

PAST PRESENT ALLEN BALDWIN PRESENTED THE 2024 W. C. "BILL" SMITH PRESIDENT'S AWARD

WARRENTON'S CHIEF CHRISTOPHER ROSS HONORED WITH THE GLENN A. GAINES LEADERSHIP LEGACY AWARD

11TH ANNUAL CHIEFS SUMMIT HELD

WILLIAMSBURG 5K RAISES \$'S FOR FOUNDATION!

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ALL DELIVERIES

ALL STOCK UNITS









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Corrections:

In the April edition of Commonwealth Chief two errors were shown:

On pg. 23 in the article on Foundation Scholarships, it was reported that the scholarships were presented during the 2025 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference. Since the conference ended early, that presentation did not happen. The scholarship will be presented at a different time.

On pg. 35 it was reported that the EFO graduates were honored at the 2025 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference. For the same reason, that presentation did not happen. The flags were actually mailed to the graduates.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Kevin Good 2025 VFCA President Ft. Belvoir Fire Department

VFCA Members.

I hope this message is finding each of you doing well overall in life, and ready to be challenged every time you put on your uniform or don your PPE to serve the Commonwealth. This is a calling and an opportunity to never walk by a problem you can help solve.

It has been an honor to represent the VFCA over the last several months as your President and I'm grateful to each of you for the opportunity. The Executive Leadership Team has recently met with Secretary of Health and Human Resources Janet Kelly, Deputy Secretary of Public Safety & Homeland Security Sonny Daniels, VDEM State Coordinator John Scrivani, OEMS Director Dr. Maria Beerman-Foat, Virginia Department of Fire Programs Director Brad Creasy, numerous public safety association leaders, sent letters to Congressional members of Virginia concerning the NFA impacts, and attended Secretary Cole's farewell luncheon. There is change upon us and will always be, but the constant takeaway is the Maori proverb I learned from a great friend from New Zealand which ponders, "What is the most important thing in the world?" The answer is 'he tangata, he tangata, he tangata' – it is the people, the people, the people, the people, the

I am proud to be the leader of a young (not just by age) but progressive fire ϑ emergency services organization—change is a constant and is expected, but the way we change should not be rash and without thought or preparation. The fire and emergency services community has become young very quickly, in all aspects, and we should not take the new ideas of our teams lightly; our entire team has great merit and with greater influence they can positively impact the job we love. As leaders, mentoring our team, at all levels, bringing positive change is one of the most important things we work on, even when others may not think so.

Effective communication within a team is important and requires effort at every level. The VFCA continues to adapt to the latest changes in Virginia to sustain being the trusted voice of fire service leaders in Virginia, promoting professional growth, collaboration, and innovation. Our association is dedicated to supporting every rank by fostering positive relationships among all ranks and shaping the future of fire service. The VFCA continues to adapt to the latest changes in Virginia, and we are your voice to advocate for all ranks. My ask to each of you is to please help your Board of Directors remain informed of any impacts in your community where we can help or be a part of your communications strategy.

To make up from our cancelled conference, we hit the road to present the 2024 VFCA awards and it truly has been an honor to be able to make many memories along the way. I'm also extremely proud to have been able to personally say thank you to our Conference sponsors. One of the most rewarding awards to present was to Henrico County Division of Fire's FF Larvell Mason with the 2024 Lt, Brad Clark Memorial Leadership Award at the 11th Annual Fire Chiefs Summit. FF Mason had one his biggest fans present-his mother and that was special for everyone in attendance to share the opportunity and celebrate an emerging leader who stands outs for serving relentlessly. It takes a family!

Your Board of Directors are hard at work and there are so many "thank you's" but I specifically would like to call out VFCA Second Vice-President Marci Stone for organizing all aspects of the 11th Annual Fire Chiefs Summit and for Vice-President Deputy Chief Abbey Johnston who served as the Master of Ceremonies at this event and led over 85 Chief Officers through this year's summit. Additionally, I'd like to recognize the Company Officer's Section Vice-President Captain Parker Coughlin and the Community Risk Reduction/Life Safety Section President Battalion Chief Charlie Knowles for their leadership to grow these sections and provide focused opportunities for members to get fully involved in the VFCA.

The VFCA has undertaken a program to connect small rural fire departments with extremely limited funding to Fire Departments who may be resourced and supported by a more robust fiscal structure to share serviceable emergency vehicles & equipment. Virginia has organizations trying to provide service in ambulances and fire apparatus from the 1980's. We want to spread the word about this program to request organizations that are getting ready to retire apparatus from service to consider supporting these organizations. Equipment & vehicles considered for donation should be capable of providing frontline service now. If you have a serviceable piece of fire equipment or ambulance that is available for donation, please consider contacting the Executive Director of the VFCA Chris Eudailey at ceudailey@ vfca.us who will facilitate the donation to a worthy organization.

Lastly, at the end of July, the VFCA will come together with eleven Virginia Fire and EMS Stakeholder Organizations as well as the representatives of the major related state agencies for the annual Virginia Fire and EMS Stakeholder Summit. We will develop the 2026 Virginia Fire and EMS Legislative Priorities and Issues booklet with the goal to publish by September 2025. We will need all members to help connect with legislator's while out of session on these topics. If you have a specific matter that you want to ensure the VFCA is aware of, please let 1st Vice-President Kevin Duck know, as he leads our legislative committee.

Thank you once again for your commitment to serving the people of Virginia as fire service leaders. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at kevin.n.good.civ@army.mil should you have any questions or would like to connect with the VFCA.





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SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS – BOD Swearing In

After several weeks delay, on Saturday, March 22nd, the 2025 Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Awards and Recognition Ceremony was held in Williamsburg where this year's officers and BOD were installed. The delay occurred because of a very unusual (13°) snow storm occurred in Virginia Beach and a local state of emergency was declared and the 2025 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference had to be cancelled.

In addition to installing the Officers and BOD, several awards and recognitions were presented at the gathering.



Group gathering



New Board members introduced to attendees



2025 Health & Safety Award winner, Spotsylvania Co.



President receiving his gavel



SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS – Gaines Award

ASSOCIATION HONORS WARRENTON'S CHIEF CHRISTOPHER ROSS WITH THE GLENN A. GAINES LEADERSHIP LEGACY AWARD



L to R: Loudoun Deputy Chief and Div. 7 Vice President Todd Lupton, Chief Christopher Ross, President Kevin Good present helmet to Ross

Photo: Kevin Good

This annual award recognizes an individual for superior leadership ϑ actions that have elevated the fire service profession within the Commonwealth of Virginia through mentoring, teaching ϑ sharing outstanding contributions. Any current career or volunteer firefighter up to and including a chief officer within the Commonwealth of Virginia is eligible to compete for this award.

After being nominated by the Warrenton Volunteer Fire Company, Chief Christopher S. Ross was selected for this year's prestigious VFCA Chief Glenn A. Gaines Leadership Award. It was presented at the Warrenton Volunteer Fire Company's 101st Annual Awards Banquet on April 26, 2025 at the WVFC Station 1.

Chief Christopher Ross, who's distinguished 45-year career in the fire service, including 31 years with the federal government, exemplifies unparalleled dedication, technical expertise, and leadership. Chief Ross' legacy of service to his agency, his community, and to the broader fire service is one that has not only shaped countless careers but has also had a profound, lasting impact on the profession itself. His exemplary leadership, mentorship, and commitment to

professional development make him a deserving candidate for this prestigious award

Chief Ross' journey in the fire service began more than four decades ago at Warrenton Volunteer Fire Company at an age before he was technically eligible. Living blocks away from the

firehouse he could be found training and completing work details with the volunteer members—chasing his dreams.

He started with his formalized fire service education in the Fauquier County High School Fire Science program to obtain his firefighter certification as a junior member. Chief Ross is an active life member today and currently serving as the Department's Fire Chief. Through his passion for helping others, he has become synonymous with professional growth and developmental programs directly contributing to the volunteer fire and EMS providers service capabilities in Fauquier County. His service in the federal government culminated in his role as Assistant Chief of Training at Fort Belvoir, where he was instrumental in developing and implementing regional training programs that set the standard for operational readiness and safety in Northern Virginia. In this capacity, Chief Ross built the foundation for the Fort Belvoir training division, ensuring that it became a cornerstone of the department's success. His vision not only improved operational efficiency but also enhanced the department's ability to respond to emergencies effectively, saving lives and property.

As a mentor, Chief Ross has had an immeasurable impact regardless of his pay status. His leadership continues the technical aspects of firefighting, focusing equally on developing the next generation of leaders. He instilled a sense of professionalism and responsibility in all those who worked under him, encouraging them to strive for excellence and continue their education. Many current leaders in the fire service can trace their careers directly to the guidance and wisdom provided by Chief Ross. His mentorship is not limited to his immediate colleagues but extends to the larger fire service community, as evidenced by his tireless work as an instructor and educator.

Perhaps even more notable is Chief Ross' active involvement in the Town of Warrenton's community outreach and service projects. Through initiatives such as leading the Toys for Tots Santa Runs, he has demonstrated a commitment to helping those in need, especially during the holiday season. Chief Ross' involvement in these events goes beyond organizing charitable efforts; he personally engages with his community, using his position to inspire others to give back. His personal contributions to Toys for Tots have brought joy to countless children, further solidifying his role as a leader who cares about people, both within and outside the fire service. This is just one of the many examples of his abilities to go above and beyond.

Chief Ross's dedication to professional development is exemplified through his commitment to teaching first responders at all levels. Even after his retirement from federal service, he continued to offer his expertise as an instructor, particularly in EMT training, where he consistently volunteers his time year after year. His technical competence in emergency medical services, combined with his clear and effective teaching methods, has equipped countless students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life-saving roles. Chief Ross' ability to explain complex concepts in a manner that is both accessible and engaging has earned him the respect of all who have had the privilege to learn from him.

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS – President's Award

His technical knowledge, coupled with his understanding of the broader needs of the fire service, allows Chief Ross to provide insights that go beyond routine training. He teaches not just to meet certification requirements, but to ensure that those under his instruction develop the critical thinking skills needed to respond to dynamic and high-pressure situations. His approach to teaching has led to higher levels of competency and confidence among his students, which directly translates to safer and more effective emergency responses. Chief Ross' technical competence is second to none. Throughout his career, he has maintained a high level of proficiency in both firefighting and emergency medical services. His deep understanding of fire and EMS protocols, combined with a keen awareness of emerging best practices, allowed him to develop training programs that were not only comprehensive but also forward-thinking. His contributions to the advancing Warrenton's training division are particularly noteworthy, as he helped establish a framework that ensured the continuous professional development of every member of the department. Working with volunteer members of different backgrounds and time availabilities for determining the best opportunity for them to obtain training as a new member, sustain certification compliance, support advancement in professional development. He knows one size doesn't fit all and he make sure everyone who desires to serve as a volunteer can do so while upholding the professional standards required by the public.

As a leader, Chief Ross exemplifies the qualities that are the hallmark of great mentorship: patience, integrity, and the ability to inspire others. His leadership style emphasizes collaboration, inclusivity, and a commitment to continual improvement. He understands that leadership is about more than just directing others—it is about empowering them to succeed and fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and supported. His legacy as a mentor is defined not only by the knowledge, he imparted, but also by the example he set in living the values of professionalism, selflessness, and dedication to service.

Chief Ross' leadership extends far beyond the confines of his official duties. Even in retirement, his influence continues to be felt as he serves as Fire Chief of the Warrenton Volunteer Fire Company. In this capacity, he has revitalized the department's level of service by strengthening its training programs, improving operational procedures, and fostering a culture of teamwork and professionalism. His leadership within Warrenton is a testament to his unwavering commitment to public service and his belief in the importance of volunteerism in the fire service.

Chief Ross also recognizes the importance of education and community engagement in the broader context of emergency services. His teaching of EMT classes is not only a demonstration of his technical skills, but also a reflection of his dedication to fostering stronger connections between first responders and the communities they serve. Through his volunteer work and teaching, Chief Ross has instilled a sense of service and duty in others, influencing not just his peers. but also the future generations of firefighters, EMTs, and community leaders. He has mentored and assisted so many new instructors in the area to carry on his sense of commitment to learning.

In every phase of his career, Chief Christopher Ross has demonstrated extraordinary technical competence, exceptional leadership, and an unwavering commitment to mentoring others. Whether serving in the federal government, teaching in the classroom, or leading the Warrenton Volunteer Fire Company, he

has consistently exemplified the very best qualities of the fire service. His legacy is not just one of service, but of profound, lasting impact on the careers of those he has mentored and the communities he has served. For his contributions to the fire service, his leadership, and his tireless dedication to mentoring the next generation of emergency responders, Chief Christopher Ross is most deserving of this distinguished award.

BALDWIN HONORED WITH 2024 PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Vance Cooper



L to R: Past Presidents Baldwin and Vance Cooper

On Saturday, March 22nd at the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Awards and Recognition Ceremony, outgoing VFCA President, Vance Cooper, named Chief Allen Baldwin, as the recipient of the 2024 VFCA President's Award. Chief Baldwin was selected based on his incredible commitment to Virginia's fire service.

Allen Baldwin was chosen for the VFCA President's Award because he is an excellent relationship builder. This is paramount for an association like ours to succeed through leadership, advocacy, and education. The most impactful relationship he started was joining forces with Virginia Professional Fire Fighters. As a result, we began participating in Lobby Day and aligning Virginia's Fire Service priorities. By combining our efforts we became stronger and generated impactful legislation, connected resources and sent meaningful messages. Allen knows to go far you can't go alone. This exemplifies the meaning of the President's Award and I am very proud to present him with this honor.

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association W.C. "Bill" Smith President's Award has been awarded by the VFCA President since 2009. This award is chosen by the president for an individual who has provided some type of influence and support to the president during his term in office.

Congratulations Chief Baldwin!



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SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS – Governor's Awards

GOVERNOR GLENN YOUNGKIN RECOGNIZES RECIPIENTS OF 2024 GOVERNOR'S FIRE SERVICE AWARDS



Photo: VDFP

March 31, VFCA, VDFP and members from the fire service community were are able to come together and celebrate the 2024 Governor's Fire Service Award Winners at the Governor's Mansion.

Special thanks to Governor Youngkin and the First Lady for hosting the awards at the Governor's Mansion.

Congratulations once again to our 2024 Award Winners!

The prestigious awards, established in 2002, recognize excellence in Virginia's fire service and were expected to be presented during the 2025 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach. Due to weather, these award recipients had to be honored at a later date.

"These award recipients embody excellence, dedication, and leadership in the fire service, and I am honored to recognize their contributions to public safety across the commonwealth," said Governor Glenn Youngkin. "In collaboration with Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Terry Cole, we celebrate and thank these recipients for their unwavering dedication and commitment to safeguarding our commonwealth."

"I commend each of these departments and individuals for their outstanding service and dedication," said Virginia Department of Fire Programs Executive Director Brad Creasy. "Their tireless commitment to protecting our communities and bravery in the face of danger is inspiring. These recipients exemplify the very best of the fire service and it is my honor to recognize their contributions to the

fire service."

VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEF OF THE YEAR

Keith Johnson, Loudoun County Fire and Rescue

A fourth-generation firefighter with over 42 years of service, Chief Keith Johnson has been a transformative leader in Virginia's fire service. His career is marked by innovation, leadership, and a steadfast commitment to the fire service. After retiring from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue in 2014, he joined Loudoun County Fire and Rescue as Assistant Chief of Operations and became System Chief in 2018. Under his leadership, the department implemented the award-winning FACT*R field blood delivery program and acquired a metro training prop to enhance firefighter preparedness when Metro was expanding into the county. Chief Johnson played a key role in developing Loudoun County's Combined System and has been a strong advocate for legislative initiatives benefiting public safety. Chief Johnson currently serves as chairman of the Virginia Fire Services Board and as a member of the Virginia Board of Housing and Community Development.

Jerry "Jay" Ritchie, Harrisonburg Hose Company No. 4

Chief Jerry "Jay" Ritchie has been acting Chief for three and half years but has been in the fire service since the age of 15 with 25 years of service both as a medic and firefighter for Winchester and Harrisonburg. After his retirement, he returned as the Training Officer for Hose Company No. 4 in 2020. In 2023, Chief Ritchie started the first volunteer fire academy for its members in the region. He taught Firefighter I and Firefighter II courses along with Hazmat Operations, EVOC, Basic Pump Operator, and CPR/First Aid. In the last year, he has been able to staff 12-hour duty crews seven nights a week and coverage during the day at least four out of seven days. Chief Ritchie has begun his second fire academy that includes members from four other departments and four career personnel from a different county. Through Chief Ritchie's leadership, the department is back to being the prestigious department that they were known for 20 years ago.

VIRGINIA FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Kerstenn Rodgers, City of Winchester Fire & Rescue

Kerstenn Rodgers is a dedicated firefighter-paramedic known for her leadership in public education, peer support, and community engagement. In her career, she has become a certified firefighter, progressed through her EMS certification to a paramedic level, and become involved in the department's public information office, public education, and peer support programs. She is a multi-faceted employee who brings a positive attitude to every project she is involved in and displays a genuine and contagious love for the fire and EMS service.

Trevor Baldwin, Pamplin Volunteer Fire Department and Campbell County Company 18

With 18 years of service, Trevor Baldwin has significantly enhanced emergency response operations in his community. In addition to his duties with the Pamplin Volunteer Fire Department, he also volunteers on a Facility Fire Brigade at a major business in the area, where he holds the rank of Captain and previously served as Battalion Chief. In this role, he oversees 10 other emergency response personnel trained in fire, EMS, and hazmat response. His leadership in fire ground command and commitment to training have strengthened volunteer fire services in Virginia.

EXCELLENCE IN VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES

Henrico County Division of Fire

Henrico County Division of Fire is a highly regarded department known for its dedication to training and regional partnerships. Responding to over 55,000 calls annually, Henrico Fire has maintained international accreditation for over 25 years. The department has been instrumental in supporting large-scale statewide training events, ensuring fire service personnel across Virginia receive advanced and essential training.

Goochland County Department of Fire-Rescue & Emergency Services

Goochland Fire-Rescue has revolutionized fire service training with the construction of a \$1.2 million live fire structure. This facility enhances local and regional training capabilities, addressing previous challenges in conducting live fire exercises. Goochland's leadership in fire training innovation ensures firefighters are well-prepared to serve their community effectively.

EXCELLENCE IN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

Salem Fire Marshal's Office, Salem Fire and EMS Department

On May 11, 2024, Salem Fire and EMS collaborated with the Southwest Virginia Chapter of the American Red Cross for a smoke alarm installation event, impacting 72 homes and 177 individuals. This initiative focused on mobile home parks in the east Salem, providing residents with 97 new smoke detectors and enhancing fire safety awareness.

EXCELLENCE IN VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICE TRAINING

HB2451 Electric Vehicle Lithium-Ion Battery Online Training Work Group (Jasen Dodson, William Vannoy, John Walser, Richard Grassel, Lawrence Lippincott, Amanda Kennedy)

These individuals played a crucial role in expanding fire service training, including legislative efforts to enhance electric vehicle fire response training. Through countless hours of research and collaboration, this workgroup produced the mandated Electric Vehicle, Lithium-Ion Battery awareness course. This is the first mandated fire training in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Their contributions have significantly improved training opportunities and emergency preparedness across Virginia.

John Bledsoe, Wise Volunteer Fire Department

John Bledsoe has been a key adjunct instructor for Virginia's fire service, developing and delivering mayday programs statewide. As an assistant chief of Wise Volunteer Fire Department, his leadership has strengthened regional training efforts, including the expansion of the Wise Regional School, which reached a record attendance of over 400 students in 2024. His willingness to support any class at any time reflects his dedication to fire training throughout the commonwealth.

OUTSTANDING FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE

Fairfax County Rescue 439 C-shift, Battalion 401 C-shift, Loudoun County Rescue 635 B-Shift, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue/Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue

On the evening of February 16, 2024, Loudoun County Engine 618 and Truck 611 were on scene of a gas leak in Sterling, Virginia. The explosion caused the Line

of Duty Death of Firefighter Trevor Brown from Sterling Volunteer Fire Company and injured 11 other firefighters that were on scene. With two firefighters trapped in the basement, Battalion 401, Rescue 439, and Rescue 635, tunneled into the burning debris pile to access the two firefighters that had called maydays. Their selfless actions led to the successful rescue of two trapped firefighters, showcasing extraordinary dedication and teamwork in the face of extreme danger.

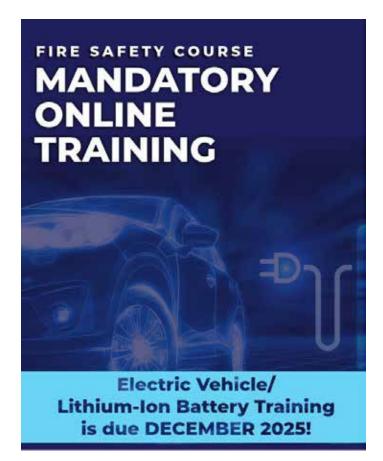
Augusta County Fire-Rescue

On August 24, 2024, Augusta County Fire-Rescue, with assistance from multiple public safety partners, executed a complex rescue operation after receiving an emergency alert from a hiker. Through seamless coordination, including the use of a hoist-capable helicopter, emergency responders successfully extracted and transported the injured individual to UVA Medical Center. This incident highlights the effectiveness of regional emergency response collaboration.

PRIVATE SECTOR EXCELLENCE IN VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICE SUPPORT

Chief Todd LeDuc (Ret.), Deputy CEO, Life Scan Wellness Centers

Life Scan Wellness Centers provides comprehensive firefighter health screenings, benefiting over 4,000 Virginia first responders annually. Their efforts in early cancer detection and occupational health advocacy have greatly improved firefighter well-being across the commonwealth. Additionally, Life Scan has been a leader in publishing research on first responder occupational health and wellness and supported educational and advocacy issues.



6TH ANNUAL VFCF/ WILLIAMSBURG 5K RUN/ WALK

Chris Eudailey

The 6th Annual VFCF/Williamsburg 5K Run/Walk was held on March 22, 2025 in Williamsburg. The weather for this year's event was perfect and contributed to the overall success. This year there were a total of 172 registered participants and we had 159 actually participate in the event. We had some great sponsors again this year to include the following:

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Bronze Sponsors – Fire Protection Equipment Company

The VFCF would like to give a big shout out to all the sponsors that supported this event and helped ensure its overall success! We did lose a few sponsors from last year, but the VFCF raised a little over \$8K this year. The VFCF uses these funds to help support the Robert E. White Scholarship Program, to financially support the VFOA and VCOA programs as needed and to help support the new Line of Duty Death Program recently established by the Foundation. This program provides a financial gift to the family of a fire/EMS provider killed in the line of duty or that passes away from occupational cancer.

I wanted to take a minute to thank all the participants who supported this event as well as the dedicated volunteers. Also wanted to give a special shout out to Beth Eberhart from Williamsburg Fire Department for coordinating and facilitating the CERT volunteers from Williamsburg and James City County. I would also like to thank Chief Ashe from JCCFD for his continued logistical support of this event. Also wanted to thank the other numerous volunteers that came out to help support this event – your dedication and support are greatly appreciated!

The VFCF would also like to thank the planning team members – Pat Dent, Donald Booth, Kevin Duck and Rick Platt. In addition, this event could not have been held without the generous donations from Trader Joe's, Food Lion and Harris Teeter for fruit and granola bars for the participants and the continued support of the Colonial Roadrunners Club.

The 7th Annual VFCF/Williamsburg 5K Run/Walk has been set for March 21, 2026. Please put this date on your calendar and check the VFCA website in early January 2026 to get registered!! I hope to see you there!







MISSIONS AND EMERGENCIES DON'T WAIT FOR THE IDEAL TIME OF DAY OR CLEAR WEATHER CONDITIONS. THAT'S WHY WE DESIGN OUR RIGID INFLATABLE WORK BOATS TO WITHSTAND THE TOUGHEST JOBS SO THAT YOU CAN FOCUS ON YOUR DUTY.

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The SWR13 (Swift Water Rescue 13), a purpose-built watercraft meticulously designed for swift water rescue operations. Crafted with precision and efficiency, this agile vessel ensures optimal performance in challenging conditions.

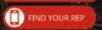
- · All Aluminum Hull
- 10mm EVA Decking
- 4" Elephant Trunk Deck Drains
- · Bow/Stern Eyes (Towing & Lifting)
- 1670dtx Military Grade Hypalon Tubes
- Non-Slip Rubber Applied to Tubes
- 9 Carry Handles
- 2 Righting Lines

- LOA (Length Overall):
 - Length Inside: 9'6"
 - Weight Capacity: 2,020
 - Person Capacity: 7
 - Boat Weight: 181 lbs
 - Engine Weight: 170 lbs
 - Horsepower: 30 hp
 - Fuel Capacity 5 gal
 - Transom Height: 20"

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VFCA President, Chief Kevin Good, VFCA Board of Directors and VFCA Members from across Virginia at the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief rank, were able to say "Thank You" to Atlantic Emergency Solutions for their Fire Chief level sponsorship for the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference. Thank you to Chief Operations Officer Will Bascom, Regional Vice President of Sales Kevin Sandrige, and Regional Vice President of Service Chris Adams for accepting the award and for sponsoring our 11th Annual Fire Chief's Summit Reception. Their commitment to public safety professional's education, training, and family is extremely commendable and we are grateful for the continued partnerships. #AES #vfca #leadership #education #advocacy #publicsafety

VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS CONVERGE FOR INSIGHTFUL 2025 SUMMIT

The Courtyard Marriott Richmond North Glen Allen recently played host to a pivotal gathering for fire service leaders across the Commonwealth: the Virginia Fire Chief's Association Fire Chief's Summit 2025. Held on May 15th and 16th, the summit offered a comprehensive agenda designed to equip Virginia's fire chiefs with the knowledge, strategies, and connections needed to navigate the evolving landscape of emergency services.

The summit kicked off on Thursday, May 15th, with Master of Ceremonies, Abbey Johnston, VFCA Region 6 Vice President, guiding attendees through a packed day of presentations and discussions. The Central Virginia Joint Honor Guards opened the proceedings with a Presentation of Colors. Opening remarks provided by Chief Kevin Good, President of the VFCA, and Brad Creasy, Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, who underscored the significance of the summit for the state's fire and rescue community. A highlight of the opening session was the address by Governor Glenn Youngkin, emphasizing the state's commitment to supporting its first responders.

A 2025 Legislative Update was presented by Devon Cabot of Two Capitols Consulting, providing the attendees with vital insights into legislative changes impacting their departments.

The morning continued with a highly anticipated session, "What Every Fire Chief Should Know about Engaging Officials," led by Chief Greg Wormser of Lynchburg Fire Department and Chief Nestor Mangubat of Portsmouth Fire & Rescue. These seasoned leaders brought a wealth of experience to the discussion. Chief Wormser, with his extensive background in various leadership roles within the Lynchburg Fire Department, shared insights from his more than two decades in the service. Chief Mangubat, whose career spans from Chesapeake to his current role as Portsmouth's Fire Chief, offered valuable perspectives on navigating complex administrative and political landscapes. Their session prepared chiefs for the afternoon's highlight: a dynamic panel discussion.

Following a networking lunch generously provided by First Arriving, the summit honored excellence with the Lieutenant Brad Clark Leadership Award Presentation by Chief Kevin Good presented to recipient Firefighter Larvell Mason. This was followed by the "Engaging Elected Officials & Administrators" panel. Featuring an impressive lineup of local government leaders – Tom Arnold, Deputy County Executive, Fairfax County; John Vithoulkas, County Manager, Henrico County; Tyrone Nelson, Board of Supervisors, Henrico County; and Steven Carter, City Manager, Portsmouth – the discussion delved into crucial aspects of collaboration and understanding. Facilitated questions explored topics such as the perceived role of fire-EMS within local government, expectations for communication, legal and financial constraints, and advice for new chiefs. The interactive panel provided invaluable perspectives on how chiefs can most effectively advocate for their departments, demonstrate return on investment, and build strong relationships with those in power.

The afternoon concluded with the session, "Make Your Mark: Leadership as a Creative Practice," presented by Amanda Stanley, founder of The Artisan Leader. Stanley, with her unique background in social work and two decades of experience in public service and the administration, encouraged chiefs to approach leadership with

a designer's mindset, fostering transformative change within their organizations. The day wrapped up with a reception at the hotel, sponsored by Atlantic Emergency Solutions, providing a relaxed atmosphere for continued networking.

Friday, May 16th, began with an optional Group Physical Training session, promoting resilience and camaraderie among the chiefs. After breakfast, the day's discussions commenced with a "Welcome and General Discussion."

A key session for the morning was the "NERIS Update" delivered by Tom Jenkins, retired Fire Chief and Senior Advisor/Research Manager for UL Fire Safety Research Institute on the NERIS project. Chief Jenkins, provided crucial updates on this vital initiative impacting fire safety research.

The summit concluded with a presentation by Deputy Chief Allen Baldwin of the York County Virginia Department of Fire and Life Safety, titled "Stepping Out of Your Box and Leading from the Front." Deputy Chief Baldwin, with over four decades in the fire service and extensive experience in both career and volunteer capacities, shared his insights on proactive leadership and innovation. As a Past President of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and holding numerous certifications, his perspective resonated deeply with attendees.

The Virginia Fire Chief's Association Fire Chief's Summit 2025 proved to be a resounding success, offering a robust program of education, networking, and strategic discussions. From legislative updates to leadership development and critical conversations with elected officials, the summit provided Virginia's fire chiefs with the tools and insights necessary to continue leading their departments with excellence and serving their communities effectively.



Gov. Glen Younkin speaks to the attendees



Gov. Youngkin shown outside with a group of attendees



Sec. of Public Safety Cole receives VFCA helmet prior to leaving for his new position



Attendee's shown in Summit Meeting



Managers participate in discussions with attendee's



L to R: Firefighter Larvell Mason and VFCA President Kevin Good.

Photo: Kevin Good



Chief's Greg Wormser of Lynchburg Fire Department and Chief Nestor Mangubat of Portsmouth Fire & Rescue lead discussion group



Chief Allen Baldwin speaks to "Stepping Out of Your Box and Leading from the Front."

Please join the VFCA in recognizing Firefighter Larvell Mason with the Henrico County Division of Fire who is the recipient of the 2024 Lieutenant Brad Clark Memorial Leadership Award. This award is selected by the command staff from the Virginia Fire Officer Academy and is awarded to recognize the top student from the 2024 Virginia Fire Officer Academy.

Lieutenant Clark was a graduate of our prestigious VFOA program. The command staff saw a lot of Lt. Clark's characteristics in FF Mason. Lt. Clark's passion for the fire service, his dedication, his commitment to teamwork, and his ability to remain calm in all situations are only some of the same things we observed from FF Mason while he was a student in June 2024

The VFOA command staff noted throughout FF Mason's participation in the 2024 program that he demonstrated remarkable leadership and dedication. His commitment to teamwork and eagerness to learn set him apart from his peers. Furthermore, his ability to motivate and inspire others, while maintaining a strong focus on personal and professional growth, exemplified the spirit of Lt. Brad Clark's leadership. As the top graduate of the class, his academic excellence and ability to apply the lessons learned in a practical, real-world setting were consistently evident. FF Mason's passion for continuous improvement will undoubtedly serve as an inspiration to others.

On behalf of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and the Virginia Fire Officer Academy we congratulate him on this prestigious award and look forward to seeing what else the future holds in your career.

Congratulations Firefighter Larvell Mason!





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CSX SUPPORTS VFRC AND OTHER HAPPENINGS!



Chief Good, VFCA President and Chief Eudailey, VFCA Executive Director were able to say "Thank You" to CSX Transportation for their Assistant Chief level sponsorship. Thank you to Blaise McDonald for accepting the award and for continuing our partnership in public safety.



The VFCA also recognized Assistant State Fire Marshal and former VFCA Life Safety and Community Risk Reduction President, Joshua "Jay" Davis for his years of service and commitment to the VFCA and building a strong foundation for the LS/CRR Section to thrive. Thank you!!



The VFCA President, Kevin Good, presented the Career Fire Department Health and Safety Award to Fredericksburg Fire Department and was accepted by Battalion Chief Jack McGovern and Deputy Chief & VFCA VP At-Large 4, Matt Fox. Congratulations!



Thank You to the Virginia Office of EMS Director Maria Beermann-Foat, PhD, NRP for hosting our Executive Leadership Team at the OEMS Headquarters in Glen Allen. We look forward to sustaining our existing partnership and exploring future opportunities for the entire Commonwealth of Virginia.

MEET THE CHIEF



Getting to know Pedro Caceres.

In this issue we will meet one of the many fire chiefs who will be spotlighted in Commonwealth Chief this year. Here we take a look at Pedro Caceres, Chief of Prince George County Fire & EMS.

CC: Describe your tenure in the fire service...

PC: I have been in the fire service for 31 years and currently serve as the Fire and EMS Chief for the Prince George County, VA Fire and EMS department.

CC: Please describe your career journey...

PC: I graduated from Ball State University with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture in 1992. After five years of practicing as an Architect, I decided to change career paths from architecture to firefighting, and so, began my journey as a professional firefighter in 1997. I understood from the beginning that preparation was the key to the successful delivery of the best service to the community. I embarked on a professional development journey seeking to learn as much as possible in formal education settings and real-world experience. Now, after 31 years as a professional firefighter, I have served in various roles for the Fishers Fire Department (IN) and the Wayne Township Fire Department (IN) including, Firefighter, Lieutenant, Captain, Support Services Division Chief, Training Division Chief, and Battalion Chief. I have also been a member of the Indiana Search and Rescue Task Force One (IN-TF1) for 22 years and have deployed to several disasters all over the United States including the Hawaii fires, the Surfside building collapse, and most recently Hurricane Helene. Extensive fire and rescue operational experience have allowed me to lead and manage at many levels of the organization. My formal education includes a Leadership Certificate from Harvard John F. Kennedy School of Government, a Master of Public Management Degree from Indiana University, and the Executive Fire Officer Designation from the National Fire Academy. My formal education has enhanced my critical thinking ability and has provided me with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and operate in our ever increasingly complex world.

CC: Please describe your Form of Government...

PC: Governance in Prince George County operates under the framework of the Commonwealth's local government statutes. A five-member Board of Supervisors, each elected from single-member districts, sets policy and adopts the annual budget; day-to-day administration is overseen by a County Administrator.

CC: Describe the sources of Funding for Your Organization...

PC: The Prince George County Budget is funded in part by Real Property Tax, Personal Property Tax, State Revenue, Federal revenue and other various local taxes.

CC: What population does you department serve...

PC: As of the 2020 decennial census, Prince George County was home to 43,010 residents. A mid-cycle estimate by the U.S. Census Bureau placed the county's population at approximately 43,295 in 2022.

• CC: Describe the demographics your organization covers?

PC: Age & Household: 4.7% under 5 yrs; 19.6% under 18; 13.6% 65 +; median age 33.4 yrs; 12,718 households, 2.81 persons/household.

- Race & Ethnicity: 60.0% White, 32.8% Black, 2.1% Asian, 0.9% American Indian, 0.5% Pacific Islander, 3.7% multiracial; 10.4% Hispanic/Latino.
- Education & Income: 90.6% high-school+; 24.0% bachelor's+
- Income: median household income \$88,225; per capita \$33,937; 11.3% below poverty line.

CC: How many square miles do you cover...

PC: PGC encompasses 282 square miles. 265 square miles of land and 17 square miles (5.9%) of water—and sharing borders with the independent cities of Petersburg, Hopewell, and Colonial Heights to the northwest, Chesterfield County to the west, Charles City County to the north, Surry County to the east, Sussex County to the south, and Dinwiddie County to the west.

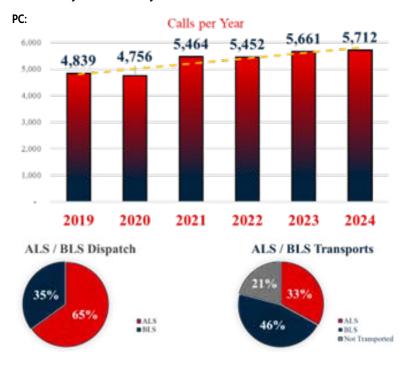
CC: Describe the department composition...

PC: The department is currently staffed by 37 career firefighters, 80 volunteer firefighters and 4 administrative support staff.

CC: Describe the department equipment...

PC: 10 Fire Engines, 7 Medic trucks, 2 aerial trucks, 9 brush trucks, 6 tankers, several Command and support vehicles. These numbers include reserve apparatus.

CC: Describe your call summary...



CC: What is the most challenging issue or issues facing your department today?

PC: Staffing (both career and volunteer) shortages, apparatus costs, lead times and limited funding sources.

CC: How would you describe your management style?

PC: My leadership styles are engagement and coaching. These styles are in turn informed by my leadership principles: leading by example, positive attitude, good communication, empowerment and support.

As a public servant, our first priority is to make a positive difference for the people we serve regardless of the circumstances. The second priority is continuous individual and organizational improvement. The more prepared we are as individuals and organizations, the greater positive impact we can have in the community.

I believe that trust is the key to good leadership, but that trust must be earned. Therefore, I make every effort to lead by example, by sharing the knowledge gained over the years and providing opportunities for others to learn and grow. I have high standards and clear expectations for myself and those around me. I challenge those around me, but also give them the tools necessary for success. I am willing to accept criticism and learn from my opportunities for improvement. I am forever optimistic and look for the positive side in all situations.

CC: Does your department have a formal, long-range strategic plan?

PC: Yes, as part of a county wide effort. Additionally, we are working on a Standard of Cover project for the Fire Department.

CC: How have current economic times impacted your department?

PC: It complicates the planning and budgeting process as everything costs more and, in some cases, unpredictably so. We are currently trying to catch up and spend a significant amount of time looking for affordable options.

CC: Are you doing things differently today because of the economy?

PC: Having only been the Fire Chief for four months, it is difficult to say that we are

doing things differently, but my approach has been impacted by the economic circumstances. For instance, strategic thinking and planning must now accommodate not just increased costs but also long lead times of 3-4 years in some cases.

CC: What challenges do you see facing the fire service today?

PC: Balancing the ever-increasing demands for service with the pressure to minimize the fiscal impact on the taxpayers while managing both outcomes and expectations.

CC: What do you look for in a new recruit?

PC: Positivity, more than anything. We look for individuals that work well in team environments, and that are driven by service to others. We seek individuals who are committed to physical and mental fitness so that they are in the best condition possible to meet the many demands of the fire service. We look for individuals that are excited to learn and are committed to lifelong learning which is essential in our everchanging world.

CC: How do you view training?

PC: Training is critical to fulfilling the mission. Besides building or reinforcing skills, it allows individuals to gain confidence in themselves, and it allows teams to grow confident in each other. This of course is also important to develop and maintain trust which is critical to the team environment in which we operate.

CC: Do you have a close working relationship with neighboring departments?

PC: Yes, we have mutual aid agreements but also collaborate with the regional technical rescue team which allows us to provide all special operations disciplines for technical rescue in five different jurisdictions.

CC: What's in the future for the fire service as you see it?

PC: The future is bright but evolving. Having the ability to quickly assess, pivot and adapt without losing the essence or our culture and traditions will be key to successful fire departments. We will need to embrace the future in order to preserve those things that got us to where we are.

CC: How has being a member of the VFCA helped you become a better chief/leader?

PC: By having the ability to meet and network, specifically, receiving and sharing information that affects all of us. It saves time, it allows us to quickly understand general trends and best practices. We can address current topics or concerns and coordinate responses for issues that affect us all.



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS

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THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH









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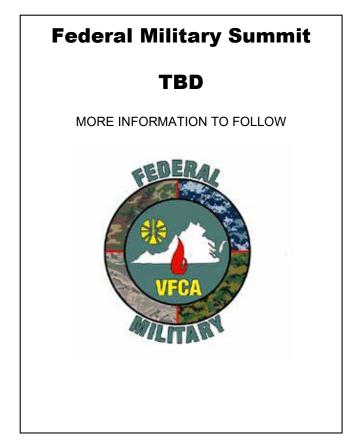




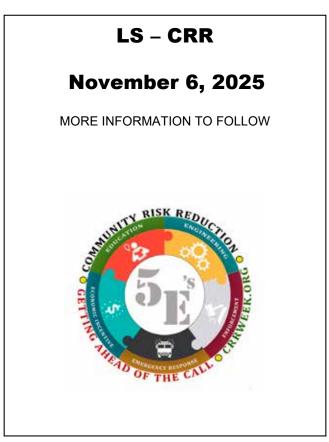


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Virginia Natural Gas operates, secures and maintains the pipeline in our service territory. With safety being our highest priority, we adhere to federal, state and local pipeline safety regulations by performing extensive quality control checks, educate the public on natural gas pipeline, leak recognition and damage prevention and work closely with emergency and public officials to develop emergency response plans.

How to recognize a pipeline leak

- LOOK for blowing dirt, discolored vegetation or continued bubbling of standing water.
- **Z** LISTEN for a hissing or roaring noise near a natural gas appliance or line.
- **SMELL** for the distinctive, rottenegg odor associated with natural gas. Natural gas is colorless and odorless, so we add a chemical odorant called mercaptan for easy detection of a suspected natural gas leak. This odorant has a distinctive "rotten egg" type odor. You should act any time you detect even a small amount of this odor in the air. Be aware that "odorant fade," while uncommon, can occur. Odorant fade occurs when a physical or chemical process causes the level of odorant in the gas to be reduced. This can happen in both existing gas pipe and new installations.

Note: Be aware that "odorant fade," while uncommon, can occur. Odorant fade occurs when a physical or chemical process causes the level of odorant in the gas to be reduced. This can happen in both existing gas pipe and new installations. Be aware that some individuals may not be able to detect the smell of the natural gas odorant because they have a diminished sense of smell, because the scent is being masked by other odors in the area or because the odorant has diminished so that it is not detectable. Some gas lines, due to their unique function, may not have odor at all.

Learn more

For more information about natural gas and emergency response procedures and training, contact us at 800.552.7473.

To learn about our emergency response plan, which recognizes and mitigates threats and also sustains the integrity of the pipelines. Visit

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virginianaturalgas.com/ respondertraining (Use password: virginia)

Help keep everyone safe during a natural gas emergency

Even though natural gas pipeline incidents are uncommon, it is still important to be prepared by knowing the signs of a potential problem.

You should take the following action any time you detect any of the signs of a pipeline leak:

- **DO NOT** try to identify the source to stop the leak yourself.
- AVOID using any sources of ignition, such as cell phones, cigarettes, matches, flashlights, electronic devices, motorized vehicles, light switches or landlines, as natural gas can ignite from a spark or open flame, possibly causing a fire or explosion. Natural gas is non-toxic, lighter than air and displaces oxygen. In severe cases, if not used properly, natural gas can also lead to asphyxiation.
- CALL Virginia Natural Gas immediately at our 24-hour emergency response line 800.552.7473 with the location and type of emergency.
- SECURE the area by establishing a safety zone around the incident and control access. You may need to reroute traffic and evacuate area homes and businesses.

How we respond

Once we are notified of the emergency, we will immediately dispatch trained personnel to the site, keeping you informed of our progress. We will take all necessary actions to correct the problem. We will work together to ensure our community is safe.

Prevention – the best defense against leaks

Emergency officials and first responders do their part daily to prevent natural gas leaks by keeping the following safety tips in mind:

Understand that natural gas is lighter than air and displaces oxygen. Although natural gas is non-toxic, in extreme cases of oxygen displacement, it may lead to asphyxiation. Natural gas has a risk of ignition near a spark or open flame.

- Know where the pipelines are in your jurisdiction. If you notice any missing or damaged pipeline markers, contact Virginia Natural Gas at **1.877.572.3342** so they can be replaced.
- Virginia law requires all underground utilities be marked before any type of digging or excavation. Be on the lookout for any suspicious activity or unauthorized digging. If the excavator has not notified the state of their intent to dig, they must HIGH stop all activity immediately. The excavator is required P-PELINE GAS NARY-NE to present a valid dig ticket number when requested by first responders. Also, no one, including homeowners, should

be digging, ditching, drilling,

leveling or plowing without

underground utilities.

having first contacted our state's

One-Call number (811) to locate

- Remember, pipeline markers, like the sample pictured, indicate only the general area of the pipeline and not the exact location or depth. Pipeline markers may not be present in all areas.
- Information about transmission pipelines operating in your community is available through the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) and online at: npms.phmsa.dot.gov.





Online Survey

Please take a moment to complete a survey about natural gas safety and you by scanning the QR code or visiting surveymonkey.com/r/FV2MQPB to help us make sure we are keeping our communities safe.

FB-94 Pumper

MATHENY FIRE & EMERGI



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- One 3" 5" OS LDH discharge
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VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS SECTION HOLDS SUCCESSFUL QUARTERLY MEETING IN MANASSAS

Mandy Waybright, President, Administrative Professioal Section

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) Administrative Professionals Section recently held its quarterly meeting at the City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Department. We extend our sincere thanks to Melissa Heiderman, Dana Campbell, and the entire Manassas Fire and Rescue team for their generous hospitality and willingness to host. Their attention to detail and warm welcome helped make this meeting a meaningful and productive gathering for our members.

The meeting was opened by City of Manassas Fire & Rescue Deputy Chief Kevin Franzello, who welcomed us to the City and thanked the administrative professionals for the essential role they play in the fire and EMS services.

We were also pleased to welcome VFCA Vice President Todd Lupton, Deputy Chief- Volunteer Administration Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System and VFCA At-Large Vice President Matt Fox, Deputy Chief Fredericksburg Fire Department who provided valuable legislative updates and spoke about the VFCA's current initiatives. Their insight into the advocacy efforts taking place at the state level legislature helped our members better understand how their roles contribute to the broader mission of fire service leadership and support.

Lieutenant Kristen Martin with Goochland County Department of Fire-Rescue & Emergency Services gave a presentation titled "Leveraging Emotional Intelligence for Effective Stress Management." Lt. Martin provided practical tools and strategies for managing stress by increasing self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Her message resonated with attendees and provided useful takeaways for both personal and professional growth.

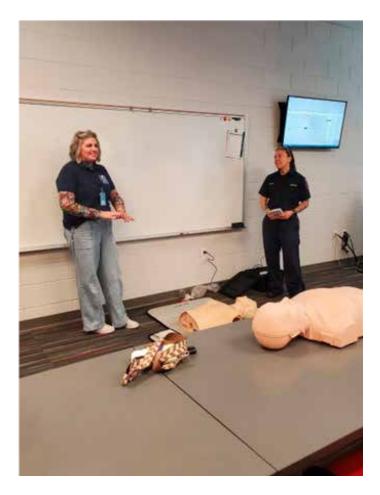
Later during our meetin, we went back to the fire station and spent some time brushing up on our CPR skills (not full training) and worked with ladders.

We encourage everyone to stay connected with us and keep up to date on future events by following the VFCA - Administrative Professionals Section on Facebook. This is where you'll find information about our next quarterly meeting coming up this summer, which will be posted in the near future. Mark your calendars! The Annual Administrative Professionals Retreat will be hosted by Stafford County Fire & Rescue on October 9–10, 2025.

Thank you again to all who attended and contributed to the success of our May meeting. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.







ON THE MOVE & ODDS AND ENDS

City of Winchester selects new fire & rescue chief

The City of Winchester has selected Drew Savage as its new Fire and Rescue Chief. Savage brings a wealth of experience, with nearly two decades in fire and rescue, including extensive training, operations, and organizational leadership. His journey began as a firefighter-paramedic with Norfolk Fire-Rescue in 2005, and he currently serves as their Assistant Chief of Administrative Support Services.

"After an exhaustive internal and external search, Drew really distinguished himself among the applicants," said City Manager Dan Hoffman. "He brings decades of experience in public safety and has demonstrated success with Norfolk Fire-Rescue. We are delighted to have Drew join the team and look forward to him leading our Fire and Rescue Department."

Savage will replace outgoing Winchester Fire and Rescue Chief Jon Henschel, who will retire as Chief on April 1, 2025. Until Savage arrives to assume his duties in early May, the Department will be led by Acting Fire and Rescue Chief JD Orndorff.

Savage is known for his problem-solving skills and collaborative approach to addressing administrative, operational, and cultural challenges within Norfolk Fire-Rescue. He led the department's response to COVID-19, supported recruitment efforts, supervised training and professional development, and has extensive experience in budget oversight and operational supervision. Savage holds a master's degree in organizational leadership/fire rescue executive leadership and is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program.

"I am honored to serve the City of Winchester as the next fire and rescue chief," said Savage. "Thanks to outgoing Chief Henschel and his team, the Fire and Rescue Department appears well-positioned to meet the City's current needs and evolve with the demands and challenges of the modern fire service. I look forward to continuing this success and helping position Winchester Fire and Rescue as a model department within Virginia."

Salem City names new Fire & EMS Chief

The Salem City Manager has named Steve Simon as the city's new Fire ϑ EMS Chief.

"I am extremely excited and pleased that Salem is able to welcome someone the caliber of Chief Simon onboard to lead our Fire and EMS Department. The department has strong traditions and an outstanding reputation, and I feel certain that Chief Simon will be able to not only maintain those things but elevate them in the coming years."

Simon is currently Executive Director at the Western Virginia Emergency Medical Services Council. He also served as Fire Chief for Roanoke County Fire and Rescue from 2015 to 2021.

"I have had the opportunity to work with various leaders within the City of Salem government during my career and I was always impressed with the quality of

services they provided and the pride they espoused for their community. The City of Salem truly has a winning team, and I am excited to be a new member of it."

Simon attained a bachelor's degree in Fire Service Administration from the University of Maryland and a master's degree in executive Fire-EMS Leadership from Grand Canyon University. He is also a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer program at the U.S. Fire Administration, Department of Homeland Security.

"I am honored and humbled to have been selected to now serve the citizens of Salem. The Salem Fire-EMS Department has a long history of providing high quality services and I am excited to work with our dedicated men and women and ensure the department continues to provide efficient, professional, and compassionate services to this great community."

Simon is replacing John Prillaman, who announced his retirement in September 2024. Deputy Chief Matt Rickman has been serving as interim chief since December 2024, and will return to his previous role in the department when Simon takes over as chief in May.

"I want to thank Matt for immersing himself in the interim role and doing such a solid job in this transition period. He took great care in maintaining and developing personnel and moving many of our current programs and advancements forward. He and Steve will make a great team for Salem."

At the March 22nd Swearing in Ceremony, Chief Prillaman was presented his Life Membership" in the VFCA for his years of service.

Chief Hall of Richmond Fire Retires

After 25 years of service, Chief Steven E. Hall, Jr. will be retiring from the City of Richmond, effective May 2, 2025.

Long time York County Fire Chief Steve Kopczynski retires July 1

The York County Administrator recently announced "We have received formal notice of Chief Kopczynski's intentions to retire. I'm excited for him and all the new adventures that stand before him. He's worked hard, more than 40 years, and left us with a legacy few can imagine – volunteer, firefighter to Chief. I probably can't begin to put together a comprehensive list of accomplishments for him and the FLS organization, but the ones that struck me include:

- · Hurricane Isabel.
- · Significant ice storm.
- Vehicle pile-up on 64 at Queens Lake (Ice, not the law enforcement kind).
- COVID
- All the programs that FLS has stood up; HAZMAT Training Center, fire boat, HRMMRS, Community Medicine and recently our own pharmacy.
- Built, outfitted and staffed four new fire stations.
- Built and relocated Station 1.
- One of the most recognized Fire Chiefs in the state. President of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association.
- And the list does go on and on.

Chief K will be around until July 1. When possible, please join me in congratulating him on a job really well done and in celebration of his retirement. I/we have been incredibly fortunate to work beside him.

Then the obvious question is where do we go next, who's the Chief? I am pleased to share that I am appointing Deputy Chief Baldwin to the role of Chief. Please wish him well as you see him. He is the first fire chief hired outside of YCFLS.

Chief Russell Rakestraw passes

Maurice Russell Rakestraw II, 78, of Louisville, Ky., died Monday, May 19, 2025, at the VA Medical Center in Louisville. Rakestraw was born Oct. 17, 1946, in Louisville, the son of his namesake, Maurice Russell Rakestraw, and Louise Parsons Rakestraw.

A U.S. Army veteran, he served during the Vietnam War and was honorably discharged in 1968. He later served in the fire service for 46 years, retiring as chief of Lyndon Fire in Lyndon, Ky., and was known for his authenticity, quick wit, and sense of humor. "Russ" worked in the Prince William County Fire Department prior to moving to KY. He was deeply proud of his service to his country and community.

Rakestraw is survived by his wife, Vivian Rakestraw; his children, James Rakestraw of Louisville, Ky., Maurice Russell Rakestraw III and his wife, Meaghan, of Leesburg, Va., and Joseph Rakestraw and his wife, Paige, of Boca Raton, Fla.; his grandchildren, Carson, Jaime, Christian, Aiden, Connor, Aidan, Evren, Jackson, Joseph, Claire, Brian, and Liam; and his great-grandchildren, Anastacia, Jocelyn, and Carter.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his sister, Sally Parsons Rakestraw; his wife, Pamela Elliott Rakestraw; and his daughter-in-law, Dawn Lynn Rake

Memorial Service will be from 11:00am Friday May 23rd at Pearson's 149 Breckenridge Lane with Burial to follow at Cave Hill Cemetery, Vitiation will be 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, May 22, at Pearson Funeral Home.

Roanoke County's First Fire Chief, Tommy Fuqua, Passes Away

On Saturday, May 24, 2025, retired Fire Chief Tommy Fugua passed away at his Roanoke County home after a battle with cancer. Fuqua started as a volunteer firefighter at the age of 17 in 1961 at the Vinton Volunteer Fire Department. In 1971 he became a career firefighter with the Veterans Administration. Six years later, Fuqua was hired by Roanoke County as a career firefighter while also serving as the Volunteer Chief of the Clearbrook Volunteer Fire Department. 1981 saw Fugua named as coordinator of all Fire & Rescue activity in Roanoke County. In 1986, Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Department was officially formed, and Tommy Fugua was appointed to be the Chief of the Department. His 26-year career with Roanoke County Fire & Rescue saw many historic events including the flood of 1985 and a deadly fire at the Shenandoah Homes retirement home in 1989 that is still used as a case study today at the National Fire Academy. In 1996, Fuqua stepped down as Chief of RCFRD but remained employed as Battalion Chief for Training and Operations before retiring in 2003. After retirement from Roanoke County, Fugua became an instructor, teaching classes at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland and for the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. Chief Fugua served on many fire service boards and committees and was the interim Chief for a brief while in Botetourt County.

Chief Fuqua is survived by his wife Hazel and two children. Visitation will be on Wednesday, May 28, 2025, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Simpson Funeral Home at 5160 Peters Creek Road. Parking for visitation will be at Roanoke County's Green Ridge Recreation Center at 7415 Wood Haven Road with shuttle buses running to Simpson Funeral Home. Chief Fuqua's funeral, with fire department honors, will be on Thursday, May 29, 2025, at 1 p.m. at Roanoke's First Baptist Church at 321 Marshall Avenue in downtown Roanoke with interment to follow at Mountain View Cemetery in Vinton.

RIP Chief...

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PASSES LEGISLATION TYING ATL FUNDING TO REQUIRED NERIS REPORTING

Legislation passed during the 2025 General Assembly session directed the Virginia Fire Services Board to adopt a policy that would require localities, as a condition to receive Aid to Localities funding, to report emergency incidents to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) starting July 1, 2026. NERIS is a national effort to develop and launch a new interoperable fire information and innovative analytics platform, to replace NFIRS. The requirement that localities report to receive funding is a new requirement.

Fire and emergency response data is a vital component of making informed decisions to better address community risk. Many localities and fire departments already report incidents, but a significant number do not. According to the current federal plan, Virginia departments are scheduled to begin onboarding in September 2025. For questions concerning onboarding to NERIS, please contact the United States Fire Administration or visit their website National Emergency Response Information System NERIS).

The Virginia Fire Services Board, and staff from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, will begin drafting the policy during the summer of 2025. We encourage localities and their fire departments to be involved in the process. The Virginia Fire Services Board will meet on the below dates and all meetings can be found by accessing VFSB Meeting Dates – Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

June 6, 2025, VDFP Headquarters, Glen Allen, VA September 24th and 25th, Harrisonburg, VA December 2, 2025, VDFP Headquarters, Glen Allen, VA.

Virginia Department of Fire Programs 1005 Technology Park Drive. Glen Allen, VA 23059-4500 Phone (804) 371-0220 or Fax (804) 371-3444 www.vafire.com

Written comments can be provided throughout the process by emailing:

Government Affairs Division 1005 Technology Park Drive. Glen Allen, VA 23059 ATTN: NERIS Reporting Policy

The agency looks forward to working with the Virginia Fire Services Board, localities and fire departments to ensure all are compliant with the new law and that fire reporting provides better data to address community risk throughout the Commonwealth.



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WHAT A YEAR!

VA TASK FORCE'S DEPLOY TO KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE



It was April Fools Day, but not for eight members of Virginia Task Force 2 based out of Virginia Beach. They were deployed to Kentucky following severe weather in the area Tuesday.

Violent storms cut through the South and Midwest, spawning tornadoes and killing 3

According to a release, the team was activated around 7 p.m. that Tuesday after preparing its incident support team cache.

Once the members arrived in Louisville, Kentucky Thursday morning, they were expected to meet with the FEMA incident support team and other local agencies to assist when needed.

10 On Your Side spoke with the team as they got there. One team member said they were currently waiting to hear what area has had the most impact to see where they will be sent.

They brought two tractor trailers, a communications vehicle and a command vehicle, all to help Kentucky residents still reeling from the aftermath of weather.

The severe weather tore through cities in the South and Midwest, bringing violent tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flooding. As of Thursday morning, three people were reported dead as a result of the storms.

The coming days were also forecast to bring potentially deadly flash flooding.

Virginia's Task Force 2 is one of 28 FEMA Urban Search and Rescue teams across the country.

The unit, sponsored by the Virginia Beach Fire Department, has conducted search and rescue operations in the aftermath of several natural disasters.



On Saturday, the 5th, three additional Type 3 Task Forces with water rescue capability have been activated. VA-TF2, PA-TF1, and CO-TF1 will move to staging areas in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Arkansas to provide support upon request from the states if needed. The Mississippi and Ohio Valleys are dealing with excessive rainfall, leading to significant flash flooding,. They will join MD-TF1, VA-TF1 and NE-TF1 already staged in the region.

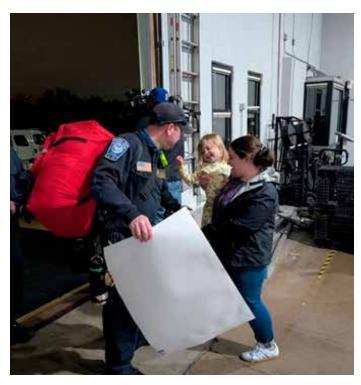
Members of Virginia Task Force 2 returned home to Virginia Beach on Wednesday, 4/9/25 after assisting in emergency responses in Kentucky and Tennessee.



April 5th



VA Force 1 returns home 4/12



Greeting families upon return

OCCUPATIONAL CANCER IS KILLING FIRE FIGHTERS

Occupational cancer is claiming the lives of more fire fighters than any other cause, including fires and other on-scene incidents. The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN) are committed to reversing this trend.

During the 2025 Fire Fighter Cancer Awareness Month (January), the IAFF and FCSN partnered to deliver targeted education and best practices and resources to reduce the impact of cancer on fire fighters.

This year's Fire Fighter Cancer Awareness Month highlights comprehensive strategies to reduce cancer risk throughout a fire fighter's life. This includes understanding legislative presumptions for cancer coverage, addressing male and female reproductive cancers and their impact on fire fighters, providing behavioral health support for those facing a cancer diagnosis, and empowering fire fighters to advocate for their health at throughout their career.

This month-long campaign will allow fire fighters to participate in weekly calls to action and highlight success stories to help end the epidemic of cancer in the fire service.

"Our job is dangerous; every fire fighter knows we may one day sacrifice our own life in order to save another's," says IAFF General President Edward Kelly. "But that doesn't mean we shouldn't do everything possible to make the profession safer. Education is a critical tool in the fight against occupational cancer. That's why the IAFF and the FCSN are committed to raising awareness this January about actions fire fighters can take to stay healthy and safe."

"It is a well-established reality that the title of fire fighter comes with a significant risk of developing occupational cancer," says Bryan Frieders, CEO of the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN). "For the past 20 years, the Firefighter Cancer Support Network has been at the forefront of the fight against this devastating disease, offering immediate support to fire fighters and their family members during their most critical moments. The need for awareness and education about firefighter occupational cancer cannot be overstated. FCSN is proud to stand alongside organizations like the IAFF, who have made the health and well-being of their members a top priority."

About the Firefighter Cancer Support Network

Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN) provides critical assistance for career or volunteer, active or retired fire fighters, emergency medical service providers, and their immediate family members who have been diagnosed with cancer. They deliver valuable post-diagnosis resources followed by unique badge to badge, one-on-one mentorship from one of their 220 fire-service mentors who have first-hand knowledge about battling cancer. They share their survivor's journey about their types of cancer, their own experiences with testing and treatments, and offer valuable insight into the recovery process. firefightercancersupport.org

Source: News Release, FCSN & IAFF, 12/21/24



VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS FOUNDATION HOSTS SUCCESSFUL 2ND ANNUAL CHARITY SHOOT



The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation (VFCF) proudly hosted its 2nd Annual Charity Shoot on Friday, May 30th, at The Flying Rabbit Sporting Clays in Mt. Crawford. The weather held out and we had a beautiful day for the event. Supporters from across the Commonwealth gathered for a day of fun, fellowship, and fundraising.

This year's event had 32 shooters, representing departments, businesses, and supporters from throughout the Commonwealth. Participants enjoyed a challenging and exciting day on the range.

We extend our sincere congratulations to our top shooters:

• 1st Place: Jason Reed

· 2nd Place: Trey Embrey

• 3rd Place: Corey Johnson

There was a **tie for second place**, which led to an exciting **shoot-off** to determine 2nd and 3rd place honors. The showdown was a highlight of the day and showcased the impressive skills and sportsmanship of our participants.

We also want to extend a **thank you to all of our sponsors**, whose generosity made this event possible:

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Your support directly fuels the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation. The purpose of the Foundation is to provide educational opportunities, including scholarships, to fire and emergency services professionals; develop public relations programs to promote and raise public awareness of Virginia's fire and emergency services; to assist other related organizations in the development and implementation of public education programs; and to provide grants to other fire and emergency service organizations.

The Foundation just initiated a new program in 2024. This is a Line of Duty Death Benefit for Fire and EMS providers in Virginia. If a member of the Fire/EMS service is killed in the line of duty, there is a \$5,000 gift provided to the immediate family

to help address some items that may not be taken care of otherwise. If a member of a Fire/EMS department passes from occupational cancer the VFCF provides a \$2,500 gift to the immediate family to help address immediate needs. Since the inception of this program there have been two families who have been awarded \$5,000 each and five families that have received a gift of \$2,500 each.

Mark Your Calendars!

We are already looking ahead to next year. The **3rd Annual VFCF Charity Shoot** will return to The Flying Rabbit on **Friday, May 29, 2026**. We hope to see even more individuals, teams and sponsors join us as we continue this growing tradition.











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1000 GALLON PUMPER

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10° NEWTON REAR & SIDE DUMPS | CUMMINS 350 HP

750 GALLON PUMPER



SABER CHASSIS | 70° CAB | LOW HOSEBED | LAP DOORS SEATS SIX | 1500 GPM | 510 HP | 145° BODY

1800 GAL. PUMPER TANKER



SABER CHASSIS | 70" CAB w/ 10" RAISED ROOF 10" NEWTON REAR DUMP | 1500 GPM | CUMMINS 450 HP

750 GALLON PUMPER



SABER CHASSIS | 70" CAB | LOW HOSEBED | ROLLUP DOORS | SEATS SIX | 1500 GPM | 510 HP | 145" BODY

107' ASCENDANT LADDER



ENFORCER CHASSIS | 500 GALLONS | 2000 GPM WATEROUS 70" CAB | SEATS SIX | TAK-4 IND. FRONT SUSPENSION

107' ASCENDANT LADDER (TANDEM)



ENFORCER CHASSIS | 500 GALLONS | 2000 GPM WATEROUS 70" CAB | SEATS SIX | TAK-4 IND. FRONT SUSPENSION

1000 GALLON PUMPER



1250 GPM | 152" BODY | 360HP CUMMINS

1000 GALLON PUMPER



FREIGHTLINER M2-106 CHASSIS | SEATS FIVE 1250 GPM | 152" BODY | 360HP CUMMINS

3000 GALLON TANKER



FREIGHTLINER M2-106 CHASSIS | 1000 GPM 10" NEWTON REAR & SIDE DUMPS | DETROIT DD8 375 HP

DID YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

Washing your hands helps prevent the spread of viruses, bacteria, and *carcinogens*. Wash your hands after any contact with turnout gear, radios and other equipment, and both *before* and after using the bathroom.



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SOOT IS NOT A BADGE OF HONOR

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT FIREFIGHTERS DEVELOP CANCERS AT HIGHER RATES THAN THE GENERAL POPULATION.

2

times greater risk for testicular cancer 1.5

times greater risk for multiple myeloma and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma 1.3

times greater risk for skin cancer, malignant melanoma, and brain cancer 1.2

times greater risk for prostate cancer and colon cancer

It's time to take immediate action, change habits and protect yourself.



Use SCBA from initial attack to finish of overhaul.

(Not wearing SCBA in both active and post-fire environments is the most dangerous voluntary activity in the fire service today).



Do not take contaminated clothes or PPE home or store them in your vehicle.



Do gross decon of PPE while on scene to remove as much soot and particulates as possible



Decon fire apparatus interiors after fires.



Use cleansing wipes to remove as much soot as possible from head, neck, jaw, throat, underarms and hands while still on scene.



Keep bunker gear out of living and sleeping quarters.



Change your clothes and wash them immediately after a fire.



Don't use tobacco



Shower thoroughly after a fire - preferably within the



Clean your PPE, gloves, hood and helmet immediately after a fire.



Use sunscreen or



Schedule annual medical exams.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CANCER STATISTICS AND PREVENTION



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HOW ONE COLORADO RURAL FIRE CHIEF SAYS HE'S CRACKED THE CODE ON GETTING AND KEEPING VOLUNTEERS

John Buchan created a fire house atmosphere volunteers want to be in, doubling their numbers in a year

Deborah Grigsby deborah.smith@denvergazette.com

Apr 13, 2025 Updated Apr 14, 2025



Florissant Fire Chief John Buchan shuffles through papers at his desk in his rural mountain fire department. In less than a year, he has doubled the number of volunteers in his department, bucking national trends.

Photo: Deborah Grigsby/Denver Gazette

In the tiny mountain town of Florissant, Colorado, Fire Chief John Buchan shuffles through the stacks of papers on his desk.

"Oh, and these are just from last week," he said, holding up four crisp, new applications from individuals hoping to become new fire department volunteers.

Across rural Colorado, as well as much of the nation, dwindling numbers of volunteers, ballooning bureaucracy and roller-coaster funding have become well-worn stories from frustrated communities as they watch volunteer fire departments slowly become a thing of the past.

Buchan said that's not the case in Florissant — at least not anymore.

In less than a year, the former recruiting and retention manager for the Tontitown, Arkansas Fire Department said he's been able to almost double the number of volunteers serving the Florissant Fire Protection District, from close to 30 to more than 60.

And he said he's done it without "going to the taxpayers."

His secret?

"I listened to the volunteers," he said. "I listened to the reasons they weren't happy — if you're going to be doing something for free, you should at least be happy doing it."

Buchan is the department's only paid employee. But by mixing up the volunteer opportunities from just firefighter or EMT, being fully engaged and creating a fire house

atmosphere people want to be in, he's found somewhat of a secret sauce other departments could learn from, he said.

In a survey conducted by the National Volunteer Fire Council, volunteer fire departments often lose members due to leadership challenges, lack of resources, incentive concerns and time demands.

Buchan, who has been on the job just under a year, doesn't disagree, but added that one of the biggest challenges he encountered was with the term "firefighter" itself.

"A lot of departments will say that they have 20, 30, or 40 firefighters on the roster, but are they really firefighters?" he said. "We've kind of stripped the title of firefighter because it was kind of a misconception."

Florissant prefers the term "emergency responder" instead, reserving "firefighter" for many of its volunteers, citing more clarity in job function.

"As many people know, nationally, the number of volunteer firefighters has dropped dramatically, Buchan said. "But how many of those were really firefighters?"

Some may have been administrators, only drove the fire truck, or only went on medical calls.

"We said, let's bundle those people into another bucket and call them emergency responders and leave the term firefighter for the actual firefighters," Buchan explained.

This freed volunteers to pick the field they were most interested in without the extensive obligation and time commitment to maintain training standards for the formal title.

Standards are still met for those who choose to be a firefighter or EMS, Buchan said, but the remaining department volunteers just want to give back to the community, not launch a new career.

"If you want to be EMS, great! I have a spot for you because 70% of our calls are medical," Buchan said. "And if they don't want to fight fire, they don't have to fight fire — I have a spot for them."

Other changes, such as swapping out rarely used fire trucks with more agile pickup-type "brush" vehicles, accommodate close to 80% of the departs calls.

The move not only reduced the department's fuel, maintenance and insurance cost but also upped the number of individuals qualified to drive and that helped increase response time.

"When I got here, we had 18 fire trucks in our fleet," Buchan said. "We identified that we really only needed five."

By buying fuel in bulk rather than at the pump, the department saves an estimated \$700 annually.

A remodeled dayroom with games and overnight bunking reduces outof-pocket expenses for volunteers who need to stay overnight.

"I guess the biggest cost I have to put up with is all the different packages because they (volunteers) do movie nights, so we got ESPN, Amazon and HBO," Buchan joked. "I really want to make it fun and afford them the opportunity to live the firefighter life."

Also, by encouraging volunteers to stay overnight, Buchan said he's pretty much created a full-time department without the cost of salaries.

Volunteers say the changes Buchan has made, such as engaging volunteers and putting them first, have brought new life back to the fire hall and made volunteers "want to be here."

Lt. LeAnne Spicer, who's been with the department since June of 2023, said one of the most obvious indicators of Buchan's impact so far is "you walked through the doors today, and there were people here."

"Prior to him (Buchan), this was a ghost town to where even the chief worked from home," Spicer said.

Buchan took over in June of 2024 from the interim fire chief, Capt. David Quick, who served for almost a year after the Florissant Fire Rescue District Board fired the former chief, Erik Holt.

Holt would later go on to sue the board, but did not prevail.

Spicer said that the department had a total of five chiefs in four and a half years, which has contributed to the department's lagging inflow of volunteers.

Emergency responder volunteer and administrator Vicky Collings said Buchan has hit the ground running.

"He has absolutely been a game changer," Collings said. "There's no idle button on him — finally there's a chief that is very involved, but also willing to delegate stuff."

Local residents are also excited about the changes, saying events such the department's annual pancake breakfast, toy drive and "genuine welcoming" atmosphere have made a difference.

Florissant has a population of approximately 5,000 people.

However, as a winter retreat and summer cabin destination, Buchan said the town can swell to more than 10,000 in the summer.

Along with increased transparency policies, Buchan and staff have cleaned up finances and are pursuing additional revenue streams for the department, including amping up cost-recovery, deployment pay and conducting a study to look at potential impact fees.

Fiscal responsibility is at the top of Buchan's list.

"The last thing I want to do is to have to ask the taxpayers for more money," he said. "We have the lowest mill levy in the area, and I want to keep it that way."

Deployments to assist other states and jurisdictions not only bring in revenue to the department, they also provide volunteers with pay and an opportunity to train with other, more experienced departments.

Buchan said the department has even looked at partnering with organizations like AAA to provide motorist services such as bringing fuel or changing tires.

Spicer added that Buchan's "emergency responder" approach has changed the stereotype of volunteer firefighters.

"When you mention firefighters, most people think of what you see on TV shows — the 6-foot-4 sexy type working on a full-time city department," Spicer said. "But on a volunteer rural department, we're not that — but yet when we go out on calls, you realize you can help without being 6-foot-4 and 220 pounds."

Time, Buchan said, is the most important thing volunteers bring to a department.

"I could have all the fancy equipment I want, but if I don't have their time, I can't do anything."

Reprinted with permission: Deborah G. Smith Denver Gazette

VFCA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July

15 Executive Officers Meeting Virtual 1000 Hours

August

19 VFCA Full Board Meeting VDFP 1000 Hours

September

Executive Officers Meeting Virtual 1000 Hours
 VFCF BOT Meeting VDFP

October

3 11th VFCF/JCC Golf Tournament Williamsburg
Kiskiack Golf Club
0800 Hours

1-3 VFCA Annual Retreat/BOD Meeting Harrisonburg
0900 Hours

9 -10 Administrative Professionals Retreat Stafford
0800 Hours

November

6 Life Safety-Community Risk Reduction TBD Summit

13-14 Company Officers Summit East Rivanna VFC

18 Executive Officers Meeting Virtual 1000 Hours

December

VFCA Full Board Meeting VDFP
 1000 Hours
 VFCF BOT Meeting VDFP





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- ► Fuel Gas
- ► **Box** 1,000 lb
- **► Towing** 2,500 lb



RANGER XD 1500

- ► Available in Standard Cab or Crew Cab
- **▶ Seats** 3-6
- ► **HVAC** Models Available
- ► Payload Up to 2,150 lb
- ► Engine 4-Stroke DOHC 1500 cc
- ► 110 HP
- ► Fuel Gas
- **▶ Box** 1,500 lb
- ► Towing 3,500 lb



RANGER XP KINETIC

- Available in Standard Cab
- ► Seats 3
- ► Payload Up to 1,500 lb
- ► 14.9 29.8 kWh Lithium Ion Battery
- ► Range Up to 80 miles
- ► 110 HP
- **▶ Box** 1,250 lb
- ► Towing 2,500 lb

AVAILABLE SKIDS

The right equipment for any call: QTAC skids built with Polytough™ construction for the highest level of performance, complete with Polaris validated installation.

All skids available on RANGER XP 1000, RANGER XD 1500 and RANGER XP Kinetic.



FIREFIGHTING SKID

- 80 gal copoly water tank
- Waterax Versax 6hp pump (Electric start 9hp available)
- Manual Hannay Reel, 75' Hose (Electric available)
- ▶ 2.5 gal foam available
- Draft hose kit available



UHP FIREFIGHTING SKID

- ► Ultra High Pressure 6.7 GPM
- ▶ 75 gal copoly water tank
- ► Waterax Versax 8hp pump with electric start
- ► Electric Hannay Reel, 75' Hose
- ▶ 2.5 gal foam



RESCUE SKID

- Full size rescue area
- ► Sliding storage
- ► Attendant seat
- ▶ O2 mounts and IV pole available



FIRE & RESCUE SKID

- ► Folding convertible rescue litter
- 60 gal or 75 gal copoly water tank
- Waterax Versax 9hp or 6hp pump
- Manual Hannay Reel, 75' Hose (Electric available)
- 2.5 gal foam available
- ► Draft hose kit available



THOUSANDS GATHER FOR THE 44TH NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL SERVICE EVENTS HELD MAY 3-4, 2025 TO HONOR 140

Public ceremonies remember fallen firefighters from 2024 and previous years



The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) hosted the 44th National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend on May 3–4, 2025, in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The ceremony honored 140 firefighters who died in the line of duty, including **70 who lost their lives in 2024** and 70 from previous years.

"This weekend is a powerful reminder of the extraordinary courage and commitment of those who put their lives on the line to protect others," Chair of the NFFF Board of Directors Troy Markel said. "We come together not only to remember the fallen, but to stand in solidarity with their families and departments, letting them know their loved ones will never be forgotten."

Two public ceremonies were held at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial on the grounds of the National Emergency Training Center. The Candlelight Service took place on Saturday, May 3, at 7:30 p.m. ET, with streaming beginning at 7:00 p.m. The Memorial Service followed on Sunday, May 4, at 10:00 a.m. ET, with streaming beginning at 9:30 a.m. ET.

Both events were live-streamed at weekend.firehero.org and on the NFFF YouTube channel, allowing viewers across the country to participate in the tribute. Sunday's Memorial Service, which draws thousands of attendees each year, featured remarks from prominent fire service and government leaders offering powerful reflections on the sacrifices of America's fallen heroes.

"Each of these 140 firefighters made the ultimate sacrifice in service to others, a profound sacrifice that defines true heroism," NFFF CEO Victor Stagnaro said. "Memorial Weekend is a time for our nation to come together to honor their bravery, to stand beside their families and ensure their legacy lives on in every community they so selflessly served."

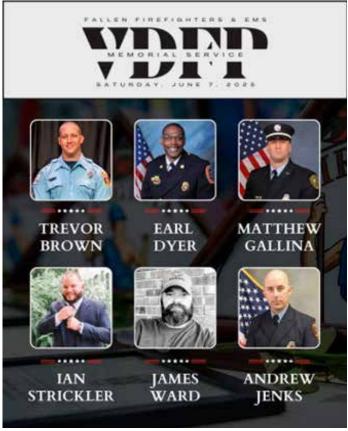
2025 VIRGINIA FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES MEMORIAL SERVICE

The 28th annual Virginia Fallen Firefighters & Emergency Medical Services Memorial Service was held at 12 p.m. on Saturday, June 7, 2025 at the Richmond International Raceway Complex, Main Exhibition Hall. This event is open to the public. The services were streamed live for those who could not attend in person. Several departments provided equipment and Honor Guards,

For over 20 years, on the first Saturday in June, we gather to honor the courageous firefighters and EMS personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. This annual event, hosted by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, recognizes those who have been acknowledged by the Virginia Line of Duty Act in the past year.

This memorial service expresses our deep gratitude, unwavering support to the families left behind and reflecting on the unyielding dedication of our firefighters and EMS personnel. It is a powerful moment for our community to unite, pay tribute to the fallen and renew our commitment to those who continue to serve with such selflessness and bravery.

Those honored this year included:



Thank you for your service

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VFOA & VCOA STUDENTS SELECTED

This year's VFOA and VCOA is set to begin later in June.

Below is a summary of the VFOA selected students

There were a total of 94 applications received for the VFOA – shown below is a breakdown on the selected students:

- 31 different departments represented.
- 7 different departments with multiple students.
- 33 males / 7 females
- All DFP divisions represented.

Also, here is a summary of the VCOA selected students:

- 30 students selected.
- 8 students rejected mostly for incomplete applications.
- 3 females and 27 males.
- · All career department representation.
- 26 different departments are represented

Smolte Alerens

Working smoke alarms save lives. However, people who are deaf or hard of hearing may not be able to depend on the traditional smoke alarm to alert them to a fire.



Install smoke alarms in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. For added safety, interconnect all the smoke alarms. If one sounds, they all sound. This gives people more time to escape.

SAFETY TIPS

- Smoke alarms and alert devices are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Strobe lights flash when the smoke alarm sounds.
 The lights warn people of a possible fire.
- When people who are deaf are asleep, a pillow or bed shaker can wake them so they can escape. The shaker is activated by the sound of a smoke alarm.
- When people who are hard of hearing are asleep, an alert device that uses a loud, mixed, low-pitched sound can wake them. They may find a pillow or bed shaker helpful. These devices are triggered by the sound of the smoke alarm.
- Research the products and select the ones that best meet your needs.

WHERE TO FIND EQUIPMENT

Search home improvement store websites or use a general search engine to look for strobe light smoke alarms. BRK/First Alert, Gentex, and Kidde brands offer this type of smoke alarm. Find smoke alarm accessories such as pillow or bed shakers, transmitters, and receivers at **lifetonesafety.com**, **safeawake.com** and **silentcall.com**. Choose devices that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory.

FACT

Home fire sprinklers keep fires small. This gives people more time to escape in a fire.

AND DON'T FORGET...
Test all smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.





Your Logo

LOUDOUN COUNTY HIGH THREAT TEAM DEVELOPS FIRE AS A WEAPON RESPONSE CAPABILITY

Andrew Jenkins and Joel Sauer

Fire as a Weapon (FaaW) may not be a familiar term. Inherently, any incident involving a fire instills fear. The idea of fire being used to purposely cause harm and injure civilians and responders invokes terror. This emerging worldwide threat is widely unknown. Marino (2022) described this vagary, "Fire as a Weapon is discussed within the first responder community but still vaguely defined. This ambiguity, coupled with absent reporting mechanisms, leads to an inability to estimate the size of the problem correctly" (1). He defined FaaW as "the use of smoke and/or fire sometimes used with other attack vectors which confound incident response and requires an integrated multidisciplinary effort for incident stabilization" (1).

The Loudoun County High Threat Team identified the need for a capability to respond to incidents in which fire was used as a weapon. Marino (2022) suggested that the frequency of FaaW incidents is comparable (or may even exceed) active shooter incidents (1). Regionally, FaaW incidents occurred in which fire was used as a barricade or a means of suicide. Other incidents involved accelerants used as deterrents to keep first responders from making entry into an occupancy. These incidents garnered support from leadership for the Loudoun County High Threat Team to design and deliver a Responding to Fire as a Weapon course.

Marino (2022) defined that an intermediate FaaW response capability is gained by training tactical law enforcement personnel to wear self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and operate in an immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) environment. With this course objective in mind, the Loudoun County High Threat Team developed and delivered a 24-hour (three day) course on Fire as a Weapon to the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) Tactical Support Unit (TSU). The overall course goal was to train TSU members to operate effectively as a tactical team when called to FaaW incidents.

The FaaW course covered several topics. Students were trained in the use of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), basic fire behavior (Figure 1), hose line movement and fire department terminology. Students also navigated mazes in SCBA, experienced interior fire conditions, and extinguished fires with water cans. While in full SCBA, students also honed their marksmanship skills (Figure 2). This allowed the students to identify any equipment (or technique) changes to better use their weapons while in SCBA. The final day of the course culminated with four "live fire" scenarios that involved TSU and LCFR field personnel. The objective of the scenarios was to provide students an opportunity to address a FaaW scenario while under direction from unified command. These scenarios consisted of tactical movements, extinguishing fires, and rescuing trapped victims.

Agencies should consider developing a FaaW response capability of integrated firefighters and law enforcement officers. Developing one of these FaaW programs is a logical progression from an integrated response to an active shooter incident. The time to consider developing this type of program is not on "game day". Coordination between responding agencies is paramount. Relationships between agencies must be established and fostered before an incident. This will be the difference between success and failure in the response. As FaaW incidents continue to increase, LC-CFRS and the LCSO are more prepared to implement an integrated multidisciplinary response.

The Loudoun County High Threat Team is comprised of representatives from the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System (LC-CFRS) and the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office (LCSO). The team meets regularly to develop joint training, review joint incidents, and develop interagency collaboration. The team was formalized in 2021.

References:

1. Marino Michael, 2022. "Defining Fire as a Weapon (FaaW): Clarity, Implications, and Opportunity for the Homeland Security Enterprise," Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, De Gruyter, vol. 20(1), pages 19-58.

About the Authors:

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Joel Sauer, NRP, FP-C is a lieutenant/paramedic with Loudoun County Fire and Rescue. He is the co-lead of the Loudoun County High Threat Team and is assigned to the operations division. Lt. Sauer is qualified as an EMS Supervisor and Uniformed Fire Dispatcher. He has been with the department for 14 years.



The LCSO TSU learns about fire behavior from the Loudoun County Fire Marshall's Office

LCSO TSU practicing shooting competency while donned in SCBA



LCSO TSU advances a hose line under the protection of their armored vehicle



LCSO TSU approaches a 'barricade with fire' scenario utilizing ballistic protection, thermal protection and a charged hose line.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERS COLLABORATE ON EMS AND FIRE RESOURCE AVAILABILITY AND IMPROVED DELIVERY OF CARE FOR VIRGINIANS



Leaders from both Public Safety and Public Health, including Virginia's Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, the Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Virginia Department of Fire Programs, as well as leadership from the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, the Virginia State Firefighters Association, the State Board of Health and the State EMS Advisory Board, came together April 21, 2025 to discuss EMS and Fire Services in the Commonwealth.

Public Health and Public Safety are wound together in the delivery of EMS, and the group spent the afternoon discussing a path forward to improve care delivery and resource availability to citizens. Actions from this group include a commitment to improved working relationships and broadened communication amongst leadership at the state level in EMS and Fire Services.



Featured in Group Photo from Left to Right:

Nick Nanna, Deputy Director, Virginia Department of Fire Programs, Gary Critzer, Chair, State Board of Health, Sonny Daniels, Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, Leah Mills, Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Stephanie Dunkel, Deputy Commissioner for Population Health and Preparedness, Virginia Department of Health, Maria Beermann-Foat, PhD, Director, Virginia Office of EMS, Karen Shelton, MD, State Health Commissioner, Virginia Department of Health, Lanette Walker, Deputy Secretary and Chief Financial Officer of Health and Human Resources, Brian Frankel, Virginia Fire Chiefs Association representative to the State EMS Advisory Board,

Janet Kelly, Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Christian Eudailey, Executive Director, Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Walt Bailey, President, Virginia State Firefighters Association and Member, Virginia Fire Services Board and State EMS Advisory Board. Christopher Lindsay, Chief Operating Officer, Virginia Department of Health, Kevin Dillard, Chair, State EMS Advisory Board, J.C. Bolling, Vice-Chair, State EMS Advisory Board.

National Fire Prevention Week

"Not Every Hero Wears a Cape"

The theme for National Fire Prevention Week 2025 is "**Not Every Hero Wears a Cape**". The objective is to highlight fire incidents in residential areas, as home fires now burn faster than ever. The campaign aims to teach everyone about having working smoke alarms at home and why it's so important2. The theme reminds us that having a well-practiced escape plan can save lives.

National Firefighter Registry for Cancer reopens after shut down in April

After being shut down "indefinitely" at the start of April, the registration portal of the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer is operational again.

The registry is considered by many to be one of the largest and most promising efforts to further understand cancer risks among firefighters, including wildland firefighters.

Earlier this year, staffing cuts at NIOSH disrupted several key firefighter health programs, including the NFR. The NVFC responded quickly by meeting with lawmakers, issuing an action alert, and joining other fire service organizations in urging Congress to restore these critical initiatives. The NFR plays a vital role in helping researchers better understand and reduce cancer risk in the fire service. Sign up today at NFR.cdc.gov.

VFCA Administrative Professionals Section is Looking for New Members



Why Belong?

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- There are training and educational opportunities at your meetings
- Quarterly magazine Commonwealth Chief... new and updated information
- Website
- VFC Foundation Scholarship Program, several APS members have benefited
- You have become more rounded, better educated and more valuable to your organization
- Find new ways to contribute



A firefighter sprays down the remains of a burning home during the Hillside Fire in the North Park neighborhood of San Bernardino, California on October 31, 2019

FIREFIGHTERS MAY FACE INCREASED RISK OF BRAIN CANCER DUE TO CHEMICAL EXPOSURE: STUDY

Sharon Udasin

Firefighters may face a heightened risk of developing brain cancer due to their persistent exposure to certain chemicals, a new study has found.

In a set of patients who had gliomas — the most common type of malignant brain tumor — cancer-causing gene mutations linked to toxic exposures were more prevalent in firefighters than in individuals from other professions, according to the study, published on Monday in Cancer.

The compounds in question, called haloalkanes, are found in flame retardants, fire extinguishers, refrigerants and pesticides and have previously been associated with a specific gene mutation that causes gliomas, the researchers noted.

"Glioma is the most common malignant primary brain tumor and is associated with significant morbidity and mortality," the authors warned.

Examining the histories of 35 participants in the University of California Adult Glioma Study, the scientists — from multiple researcher institutes across the country — determined that 17 individuals had an occupational history of firefighting.

These participants worked as firefighters for an average of 22 years and received their diagnoses about seven years after their least reported occupational exposure, per the study.

Looking for the presence of a specific mutational "signature," or pattern, linked to haloalkanes exposure, the researchers found that the firefighters were much

more likely to have the signature than the other 18 participants.

Within the non-firefighter contingent, the mutational

signatures appeared more in individuals whose careers also possibly exposed them to haloalkanes, including painters and auto-mechanics.

Senior author Elizabeth Claus, a professor at Yale University School of Public Health, acknowledged in a statement that the study's results were only preliminary and that a much larger data set across a broader range of professions is needed to confirm the findings.

But she and her colleagues also stressed that pinpointing potential links to exposure-related mutations in cancers "is extremely important because they may inform public health intervention."

Such knowledge, they explained, could help researchers develop strategies to prevent the gene mutations that cause cancer formation. And in the haloalkane scenario, awareness about the possible connection could also help firefighters to prevent certain exposures, the scientists added.

"Identifying exposure to such mutational agents is important to inform public health intervention strategies and pinpoint occupational hazards that may be avoidable." Claus said.

Be prepared. Be informed. Be safe.



It's Not Luck, It's Having Working Smoke Alarms!

To make smoke alarms work for you and enhance safety:

- 1. **Install smoke alarms** in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area, and on each level of the home.
- 2. **Ensure smoke alarms meet the needs of all family members**, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.
- 3. **Test smoke alarms at least once a month** by pushing the test button.
- 4. Remember that working smoke alarms reduce the risk of dying in a home fire by more than half.

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- Dual 23-Foot Electric Awnings
- Interior Cabinetry & Work Station
- Extendable 15-Foot LED Light Tower









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