heat of fire and the cold weather in winter, the early Firemen wore wool or leather coats. Wool was a fairly durable fabric that retained body warmth even when wet. By the late 1800's, there would be a new change in firefighting equipment.

### **RUBBER BOOTS AND COATS**

The Practice of using natural rubber in the Fire Service came when James Boyd of Boston, MA, made the first rubber-lined cotton fire hose. He received a patent in 1821 and went on to improve the product.<sup>32</sup> By the 1890's, numerous companies were producing and selling rubber-coated products, including rubber-coated items designed for Firemen. These items included rubber-coated canvas coats and rubber pull-up hip boots.<sup>33</sup>

### **FIRE COMPANY ASSIGNMENTS**

Within the new career Fire Departments, personnel were assigned to tactical fire companies housed in designated Firehouses. These were the days before combination pumpers or multi-purpose apparatus. Generally speaking, each fire company or piece of apparatus had a specific tactical assignment.

Perhaps the most common in most cities was the Engine Company, which was responsible for staffing a steam fire engine that pumped water from a water supply to the scene. The Steam Fire Engine Co. was composed of an officer, driver (teamster), engineer, and stoker. In some cities, they also had Chemical Engine Companies, providing self-contained quick attack capability beginning in 1872.<sup>34</sup> For more information on Chemical Engines, see the chapter on “The Chemical Fire Engine”.<sup>35</sup>

Working with the Engine Company was the Hose Company that carried fire hose on reels or wagons to be used for attack lines attached to the steamer (engine) or supply lines to supply water to the engine. In addition to helping the engine establish a water supply, the Hose Co. Firemen were responsible for stretching the line to the fire and for firefighting. They might also perform immediate rescues, etc. Some hose companies might carry some ground ladder or pompier (scaling) ladders for initial rescue operations. This was the beginning of multi-function or combination apparatus that would lead to triple combination pumpers and finally to today's “quints”.

Ladder companies carried ground ladders and sometimes were equipped with hand-cranked aerial ladders attached to the ladder wagon. Some ladder apparatuses were “Hook and Ladder” Co. that carried large hooks as well as ladders. The hooks were used to pull down burning walls and roofs to prevent fire spread and create fire breaks during conflagrations. The Firemen assigned to the ladder company performed similar tasks that modern ladder companies do: ladder work, ventilation, rescue, and forcible entry.

Larger cities might have specialty companies such as water tower apparatus, salvage companies, or other specialized units. In

some larger cities, insurance companies sponsored private salvage companies to preserve and protect property and contents.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF STATION DUTY AND PLATOONS**

As most people would agree, the Fire Service is a unique occupation that is driven by its mission of saving lives and property. Because of the potential for emergencies (fires, rescues, medical calls) to occur any time, day or night, the Fire Service is always ready to respond 24-hours a day, every day. To enable this continuous coverage, Fire Departments, whether career or volunteer, establish duty assignments for their personnel to ensure there is a workforce ready to respond when needed. Though Volunteer Firefighters can serve assigned shifts in the Fire Station, they usually are dispatched by radio/pagers/texts from home, business, or other activities to answer emergency calls. Other duty assignments, such as station and truck maintenance, training, and special assignments, are scheduled events around the volunteers' job and personal life. This is similar in some respects to the early days of the volunteer era in Colonial times. Career Firefighters are employees of the Fire Department; they work for and are generally assigned to a platoon, which has a regular shift schedule of work assignments. During their shift, they will answer emergency calls, perform station and truck maintenance, do training, and perform special duty assignments. And depending on the length of their assignment have meal times and sleep periods when not on emergency calls.

In the Fire Service, a “platoon” is defined as “a shift of firefighters assigned to work the same tour of duty.”<sup>36</sup> Today, many Fire Departments use the term shift to identify a work shift, such as A-shift, B-shift, etc., instead of platoons. The term platoon originated in the 1600's and refers to a small grouping of soldiers performing assigned tasks.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the term further linking Fire Department organization to military units of the time period. The military division of troops ranging from small units to large units might be called a squad, platoon, company or battalion. In the early Fire Service Firefighters were assigned to a company (i.e., engine company, or ladder co.), a station, and in larger departments, the stations might be grouped into geographic Battalions or Districts all assigned to an operational duty period called a platoon or shift. In other words, when the career Firefighter is off-duty, another Firefighter takes their place

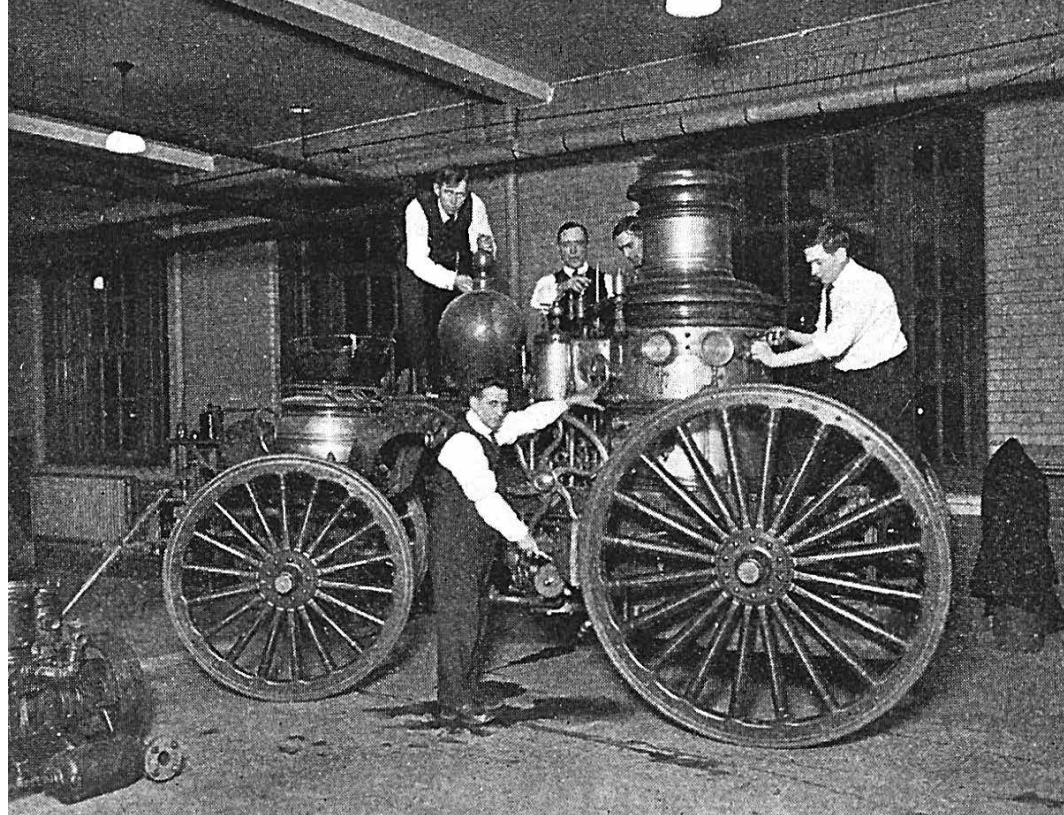


on-duty to provide around-the-clock staffing each day. This section will examine the historical development of shift schedules in the career Fire Service.

A majority of Firefighters today probably think the 24-hour shift rotation was the traditional standard for the United States Fire Service. The more seasoned Firefighters probably remember a two-platoon system with the On 24 hr. /Off 24 hr. continuous rotation. The author's first full-time Fire Service assignment in the mid 1970's had this shift schedule. One was getting up every morning to either go on-duty or go off-duty, generally serving 15 shifts a month. Thankfully, benefits and work schedules have improved over time, adding "Kelly Days" or a third platoon to have different combinations of 24 hour shifts separated by various combination of days off to give Firefighters time to recuperate from difficult or demanding shifts. However, the traditional 24-hour shift was not the original work schedule for the early career Fire Departments.

Though Cincinnati and Providence Fire Departments started a career department before the American Civil War (1861-1865), New York and the other career departments soon followed this trend at the end of the war. Governing officials saw these new departments as being similar to the town's militias of the past, personnel on a military duty assignment. In the case of a fire department assignment, the personnel were providing the citizens protection from fire instead of a hostile military force. Just like soldiers in a time of conflict, the fire forces needed to be on duty all the time. The first career Fire Departments were based on this quasi-military duty model.<sup>38</sup> An example of military-style leadership is seen in the early days of the Metropolitan Fire Department (MFD), which would become the Fire Department of New York (FDNY), with the appointment of retired Civil War General Alexander Shaler as President of the Board of Commissioners in 1867.<sup>39</sup> Using his military background, Shaler would change the structure of the fire department along military lines, and even change the titles of Foremen and Assistant Foremen to military titles of Captain and Lieutenant, respectively.

The Firemen were considered public servants, filling an occupation that required them to be always on duty. There was a single platoon of men assigned to each



Pittsburg Firemen learning the workings of a steam fire engine at Carnegie Institute of Technology. *The American City*, January 1917, p. 65. Photo assumed to be in the public domain.

station. As an example, New York Firemen basically lived in the Fire House to which they were assigned. They worked 24 hours a day each day, with the exception of a meal break each day, and a 24-hour leave three times a month.<sup>40</sup> Meal breaks and leave days varied between career departments of the period but followed a similar work schedule.

This work schedule, established and implemented by most of the early career Fire Departments (and those that followed), made for an austere and demanding life for the Firemen. It is an odd twist of circumstances when one considers that originally one of the reasons given by supporters for a "paid" fire department was because the volunteer "firemen sleep or 'bunk' at their respective engine houses. This cuts them off from all home or virtuous female influence."<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, this is what the political officials created with a full-time Fire Department encumbered by a work schedule that created a para-military work force practically devoid of a normal home life.

### **MULTIPLE PLATOON SYSTEMS**

Eventually, in the late 1800's, Firemen, some Fire Chiefs, and citizens began to push for better working conditions for their municipality's Fire Department, giving them more time off for family life. Enter the concept of the two-platoon system. This idea of a new work shift paradigm began to circulate

in national Fire Service conferences and meetings of the day.

New York Fire Chief Edward Croker implemented a trial experiment of the two platoon system in the winter of 1904-05 in one of the department's battalions.<sup>42</sup> The companies were split into two platoons or shifts. Officers were transferred to provide leadership for each shift. But the shifts would not be working a rotating 24-hour shift. One shift worked ten hours from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, the other fourteen hours from 6:00 pm to 8:00 am. Every two weeks, they would swap shifts. However, it seems Chief Croker may not supported the experiment or the concept of two platoons. Off-duty meal breaks were eliminated, and most significantly, the beds were removed from the firehouses. The night shift was expected to stay up all night, ready to respond to emergency calls. Lack of sleep during the night and little time to do anything but try to catch up on sleep during the ten hours off soon affected performance and attitudes. A Board of Underwriters report stated that the two platoon system was "extremely detrimental to the efficiency and discipline of the department and unsatisfactory even to its advocates among the privates [Firemen]."<sup>43</sup> After the trial, the battalion went back to the regular on-duty schedule. Though Chief Croker was an innovative fire chief of the time period, promoting new building and

life safety codes, when it came to the work schedule, he was apparently a traditionalist to maintain the current system. Even Chief John Kenlon, who became Fire Chief after Croker in 1911, was against a two-platoon system. In his book *Fires and Fire Fighters*, he wrote that the “esprit de corps – a vital force in fire-fighting – will vanish,” referring to the consequences of going to a two-platoon system.<sup>44</sup>

Putting aside tradition and disruptive concerns for the system, the major issues related to the adoption of a two-platoon system at the time were the cost of manpower and efficiency. By adding platoons or shifts of men to cover the off-duty platoon, the operational cost of the Fire department significantly increased to pay for the second platoon of added personnel. If the Fire Department elected to split the existing force into two platoons, the number of personnel working each shift was reduced, which jeopardized efficiency by operating with too few personnel on a shift.<sup>45</sup> The physical and mental well-being of the firefighters was, at the time, a secondary issue to budget expense. This was well before federal regulations were created regarding wages and overtime requirements.

Documents indicate that up to World War I, most career Firefighters of paid departments were on a one platoon system working a continuous duty shift that provided minimal time away from work.<sup>46</sup> However, the concept to change Firemen work hours was gaining steam. Between World War I and WWII, the United States saw a shift by Fire Departments to “some form of two-platoon system.”<sup>47</sup>

Pittsburgh, PA, went to a two-platoon system in late 1916. It was similar to other first attempts with two shifts, a day shift of ten continuous hours and a night shift for fourteen continuous hours. Splitting the current force into two shifts, it created a problem of trained personnel ready to move up into engineer and assistant engineer positions. This required a special training program to prepare current firefighters to meet civil service requirements for the positions.<sup>48</sup>

Labor Unions would also come into play during this period. The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) was formed in 1918 and was chartered by the American Federation of Labor (AFL) unions. At their first convention, they began to advocate the need for a two-platoon system.<sup>49</sup>

In February 1918, Cincinnati Firefighters organized a local union under the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF).<sup>50</sup> In April of 1919, the Firemen went on strike for improved work schedules, fair wages, and better conditions. The city broke the strike shortly after, but a year later, the CFD started operating on a two-platoon system.<sup>51</sup> This may have been precipitated by the department’s move to mechanization, thus releasing personnel from horse duties and freeing them to form another shift. In 1952, the CFD went to a three-platoon system, creating a 24-hour on and 48-hour off working structure.<sup>52</sup> Today, after working seven on-duty tours, Firefighters received a Kelly Day off.<sup>53</sup>

The Providence (RI) Fire Department (PFD) instituted a two-platoon system in 1923. The department adopted a ten-hour day shift and a fourteen-hour night shift that changed assignments each week with a twenty-four hour shift change day on Sunday.<sup>54</sup> The City Council would rejected the change because of the resulting increase in the Fire Department’s budget due to the need to add approximately 100 personnel to fill the shift assignments. However, they relented within a month, and the two-platoon system became a reality. In 1947, the PFD reduced the work week hours and provided for 48-hour leave every ten days.<sup>55</sup> In 1955, the Fire Department implemented a three-platoon system, and in 1971, went to a four-platoon system, each change further reducing duty work hours.<sup>56</sup>

After the end of World War II (1945) and into the 1950’s, the two-platoon system became a standard operational duty assignment for Firefighters in the United States.<sup>57</sup> Though some departments were still using 10/14 or 12/12 hour daily shift schedules, the common shift rotation for most Fire Departments had become the 24-hour shift rotation.

Labor issues and remuneration became a national concern for all workers in the United States in the 1930’s. In 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) into law as part of his “New Deal” plan.<sup>58</sup> It primarily addressed child labor regulations, a minimum hourly wage (25 cents per hour), and set a maximum work week (44 hours).<sup>59</sup> However, state and local governments were exempted from the Act. Congress amended the FLSA in 1974 to include state and local governments. Congress created the “207K” exemption in the FLSA to address the

unique work schedules that Firefighters and Police Officers worked. After much legal wrangling and federal lawsuits, in 1985 the Supreme Court ruled that the FLSA did apply to state and local governments.<sup>60</sup>

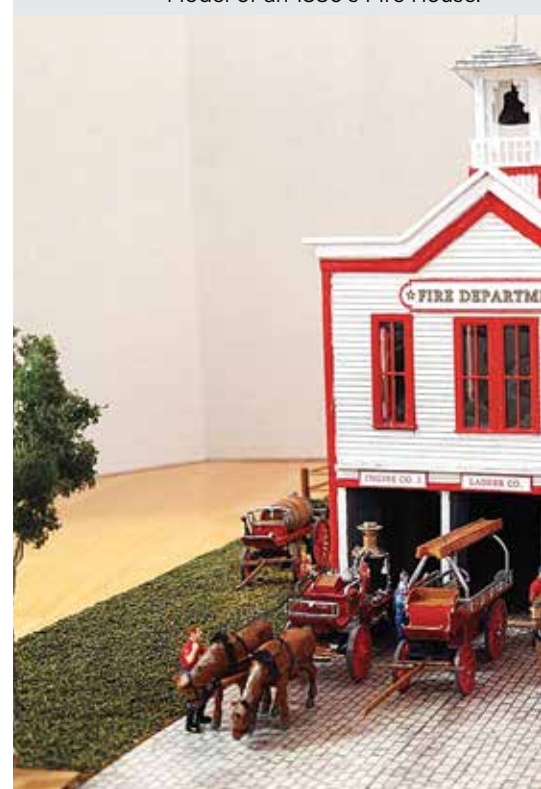
The results of these Acts and Regulations impacted Firefighter work schedules related to when and how overtime remuneration was due. These federal regulations became a consideration when adjusting Firefighter work schedules and the amount of potential overtime pay that could impact budgets.

Over time, considerations for both Firefighter work/life balance and overtime expenses have brought about a variety of platoon and shift work schedules. Some Fire Departments instituted a three-platoon system with a variety of shift schedules, such as 24 hours on/ 48 hours off; or 48 hours on/ 96 hours (4 days) off. Other, more complex rotations are optional with “Kelly” Days added. A Kelly day is an off-duty day in addition to regular off-duty shift days.<sup>61</sup>

In recent years, some Fire Departments have gone to a four-platoon systems providing additional shift rotation options and more time off. An example of a four-platoon shift might be 24 hours on and 72 hours (3 days) off. More complex rotations are also used by some Fire Departments.

Though the job of the Firefighter can still be as arduous as it once was, the work-hour demands have changed over time. The Fire

Model of an 1880’s Fire House.





Service is still a para-military organization that encompasses a chain of command, discipline, teamwork, and mission-focused training and deployment to manage potentially hazardous public safety/service tasks. However, it has become more flexible and work/life balanced in the ways the tactical personnel are assigned to work. The goal of modern platoon and shift schedules is to balance work with adequate rest for Firefighters while minimizing overtime, which would impact the operational budget of the Fire Department. In addition, other benefits, such as educational incentive programs, have further incentivized and professionalized the Fire Service. These various initiatives provide a positive impact that will improve the longevity and contribution of the personnel. Leaving a lasting legacy for those generations that follow.

### CHANGING CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

The early career Fire Departments began with round-the-clock staffing by a single platoon of Firemen. Like their military counterparts of the period, they served an austere duty life with limited time off. Firemen were granted meal breaks on a seniority rotation basis. Also, they received one or two 24-hour days off (furlough) during a month of otherwise continuous service. It was an extremely hard and demanding life. However, veterans coming out of military service from the American Civil War, along with others desperate for a secure living wage job were willing to step up and apply for these new

civil service jobs. In addition, the admiration of the citizens for the heroics of the brave Firemen garnered in the volunteer days was extended into the career service, making the job a respected profession (for the most part). But besides the potential risks of injury or death, the austere work life would lead the Firemen and citizens to seek better working conditions (life/work balance) for the Fire Departments' workers.

As all things do, over time, things changed in the Fire Service. Where the practice of dormitory-style sleeping arrangements in the Fire House was the norm, many new Fire Stations being constructed today have individual rooms for each Firefighter. Certainly giving more personal privacy, but perhaps losing some of the camaraderie of the shared bunkroom. The Firehouse kitchen table, where so many communal meals were shared along with work discussions, family, and politics, is changing to meals in the dayroom and personal e-communications. Even the tailboard discussions in the apparatus bay seem to have gone the way of so many other customs. Though these changes reflect our newer generations' lifestyle and work habits, it is not necessarily bad. Firefighters now have personal space to mentally process tough calls, or quiet time for study to prepare for new opportunities or keep abreast of new changes in technology. New shift schedules now give Firefighters more time for family and to relax between hectic on-duty days or difficult, taxing emergencies. Though new federal regulations creating overtime costs were one factor in driving work schedule changes, the need for improved mental health and better life and family relationships have greatly benefitted from work schedule changes.

Still, some of us sometimes mentally wander back to the historic past. The kerosene lantern lit rooms, the smells of the apparatus bay with smoke-stained leather hose, liveried horses, and coal furnaces preheating the steamer's boiler. Along with this, the kitchen fragrances of homespun hearty meals simmering on the Firehouse stove. Trusted compatriots gathered in the recreation room whiling away the time with dominoes, parlor games, or craft projects. Suddenly, the house gong sounds and taps out a box number. Everyone is off in the instance down the poles and to their horse and harness tasks, mount the apparatus, and off on another fire response. All performed in under 20 seconds! Long days and nights, combined with sometimes difficult emergency calls

shared with a close-knit Firehouse Family, established a strong culture and tradition. It must have been one heck of an experience to live through those days of brave, dedicated personnel, strong horses, and fiery steamers all working together to protect life and property.

The desire to serve continues to permeate the Fire Service today just as in the past. However, over time, the difficulties of the Firefighter's life also drove a desire for change. Just like families wanting a better life for their offspring, Firefighters sought to make a better profession for the generations that followed. Though these changes have modified how we do the work, past traditions still mold and inspire the career or avocation today.

The Fire Service continues to make improvements in technology, safety, and the well-being of those who serve. These continuing changes will improve the longevity and contribution of the personnel in our profession and leave a lasting legacy for those generations that follow. As we embrace the changes that continue to impact the Fire Service, remember our dedicated forefathers who laid the foundation of our proud Fire Service profession.

### AUTHORS COMMENTS

The author wishes to recognize and thank the fire service personnel and organizations for their assistance in the development of this chapter. In particular, the author expresses his appreciation to: Curt Varone, Deputy Assistant Chief (Ret.) Providence (RI) Fire Department and Attorney and author Fire Law Blog, Exeter, RI; Michael A. Washington, Sr., Fire Chief (Ret.) Cincinnati (OH) Fire Department, and the University of Missouri Ellis Library/Lending Library for assisting the author in obtaining the inter-library loan of various research documents and archival materials.

The author also wishes to recognize all the various Historians and Authors for their extensive and invaluable work in Fire Service History through artifact notes, articles, and books that have been used for research purposes by the author and footnoted in this series. May their work continue to endure the ages and preserve the true history and traditions of the American Fire Service.

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Model and photo by author.



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# CASSIDY-RAE LUEBBERING

December 9, 2006 • November 28, 2025

Cassidy-Rae Luebbering, 18, of St. Thomas, passed away Friday, November 28, 2025, at her home.

Affectionately known as C-Rae, she was born on December 9, 2006, in Columbia, Missouri the daughter of Nathan Allen and Renee Ann (Messer) Luebbering.

C-Rae was a senior at Blair Oaks High School, where her enthusiasm and spirit left a profound impact. She previously graduated from the Special Learning Center.



Her life was filled with joy, friendship, and unforgettable moments. She loved participating in the Special Olympics and was supported by the Dream Factory of Lake Ozark, Children's Miracle Network, and Mizzouathon. She enjoyed music, art, and was currently learning ASL at school. Some of her greatest joys were simple ones: riding the UTV with her dad, watching Christmas movies with her mom, loving animals, and cheering proudly for the Blair Oaks High School football team.

She was deeply cherished by her community, was included as a Miracle Princess at the Miss Missouri Pageant on three occasions, a University of Missouri Columbia Theta Chi sweetheart, an honorary firefighter at Lake of the Ozarks, a Walmart Champion Child and Walmart's "Walmart Heart" program proudly recognized her as an honorary driver. She was greatly supported by the Cole County Fire Department and many neighboring fire departments. She loved being around people, and people loved being around her. Her bright spirit and gentle heart will continue shining in the lives she touched.

Survivors include her parents, Nathan and Renee Luebbering, St. Thomas; paternal grandparents, Bill and Betty Jo Luebbering, St. Thomas; maternal aunt, Roxanne (Nate) Jett, New Bloomfield; maternal uncle in-law, Bob Scheppers, Wardsville; four paternal uncles, Clinton (Christa) Luebbering, Wardsville; Shannon (Elena) Luebbering, St. Louis; Justin (Jamie) Luebbering, Wardsville; Jarret (Kasie) Luebbering, St. Thomas; 14 cousins; many great-cousins and other extended family members.

She was preceded in death by her maternal grandparents, Raymond and Janet Messer; maternal aunt, Julie Scheppers; paternal uncle, Jeremy Luebbering; and Papa Larry Rizner.

Burial will be in St. Thomas Catholic Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations are encouraged to the Special Learning Center, Children's Miracle Network, or to Dream Factory of Lake Ozark. Services entrusted to Trimble Funeral Homes – Jefferson City. [trimblefunerals.com](http://trimblefunerals.com)



# Director's Comments

MU Fire and Rescue Training Institute



**Harry Ward**  
Director

On behalf of the University of Missouri Fire and Rescue Training Institute (MU FRTI) faculty and staff, we wish you a Happy New Year. Winter has come with a vengeance, and I hope everyone is keeping warm. We are looking forward to the next six months of our fiscal year and training firefighters across the State of Missouri.

The *Fire Service Leadership Enhancement Program* (FSLEP) has taken off, and we have already had our first session. This year, we have had our largest group of students in the program's history. If you are a supervisor or an executive fire officer, this is the course for you. I can tell you that as a graduate of FSLEP, it can give you the tools to help you succeed in your career.

By the time you read this, Winter Fire School will be over. The courses are aimed to help everyone from brand-new fire-fighters to seasoned fire chiefs. There is truly something for everyone that will enhance the

students for everyone that will enhance their student's knowledge to do the job better.

MU FRTI's mission remains focused on providing the very best safety training for the Missouri Fire Service and emergency first responders. If we can be of any assistance, please contact us on 800-869-3476 or go to our website at [mufrti.org](http://mufrti.org).



## Find the Full Training Schedule at MUFRTI.org

DATE	COURSE	CITY	CONTACT	PHONE
2/10	Certified Advanced Fire and Ambulance District Training: District Impact...	Zoom	FRTI	(800) 869-3476
2/10	Certified Advanced Fire and Ambulance District Training: District Impact...	Zoom	FRTI	(800) 869-3476
2/18	Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator: Core	Brookline	Greg Smith	(417) 861-1696
2/21	Making the Grab - Residential Search	Buckner	Jayson Bodine	(816) 405-6286
2/21	Certified Fire and Ambulance District Board Training	Willow Springs	FRTI	(800) 869-3476
2/21	Certified Fire and Ambulance District Board Training	Jefferson City	Barb Shupe	(314) 500-1416
2/21	The Lithium-Ion Revolution	Lawson	David Peters	(636) 235-6262
2/21	The Lithium-Ion Revolution	Rocky Comfort	Kurt Williams	(417) 483-9443
2/21	The Lithium-Ion Revolution	Iberia	Will Humphrey	(573) 821-0707
2/24	Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator: Core	Willard	Jeremy Bumgarner	(417) 709-0536
2/26	Live Fire Instructor (Blended)	Festus	Shannon Peters	(636) 638-9057
3/2	Making the Grab - Residential Search	Moberly	Don Ryan	(660) 269-8705
3/3	Introduction to the Fire Service	Buffalo	Greg Cunningham	(417) 345-7800
3/3	Elevator Operations (3 Elevators)	St. Louis	Zach Absolon	(314) 502-1716
3/5	Certified Advanced Fire & Ambulance Dist. Training: Election Declaration...	Zoom	FRTI	(800) 869-3476
3/5	Certified Advanced Fire & Ambulance Dist. Training: Election Declaration...	Zoom	FRTI	(800) 869-3476
3/6	Introduction to the Fire Service	Lowndes	Deanna Joplin	(573) 872-6456
3/6	Introduction to the Fire Service	Kennett	Lance Davis	(573) 888-5337
3/7	Vehicle Fire Fighting	Richland	Jarrod Arnall	(573) 842-8995
3/11	Introduction to the Fire Service	Maryville	Morgan Wheeler	(660) 562-3209
3/13	Basic Pump Operations	Buffalo	Shane Duskin	(417) 733-3977
3/13	Introduction to the Fire Service	Waverly	Mitch Baldwin	(660) 251-1435
3/14	Water as a Weapon: Strategic Fire Streams and Systematic Water Supplies	Wellington	Grant Oetting	(660) 229-4525
3/14	Basic Grain Engulfment Rescue	Meadville	Mike Holcer	(660) 247-0435
3/14	Pumping Fundamentals	Savannah	Tom Sontheimer	(816) 617-5826
3/15	Small Machinery Extrication Basic	Barnhart	Kevin Schnable	(314) 420-0314
3/15	Fire Don't Care	Wellington	Grant Oetting	(660) 229-4525
3/16	Small Machinery Extrication Advanced	Barnhart	Kevin Schnable	(314) 420-0314

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# 911 OLD COMMANDER HEROES TRIBUTE LAMP FUNDRAISER

## Benefits the MO Firefighters Memorial and Museum Project

This project was inspired and created by Douglas P. Short of Warrensburg, MO. Douglas was inspired by the secure feeling of being able to call 911 and know that dedicated men and women, that silently walk among us ready, willing and able to be there would be coming as quickly as possible to make a difference. Having used 911 on two occasions, Douglas wanted to give back and created the Heroes Tribute Lamp for raffle and directed the proceeds to the Missouri Firefighters Memorial and Museum Project in Kingdom City, MO.

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On the 250th anniversary of our country and the 25th year in remembrance of September 11th (911).

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By Keith Smith, Chairperson

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Training Crew continues their free in-person face-to-face training commitment in various states. Most recently, Electric Vehicle Training was provided in Missouri on December 13 in Sedgewickville. This was their 3rd class in Missouri in the past two years.

NVFC membership continues to do well, having achieved a growth of 61% in the past 5 years. As a result, they are hiring an additional staff position to service this and future growth. During this same time frame, less than half of the other national organizations achieved any growth, and those that did reported an average of 5%. Individual NVFC Membership numbers in Missouri for 2025 vs. 2024 were down slightly, reflecting future growth opportunities.

Some interesting updates from the Fall Meeting in South Dakota. I will not get into OSHA, so I am moving on to the Codes & Standards Committee. They had several reports, but Hazmat (NFPA 470) detailed a fun fact (actually **NOT**) regarding the NFPA Committee make-up. NVFC has one member on 470, but the fact is that very few volunteers are on this important working group, and volunteer regions have a significant hazmat exposure compared to urban areas. Just look at where most incidents are occurring. Also, and even more telling of NFPA, only 17% of the entire 470 committee are connected to the fire service vs. manufacturing and transportation. Talk about special interest, but that is a typical reflection of NFPA Committees. If we can correct this imbalance, it will take years to do so. NFPA was present at this and other committee meetings, but continues to use their OLD excuse of “we do not write the standards, we just Shepard the process”. The West Virginia Director commented, “OK, but in that case your Shepard’s Hook is badly broken”. The 5-seconds of total silence that followed were priceless!

The Wildland Committee reported several interesting developments, but to pick just 3, I have the following. Grants continue to be available for now through the National Forest Service for hazmat and drone training, thinning fire loads, and prescribed burns. Soya Foam is continuing to make great strides as a PFAS-free alternative. It has checked the key boxes for Wildland



use, showing great promise in structural and ARFF is next. I will wrap with a recent natural cover fire incident in Iowa, which cast a bright light on potential operational liability in allowing farm equipment to assist with natural cover fires. Yes, it was acknowledged that this is routinely done and provides major assistance in most cases. The short version of this 10-minute overview and discussion was that a combine auger took down power lines, causing a ground fire that got into standing corn thanks to 30+ mph winds. The fire department accepted an offer from a farmer to assist with a large 4-wheel drive tractor and disk cutting fire lines. However, fire (smoke) damaged his engine resulting in \$75-K of repairs. His insurance policy did not cover this activity with Ag equipment, so he turned to the fire department and their insurance carrier. Beware of what you accept on and allow to be used on your fire scene. The point of the discussion was not to turn down real help but to be aware of and prepare for what can happen as a result in doing so, for whatever best-intended reasons.

The Legislative Committee had the usual discussions on AFG, SAFER, and several other grants, but the Fire Station Act got the most attention in this meeting. It is a one-time \$750M pot of money, which is only believed to be a tiny step towards this larger and broad-based problem. Nothing close to the solution that is needed. Also, the application process to get one of these grants will likely discourage most from even making an attempt. When you do the math, it comes back as \$15M per State, if given equally to each State, and that will not happen. Then compare \$15M to States with station numbers like California, Texas, and New York. Long Island, NY, alone has 179 volunteer departments. This simple law of numbers vs. dollars shows the challenges.

Thank you for your time plus allowing Rob and I to serve on your behalf with NVFC.





Missouri Funeral Response Teams present the 2026 Annual Conference

# 14th Annual Missouri Public Safety Weekend

October 16-18, 2026 • Camden on the Lake • Lake Ozark, Missouri

Open to all that wish to learn honor guard, mental health, and more.

The 14th annual Missouri funeral teams Public Safety Weekend will be a little different in 2026 as there will be different programs that will be available for all attendees. Programs include on Friday evening @7pm 2 pre-conference 2-hour programs. On Saturday join us in honor guard, logistic training, Public Safety Officers' Benefits, and more. Also, on Saturday, MILO Certified instructors from Ozark Shoot from Highlandville MO, will be there with their "Tactical judgement training" program. And returning this year, the "Grand Slam" competition- test your marching and maneuver skills. (Prizes will be awarded) Saturday night join us for a semi-formal event & Banquet as we recognize individuals and take time to remember those that we honored in 2025. A survivor will be the keynote speaker for the event. On Sunday, the 10-33 foundation will be sharing a program on peer support and mental health for all. SO don't miss this very informative weekend as we fellowship and learn together with all our fellow public safety family.



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### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Grant Oetting reported the following membership counts: 482 Directors/Councilmen; 442 Retired; 26 Associate; 26 Sustaining; 14 Corporate, 347 Fire Departments; 6812 Active; 2 Educational Entity; 16 Educational Active; 151 Juniors; 4 EMS Department, 78 EMS individuals; 0 911 Entity; 0 911 individuals.

### NVFC COMMITTEE

Keith Smith reported that Rob Erdel reported his portion regarding the 2025 Fall Meeting summary in the last FFAM magazine, and he will defer largely to the next magazine with his report. There are a couple of points for now:

- OSHA – the IAFF is strongly in favor of the proposed Emergency Response Standard, but has worked with NVFC regarding some refinements. A joint letter regarding these points has been submitted to the Secretary of Labor.
- NVFC Membership has grown 60% in the past 5-years and they are hiring more staff to adequately serve this growth.

### NOMINATION COMMITTEE

Secretary Miller reported that District Directors 1, 3, 7, 11 and 14 will be up for election in 2026. Interested people need to contact Ken Hoover by March 1.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Secretary Miller reported that the next magazine submission deadline is December 23.

### SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Larry Eggen reported that scholarship applications are due February 28.

### STATE FAIR COMMITTEE

Rick Dozier reported that the old fire station has been demolished with the new building construction beginning soon. They are also applying for a grant for 4 AED's.

### HISTORIAN'S REPORT

No report was given.

### FIRE FUNERAL TEAM REPORT

Keith Smith reported that in 2025, the team responded to 13 LODD and 32 non-LODD.

### EMS FUNERAL TEAM REPORT

Greg Wright reported that since the last meeting, they have had no call-outs but will be assisting with a non-LODD this week. They have partnered with Lutheran Church

Comfort Dogs and 10-33 Foundation and the team is also now responding to 911 dispatcher services.

David Hoover is the new president. They had a great 2025 conference. The 2026 conference will be Oct. 16-18 at Camden on the Lake with 8 classes and CEUs offered.

### FOUNDATION REPORT

Larry Eggen presented Keith Smith with a donation of \$500 for the Museum Project from a fundraiser held in October at the Johnson County Fire Protection District. Larry Eggen also advised that he is still selling raffle tickets for the siren lamp that was donated.

Report from Keith Smith as follows:

We are currently at 82 "Service Recognition Names for 2026". We are trying to move away from using "Non-Line of Duty" as we attempt to improve a better understanding of the levels of service and honors that go into service. We have had some increasing confusion in this area, especially with Survivor Families that are still awaiting administrative determinations.

We have some pending names for administrative determination in acceptance for line of duty honors. The planned Foundation meeting for today, following lunch, had to be cancelled, so we will get into that at the next meeting via zoom call later this month.

On November 27th, Tracy Gray and his crew came to Sedalia and removed several dozen sheets of exterior metal from the fire station with permission. They are going to be used with our continued construction inside of the museum and will serve two purposes. The material will be used in floor plan scheduled walls, plus have illuminated fake windows built into the walls

with pictures of the old fire station and some history. This is our first fixed purpose display and assures some key history with the State Fair operations is preserved. Note, this is just the beginning of state fair history preservation, not the conclusion.

We are working through the next step of phased construction with the museum. This involves more walls, electrical and very preliminary work on HVAC.

The 2nd printing of 70 - 2025 Memorial Shirts have arrived and were distributed.

2026 service planning is already underway with noted improvements planned.

Email blast coming to known service recognition families in February.

Working through some issues with Go-Daddy on how engraving information is presented back to us and shown to the purchaser upon completing the sale. We have had some recent issues that required extra steps not encountered before.

We got our 990's submitted to stay legal as a non-profit foundation in 2026.

President Jennings adjourned the meeting at 11:35 am.





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