

Volume 69 Issue 2

April - June 2026

FFAAM








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FFAM BOARD MEETING: 9:00 a.m., August 9 • Sedalia, MO

Fire Fighters Association of Missouri



ABOUT THE COVER

Modified stock image: a yellow brick wall with a fire hydrant on a flooded street.
By Linda on Adobe Stock Images

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CONTENT

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President's Remarks

A Fire Service Update and Outlook



Larry Jennings

Welcome to the second quarter of 2026. How that has arrived so quickly has me a bit mystified, but time waits for no one, I guess. As we emerge from the winter days, we see the world around us starting fresh with green fields, budding trees, tilled/planted ground and the return of more late-day daylight hours to get out and enjoy it all. Hopefully, you have made plans to enjoy your family and take part in community events as the months move forward.

I was unable to attend *Fire Fighters Day at the Capitol* this year, but it does appear many of you were able to be present. Not only is this a good day to catch up with fellow fire personnel from across the state, but it is a great opportunity to visit with various state legislators and elected officials to make sure they are aware of the needs of Missouri's fire service and the potential impacts their actions may have on our local services. Whether you were able to attend or not, it is important you make regular contact with your Representative or Senator and stay informed about pending legislation that is making its way through Jefferson City. Your voice is important and it is imperative that these officials hear from us and understand the needs and impacts.

The FFAM Convention and Annual General Membership meeting took place April 24-26 in Liberty. Since this edition of our publication will come out after the event, I hope you were able to attend and take part in the various activities and the meeting. Just as your voice is important in Jefferson City, your voice is also important for the overall functionality of the FFAM. The Board listens to what our members have to say and when possible, we try to adjust where we can to continue meeting the needs of the entire Missouri Fire Service. More will be shared in future editions about the Convention.

I am sure you are well aware that the old fire station at the Missouri State Fair has been torn down and the construction of the replacement is moving right along. The new building will take some adjustment to get used to, as it is laid out a bit differently than the old facility, but it should serve us well for

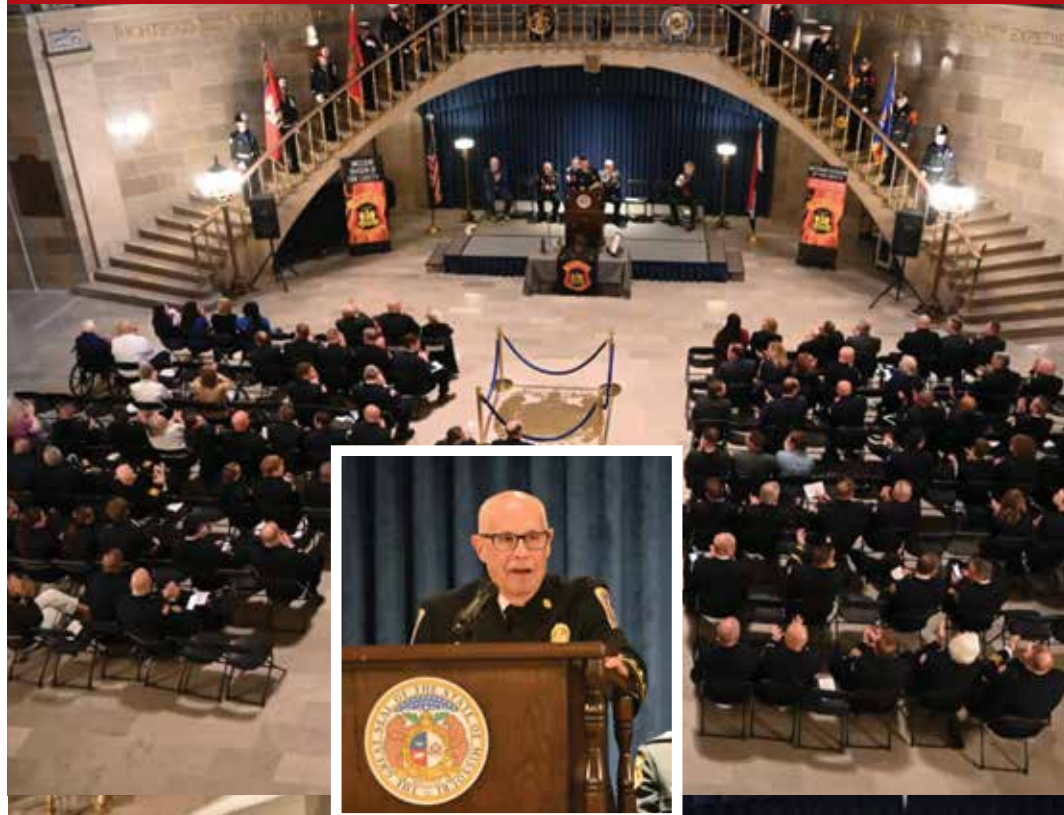
many years to come, just as the old building did. If you haven't submitted your application yet, time is running down so take an extra minute and apply to work a day, a few days or maybe the entire fair this year. Come be part of history and be some of the first personnel to staff the new building.

We are still in need of a Director and Assistant Directors in District 12. This area is made up of the thirteen counties in the southeast corner (the Bootheel) of the state. Check out the map on our website under the Director tab and let me know if you have an interest in serving on the Board and representing this area of the state.

Be mindful of the coming summer heat while you respond to incidents or take part in your area activities. It is easy to become dehydrated, which can lead to other medical issues if not addressed. Make sure your apparatus has drinking liquids available and remember that you need to consume said liquids. Take care of yourself and make sure we are in the best condition possible to continue serving our citizens.

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

Missouri Fire Fighters



Fire Marshal's Update



Tim Bean

I would like to express our appreciation to everyone who took the time to make their way to Jefferson City for the 2026 Firefighters Day at the Capitol. It was well attended, with the rotunda packed. Our theme this year was to spotlight our fire service training partners and the Fire Service Instructors. We had a world-renowned keynote speaker, Volunteer firefighter John Wilke of the Boone County Fire Protection District. For those who do not know, John is celebrating 60 years of service to the Missouri Fire Service. Congratulations, John. I appreciate your service, sir. Keep on keeping on.

Legislatively, I am pleased to report that both legislative bodies have been working hard and getting along. At the time I wrote this article, there were 5 weeks left in the 2026 session. There are many bills dealing with tax language. I would encourage you to take time and make yourself aware of the different bills that could make it across the finish line.

Budgetarily, the budget committees have spent many hours working on the 2027 budget. They are challenged to cut close to a billion dollars from the state budget. Many difficult conversations were had on programs and services. Currently, the Fire

Safety budget is still in place. Thanks to the support of the Governor and the legislators who believe in our Missouri Fire Service, the training dollars will continue to be appropriated. I feel this is due to your having those relationships with your local senators and representatives. It matters during these times of crucial budgetary cuts. Keep those relationships going!

Day at the State Capitol



MISSOURI FIRE SERVICE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

The Missouri Division of Fire Safety has implemented a program designed to recognize members of the Missouri fire service in the following categories:

- The family of any **current member or retiree upon death**, regardless of rank
- Members **retiring** from the Missouri fire service, regardless of rank (as determined by individual agency retirement guidelines)

The State Fire Marshal will issue a Salute to Service certificate for presentation to the member or the member's family, as appropriate. For a deceased member or retiree, the death **does not** need to be in line of duty to receive a certificate.

MISSOURI FIRE SERVICE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Please take advantage of the opportunity to recognize your firefighters.



<https://arcg.is/ODCiSz>

It is an honor to continue to serve you. If you would like me to attend a banquet, an awards ceremony, or your monthly chiefs meeting, please reach out to me at tim.bean@dfs.dps.mo.gov or 573-645-2069.

Thanks for all you do every day. I look forward to seeing many of you at the 2026 Convention in Liberty. Stay Safe

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, February 1, 2026, 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; Secretary/Treasurer Jaime Miller, Johnson County FPD #2; Sergeant-at-Arms Jonathan Evans, Lincoln Comm FD.

DIRECTORS

District 1, Terry Wynne, Galt FPD; District 2, Vernon Cash, Shelbina FPD (V); District 3, Rob Erdel, Little Dixie FPD; District 5, Terry Plumb, Southern Stone FPD (V); District 8, Bob Floyd, El Dorado Springs FD; District 10, Romona Kaminski, Fenton FD (V); 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 1, Blake Callen, Grundy County FPD (V); District 3, Dale Ransdell, Madison West Monroe FPD; District 3, Josh Loyd, Martinsburg Area FPD; District 5, Dylan Honea, Southern Stone FPD; District 6, Alan Braun, Cole County FPD (V); District 7, Andrew Caldwell, Boles FPD; District 8, Rusty Darnell, Strafford FPD; District 9, Chris Sterner, West Plains FD (V); District 11, Josh Koepke, Kansas City FD; District 11, Jason Deitch, Brunswick FD; District 14, Kyler Oliver, Rosendale FPD.

GUESTS

Tim Bean, Missouri Division of Fire Safety (V); Keith Smith, Warrenton FPD; Larry Eggen, Benjamin Burd, Johnson County FPD; Gary Berendzen, Cole County FPD; Roy Pennington, Pettis Co FPD; Jim Bodenheimer, 1033 Foundation.

*(V) denotes Virtual Attendance

AGENDA

President Jennings asked for additions to the agenda. Terry Wynne moved to approve the

agenda as presented. Rick Dozier seconded the motion and all approved.

MINUTES

Present Jennings asked for a review of December 7, 2025, meeting minutes. Rick Dozier moved to accept the minutes as presented. Terry Wynne seconded the motion and all approved.

FINANCIAL REPORT

President Jennings asked for a review of the November-December 2025 financial report. Discussion was held and the board advised to file the report for the annual compilation.

REPORT OF OFFICERS AND SPECIAL GUEST(S)

Jaime Miller reported on behalf of Gail Hagans with the University of Missouri Fire and Rescue Training Institute that *Winter Fire School* is next weekend. MFA grant winners will be formally announced at the *Winter Fire School Expo* on Friday, February 6 at 2:00 pm. MFA also increased funding and they were able to fund all of the requests.

Tim Bean with the Missouri Division of Fire Safety reminded everyone that if you have a firefighter or retired member pass away, let him know and he will present them with a Salute to Service recognition or certificate of appreciation.

Fire investigation numbers are up for 2025 with 118 fire fatalities. There were 107 in 2024. Smoking while on oxygen is the most common cause. The Division will be sending out data for public education. There has also been an increase in incendiary fires leading to over \$400 million in property loss.

The training funds for 2026 have been appropriated. Keep requesting classes so legislators know the funding is important.

April 1 is *Fire Fighters Day at the Capitol* beginning at 10am. Fire Service Instructors will be the featured guests.

The \$1.4 million fire service grant still has \$250k available. There are several applications still pending.

DISTRICT REPORTS

DISTRICT 1

Blake Callen reported that he reached out to 17 departments and will follow-up next week. Terry Wynne reported that Milan and Milan 911 dispatch are interested.

DISTRICT 2

Vernon Cash reported that he will be attending a meeting at Newark and Novelty/Plevna in two weeks.

DISTRICT 3

Rob Erdel reported that he met with Monroe City. There has been a large turnover of fire chiefs in the District 3 area so he is working on making new contacts. He also attended the Paris Christmas dinner.

DISTRICT 5

Dylan Honea reported that he talked with several departments that are possibly merging April 1 while at the Tri Lakes Chiefs meeting. Shelby Honea will be stepping down as Assistant Director.

DISTRICT 8

Bob Floyd reported that he will be attending a meeting next week at Sac Osage and Rusty Darnell has been meeting with Bolivar and several other departments.

DISTRICT 9

Chris Sterner reported that he has attended a meeting with Howell County Firefighters Association. Mark Arnold has also met with several departments.

DISTRICT 10

Romona Kaminski reported that Kirkwood FD has joined. The Women of Fire conference will be April 17-19, in Warrensburg.

DISTRICT 11

Billy Smith reported that Waverly is on board. Jason Deitch met with Black Water and Arrowrock. They are consolidating. Josh Koepke reported that he dropped off several packets and will be following up with Lone Jack and a few educational entities.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Jim Bodenheimer, 10-33 Foundation Executive Director, provided information on their program. Their mission is to ensure every first responder has access to free mental health resources and tools. Everything they do is a free service. They currently have four teams in Missouri, and they will travel anywhere in the US. They receive their funding through grants and are always looking for retired fire service professionals to join their foundation. More information can be found on their website, www.1033foundation.org

President Jennings instructed the Directors to review their Assistant Directors and ensure they are participating.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

AWARDS COMMITTEE

The nomination deadline is February 28.

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Charlie Peel reminded everyone to familiarize themselves with the 2027 dues increase.

BYLAWS COMMITTEE

Jonathan Evans presented proposed bylaw changes to be voted on a the April meeting.

CHAPLAIN COMMITTEE

Dave Hedrick reported that The Missouri Fire Chaplains Corp has increased its membership to 40 Chaplains. Reminder that MFCC still has openings in the MFCC Winter Training classes February 4-5 at Campus Lutheran in Columbia. For more information contact Chaplain Ed Hatcher at edhat@earthlink.net.

CONTEST COMMITTEE

No report was given.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Kyler Oliver reported that Chief Chad Dailey with KCFD will be the keynote speaker. Sponsorships are still available. They will be having the Certified Fire and Ambulance Board training and a hands-on training Friday.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Josh Koepke reported that they are working on a class at the state fair and are sponsoring



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the Certified Fire and Ambulance Board training at convention.

FIRE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

Larry Jennings advised he received a request to remove Joe Jennings from the committee and replace him with Jason Deitch. Rick Dozier made the motion. Billy Smith seconded the motion and all approved.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Charlie Peel reported that there have been \$800 million in budget cuts. So far firefighter training is unaffected.

There are several bills in process regarding fireworks, work comp, fire dampers, firefighter tuition assistance, sex trafficking training for EMS. See the legislative report for further information. Everyone is encouraged to meet with your local representatives regarding tax reform and the long-term repercussions for tax-based entities.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Jaime Miller reported the following membership counts: 241 Directors/Councilman; 381 Retired; 2 Associate; 13 Sustaining; 6

Corporate, 236 Fire Departments; 5117 Active; 1 Educational Entity; 9 Educational Active; 110 Juniors; 2 EMS Department, 27 EMS individuals; 0 911 Entity; 0 911 individuals.

NVFC COMMITTEE

Keith Smith reported that those of you who are individual members should have received the annual meeting notice. It is March 11, at 12:00 pm., Central Time on Zoom. This meeting allows any individual member to sit in on a live update of NVFC and raise your hand in chat box for questions.

The NVFC Spring meeting is May 15-17 in Alexandria, Virginia. The plan for now is to attend. May 14, was set aside for Capitol Hill visits if so inclined.

In order to minimize any misunderstanding about the NVFC Spring meeting expenses to FFAM in this highly tight budget year, FFAM is not paying for any portion of that trip.

Continued on page 46.

EXEMPT FIREMEN

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

In this series, A Part of Fire Service History, we have covered many of the occurrences that brought change to the Fire Service. Based on these changes came the establishment of traditions founded on the events and related occurrences of the past. Over forty years ago when I had the opportunity to enter the field of Emergency Services, little did I know those early days of my career would today be considered past history. As senior (ancient) Firefighters we still have much in the way of advice and experience to share with the new generations of First Responders. It is important that as we share the history of the Fire Service to these new entrants into the profession we provide the true and correct history. It is unfortunate that over the years assumptions and tailboard tales have created fallacies that continue to subvert our grand and glorious Fire Service history. Along those lines this chapter will cover a unique term that originally came about as part of cultural changes in the Fire Service.

This chapter continues the practice of using the term Fireman when the use is historically appropriate. In addition some historical references to Fire Engines will use the term “Engine” for “Fire Engine”, a common spelling in Colonial times, and still used by some fire organizations today.¹

EXEMPT FIREMEN

In discussions about Fire Service history with newer generations of Firefighters, some historical terms along with associated

artifacts are misinterpreted today. One of the terms is “Exempt Firemen”. To understand the term and its significance, we need to review the history of the early American Fire Service.

In researching the term “exempt”, the only specific fire service definition was found in the National Fire Protection Association’s (NFPA) book on *Fire Terms, A Guide To Their Meaning and Use*, published in 1980. It defines the term “Exempts” as:

Volunteers fire fighters in certain states who have served a prescribed period of active duty and retains status on the social roles of the fire department.²

This definition is perhaps relevant to the more modern time period, but leaves out the history of where and when the term originated. Interestingly, even though the term still has applicability today in some states, the later editions of *Terms* did not reference exempt fire fighters at all.³

An early American dictionary from 1846 defines the term “Exempt” as: “A person exempted from the performance of certain duty or service as from paying a tax or performing military duty”⁴ This perhaps being a more accurate definition regarding this discussion as it reflects the historical time period being referenced.

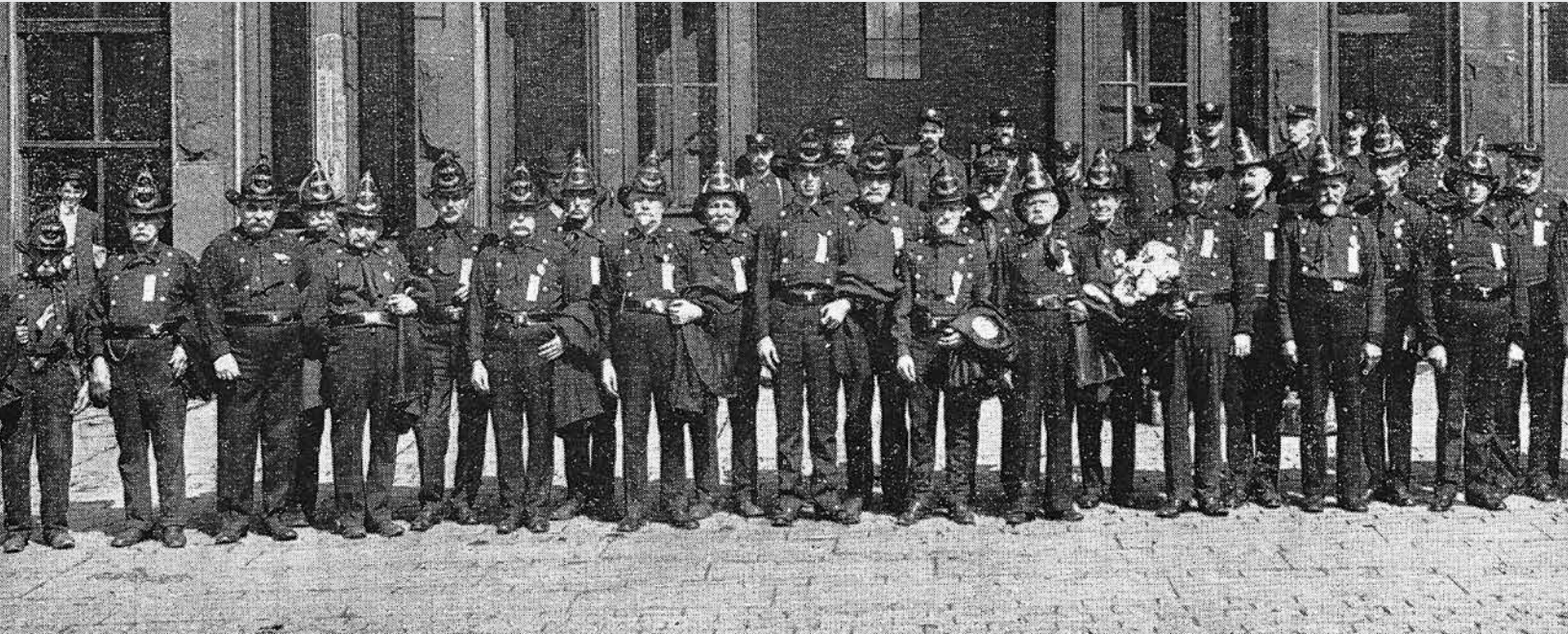
In the early days of the American Fire Service, it was an honor to be selected as

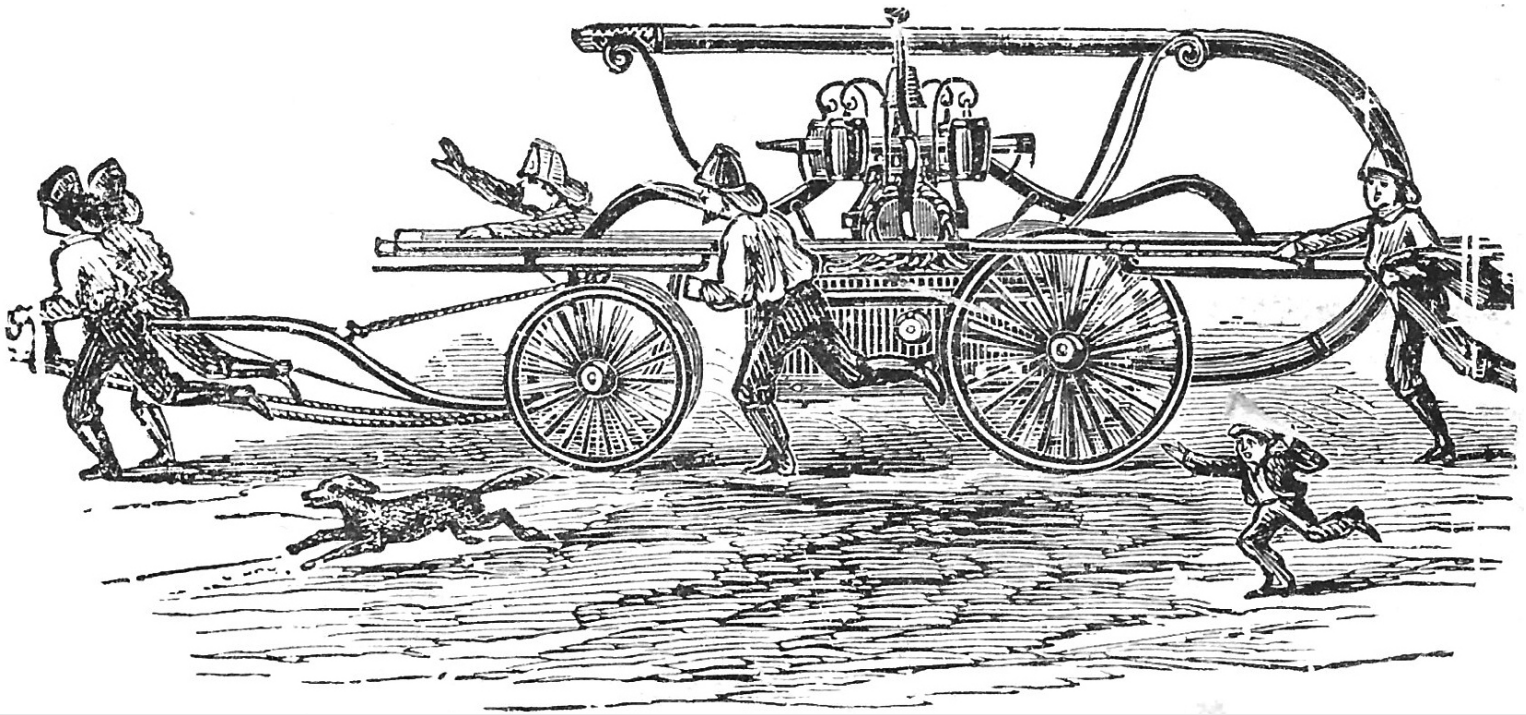


Fire Helmet Shield - Exempt Fireman. Author's collection.

a member of a Volunteer Fire Company. However, besides the prestige of being a fireman and being looked up to perhaps as a hero for saving lives and property, the individuals served without any compensation or benefits. Answering calls day or night, required an individual to miss work activities during the day or lose sleep at night, along with the possibility of damaged clothing

Photo of Rochester, NY Exempt Firemen 1905 from *Twenty-sixth Annual Dance of the Exempt Firemen's Association*, December 11, 1905, Rochester, NY, Program Booklet, 1905. Assumed to be in the public domain. Author's collection.





Exempt Firemen's Hand-pump Engine Drawing from *Twenty-sixth Annual Dance of the Exempt Firemen's Association*, December 11, 1905, Rochester, NY, Program Booklet, 1905. Assumed to be in the public domain.

from fires. Being a Firemen required significant personal sacrifice, let alone the potential for serious injury or the loss of their life.

Two of the primary volunteer jobs related to community or civic service in the American colonies were the need for Militiamen and Firemen. Militias were made up of local citizens who served as a volunteer armed military force to protect the community from hostile groups and maintain order. In most cases, like Firemen they served for the good of the community without compensation

(pay). However, as an enticement for their service it became a custom for Militiamen to be exempt from other civic activities such as jury duty or other mandatory public works projects for the community. Using Militia service as a model, some local communities would follow suit with Firemen being exempt from serving jury duty or militia service while serving as Firemen. When this exemption for Volunteer Firemen first began is hard to answer, but the first occurrences appear to have been in the New England communities of the American Colonies during the colonial period.⁵ The practice of exemptions for Firemen continued into the early days of the United States. In 1816 Firemen in New York formed one of the first Exempt Firemen organizations.⁶

Over time east coast customs spread to the west coast and In California the State Legislature approved an Act Exempting San Francisco Firemen in 1853. Firemen that had actively served for five years, and had a certificate signed by the Chief Engineer or other Fire Department Official:

should be entitled to a certificate as an exempt fireman, which should ever release him in the State of California from jury or military service.⁷

Because of the substantial numbers of Firemen who claimed exemption, an organization called the "Exempt Fire Company" was established in 1860, with state recognition and sanction in 1862.⁸ The Exempt Company was given a fire house and apparatus and responded on fires as a back-up resource for the community.

These benefits expanded to a lifetime exemption for individuals actively serving in Militias or Fire Companies for a minimum of a set number of years. Service requirements for Firemen generally ranged from



New Jersey Exempt Firemen Member Parade Flag. From author's collection



five to twenty years of active service to be eligible for permanent exemption.

As Volunteer Fire Companies began to be replaced by authorized paid Fire Departments in a municipality, Exempt Firemen's Associations were formed to represent the displaced volunteers. A number of these groups retained their old hand-pump "Enjines" and were a reserve forces for the city backing up the Fire Department if needed. Over time these associations became more of a social organization. Some groups still hold competitions or Fire Musters today and compete in various events with their antique fire apparatus.

As has been seen in previous chapters of this fire Service history series, New York City provides a good historic example of the American Fire Service. This includes the development of Volunteer Firemen's Associations and Exempt Associations. Covered previously in this series was the change from Volunteer Fire Companies in New York to a Metropolitan Fire District with a career Fire Department at the end of the Civil War in 1865. The returning military veterans that were former Firemen in Volunteer Fire Companies (many of them had formed Fire Zouave military companies during the war) were upset at the loss of their Fire Companies and their status as Volunteer Firemen. Though some would seek jobs with the new career department, many would resist the transition and the loss of their status. Returning veterans and current Volunteers would move to form Volunteer Firemen's Associations and Exempt Firemen's Associations.⁹ In many cases, the original Volunteer Fire Companies had purchased and owned their fire apparatus, equipment, and fire houses. Though the state legislation that created the district and the Metropolitan Fire Department (MFD) order the Fire Companies to turn over their apparatus, equipment, and in some cases fire houses, the Volunteers resisted. There are reports of Fire Companies hiding their ornate hand pumped fire apparatus and hose carts/wagons to keep them from being confiscated. Eventually an understanding was reached and the Volunteer Fire Companies that retained their apparatus and fire houses were designated as reserves to the MFD. Thus retaining their status as Firemen and being able to finish their service time and earn their life designation as "Exempt Firemen".

The City of Rochester, NY was originally served by various volunteer Fire Companies. In 1866 the city established a career Fire Department, and over time gradually phased out all the Volunteer Fire Companies. The state first enacted legislation covering exempt Firemen in 1816. Like other volunteers in the state that had not completed their service requirements for permanent exemption when a career Fire Department was enacted, a group of volunteers organized the Exempt Firemen's Association of the City of Rochester in 1869, finally becoming incorporated in July of 1902. Those with five years fire protection service were "entirely exempt from serving as a juror in any of the Courts in this State, and from all militia and military duty, whatever, except in case of insurrection or invasion."¹⁰ Apparently the added clause of exception for "insurrection and invasion" was related to the experience of the Civil War. Similar to other Exempt Associations, they also provided other assistance to their Firemen. They established a burial fund and purchased a Firemen's burial plot expanding it in 1880 and dedicating a monument.¹¹ To raise necessary funds for the association and provide burial services for Firemen, the members hosted dances and other community social events. The members also participated in various state meetings and Firemen's musters.

LABOR EXEMPTION

Today, the term exempt or exemption also carries a different meaning related to the career service. As related in the previous chapter on "Life in the Early Career Fire Department", the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) signed into law in 1938 created minimum wage and maximum work hour regulations.¹² However it was not until 1974 that the FLSA was first applied to state and local governments with a final ruling in 1985 by the Supreme Court. This impacted the distinctive work schedules of career Fire Departments, such as 12, 14, or 24 hour shift assignments. To minimize impact and work within accepted work schedules of Fire Departments, Congress created the "207K" exemption [FLSA - 29 USC 207(k)] in the FLSA to address the unique work schedules of Firefighters and Police Officers.¹³ A paid firefighter position may be exempt from standard federal wage and overtime rules because of their job classification and shift work.¹⁴ As can be seen, this wage and work schedule exemption is a completely different situation than the original service duty exemption of the volunteer Fire Companies.



New Jersey Exempt Firemen's Association Member pin. From author's collection

CONSCRIPTION VERSUS EXEMPTION

Even though local governments and some states legislature had enacted statutes to recognize and exempt Firemen from certain civic duties, over time these exemptions faced a number of challenges regarding conscriptions for military duty.

During the American Civil War, New York like most northern cities was supportive of maintaining the Union of the United States. Early on many citizens including Firemen volunteered for the United States Army or formed special military units. But as the war dragged on with numerous bloody battles, military service became less popular. To replenish lost manpower in the Army, President Lincoln and the United States Congress enacted a conscription (draft) act. The first draft lottery took place in New York in July 1863.

The draft was unpopular with most citizens. One reason for its unpopularity was that wealthy men could get out of the draft by paying \$300 for a substitute to serve in their place. Also, volunteer Firemen long exempt from militia or military service were no longer exempt from the draft act. A protest started in New York on July 13 and was spurred to violence by: "members of the Black Joke Engine Co. 33" of which several members had been drafted in the lottery draw.¹⁵ The rioters began setting fires and attempting to destroy government buildings in the city. Other Fire Companies stood strong against the rioters and did the best they could to save lives and property from the on slot. After almost a week of riots federal troops arrived and were able to quell the uprising. The event saw both dreadful actions by some and heroic actions by other firefighters. This violent event was a regrettable period in the

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history of the United States Fire Service. The insurrection started by volunteers was one more reason for the city fathers, insurance agents, and citizens to call for a career Fire Department that would be more readily governed by the city of New York.

The American Civil War was not the last time exemptions for Firefighters were overturned or challenged. In World War II the U.S. Selective Service was drafting large numbers of fit young men for military duty with few exceptions. A number of major cities fought to exclude Firefighters from the national draft for fear of depleting their trained and experienced fire protection forces. In some cases municipal governments tried to offer compromises to obtain deferments “for firefighters and police with more than two years of experience.”¹⁶ In the last year of the War, President Roosevelt was demanding the conscription of “a million more men in uniform.”¹⁷ The traditional exemption from military service for Firemen disappeared for hundreds of Firefighters till the war’s end. This also created a shortage of trained and experienced Firefighters for maintaining protection on the home front.

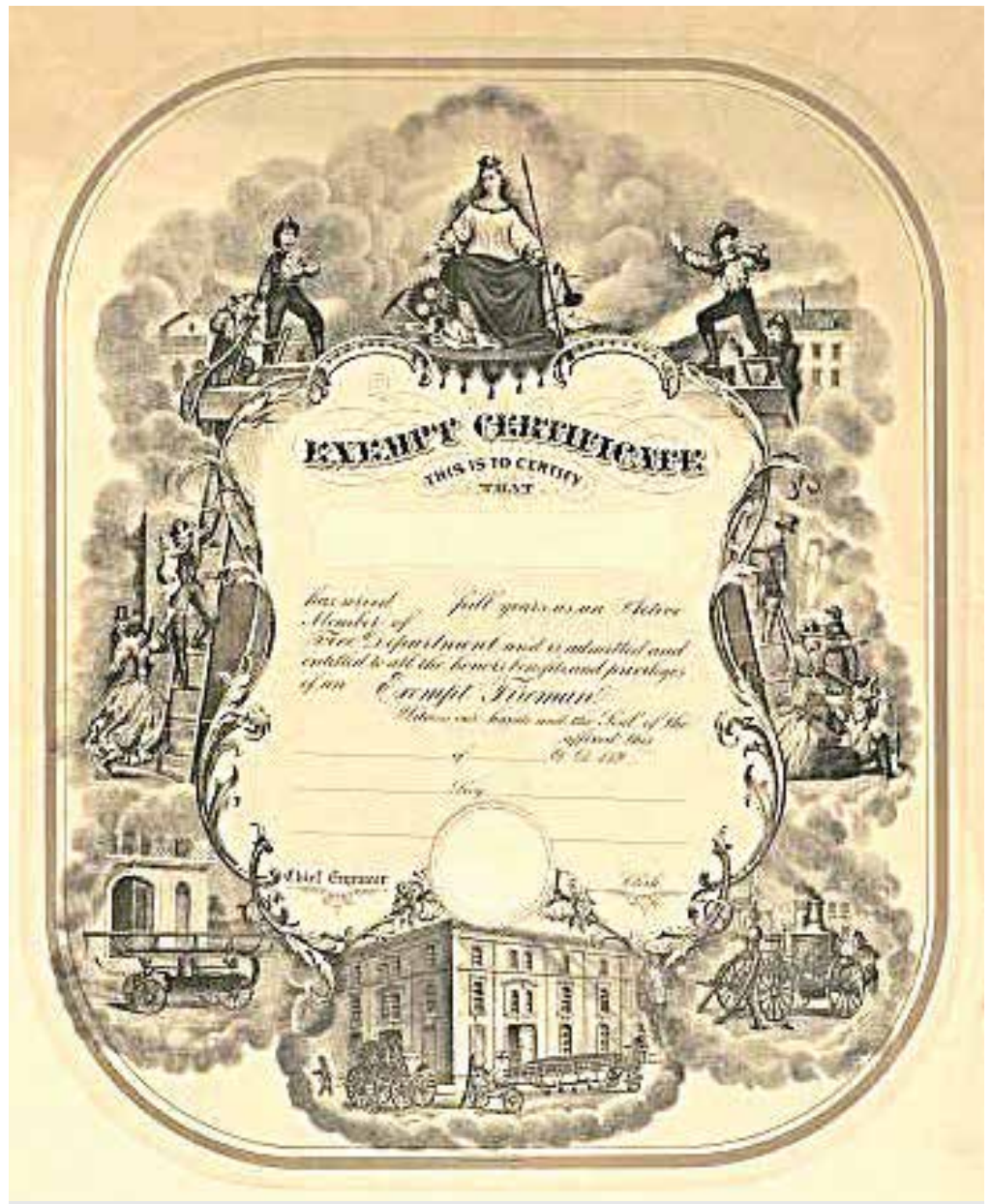
EXEMPT FIREMEN TODAY

Regarding volunteer Firefighter service today, the original exempt tradition carries on in some communities or states where volunteer Firefighters can be exempt from civic duties for their service, as well as be eligible for other benefits. The State of New Jersey has legislation that provides for the following:

The Exempt Firefighter obtains an Exempt Certificate after seven (7) years duty from the municipality in which his/her fire company is operational and part of that fire department. This certificate is then filed with the County Clerk and entitles the firefighter to certain benefits by statute.¹⁸

In recent years there have been some additional states that have pursued legislation that would exempt Firefighters from jury duty.¹⁹ As history reveals, this is not really a new idea, but a return to a practice that was common back in the early days of the American Fire Service.

Benefits for exempt Firemen varied by community, state, and time period. In addition to exemptions from military service and jury duty, research found some communities provided various tax exemptions



Exempt Fireman Certificate, 1898. [United States: publisher not transcribed] Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/2018695132

for Firemen such as individual property tax relief, poll tax, road tax or road work projects exemptions. These historic benefits for being a Volunteer Fireman helped incentivize local citizens to serve in the Volunteer Fire Companies, as well as garner support from the family for members to serve. Today a number of Volunteer Fire Departments looking for ways to encourage recruitment and retention of Volunteers have subsidized retirement plans for volunteers that provide a modest extra retirement income for members as an enticement for meeting service longevity tenures. Other service inducements may be Income tax credit, and job protection when responding to emergency calls and other deployments.

CHANGING CULTURE AND CONTINUING TRADITIONS

In some parts of the United States the term of Exempt Firemen still applies to legislation or proclamations that provide state or local exemptions for volunteer Firefighters that have met specific service requirements. In other areas of the country, the term has all but been forgotten as an archaic term from the past. Unfortunately, a number of recognized Fire Service sources have deleted this term from newer publication, thus obfuscating the true history of the American Fire Service.

However, there still remains paper paraphernalia, and other artifacts that document this historic past. Exempt Firemen memorabilia

Continued on page 38.



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By Cindy Gladden, Record Correspondent



Tuesday, Feb. 18 started out pretty normal for Larry and Cindy Pape of Marthasville. Cindy headed to work and Larry let Truman out for his morning constitutional in the wooded area of Fox Meadows. Truman is a 105-pound, 12-year-old Newfiedoodle, a cross between a Newfoundland and a Poodle.

The Papes said Truman is a “chill boy,” happy with his dog routine and rarely strays far. Because of the wooded area and the possibility of getting too far from home, Truman wears a GPS tracker collar that covers a 300-ft. radius around the Pape home.

Larry called for Truman just as usual, but there was no response. Pape consulted his GPS and saw that Truman was on the edge of their property and it looked like he was turning in circles. He heard a sharp “Yipe” from Truman and immediately headed his direction to find out what was going on.

“I found him down in the creekbed laying down,” said Pape. “He couldn’t walk. I called Cindy to come home from work, and we tried to get him out of there.”

Larry said he and his wife fashioned a makeshift gurney with 2x4s, but that was “a disaster.”

“I called my daughter (Lea Welter) because she knows everybody,” said Cindy. “We needed someone to help us.”

Thanks to Welter, the Marthasville Fire Protection District (MFPD) was dispatched for the animal rescue. The team of five volunteers responded with a UTV, two brush trucks and the medical truck. They

also brought a Stokes basket litter, hoping to retrieve the dog and carry him out.

“Accessibility was not good,” said Chief Sean Johnson. “It was treacherous with wet leaves and rocky, steep terrain.”

Using special apps to help precisely determine their location and find a way in, Engineer Derik Roloff, Retired Chief Jim Buescher, Chief Sean Johnson and Firefighter/EMT Estiven Levin carried the litter. Firefighter Jeremy Smith met them with the UTV and drove it out carefully over the rocky terrain. While the rescue was ongoing, Johnson contacted the family’s vet, Dr. Daniel Smith, so his staff could be prepared for Truman’s arrival.

“He was probably chasing something,” said Cindy. “I was so blown away watching this rescue. It almost makes me cry just thinking about it. They even thought to get water to Truman.”

“Those guys carried that dog for 1,600 feet to get to the UTV,” said Larry. “He was just laying down enjoying the ride.”

Cindy said the firefighters had to lift the litter many times over large rocks and downed trees, sometimes hoisting it to eye level.

“I’m sure they were exhausted when they were done,” she said. “The rescue took over three hours.”

Truman made a huge entrance into Washington as he traveled in the back of the bright red MFPD medical truck with Chief Johnson sitting next to him. When they arrived at Dr. Smith’s office, the staff was

waiting. The firefighters lifted Truman once more and carried him into the vet facility.

The good news is that Truman has recovered from his ordeal. According to Dr. Smith, there was no lasting damage that a few weeks of medication and TLC couldn’t take care of.

“I was speechless that our fire department saved our dog like this,” said Cindy. “I think we would have really gotten hurt if we had tried to do this ourselves. Everyone knew what to do. It takes a lot to pull off what they did.”

EMT Levin commented dryly that this canine victim “talked a lot less” than his normal patients.

Johnson agreed this wasn’t a typical rescue, but it’s “what we do.” He encourages the community to call on the MFPD when they are needed.

“It was a smooth rescue considering,” said Johnson. “We had the proper resources to rescue Truman. We also had Boles Fire cover our community during the rescue.”

Cindy said the MFPD’s Facebook post described Truman’s rescue and everyone was asking how Truman was doing. There were more than 63,000 views on the department’s page.

Truman has unfortunately tried to return to the area where he was rescued and the Papes have put a stop to that.

“We are NOT calling the fire department again, although we are eternally grateful,” said Cindy.

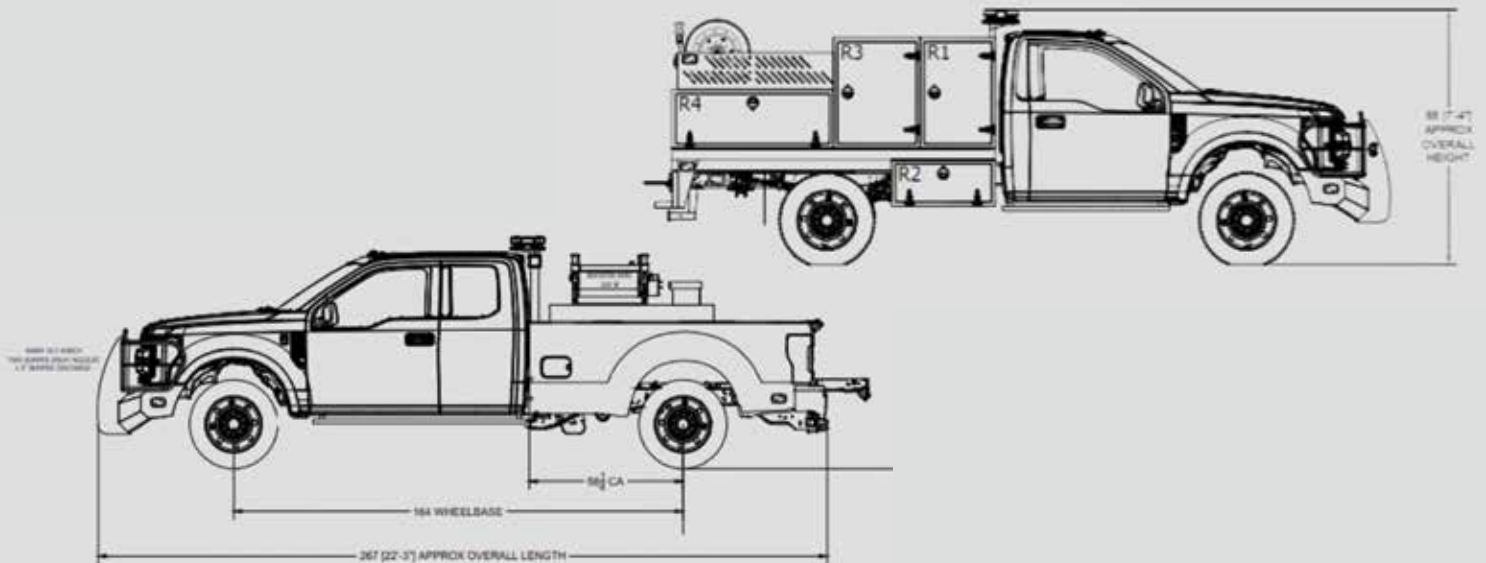
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KANSAS CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT- KC, MO.



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By Mick Fischer, Fire Chief

Last month, we had the honor of hosting our annual awards dinner, celebrating the exceptional achievements and dedication of our members throughout 2025.

We are proud to recognize the following individuals for their service milestones:

1 YEAR OF SERVICE

- Benjamin Bajric
- Sullivan Clancy
- Tyler Hammer
- Alexander Krupski
- Susan Litteken
- Clay Lively
- Logan Lynch
- Miguele Santamaria
- Cody Steinmeyer
- Blake Woods

5 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Thomas Dunn
- Benjamin Fischer

10 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Charles Malson
- Matt Thuston

15 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Jason Barton

20 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Kelly Fischer
- Jeremy Lenhart

35 YEARS OF SERVICE

- Jeff Argurio

Jeff Argurio • 35 Years of Service



We also recognized excellence in training and performance:

TRAINING AWARDS

- Junior Firefighter: Benjamin Bajric
- Senior Firefighter: Benjamin Fischer
- Paid Firefighter: Dennis Polfer

MOST HOURS LOGGED

- Senior Firefighter: Braydon Sherrill
- Junior Firefighter: Lucas Powell

OFFICER OF THE YEAR

- Captain Shawn Hahl

HONOR ROLL

- Mick Fischer
- Matt Shuster

Additionally, we were proud to surprise Will Powel with a well-deserved promotion to Captain.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all of our members for their commitment, professionalism, and unwavering service. Congratulations to each of this year's honorees, and thank you for your continued dedication to serving our community.

Captain Will Powel



Award winners: Dennis Polfer • Captain Shawn Hahl • Mick Fischer • Charles Malson



Honor Roll Awards: Matt Shuster • Mick Fischer





MISSOURI FIRE FIGHTERS CRITICAL ILLNESS POOL

& THE FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI



**Partnering to ensure you have the
cancer coverage and behavioral
health benefits you deserve!**

**Join MFFCIP during open enrollment
October 1 - December 31, 2026!
Open to all Missouri Fire Fighters,
EMTs and Telecommunicators**

Partnership Details

The MFFCIP and the FFAM have formed a partnership to facilitate two membership options for first responder participation in the Critical Illness Pool. In addition to Department/Agency membership, Individual MFFCIP membership is now available exclusively to FFAM members. As a member of FFAM, you are eligible to join the MFFCIP by selecting the coverage limit and annual cost which works best for you.

Cancer Coverage

Recognizing the causal relationship of 21 specific cancers scientifically proven to occur more frequently in first responder occupations, MFFCIP provides benefits to members diagnosed with one of the following: bladder, brain, breast, cervical, colon, esophagus, kidney, leukemia, lung, melanoma, mesothelioma, multiple myeloma, non-hodgkin lymphoma, ovarian, pancreatic, prostate, rectal, skin, stomach, testicular, and thyroid. Benefit amounts are based on the coverage limit selected, as well as the type and stage of cancer. MFFCIP also provides supplemental benefits for members diagnosed with 8 additional cancers. Benefits are paid to the individual based on the coverage limit selected, as well as the type and stage of cancer.

Behavioral Health Support

MFFCIP provides support for the mental and emotional well-being of Missouri's first responders. Program benefits include resources, training, and best practice guidance for emergency response agencies and peer support teams, as well as a network of trained peers and culturally competent clinicians who are ready to provide assistance. Financial resources are also available to member peer support teams and clinicians, as well as individuals with out of pocket costs associated with inpatient treatment.

MFFCIP is Member-Owned. Rates are subsidized as long as funding permits. **Learn more at <https://www.mffcip.org> or email Sherry.MFFCIP@gmail.com**



Advantages for First Responders

- Individual path to benefits if your department is not an MFFCIP member.
- Retiree coverage up to the age of 70.
- More claims eligible for compensation.
- Choose your coverage level.
- Fast payouts to assist with out of pocket expenses.

Volunteer and Part-time First Responders with 5 or more years of service

Coverage Limit	Annual Cost
\$100,000	\$44
\$200,000	\$88
\$300,000	\$133

Full-time First Responders with 5 or more years of service

Coverage Limit	Annual Cost
\$100,000	\$55
\$200,000	\$109
\$300,000	\$165

Eligibility Requirements

- FFAM Membership
- Signed Required Actions Agreement
- Roster with verification of years of service
- Payment of selected annual cost



By Keith Smith, Chairman

We are excited to announce that we have another Fire Truck committed to your future museum. Affton Fire Protection reached an MOU (Memo of Understanding) with the Foundation regarding their open cab Central.

Drywall work has started in the North half of the museum. This first of two phases involving drywall work in this area. You will see a big difference in finished surface area if you are able to attend the October 3rd and 4th services.

Our keynote speaker for the Sunday Service will be the Fire Chief of the FDNY. This came about by the connection of our Statue with 9-11 and the 25th anniversary of that date. At the time of this article, there are still some moving parts with this arrangement.

Due to the continued frequency of bad actors for scams in using individual emails from non-profit websites, we have changed completely over to a "CONTACT US" page on our website. I will continue to leave my phone number posted in the board profile so any urgent needs can still be accommodated. While text messages may still be at risk depending on a response, this change better protects individual email accounts. It is a sad development in taking these measures due to how sophisticated criminal elements have become. Our email will continue to be listed in the FFAM Magazine Foundation Report.

We have a new fundraising initiative involving an etched glass decanter and glasses. Please be sure to check out that advertisement in this edition of the magazine.

We are honored to again be selected as a recipient of the Firestorm Charities annual

funding raising event for 2026, involving their 911 Tribute to Hero's ride. The date this year is Saturday, September 5th, starting at Outlaw Harley Davidson in Blue Springs and travel to the Branded Steakhouse parking lot in Richmond. Several events are planned at that site for the remainder of the day.

The Funeral Team report at our April 11th meeting created several concerns regarding what future services could involve. Brian Zinanni gave a detailed overview of the new cancer presumption and how that could impact our future services. Brian is currently working on 22 requests and anticipating many more to come. The Foundation discussed how that could change our memorial services with large numbers of previous occupational disease deaths now qualifying for LODD Honors. This raised many questions on how to manage these initial large numbers during the catch-up timeline from January 1, 2020, to date. Current estimates are likely to show no significant impact until the 2028 services and following, but we will be preparing following the 2026 services. The key point is time management for honors and service recognition. What we are currently doing will likely be different in the future.

Please pay very close attention to the following 3 dates. You may not get another reminder of their cut-off prior to the next magazine edition. All engraving orders must be received by July 1 in order to be completed prior to the October 3rd and 4th services. Flag orders must be received by September 12th. Both Dates are FIRM! A 2026 Memorial Tee Shirt listing the "LODD" and "Service Recognition" names will be available for order by June 1st, with a firm cutoff

date of August 16th. If you cannot pick up your shirt on October 3rd or 4th, we will offer shipping for an added cost. If demand exceeds supply, we will offer a 2nd printing following the October services. Shirt orders must be purchased through our website.

We need additional assistance with the Candlelight and Sunday morning services. It takes several additional people than the Foundation to make these services successful. If you have an interest in doing do for either service or both, please contact me or one of the other Foundation Directors or me.

I will close our update with a very special THANK YOU to Don Wilmesher and his long-standing tenure on the Foundation Board. Don is taking a step back but not away from the work of the Foundation, with plans to continue to assist where he can in the future. Interestingly, Don has completed 50-years of service since first becoming an FFAM District Director and later moving onto the Foundation Board. Very well done, Don and most appreciated.

If you need to contact us, we have several options. For general information, engraving and shopping, our website is mofirememorial-museum.org. Our mailing address is 5550 Dunn Drive, Kingdom City, MO 65262. For email, please use info@mofirememorial-museum.org. This is a shared platform for checking messages, so please give it a few days to respond. If it is urgent or you prefer to save time, you may call my mobile at 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

8x8 Brick Engraving • \$300

Distinguished Wall Engraving • \$175



SUPPORT OUR HEROES



FIREFIIGHTERS MEMORIAL FOUNDATION OF MISSOURI

Honoring the brave. Supporting the families.
Preserving their legacy.



DECANTER & 4 GLASSES

\$150.00

DECANTER ONLY

\$100.00



Proceeds benefit the Firefighters
Memorial Foundation of Missouri,
helping to honor fallen firefighters
and support their families.

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT!**



★
DEDICATED TO THOSE THAT HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES WHILE ANSWERING THE CALL FOR HELP

SAVE THE DATE

Firefighter Memorial in Kingdom City

**Candlelight
Services**

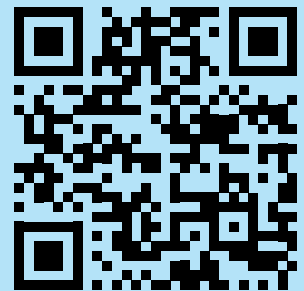
**October 3
7:00 pm**

**Memorial
Services**

**October 4
10:30 am**

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

**More details at
mofirememorial-museum.org**



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

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.



\$1 per ticket • Drawing July 4, 2026

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

**The inside of the Museum must be built.
Help us finish it up so we can open up!**

TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Mail a check with phone number to:
MO FF Memorial & Museum Project
PO Box 1153, Warrensburg, MO. 64093

QUESTIONS: Larry Eggen • 660-909-7882 • Leggen@JCFPD.net

FIRE FIGHTER'S FIELD OF FLAGS

A FIRE FIGHTER MUSEUM FUNDRAISER



For \$35 each, you can designate a flag to be flown in memory, honor, or appreciation of an individual you choose. If you would like to have your flag mailed to you, please add \$5 per flag for postage. Flags will be raised in mid September and be flown at the Firefighters Memorial in Kingdom City, Missouri. All proceeds will benefit the Firefighter Museum Project and are tax-deductible.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Check Visa Mastercard Discover Am. Exp.
Name on card _____
Card # _____ Exp. Date _____
Signature _____ CCV _____
Make checks payable to "FFAM Museum"

Number Of Flags: _____ X \$35 Mail?: _____ X \$5 = Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Name On Flag #1: _____ In Honor of In Memory Of In Appreciation

Name On Flag #2: _____ In Honor of In Memory Of In Appreciation

Name On Flag #3: _____ In Honor of In Memory Of In Appreciation

Firefighter Veteran Active Duty Army Navy Air Force Marines Coast Guard Other _____

Mail to: Firefighters Memorial
Foundation of MO
5550 Dunn Drive
Kingdom City, MO 65262

Email questions to:
ffammuseum@gmail.com

Deadline to order: September 11, 2026!

ORDER ONLINE AT: MOFIREMEMORIAL-MUSEUM.ORG/PRODUCT/FIELD-OF-FLAGS-MEMORIAL/

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.ffam.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

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.



1 All Law, Fire, and EMS Funeral Team Members

\$169 Early Registration
July 1-September 15, 2026

\$229 Registration Fee
September 16-October 5, 2026

2 Non-team Attendees

\$199 Early Registration
July 1-September 15, 2026

\$229 Registration Fee
September 16-October 5, 2026.

3 Special Sunday Only

\$50 Registration Fee

Includes training and full breakfast on October 18, 2026

Options 1 & 2 both include Saturday and Sunday Breakfast, Saturday Lunch, Saturday evening Banquet, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday training, refreshments and more. Program runs Friday evening 7-9, Saturday 8-4 with Banquet @ 6pm. Sunday 8-12noon.

HOST HOTEL

Camden on the Lake
573-365-5620
camdenonthelake.com
Use code MEMS1026 for special weekend rate.
Available now.

WANT TO BE A SPONSOR?

Conference sponsorships available starting at just \$60

REGISTER NOW ONLINE



moemsfuneralteam.com

Registration Detail

Extra banquet, breakfast and lunch tickets available!

Refund available before October 5, minus a \$35 processing fee. No refunds after October 5, 2026.

Make checks out and mail to:
MO EMS Funeral team
245 Blossom Vally,
Branson, MO 65616

Credit cards or Venmo can be used online at moemsfuneralteam.com

THANK YOU, KNOB NOSTER!

The Knob Noster Fire Department would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Knob Noster community, as well as the Board of Aldermen, Mayor, and City Staff, for their continued support and commitment to public safety. Thanks to your leadership and support, we are proud to place our new 2025 Chevy Silverado 3500 brush truck into service. This versatile vehicle will respond to brush and grass fires, medical calls, trash fires, and investigations, while helping reduce wear and tear on our larger apparatus. Your partnership and dedication are vital to protecting and serving the Knob Noster community. Thank you for standing behind your fire department. Thank you to Don Brown Chevrolet, St. Louis, MO., Knapheide Truck Center, Saint Peters, MO., and Public Safety Upfitters LLC, Fenton, MO. For your expert input on this finished project.



WASHINGTON OPENS NEW FIRE STATION

The Washington Fire Department is excited to announce the opening of a new Fire Station 1 on March 30, 2026. The station was designed by FGM Architects and constructed by Lawlor Corporation. The station was funded by the City of Washington ½ cent capital improvement tax, ARPA funds and the Washington Community Fire Protection District.

The station is located in the south east section of the City and is just under 10,000 square feet with three drive through bays, living quarters with a day room, kitchen, covered outdoor patio, four bunk rooms, a weight training room, ICC 500 storm shelter and a full building generator.

A new 2026 Pierce Enforcer Engine 8120 was placed in service on February 1 at the Fire Department Headquarters, Station 2. Engine 8110 was moved to Fire Station 1.

There will a dedication of the new Fire Station and Engine 8120 on Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 2698 Phoenix Park Drive.



HARDIN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



Around the State

Assistant Chief Joe Manchester and Chief Malcolm Cunningham of Hardin Fire Protection District participated in Career Day at Hardin Central High School. Representatives from many industries talked to High School students about different careers. Hardin Fire Protection District was invited by Richmond Fire to participate in an SCBA familiarization session.



Hardin Fire Protection District trained on their new battery powered vehicle extrication tool. The combination cutter-spreader was obtained by the department utilizing grant funds from Norfolk Southern Railroad.





JOIN THE FFAM

Be a member in the largest fire service association in the state of Missouri

Support an organized voice on important annual fire service legislation in Jefferson City

National Volunteer Fire Council representation

Access to college scholarships for yourself, dependents or family

Access to low cost Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance

Receive a 10% discount on IFSTA (red book) manuals

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

For More Information Visit Our Website

FFAM.org

KIMBLER RETIRES

Beaufort-Leslie FPD

By Heather Suerig, Lieutenant

The Beaufort-Leslie Fire Protection District is honored to announce the retirement of Firefighter Jerry Kimbler. Jerry has volunteered his time and skills for 47 years, earning numerous perfect attendance and top responder awards. He has always

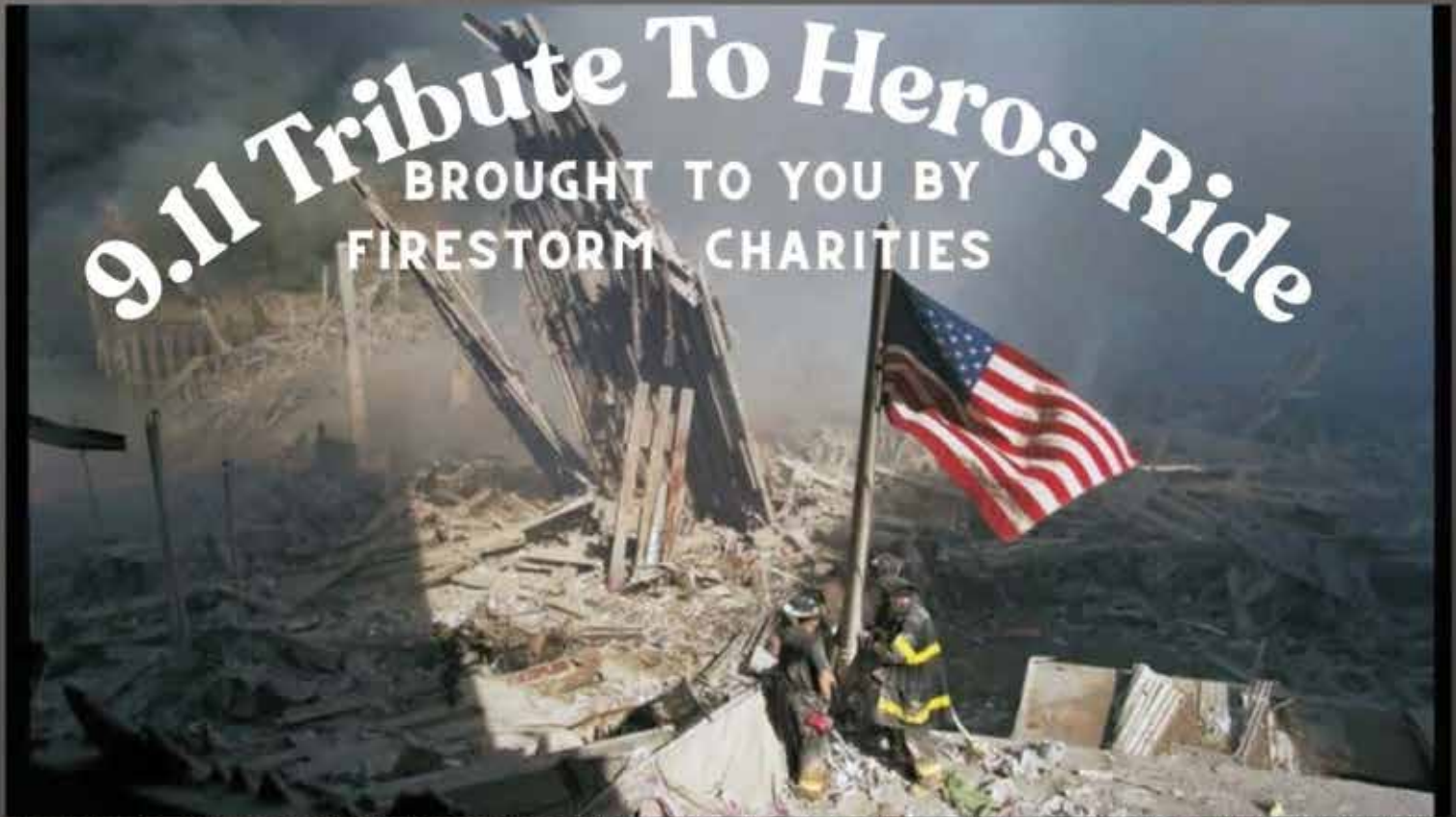
gone above and beyond to ensure his family, neighbors, and community are well cared for.

Jerry, your fire family thanks you for your bravery and service. You may be retired, but you will always be a firefighter.



9.11 Tribute To Heros Ride

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
FIRESTORM CHARITIES



JOIN US ON SEPTEMBER THE 5TH 2026 TO SHOW OUR RESPECT ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY TO THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO LOST THERE LIFE IN THE LINE OF DUTY ON SEPT 11 2001. THIS YEAR ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO MISSOURI FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION IN HONOR OF HAROLD HOLLINGSWORTH

RIDE DETAILS

RIDE WILL BEGIN AT OUTLAW HARLEY DAVIDSON IN BLUE SPRINGS, MO REGISTRATION FOR DAY OF AND CHECK IN FOR PRE-REGISTRATION OPENS AT 9AM AND KICK STANDS WILL BE UP 11AM. PANCAKE BREAKFAST WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR \$5/PERSON THE RIDE WILL GO THROUGH BUKNER, NAPOLEON, WELLINGTON, LEXINGTON AND ENDING AT BRANDED OUTDOOR THEATER IN RICHMOND, MO. THERE WILL BE A BLESSING OF THE BIKES BEFORE THE RIDE STARTS

RIDE WILL COST 125 PRE-REGISTRATION AND 130 DAY OF
PLEASE SCAN OR CODE FOR PRE-REGISTRATION



WWW.DAMIENGUNNMUSIC.COM

DAMIEN GUNN WILL BE PLAYING AT BRANDED OUTDOOR THEATED STARTING AT 12:30 AND WLL CONTINUE TO PLAY AFTER THE RIDE ARRIVES

KC MOTOR BABES WILL BE AT THE END OF THE RIDE ALONG WITH OTHER VENDERS

FOR ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT
KYLE HARRISON
FIRESTORM PRESIDENT-816-240-2878



PROUDLY SPONSORED BY



NVFC • 2026 BY THE NUMBERS

By Keith Smith, Chairperson

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. In keeping with that theme, I refer you to the snapshot of *NVFC 2025 By the Numbers*.

The week before submitting this article, plans changed regarding the Spring Meeting. I will not be able to attend May 15-17. I will make arrangements with NVFC Staff for meeting information that may be passed along in the next magazine.

OSHA continues to consume large blocks of time, specifically those States having their own State Plans. They have moved into negotiation and action summaries in this process.

IAFF and NVFC have discussed several areas of compromise in this proposed standard.

NVFC is celebrating their 50th anniversary, 1976-1926. In keeping with that, they are profiling each State. I am working on Missouri information for that project.

Currently, the failure to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has resulted in issues within FEMA (located within DHS) regarding scheduled grant payments for numerous programs. NVFC has been collecting individual stores from departments awaiting payments for SAFER

Grants and other program obligations. Call for action alerts to Senator's and Representatives have gone out. At the time of this article, Emmitsburg is closed which has cancelled onsite classes, regional class delivery and potentially moves the annual memorial service for LODD families offsite. The NFA closure due to the annual 3rd quarter budget battles in DC is what NFFF was attempting to avoid when they moved their services from the first weekend in October to the first weekend in May.

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

Membership



42,557

individual members



48

state fire associations



50

corporate members

Make Me A Firefighter Recruitment Campaign



19,842

registered departments



6,635

posted volunteer opportunities



26,166

clicks on opportunities



10,877

volunteer inquiries submitted

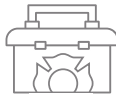
Health and Safety



900

participants in the Step Strong Challenge

1,647



visits to the *Psychologically Healthy Fire Departments: Implementation Toolkit*



24,500

printed copies of *Firefighter Strong* distributed



33,994

visitors to the Safety Stand Down web site



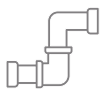
15,019

visits to the Directory of Behavioral Health Professionals



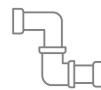
23,432

visits to the Lavender Ribbon Report webpage



20,702

visits to the Fire Department Pipeline Response, Emergency Planning, & Preparedness webpage



Grants



\$1.69 million

in grants awarded to the NVFC

Training



7,040

course and webinar registrations in the NVFC Virtual Classroom

38

live online trainings with



3,328

attendees.



95

in-person trainings with



2,073

attendees



175



attendees at the NVFC Training Summit



Partnerships

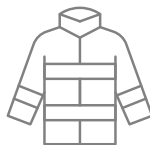
The NVFC and our partners provided over **\$2.5 million** in grants, giveaways, and scholarships to support the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. These included the following:



\$1.5 million in equipment grants through the State Farm® Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program



500 pre-owned laptops through the State Farm® Laptop Donation



52 sets of turnout gear and helmets through MSA and DuPont's Globe Gear Giveaway



1.5 million+ cans of emergency drinking water through the Anheuser-Busch Emergency Drinking Water for Wildland Firefighters Program



4 helmets through the MSA Cairns® 1836 Fire Helmet Giveaway



3 STEPR PRO+ stair climbers through the STEPR™ Health & Safety Giveaway



200,000 electrolyte sticks through the DripDrop Hydration Giveback



2 scholarships provided by Columbia Southern University



1 scholarship provided by Waldorf University



60 travel stipends for the NVFC Training Summit thanks to FEMA grants



\$25,000 in grants through the Nutella® Stacks for Giving Back program

View the full 2025 NVFC Annual Report at www.nvfc.org/about.

BURNS RECOVERED & MIDWEST CHILDREN'S BURN CAMP

By Nathan Ball, Executive Director, Burns Recovered

As firefighters and first responders, we see people on some of the worst days of their lives. Burn calls are some of the toughest. We do our job—put the fire out, treat the patient, get them to the hospital. But after that, their fight is just getting started. That's where Burns Recovered and the Midwest Children's Burn Camp come in.

Burns Recovered is a group that helps burn survivors and their families after the emergency is over. They focus on helping people heal—not just physically, but mentally too. They stay with these families long after we've cleared the scene. They help survivors adjust, connect with others, and rebuild their confidence.

WHAT IS THE MIDWEST CHILDREN'S BURN CAMP?

This is one of the biggest things Burns Recovered does. The Burn Camp is a special camp just for kids who have suffered burn injuries. It gives them a chance to get away,

be around other kids like them, and just be normal for a while. They swim, fish, play games, sit around the fire—typical camp stuff. But what really matters is this:

They're around other kids who understand what they've been through. A lot of these kids struggle with confidence, scars, and feeling different. At camp, they don't feel that way. They build friendships, gain confidence, and start to feel like themselves again. For many of them, it's life-changing.

WHY SHOULD FIRE DEPTS CARE?

Because these are our patients. We're there when they get hurt. Supporting something like this means we're still helping them after the call is over. It's an extension of what we already do—taking care of people.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

This is where every fire department in Missouri can step up. You don't have to be a big department to make a difference.

1. DO FUNDRAISERS

Host something simple—pancake breakfasts, BBQs, golf tournaments, raffles, boot drives. It doesn't have to be huge. Every bit helps.

2. MAKE IT A DEPARTMENT THING

Pick Burns Recovered as something your department supports every year. Even one event a year makes a difference.

3. GET THE COMMUNITY INVOLVED

Talk about it. Post about it. Let people know where their money is going. People will support it—they just need to know.

4. GET YOUR CREW INVOLVED

Encourage your guys to show up, help out, and spread the word. Firefighters carry a lot of weight in their communities—people listen.

5. BUILD A CONNECTION

Reach out to Burns Recovered. Bring them in to talk. Learn more about what they do. When it becomes personal, it matters more.



BIG OR SMALL—IT ALL MATTERS

Not every department can raise thousands of dollars—and that’s fine. A small department doing a fish fry or a boot drive still makes a real impact. If every department in Missouri does something, it adds up fast. At the end of the day, every dollar helps send a kid to camp.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Burn calls don’t end when we leave the scene. These kids and families have a long road ahead. Supporting Burns Recovered and the Midwest Children’s Burn Camp is one way we can keep helping—even after the call is over.

It’s simple: we take care of our people. This is just another way to do it.



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A Message From The 2nd VP



Grant Oetting

I want to apologize to the membership for my tardiness of missing the deadlines of writing articles, so I hope this makes up for it.

Spring is in the air. Grass is growing, flowers are blooming and of course allergy season is upon us. By the time this article comes out, The FFAM convention will be done hosted by the Liberty Fire Department. This article I will stress about one of my passions, firefighter training.

The importance of training cannot be overstated in the world of emergency services. Where life safety is at risk, competence of the responders should be paramount. When the citizens in our community call for help, they expect and deserve the very best from us when we respond.

To provide the best services to our community, we must first understand what it is that we do. This should come from your fire department mission statement as well as from knowing what services you provide. This broad statement of what we do helps us meet the expectations of our community and sets the tone for the department. Our training must help us meet and support this mission statement.

The purpose of training is to ensure that we can provide the very best service possible to our community. We accomplish this by doing consistent, relevant, and quality training of our personnel. Our overall goal in training should be to support the services our members provide through a safe and effective training program. This helps them provide those services in a safe, efficient, and effective manner. To ensure that we provide the highest level of service to our community, we must provide training that consistently maintains and enhances the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our members.

The average fire department does a good job with company level training. This means the bulk of the training is handled at the shift or work group level by the company officers and is driven by needs determined through operations. Simply put, the types

of incidents that we respond to guide the training that we do. Working closely with their personnel, the company officers ensure the training that we do is relevant. Training must meet the needs of our personnel at the operational level. This is where the “rubber meets the road” and you will see the results.

There are several factors that should be incorporated into the training that we do. These factors are Safety, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Relevance, and Training to Standard. These principles will help ensure that we provide the very best training for our personnel. This is not to say that we aren't doing good training. We are doing a good job with company level training. We also incorporate most of these principles into our training already. But how much do we think about these principles as we develop our training? The key is to understand why they are important and ensure we build on the good training we already do by ensuring we incorporate these principles. This will help us take the good training we are already doing and improve it.

As a factor in training, safety is important for obvious reasons. The job we do is dangerous; some of the training we do also has an element of danger built into it. It is one thing to have an injury occur on the scene during operations where the environment is not a controlled situation. It is quite another to have it occur during training. On the scene, there will always be an unexpected factor that we cannot control. During training, we must ensure that it is as controlled an environment as possible. Ensuring a safe training environment is a top priority for those conducting the training. During training, our goal should be realism that is tempered with an element of control to ensure safety.

Our focus during training should be mastery of the skills and techniques that our personnel are performing. This requires company officers to be familiar with the skills and performance levels of their personnel. Company training should work to maintain those skills and allow for them to improve. Scenarios must be realistic enough to allow the students to think through the problem, apply their skills and learn from what they are doing. This will give them the competency to perform effectively and safely during a real incident where the element

of danger cannot be eliminated completely. The evolutions they perform should challenge them but not hurt them.

For training to be effective, it must focus on the needs of the department and its personnel. The department must be able to effectively serve its community. This means our personnel must be able to effectively provide the services our citizens need. As a department, we must ensure training is done that supports the services we provide. We must also make the training effective for our personnel. It must be focused on them—not just their needs but their existing skill levels. If their existing skills are not maintained and then improved on, the training has not been effective. If the citizens don't see the members of our department performing effectively on the scene, our training has not served its purpose.

Training must be done in an efficient manner. This simply means keeping it focused enough to be manageable and meeting a stated objective. There are only so many hours in the day, and training must fit in with many other duties that we have to perform. Longer, elaborate training drills require more planning and can be scheduled appropriately, but the bulk of our training should address a particular skill or objective. We must break our training up and focus on what we can effectively accomplish in small drills.

The training we do must be relevant. This means it must support what we do and meet our operational needs. The calls that we



respond to will dictate what items we train on. They will reveal our needs, as those types of calls will dictate required proficiency. They will also show where we have weaknesses and a need for improvement.

The knowledge, skills, and abilities on which we train must be related to the jobs we do on the street as closely as possible. The relevance can best be measured by how our training can make us safer, more effective, and more efficient at the jobs we do.

This can carry a dual meaning. The first part of this is that we must train to meet the applicable standards where they exist. The standards exist for a reason. In fire or rescue training, the skills and evolutions we do should meet the applicable standard. In EMS training, we must meet the applicable standards and ensure we meet criteria established under medical protocol.

The second part of this is simple: Ensure your training meets a high standard. Don't set a low standard or low example for your personnel. Ensure that when you train, you train toward a purpose and set high expectations. Do not waste your people's time with poor training.

Just a few thoughts I have on training, I hope all is well with everyone. If the FFAM can be of any assistance to you or your department. Please reach out to the office or feel free to contact me by email grant_oetting@yahoo.com or my cell number 660-229-4525. Until next time, be safe my brothers and sisters.



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Independence 76 Fire Company

Fire Fest 2026

Saturday, July 18, 2026

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By RB Brown, Chairman

As chairman of the Missouri State Fair Volunteer Fire Department, I'm pleased to share a spring update as we prepare for another memorable year at the Missouri State Fair. The fair will be here before we know it, and with it returns the only fully operational 11 day fire department in the United States—an extraordinary example of volunteer service and interdepartmental cooperation.

NEW FIREHOUSE UPDATE AND VOLUNTEER NEEDS

Chief Eggen recently shared photos and an update on our new firehouse. The projected completion date is June 30th. Once construction is finished, we'll need many hands to move equipment, set up workspaces, and settle the station so it's ready for full operations. Everything must be in place before August 2nd for the annual board meeting. Please monitor our Facebook page for the latest schedules and volunteer opportunities.

A ONE OF A KIND DEPARTMENT SERVING A ONE OF A KIND FAIR

Operating under the Fire Fighters Association of Missouri (FFAM), the Missouri State Fair Volunteer Fire Department is unique: we stand up a fully functional fire and EMS operation exclusively for the 11 days of the state fair. For more than half a century we have provided:

- 24 hour EMS and first aid services
- Fire suppression and rescue operations
- Public safety support for hundreds of thousands of fairgoers
- Mutual aid to Pettis County Ambulance District, local fire departments, the City of Sedalia, and surrounding agencies

All ambulances, brush trucks, fire engines, and equipment used during the fair are **donated** by departments and districts across Missouri. Every firefighter, EMT, paramedic, and support member is a **volunteer**, donating time and expertise to protect citizens, vendors, exhibitors, and fairground buildings.

This effort is neighbors helping neighbors, departments supporting departments, and it is a source of pride for our entire state.

HOW TO JOIN US FOR THE 2026 FAIR
If you'd like to be part of something truly special, we are accepting applications for the **2026 Missouri State Fair Volunteer Fire Department**.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Be a member in good standing of the Fire Fighters Association of Missouri (FFAM).
- Your home department or district must be a current FFAM member.
- Applications are due by May 31st.

Apply online via the FFAM website under State Fair Fire, or through our Facebook page. Whether you're returning or applying for the first time, your service matters. You'll join a team that exemplifies professionalism, dedication, and a commitment to public safety during one of Missouri's largest events.

LOOKING AHEAD

With the new firehouse nearing completion, 2026 promises to be a milestone year. We look forward to welcoming volunteers, showcasing our new facility, and continuing the proud tradition of being the only 11 day fire department in the nation.

Thank you to our volunteers, partner departments, and the Missouri State Fair community for your continued support. Have a safe day, and we hope to see you at the fair.



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MO State Fair Volunteer FD

SERVE, LEARN, & CONNECT AT THE FAIR

By Larry Eggen, Public Information Officer

We invite you to volunteer at the 2026 Show-Me Stars and Stripes Missouri State Fair Fire Department August 13 – 23 in Sedalia. You may apply until June 1 at the Firefighters Association of Missouri website, ffam.org. You must be a member of the FFAM to apply. You may apply for 1 day or for all 12. We go in service on August 12 at 18:00 and out of service on Sunday August 23 at 22:00. Members gather each year to form a special fire department and emergency services for the fairgrounds. We are the only known department that forms for an event each year. We own no equipment but are incredibly lucky enough to have member departments willing to supply our equipment along with many vendors who showcase their products for our department. Volunteers come together each year to showcase their talents in service to the fairgoers. We provide fire protection and first aid with ambulance services and public education for activities during the fair. You will enjoy meeting and making new friends who like to give their time and knowledge and share it daily. The kids stop at the firehouse for apparatus tours of the donated

equipment and observe the training and demonstrations throughout the fair. It is a good time to interact with people and share your passion to help others and education of what you do in your profession. We staff Engines, Ambulances, Dispatch, First Aid and Public Relations slots each day. We cook all our own meals, and we invite you to share your cooking and grilling talents. You can enjoy the daily activities and training and learn a few new ideas from the rest of the crew. Please consider joining our department this year. We are celebrating 65 years of volunteering service to the State of Missouri this year as well as occupying our new firehouse. We will hold tours and an evening meal each Saturday of the fair for those who have served in the past and want to come back and visit. If you need assistance in getting to the station, please contact me and make prior arrangements. We will schedule several work weekends to put our equipment and furnishings in the building before the fair. Schedules will be on our Facebook page when we get possession of the building and need assistance. Contact me if you have any questions. I hope to see you at the fair!



By Rusty Darnell, Fire Chief

On Tuesday, April 7, 2026, the voters within the Strafford Fire Protection District voted with an enormous majority to approve a 9 million dollar bond extension. This will guarantee a new fire station, new apparatus, new rescue equipment, and a major remodel of existing station issues. We are very grateful to the citizens of this district. These funds allow us to defer some of the primary budget freeing up funds for more manpower, allowing us to provide even better service to our citizens. A special thank you to IAFF local 152 for all of their assistance in the campaigning of this issue.

Another topic that Strafford Fire Protection District is currently in the final stages of completing a drone vertiport with Valkrie UAS Solutions here at our Station 1. This will be the destination point from St. Louis supporting Mid-America Transplants Organ Allocations needs. They will be flying unmanned drones carrying organs, tissues, and blood to/from our site for delivery in Southwest Missouri. Any other questions feel free to call me.



One of the things I have learned over the course of my career in the fire service is that leadership lessons are everywhere if you are willing to look for them.

Sometimes they come from formal training programs, leadership books, or mentors who intentionally shape our development. But more often than not, the most meaningful lessons come from places we never expected. A conversation in the hallway. A comment made in passing. A short moment with someone whose experience carries weight.

How often have we walked away from an interaction and thought, “*That was nice,*” or “*That made me think,*” or occasionally even, “*That changed the way I look at things.*”

Leadership in the fire service has a way of unfolding like that. You spend years learning the job, developing your skills, and gaining experience. Just when you think you have things figured out, something happens that reminds you there is still far more to learn. In fact, the moment you start to believe you have all the answers is usually the moment you are reminded how much you still do not know.

That realization has shaped how I approach learning in this profession. The lessons are everywhere, but they are easy to miss if we are not paying attention. Every training event, every conversation, and every chance encounter can hold something valuable.

When I attend training events with firefighters and officers from across the country, I am always struck by how similar our challenges are. Departments may be different in size or location, but the issues we face often sound remarkably familiar. Leadership struggles. Organizational culture. Personnel challenges. Balancing tradition with change.

It becomes clear that most of us are searching for the same answers, just at different points in our journey. The reality is we will never find all of them. Leadership is too complex and people are too unpredictable for that. But that does not mean we stop looking.

Sometimes the most valuable lessons appear in places we least expect.

I experienced one of those moments during the Fire Service Leadership Enhancement

Program through the University of Missouri Fire and Rescue Training Institute. Our class had the opportunity to attend Firefighters Day at the Missouri State Capitol. After a series of presentations from fire service leaders across the state, along with remarks from the Governor, we were given a tour of the Capitol building by Missouri State Fire Marshal Tim Bean.

The tour began in the committee rooms where legislation is debated and moved through the House and Senate chambers where decisions that affect our profession are ultimately made. Eventually, we climbed our way to the top of the Capitol dome.

For many of us it was simply an interesting tour of an impressive building. But during the climb I found myself walking near Fire Marshal Bean and decided to ask him a question that had crossed my mind.

“How does someone get to your position?” I asked it mostly out of curiosity. The State Fire Marshal is a significant leadership position within Missouri’s fire service, and I was interested in understanding what kind of career path might lead someone there.

He did not answer right away. Instead he paused and said, “Let me think about that for a moment.”

The tour continued. We moved through different parts of the building and eventually began our descent from the dome. At that point he and I happened to be walking toward the back of the group.

He turned to me and said, “I’ve thought about your question.”

His answer caught me a little off guard.

“I never intended to become the State Fire Marshal,” he said. “It was never a goal of mine. It just happened.”

That statement alone challenged an assumption many of us carry in our careers. We often believe every step upward must be carefully planned. Instead, what followed was a simple story about a career that developed through opportunities, relationships, and a willingness to step forward when the moment presented itself.

LEADERSHIP LESSONS IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

By Curtis VanGaasbeek, Fire Chief

He talked about humble beginnings in the fire service. Like most of us, he started by doing the job and learning along the way. As he described the path his career took, one theme became clear: Opportunities had appeared throughout his career that could have easily been passed by.

Committee work. Assignments. Leadership roles. Chances to contribute in ways that extended beyond the basic expectations of the job.

Many firefighters encounter those opportunities at one point or another. The difference, he explained, was simply that he chose to take them.

He accepted the opportunity. He took the risk. He did the work necessary to make the most of the moment when it arrived.

What followed was a conversation that probably lasted no more than twenty minutes. By the time it ended though, I realized I had gained far more from that brief exchange than I expected.

When we reached the end of the tour, I thanked him for taking the time to answer my question. I also told him something else. “Whether you intended to or not,” I said, “you just gave me at least six leadership lessons in the last twenty minutes.”

Those lessons have stayed with me.

The first was **humility**.

Despite holding one of the most significant leadership positions in the state’s fire service,

there was no ego in his story. There was no effort to highlight personal accomplishments or elevate his own importance. Instead he spoke plainly about doing the work and being open to opportunities when they appeared.

That kind of humility is often what separates leaders people respect from those they simply follow.

The second lesson was the **value of relationships**.

Throughout his explanation it became clear that relationships played a significant role in how his career unfolded. The fire service is a profession built on trust. The connections we build with other firefighters, leaders, and organizations shape opportunities in ways we often do not fully appreciate at the time.

People remember how you treat them.

They remember whether you show up when it matters.

Those relationships often become the bridge to future opportunities.

The third lesson was the **importance of passing knowledge forward**.

He took the time to think about a simple question from someone he had just met and then gave a thoughtful response. That willingness to share experience is one of the strongest traditions in the fire service.

Much of what we know about this profession comes from lessons handed down by those who came before us.

The fourth lesson was the **reward of hard work**.

There was no magic formula in his story. No shortcuts. Just consistent effort and a willingness to put in the work when the opportunity appeared.

The fifth lesson was the **importance of simply showing up**.

Sometimes leadership opportunities begin with something as simple as being present and engaged. Showing up for training. Participating in discussions. Volunteering when something needs to be done.

Those small moments often open doors that were never visible before.

And finally there was perhaps the most powerful lesson of all.

Make people feel valued.

In a busy day filled with speeches, events, and responsibilities, he took the time to stop, reflect on a question, and give a thoughtful answer. That small act made a lasting impression.

It reinforced something I believe deeply about leadership. You do not have to be on a stage to influence someone. You do not have to give a formal lecture.

Sometimes the most meaningful leadership lessons happen in short conversations, unexpected encounters, or brief moments when someone shares their experience.

The fire service is full of those moments. But they only matter if we are paying attention.

Because the truth is, the next lesson that shapes your career might not come from a textbook, a conference, or a classroom.

It might come from a twenty minute conversation in the stairwell of the Capitol with someone who simply took the time to answer a question.

And in the fire service, those small moments of mentorship are often the ones that carry the greatest weight.





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SAVE THE DATE

September 11, 2026

Missouri State Capitol • 7:00 pm

The State of Missouri will commemorate the 25th anniversary of 9-11. The event will start at 5:00 pm with static displays of the military, first responders and Task Force 1. There will be a fly over during the event. The event will include an honor guard, the *Pledge of Allegiance*, the national anthem, *Taps*, *Amazing Grace*, guest speakers and a keynote speaker. It will conclude with the reading of the 2977 victim names that lost their lives on 9-11.

For more information you may contact the Missouri Patriot Day Committee at;

1203 Somerset Lane
Wardsville, MO. 65101
stevlock116@gmail.com
573-680-9809

RETA DIANNE SMILEY

August 12, 1981 • December 15, 2025

Reta Dianne Smiley, 44, of Galt, Missouri, passed away Monday, December 15, 2025 at University of Missouri Hospital in Columbia, Missouri.

Reta was born August 12, 1981, in Trenton, Missouri to Jimmie Leon and Margie Dianne (Hudson) Thomas. On April 29, 2000, she married Brian Smiley, he survives of the home.

Reta is also survived by: Her mother Margie Thomas of Harris on the family farm; Her children, Dustin Johnson and spouse Clinton of Chesapeake, Virginia, Colton Smiley and significant other Sheyenne Downing of Gallatin, Missouri, and Tracen Smiley and significant other Mariah Baugher of Galt; Grandchildren, Chaylynn Tucker and River Smiley; Brothers, Richard Thomas and wife Dina of Lathrop, Missouri and Jeffrey Thomas of the family farm; several aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews.

Reta was preceded in death by: Her father, Jimmie Thomas in 2002; grandparents, Frank and Dorothy Thomas and Edward and Dolores Hudson.

Reta grew up in the Newtown/Harris area, graduating from Newtown-Harris RIII School in 2000. She was on the Galt Fire Department for the last 15 years, also assisting with the Junior Fire Department, and serving on the Galt Fair board. She was a member of the Missouri Firefighters Association and Missouri State Fair Fire Department. She was serving as President of the Judson Cemetery board currently. Reta was a Sullivan County E-911 Dispatcher for the past 5 years. She enjoyed doing crafts and also collecting rocks and shot glasses.

In lieu of flowers, Memorial contributions are suggested to the Judson Cemetery or the Galt Fire Protection District Memorial Fund.



Missouri Fire Service Funeral Assistance Team

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ROY DALE SIMS

May 29, 1958 • January 26, 2026

Roy Dale Sims of West Plains, Missouri was born May 29, 1958, in Hayti, Missouri to Roy Thomas Sims and Lillian Savage Sims. He departed this life January 26, 2026, in Thayer, Missouri at the age of 67 years. Roy was united in marriage to Michelle Ward September 15, 2007.



He is survived by his wife Michelle of 18 years; four children and five bonus children Benjamin (Robyn) Sims, Anita (Ryan) Dickson, Pamela (Cody) Garner, Thomas Sims, Brett

(Kimberly) Wilcox, Amber (Danny) Gibson, Blaire and Logan, Damon Bowling, and Jessica Rudd; twenty-one grandchildren Dylan and Sydney Sims, Michael (Megan) James, Emma James, Morgan (Darius) Parks, Colten (Hannah) Garner, Austin Garner, Haley, Alena, Keyton, Tommy and Allison Sims, Connor, Wednesday and Ellanor Wilcox, Adalyn and Gracelyn Gibson, Alexis and MacKenzie Bowling, Samantha (Zach) Roller, and Maddison (Alec) Shrable; six great grandchildren Charlotte and Ella James, Kamari Morgan, Kaiden Martin, Dean Roller, and Braylee Shrable; four sisters Gletta Clark, Hope (Danny) Seibert, Pamela (Darrell) Wade, Angela Godwin, Father-in-law Bobby Ward, two brothers-in-law Clint Ward, and Jimmy (Ashley) Ward.

He was preceded in death by his parents Roy and Lillian Sims, mother-in-law Shirley Ward, one infant sister, two brothers-in-law Ron Clark and Brent Godwin, and one granddaughter Lillian Grace Sims.

Today we say goodbye to a man who didn't just live in our community, but helped build it, protect it, and believed in it with his whole heart.

Roy Sims dedicated his life to service. During his years in the fire service, he not only answered the call when his neighbors were in need but also carried a deep passion for helping others and keeping his community safe. Even after retiring from the West Plains Fire Department as Fire Chief, that commitment never slowed.

When Roy purchased Cover Lumber Co. in 2023, he continued serving in the way only he could. He provided more than lumber and supplies; he offered wisdom, encouragement, and a steady presence. He was someone you could count on, a familiar face, a trusted voice, and a man who genuinely cared about the people he served.

Roy believed in putting people first. He loved this community fiercely and worked tirelessly to make it stronger, safer, and better for future generations. His leadership, persistence, and quiet strength left an imprint that will not fade.

If you ever shook his hand, worked alongside him, or simply crossed paths with him, you felt it. Roy cared, and he proved it through his actions every single day.

OWEN "WES" LEY RHODES

June 6, 1942 • March 6, 2026

Owen Wesley "Wes" Rhodes, 83, passed away peacefully Friday afternoon, March 6, 2026 at his home in Brookfield, MO.

Owen Wesley "Wes" Rhodes, was born on June 6, 1942, the son of Carlos Arthur and Catherine Jane (Roberts) Rhodes in Macon, MO. Wes was a 1960 graduate of Brookfield High School, and a graduate from the Dallas School of Embalming and Institute of Mortuary Science in Dallas, TX. On April 14, 1967, he married Karen Lee Heath in Marceline, MO.



Wes owned and operated the Bowden-Rhodes Funeral Home and Ambulance service for years; he was a member of the Brookfield Fire Department for 54 years; he served Linn County as the Coroner for several years; he was a past member of the Brookfield Township Board; past member of the Linn County 4-H-FFA Fair Board; Brookfield Senior Center Board; Rose Hill Cemetery Board; Linn County Sheriff Deputy; Linn County 9th Circuit Juvenile Transport Officer and he was a truck driver.

Wes is survived by his wife Karen of the home; son and daughter-in-law, Roger and Robin Rhodes; grandson, Nicholas and wife Skyler; granddaughter, Sarah Tate; brothers, Art Rhodes and Bill and Cindy Rhodes; sister-in-law, Margie and Chuck Craig; brother-in-law, Vernon and Connie Heath; several nieces, nephews and other relatives.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a nephew, Travis Heath.

Per his wish's cremation will take place. Arrangements are under the direction of Rhodes Funeral Home, Brookfield, MO.

Wes was a big supporter of his grandson's career as an Ag Teacher and FFA Advisor for Green City FFA and memorial donations have been requested to Green City FFA, payable to Green City R-I and can be left at or mailed to the Rhodes Funeral Home, 216 Linn Street, Brookfield, MO. 64628.

Roy was a faithful member of the United Freewill Baptist Church of West Plains where he exemplified the church values to "Love God, Love People, Serve God, Serve People".

Our community has lost a true pillar, but Roy Sims' legacy lives on in the lives he touched, the places he helped build, and the community he gave so much of himself to.

Rest easy, papa Roy and thank you for everything.



Director's Comments



Harry Ward
Director

Another Spring has arrived and with that comes rain and storms. For me I don't mind the storms. Sometimes it is nice just to sit and watch the lightning and hear the thunder. I know that in a lot of areas in Missouri that are dry and need rain.

As we look at the end of our fiscal year, we are busy with courses from all 4 corners of the state. Keep looking for training opportunities near your area.

FIRE SERVICE LEADERSHIP ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Our Fire Service Leadership Enhancement Program (FSLEP) had the largest course we have ever had. The students had some amazing presenters over the three sessions. Part of the course was going to Jefferson City where the students had an

opportunity to talk with the State Fire Marshall Tim Bean. The class then went to the Capitol for a tour and opportunities to talk with Representative Tim Taylor and other legislatures. The class had the opportunity to meet with Governor Kehoe in his



Find the Full Training Schedule at MUFRTI.org

DATE	COURSE	CITY	CONTACT	PHONE
05/07	Through the Lock	Lee's Summit	Doug Wheeldon	(816) 518-4675
05/08	Emergency Vehicle Driver Training	Pilot Knob	Johnny Setzer	(573) 546-3951
05/16	Small Machinery Extrication Basic	Wright City	Mike Holtmeier	(636) 485-9197
05/16	Certified Fire and Ambulance District Board Training	Poplar Bluff	Bob Fredwell	(573) 785-6049
05/16	Emergency Vehicle Driver Training	Warsaw	Johnathan Evans	(660) 221-6161
05/17	Small Machinery Extrication Advanced	Wright City	Mike Holtmeier	(636) 485-9197
05/18	The Lithium-Ion Revolution	Doniphan	Joseph Gates	(720) 315-4069
05/20	Certified Advanced Fire & Ambulance Dist Training: Property Taxes 101	Columbia	FRTI	(800) 869-3476
05/20	Certified Advanced Fire & Ambulance Dist Training: Property Taxes 101	Columbia	FRTI	(800) 869-3476
05/23	Vehicle Fire Fighting	Clever	Mike Gooch	(417) 236-3630
05/29	Structural Fire Fighting Techniques	Maryville`	Morgan Wheeler	(816) 383-4864
05/29	Vehicle Rescue: Operations	Hurley	Jimmy Phillips	(417) 635-4401
05/29	The Lithium-Ion Revolution	N. Kansas City	Greg Hook	(816) 415-8008
05/30	The Lithium-Ion Revolution	Nixa	Josh Stillwell	(417) 466-8543
06/05	Basic Pump Operations	Kennett	Lance Davis	(573) 888-5337
06/06	Truck Company Operations Without a Truck	Savannah	Tom Sontheimer	(816) 617-5826
06/06	Emergency Response to Ammonia Incidents	Charleston		sematraining.com
06/06	Vehicle Fire Fighting	Rolla	Roger Hayes	(573) 341-2211
06/10	Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator: Aerial	Willard	Jeremy Bumgarner	(417) 709-0536
06/13	Vehicle Rescue: Operations	Huntsville	Tony Bell	(660) 651-6592
06/19	Introduction to the Fire Service	Monett	Daniel Alber	(602) 384-1015
06/20	The Lithium-Ion Revolution	Holden	Brian Martley	(816) 590-0142
06/25	Certified Advanced FD & AD Training: Budgeting & Property Tax Levy Rates	Columbia	FRTI	(800) 869-3476
06/25	Certified Advanced FD & AD Training: Budgeting & Property Tax Levy Rates	Columbia	FRTI	(800) 869-3476
07/11	The Lithium-Ion Revolution	Fairview		sematraining.com
07/11	Vehicle Fire Fighting	East Lynne	Anthony Faulkenberry	(816) 805-3599
08/01	Emergency Vehicle Driver Training	Sedgewickville	Dana Craft	(573) 513-2598
08/18	School Bus Rescue	Republic	Jerod youb	(417) 771-8180
09/15	First Due: Pre-Planning for the Company Officer	Lee's Summit	Doug Wheeldon	(816) 578-9211
09/18	Farm Machinery Rescue	Monett	Daniel Alber	(602) 384-1015

office. For some students they were able to climb all the way to the top of the dome of the Capitol. We are grateful to Rep. Tim Taylor, Tim Bean, and Governor Kehoe for giving us some of his time to talk with us.

2026 SAFETY STAND DOWN

2026 Safety Stand Down takes place June 14-20. The theme for these years is "Fit to Serve, Fit for Life." The campaign encourages all responders to take a proactive approach to their fitness, so they are ready to serve their department and community now and in the future. The daily focus topics help responders go from the foundations of functional fitness to sustainable ongoing success.

MU FIRE AND RESCUE TRAINING INSTITUTE RECOGNIZED AT FIRE FIGHTERS DAY AT THE CAPITOL

The University of Missouri Fire and Rescue Training Institute (MU FRTI) proudly participated in this year's annual *Fire Fighters Day at the Capitol*.

During the event, MU FRTI was formally recognized by the Missouri Division of Fire Safety for its vital role in delivering high-quality, professional training to firefighters and emergency responders across the state.

This recognition highlights the important contribution MU FRTI continues to make in strengthening Missouri's fire service through accredited training, leadership development, and support for first responders.

We are honored to be recognized and remain committed to serving Missouri's firefighters with excellence.

We appreciate the continued support of our state partners and agencies in the delivery of fire and emergency service training MU FRTI's mission remains focused on providing the very best safest training for the Missouri fire service and emergency first responders.

If we can be of any assistance, please contact us at 800-869-3476 or 573-882-4735 or go to mufrti.org



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RUN TO REMEMBER & HONOR OUR HEROES

The Tunnel to Towers Foundation



On September 12, 2026, the 11th Annual Tunnel to Towers 5K Run/Walk - Jefferson City, will be held in downtown Jefferson City, Missouri. 2026 marks the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the U.S.A. and the volunteer team for the Jefferson City 5K is thankful for the opportunity to honor and remember the 406 first responders and nearly 3,000 civilians that lost their lives on that day. The family friendly event begins with a patriotic opening ceremony on the south lawn of the Missouri State Capitol and recognizes today's first responders, veterans and active service members that are prepared to run toward danger when others are running away. Many firefighters run in the event in their full turnout gear, and it is common to see law enforcement officers, in uniform, running in the Jefferson City event. Join us on September 12th, by registering at runwalkjeffersoncity.t2t.org/ Follow us on Facebook and Instagram @t2tjeffcity

To date, 13 first responder families in Missouri, that have lost a parent have been provided or in the process of receiving a mortgage free home through the Tunnel to Towers Fallen First Responder Home Program. Two veterans have received homes through the Smart Home Program, and one family has received a mortgage free home through the Gold Star Family Home Program.



The Tunnel to Towers Foundation was founded shortly after 9/11 by the brothers and sisters of FDNY Firefighter, Stephen Siller. By the age of 10 Stephen had lost both parents and understood that time was precious and accomplished much in his 34 years.

On September 11, 2001, Stephen, who was assigned to Brooklyn's Squad 1, had just finished his shift and was on his way to play golf with his brothers when he got word over his scanner of a plane hitting the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Upon hearing the news, Stephen called his wife Sally and asked her to tell his brothers he would catch up with them later. He returned to Squad 1 to get his gear.

Stephen drove his truck to the entrance of the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, but it had already been closed for security purposes.

Determined to carry out his duty, he strapped 60lbs of gear to his back, raced on foot through the tunnel to the Twin Towers, where he gave up his life while saving others.

Stephen was a loving husband and father to five children. He was a devoted brother, dedicated fireman, loyal friend and committed neighbor. His life brought great light to those around him. His family has kept that light glowing by helping the families of other first responders and military service members, many of our catastrophically injured military service members, and Veterans that have found themselves homeless after serving our Country.

Questions about the event can be sent by email to jeffersoncity@t2t.org. More information regarding Tunnel to Towers events and programs can be found at T2T.ORG.



Tunnel^{TO}Towers Foundation



RUN & WALK
JEFFERSON CITY, MO



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SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

Missouri State Capitol – South Lawn
201 W. Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Run starts at **8:30 AM**

Do you have a question?
jeffersoncity@t2t.org

The National Run, Walk & Climb Series was inspired by the Tunnel to Towers 5K Run & Walk NYC, which retraces FDNY Firefighter Stephen Siller's final footsteps on 9/11. The RWC Series consists of over 80 runs, walks and climbs in different cities across the nation, paying homage to America's heroes.



For Event Info & Registration,
Visit us at **T2T.ORG**



@TUNNEL2TOWERS #T2TRUN

Fun fact – the NVFC Fall meeting this year will be held at the Owensboro, KY Convention Center in late September. Same place that Supporting Hero's will be holding their Gaila on August 1.

The past 90 days has largely consumed the internal information exchange of NVFC involving the 29 states (Missouri not included) regarding the OSHA Fire Brigade Standard. Due to potential concerns with the possibility of joining a class action depending on what OSHA proposes to enforce, NVFC just recently retained legal counsel in this specialty area.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

Keith Smith reported that District Director 1, 3, 7, 11 and 14 will be up for election in 2026. Interested people need to contact Keith Smith or Ken Hoover by March 1.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Secretary Miller reported that the next magazine submission deadline is April 17.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Larry Eggen reported that scholarship applications are due February 28. There will be 3 high school and 2 continuing education.

STATE FAIR COMMITTEE

Rick Dozier reported that they received a grant for five AEDs. Applications for fair volunteers are online. The new building is progressing well, and they will be conducting background checks on all applicants.

HISTORIAN REPORT

No report was given.

FIRE FUNERAL TEAM REPORT

Keith Smith reported that in 2025, the team responded to 15 LODD and 35 non-LODD. Due to changes in the law, the numbers may continue to rise.

There is an *Honoring our Fallen Heroes Act* with a presumptive cancer clause for public safety officers. The rules and regulations haven't been finalized yet. The law back dates to 2020 with a minimum benefit of \$365k. They are currently collecting names that may be eligible.

EMS FUNERAL TEAM REPORT

Jaime Miller reported on behalf of Greg Wright that they have had 6 non-LODD and 1 LODD since the last FFAM Meeting with 2 pending this coming week.

Our state fundraiser kicks off today, February 1. First prize is \$1,500 in Bass Pro Gift cards, 2nd prize is a Surface Pro laptop computer, 3rd prize \$500 cash. Tickets are available at the FFAM convention in Liberty at our booth or from any EMS Funeral team member. 1500 tickets only to be sold. Drawing when all are sold or in August.

FOUNDATION REPORT

Report from Keith Smith as follows:

Per our By-laws, we held the annual election of Foundation Officers at our January 17 meeting.

Keith Smith, Chairman; Kenneth Hoover, Vice Chairman; Gail Hagens, Secretary. We also retained the services of Courtney Shiverdecker as the Treasurer.

Don Wilmeshier has retired from the Foundation Board. President Jennings is taking nominations for this vacant position. Fun Fact, Don started his service on the FFAM Board of Directors in 1975. Including his tenure with the Foundation, Don has given 50 years of service.

We are currently at 98 "Service Recognition" Names for the 2026 services. Two Line of Duty names are currently confirmed, and we are awaiting other determinations. Some of those names were given Service Recognition in the 2025 programs while we wait. Reminder that we are moving away from using "Non-Line of Duty" as we attempt to improve a better understanding of Service Recognition vs. formal LODD Honors. There has been confusion in the past, especially for Survivor Families still awaiting administrative determinations.

The *2026 Annual Memorial Services* will be October 3-4. Several of you assisted with one or both services last year and that was a significant operational improvement in managing things for both services. It made a measurable difference. We need that assistance again and yes – even more people as we prepare for 2026. Those of you who assisted, thank you and please sign up again. Those who gave it some thought, but for whatever reason did not work out, please reconsider and try to arrange either Saturday or Sunday. Both would be a blessing. More arm twisting to come.

All engraving went up in price for 2026. This is the first increase since the memorial was dedicated in 2002. Service Walls are

\$175, 4x8 Bricks are \$175 and 8x8x Bricks are \$300.

We will have an information table at *Winter Fire School*. Larry Eggen has a raffle supporting the Museum Project. Please come by, visit and stuff a pocket with a few tickets.

Firestorm Charities has again selected the Foundation as their primary beneficiary from their *2026 911 Hero's Ride* and activities. This will be September 5 starting at Outlaw Harley Davidson in Blue Springs and conclude at the Branded Steakhouse Entertainment venue in Richmond, MO.

Fun Fact, the Village of Kingdom City has included the Memorial and Future Museum in their Facebook video shorts on several occasions. It is cool what they do with these videos.

The next Foundation meeting is Wednesday evening March 11. If you have anything to bring before the Foundation, please contact us before the 11th.

The August FFAM Board of Directors meeting will be moved to August 9 to coincide with the State Fair.

President Jennings adjourned the meeting at 11:10 am.

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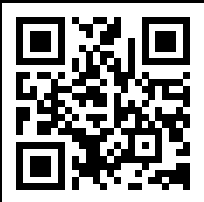
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