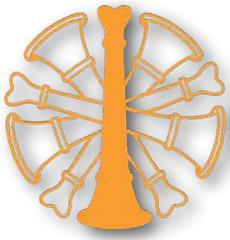


Spring 2023



# CHIEFS

The Official Magazine of the International Association of Fire Chiefs



## Resilience in the Fire Service:

### Rising to Meet the Challenges of a Changing World

Electric Vehicle  
Responses

Page 9

Recruitment and  
Retention Tips

Page 16

Building a Fire  
Department

Page 18

*And much more!*



# INTEGRATED NFIRS REPORTING SOFTWARE SAVE TIME. REDUCE ERRORS.

## How does your department collect and maintain data?

If your data is scattered in different places... **meet ESO Fire RMS.**

From an easy-to-use interface to a configurable RMS for benchmarking and identifying trends, ESO Fire RMS can meet the evolving needs of your department.



▶ VISIT [ESO.COM/NEW-FIRE-RMS](https://www.eso.com/new-fire-rms)



SCAN QR CODE  
TO LEARN MORE



# CHIEFS



## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE IAFC

- 5 A Message from the IAFC CEO and Executive Director

## FEATURES

- 6 #FireServiceOneVoice
- 9 Electric Vehicle Responses
- 14 Challenging the Status Quo Through Critical Thinking
- 16 Recruitment and Retention Dos and Don'ts
- 18 How to Build a Fire Department

## REPORT FROM WASHINGTON

- 20 Legislative Update: Government Relations Outlook

## 22 INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

### Published For: INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

8251 Greensboro Drive, Suite 650  
McLean, VA 22102  
Tel: 703.273.0911  
www.iafc.org

**CEO and Executive Director**  
Rob Brown

**Director of Communications**  
Bill Rehkopf

### Published By: MATRIX GROUP PUBLISHING INC.

Return all undeliverable addresses to:  
5605 Riggins Court, Second Floor  
PO Box 41270  
Reno, NV 89504  
Toll-Free: 866.999.1299  
Toll-Free Fax: 866.244.2544  
www.matrixgroupinc.net

**President & CEO**  
Jack Andress

**Operations Manager**  
Shoshana Weinberg  
sweinberg@matrixgroupinc.net

**Senior Publisher**  
Jessica Potter  
jpotter@matrixgroupinc.net

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Shannon Savory  
ssavory@matrixgroupinc.net

**Senior Editor**  
Alexandra Kozub  
akozub@matrixgroupinc.net

**Editors/Social Media Managers**  
Jenna Collignon, Paul Adair, Kaitlin Vitt

**Finance/Administration**  
Lloyd Weinberg, Nathan Redekop  
accounting@matrixgroupinc.net

**Director of Circulation & Distribution**  
Lloyd Weinberg  
distribution@matrixgroupinc.net

**Sales Manager - Winnipeg**  
Neil Gottfred

**Sales Manager - Hamilton**  
Jeff Cash

**Matrix Group Publishing Inc. Account Executives**  
Colleen Bell, Rob Gibson, Jim Hamilton, Scott Hendren, Frank Kenyeres, Sandra Kirby, Cheryl Klassen, Flora Korkis, Charlie Langsford, Andrew Lee, Brian MacIntyre, Caitlin Nakamura, Jaime Schroeder

**Advertising Design**  
James Robinson

**Layout & Design**  
Cody Chomiak

©2023 Matrix Group Publishing Inc. All rights reserved. Contents may not be reproduced by any means, in whole or in part, without the prior written permission of the publisher. The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Matrix Group Publishing Inc. Printed in Canada.

# THE WORLD IS FACING THE GREAT WILDFIRES OF THE XXI CENTURY

**ARE YOU READY?**



**Modern Equipment for Today's Wildland Fires**



Visit our website and find your dealer  
[www.vftnorthamerica.com](http://www.vftnorthamerica.com)

# Becoming a Resilient Force in the Community



*“While we have maintained our traditions over the years, the fire service has always risen to meet the challenges of a changing world.”*

**RESILIENCE. WE HEAR** and see the word used frequently in the American lexicon. We think of the word when we are describing something that stands the test of time. Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary defines the word as an ability to recover from or adjust to misfortune or change.

Think about it. Over the past several years, there have been plenty of opportunities to employ the word “resilience.” From the pandemic to economic uncertainty, there has been plenty of misfortune or change to recover from and adjust to. In our personal lives, such change and misfortune are always seemingly lurking around the corner. And yet, we move on.

The same can be said for the fire service. Of course, we’ve all heard the joke that our industry is “250 years of tradition, unimpeded by progress.” With any objective assessment, as much as we think the comment is true, it simply isn’t.

While we have maintained our traditions over the years, the fire service has always risen to meet the challenges of a changing world. In 2023, the challenges facing our men and women are many and diverse. And the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) continues to be a leading voice as we seek to lead, educate, and serve our members by providing them with the practical knowledge and tools they need to remain resilient.

In this edition of *iCHIEFS*, you can follow the theme of resilience in the fire service. You’ll find articles that each demonstrate the ability to adjust to our changing times.

Chief Michael O’Brian of the Brighton Area Fire Authority in Michigan is the International Director of the IAFC’s Fire and Life Safety Section and is one of the industry’s foremost experts in responding to and mitigating electric vehicle (EV) fire incidents. He takes a look at some of the best practices and innovations for firefighters as they face an increasing number of EV-related incidents.

How does the fire service stay with the times and progress while remembering its rich history? Fire Chief Tim Sendelbach is the Vice President and Chief of Public Safety Operations for iFIRE International. He also serves as fire chief for the Loveland Fire Rescue Authority in Colorado. Fresh off his excellent presentation at the IAFC VCOS Symposium in the Sun, Chief Sendelbach explains how critical thinking can help today’s fire service leaders stay on the frontlines of progress and advancement.

One of the biggest challenges facing career and volunteer fire departments today is not just the recruitment of new members, but retaining the members they have. In a “dos and don’ts” article, hear from fire service leaders who have learned and applied recruitment and retention

lessons to help build a stronger (and yes, more resilient) department.

What happens when a jurisdiction realizes that the traditional model of volunteer fire departments just won’t meet the needs of the community in a growing and changing environment? If you’re in Carroll County, Maryland, you grow a career county fire system with the help and guidance of the volunteers. We hear from Fire Chief Michael Robinson on the successes and challenges of the ongoing development of the Carroll County Department of Fire and EMS.

Lastly, Ken LaSala, the IAFC’s Government Relations Director, writes about the legislative victories the fire service realized in Washington in 2022, including the law that will allow the United States Fire Administration to investigate and report on major fires and legislation ensuring that the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant will be fully funded in 2023.

The IAFC is committed to ensuring its members and the fire service at large have the necessary tools to lead, educate, and serve to be a resilient force in their communities. Enjoy this issue of *iCHIEFS*, and be safe.

## **Rob Brown**

IAFC Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director



# #FireServiceOneVoice

*The United States Fire Administration Fire Stop Tour marked the launch of the National Fire Service Strategy.*

**T**he year 2023 marks the 150th anniversary of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), one of the oldest established associations in the United States. We are excited to honor our history while we look forward to the next 150 years of service to our members and partners. There is a lot to talk about, and I will be sharing much more as we get closer to our annual Fire-Rescue International (FRI) conference in August in Kansas City, Missouri.

The last quarter of 2022 was extremely busy for the IAFC and for the fire service at large. In October, we held the highly successful inaugural Technology Summit International in Irving, Texas, at which attendees had the opportunity to learn about the latest innovations in technology impacting the fire service.

In November, the IAFC's Volunteer and Combination Officers Section

(VCOS) held another successful Symposium in the Sun in Clearwater, Florida, and, despite an intense tropical storm knocking out power, the conference presentations went on without a hitch.

That same month, IAFC Past President Chief Ken Stuebing and IAFC Treasurer Chief Steve Locke, along with Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association President Chief Robert Rocha and Executive Secretary Chief Otto Drozd III, attended the 52nd Federation of European fire officers (FEU) council meeting in Madrid, Spain. This foundational meeting between IAFC and FEU leadership was an important first step in expanding our international footprint, as identified in our new IAFC Strategic Initiatives Plan (SIP) and to share and collaborate globally on emerging issues related to clean energy technology and climatic impacts on the growth of wildfires.



**By Fire Chief Donna Black,**  
IAFC President and Board Chair

In December, we rounded out 2022 with the move of IAFC Headquarters to the Tysons Corner area of Fairfax County, Virginia (8251 Greensboro Drive, McLean, VA 22102). This move strategically locates our headquarters along a Metrorail line, allowing for quick and convenient access to our federal partners, Capitol Hill, and Washington's Reagan National and Dulles International airports.

Entering 2023, the IAFC Board of Directors held an in-person meeting in early January in Tysons Corner, Virginia. At this meeting, we reviewed

the IAFC’s fiscal year (FY) 2022 financials and approved a balanced budget for the coming year.

Thanks to the direction of IAFC Treasurer Steve Locke, and in collaboration with IAFC staff and the staff of our contracted finance/CPA firm, we not only ended FY 2022 well in the positive, but we also established a board-designated financial reserve fund in addition to our investment reserves and net asset balance. We are now positioned to fund all of the strategic initiatives our stakeholder groups identified and the Board of Directors prioritized for FY 2023.

### FY 2023 FUNDED IAFC STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The IAFC Strategic Initiatives Plan (SIP) identifies 19 initiatives to be accomplished from 2023 to 2026. With the first 11 strategic initiatives listed in Figure 1 about to get underway, we are well on our way to shaping the future of the IAFC and serving our members for the next 150 years.

Part of serving IAFC members at the next level has come from the vision and leadership of Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell, U.S. Fire Administrator. In October, during Fire Prevention Week, Dr. Moore-Merrell convened the U.S. Fire Administrator’s Summit

*“I am committed to bringing our U.S. National Fire Service Strategy findings to our global fire and emergency service colleagues. This way, we can all share, learn, and work collectively for worldwide success.”*

on Fire Prevention and Control. This conference of stakeholders has not been held since the inaugural 1947 President Truman’s Conference on Fire Prevention that launched the *America Burning* report and established the United States Fire Administration (USFA).

At the 2022 summit, representatives from the IAFC, International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) had the privilege of participating in a roundtable

discussion and were able to speak with one collective voice to our federal leaders about those issues impacting the fire service and our personnel. This was followed by our colleagues speaking on the state of science through a series of short impactful talks. It was truly a historic day.

Working groups were then identified to address these issues, and I’m excited to report that the IAFC has representation in all groups. The goal of these working groups is to identify strategies and report at the second Summit on Fire Prevention and Control during Fire Prevention Week in October 2023.

**Figure 1: The IAFC Strategic Initiatives Plan (SIP)**

<b>Initiative 1A</b>	Implement a comprehensive communications strategy that includes messaging, marketing, and promoting a mindset that enhances the fire service.
<b>Initiative 1B</b>	Advocate for fire chiefs and the fire and emergency services through education, representation, and influence.
<b>Initiative 2A</b>	Integrate all of IAFC educational programs under one umbrella and work to offer higher-education credit for IAFC education programs and course offerings.
<b>Initiative 3A</b>	Develop a consistent, concise member communications plan.
<b>Initiative 3C</b>	Explore mental health and wellness programs and partnerships for chief officers.
<b>Initiative 3D</b>	Reengineer and expand the IAFC’s “digital footprint.”
<b>Initiative 3E</b>	Develop strategic partnerships to enhance member benefits.
<b>Initiative 4A</b>	Lead, encourage, and integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) in everything we do and stand for.
<b>Initiative 4B</b>	Expand and improve the IAFC international footprint.
<b>Initiative 4C</b>	Build IAFC membership through new partnerships and programs.
<b>Initiative 4D</b>	Evaluate member representation and involvement opportunities.

All of these efforts combined provide for the foundation of the development of the National Fire Service Strategy. Under the USFA, in conjunction with the IAFC and our fire organization partners, we are addressing the threat of fire in our communities and the ramifications of this increasing threat on our nation's firefighters.

To launch the National Fire Service Strategy, Dr. Moore-Merrell, with the assistance of the NFFF, set out on the USFA Fire Stop Tour. This three-stop

tour began in New York City, proceeded to Philadelphia, and ended in Washington, D.C.

The purpose was to honor those lost in two tragic fires in early 2022 – the Twin Parks Fire in the Bronx in New York and the Fairmount Fire in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A media event was held at each location to allow the fire service organizations to speak as one voice while honoring those lost to these tragic fires by calling attention to the growing threat of fire in our nation.

Here, I share with you the National Fire Service Strategy, as this will be the collective work of all of our fire service partner organizations:

- Prepare all firefighters for the climate-driven increase in wildfires in the wildland-urban interface by providing them with the proper training and equipment;
- Invest in a national apprenticeship program to address the firefighter shortage and make the fire service more diverse and inclusive;
- Establish a comprehensive firefighter cancer strategy that invests in research, provides access to screening for firefighters, and reduces and eliminates exposure to dangerous contaminants such as carcinogens or “forever chemicals” that have been linked to cancer and other health problems;
- Provide behavioral health resources and suicide prevention initiatives for all firefighters; and
- Create safer communities by implementing and enforcing codes and standards, especially in the wildland-urban interface and underserved and vulnerable populations, providing affordable and fire-safe housing.

The amazing collaboration of our fire service colleagues is captured in the use of the hashtag #FireServiceOneVoice. I truly believe that this momentum will transcend all of the current leaders and will become part of the fabric of our organizations into the future.

As we are the “International” Association of Fire Chiefs, and my comments above apply to the U.S. strategy, I am committed to bringing our U.S. National Fire Service Strategy findings to our global fire and emergency service colleagues. This way, we can all share, learn, and work collectively for worldwide success and continue to advocate for improved health and safety, better equipment, and judicious codes and standards.

Ultimately, this will allow our personnel to serve our communities effectively, efficiently, and safely. 🔥

# Electric Vehicle

# Responses



As sales of electric vehicles increase, the fire service must continue to modify tactics to properly respond to electric vehicle fires.

By Chief Michael O'Brian, Brighton Area (MI) Fire Authority

Fire service professionals truly adapt to the constant changes we encounter every day. Many of the changes we have seen in our careers have dealt with building construction, radio communications, and increasing demands on our emergency response and resources.

Many organizations, fire companies, and departments are taxed with our current responses and are working diligently to prepare their staff for the next change in our response, as the world adjusts to climate change policies and changes with the vehicles on our streets.

Within the United States, the fire service responds to nearly 400 vehicle fires a day, while the fire service in



Manufacturers are working diligently to create a battery pack that can withstand mechanical damage due to an incident.

the United Kingdom responds to just under 90 vehicle fires a day. Our staff has the experience, expertise, and knowledge to respond to our conventional vehicle fires and many

times can have the incident wrapped up in only 30 minutes from dispatch.

However, when responding to fires in electric vehicles (EVs), where a high-energy battery pack (often lithium-ion)

is involved, fire crews are challenged, as there are no current means to properly extinguish the fire involving the battery pack.

By the first quarter of 2023, our communities will be experiencing greater adoption of Evs, replacing fossil fuel vehicles. This has provided a fantastic opportunity for us to work with manufacturers and organizations to better understand the changing dynamics that we will face in fires involving battery-powered EVs. Our methods and tactics have allowed us to be very resilient and stand up to some of the toughest challenges.

Fire service leaders must make an emphasis to properly prepare, train, and create a culture of resilience, since these fires will challenge our methods, assumptions, and time.

### **SAFETY FIRST**

In 2022, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Safety and Health Section, as well as the Fire and Life Safety Section, established a working group to develop best practices and resources and to share quality information with fire service leaders. This working group is composed of federal agencies, fire services, manufacturers, consultants, and other experts.

The group's work continues to meet the growing dependence of incidents involving lithium-ion. One key item is the group's initial work that highlighted available resources and the preplanning need for the fire chief on what their department should be ready for on EV fires.

EV fires are filled with challenges, including roadway hazards, limited crew resources, and a toxic swamp of gas from batteries in thermal runaway (when the battery heats up uncontrollably). Crews responding to vehicle fires – either in a structure or roadway – will be faced with similar dynamics, although we must continue to emphasize the basics, which include:

- When operating on the roadway, protect the work area with blocking apparatuses, and even consider the closure of the road where crews are operating.

- Full personal protective equipment (PPE) with a self-contained breathing apparatus and facepiece is mandatory. Off-gassing cells are filled with carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide and include a flammable mixture of gases. This off-gassing presents many times as white or gray smoke and is extremely dangerous.
- Increased response resources due to the duration of the incident must be requested early at an incident.

### **PRE-INCIDENT RESPONSE**

When responding to fires involving EVs and high-energy battery packs, responding officers must develop an action plan to work to cool the battery pack or let the fire burn itself out. This determination is typically made by the identification of the need to protect against exposures, the effects of smoke on nearby homes or businesses, and if a human is trapped in the vehicle.

The key concept is once the battery pack is involved in thermal runaway, it is extremely difficult for access to be given to the area where the fire is burning inside the battery pack. When the cells are in thermal runaway, we do not have the ability to stop the process, and the reaction must be allowed to run its course.

When cooling is utilized as an option, a sustained fire flow for two handlines for 90 minutes or more should be considered. In areas where there are limited hydrants, developing on-site water delivery would be needed as well.

There is no doubt that if we are to cool the battery pack or adopt a defensive stance, the duration of the incident will be close to two hours. Response crews should determine the staffing that will be needed for this type of event as well as coordination before an incident with partner agencies such as law enforcement, the Department of Transportation, and others.

### **MANUFACTURE DESIGN**

Our manufacturers have provided great resources for our fire crews. Simply search online for the

manufacturer's name and "emergency response guides," and the current guides will typically be found online. Manufacturers are working diligently to create a battery pack that can withstand mechanical damage due to an incident. They are also working with various battery chemistries and designs to limit thermal runaway incidents.

Each manufacturer is using various methods to create the battery pack (a series of batteries). Most are located under the occupant cockpit below the floorboards. The pack is managed by battery management in the system to aid in the use of power, charging efficiencies, and monitoring the health of the cells.

### **CHARGING ELECTRIC VEHICLES**

Charging can occur in a residential setting or in a public charging area. Charging occurs in three levels, and when the vehicle is plugged in to charge, it's unable to move. Developing local training that shows the options that can be found in the home or commercially available should be part of our overall development strategy. This should also include the location of shutdown equipment, which, in the commercial setting, must be indicated on our pre-incident plans.

### **ROADWAY FIRES**

When responding to battery-powered EV incidents on roadways, crews responding should follow local practices for roadway response, PPE, and roadway safety. Upon arrival, the officer should work to quickly identify that the vehicle is an EV by conducting a 360° lap of the scene and advising their dispatch center. This should bring additional resources to the scene while the first arriving crew establishes their priorities.

In the case described earlier, the response priorities should be established to identify the exposures or if a human is trapped. If there are no exposures and no entrapment, allowing the battery pack to burn out should be the first option for consideration. Responding crews are encouraged to be familiar with the general practices outlined in the manufacturer's emergency response guides.

**INDOOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE FIRES**

When fires are located in a garage, parking deck, or other building, we must work to protect the exposure while also working to remove the vehicle from the space. Early and aggressive ventilation will be needed to limit the buildup of gases from the cells in thermal runaway. If there is no active fire, but the battery pack is showing signs of thermal runaway, crews should provide aggressive ventilation and partner with a recovery agency to remove the vehicle from the structure.

No matter one's personal or political views on alternative energy, we have to acknowledge that the genie is out of the bottle when it comes to electric-powered vehicles, and there is no putting it back. As such, the leadership of the fire service must continue to work responsibly and diligently to prepare our company officers and firefighters in the best techniques to respond to vehicle fires involving battery-powered vehicles. 🔥

*Michael O'Brian is the fire chief for the Brighton Area Fire Authority*

*in Michigan and has been serving as the president of the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs for the last three years.*

*Chief O'Brian, the International Director of the Fire and Life Safety*

*Section, has a bachelor of science degree in public safety administration from Eastern Michigan University, where he serves as an adjunct instructor with Fire Staff and Command.*

**Nederman**

Vehicle Exhaust Solution For Every Station's Needs!

- ✓ Effective source capture of exhaust fumes to prevent migration throughout your station
- ✓ Broad range of solutions that align with your station's unique needs
- ✓ Durability to reduce maintenance and total cost of ownership

**Wildfire Sprinkler Kits & Sprinkler Trailers**

Rent - Lease - Purchase

Featuring the **Elevated Sprinkler Mount**



**Elevated Sprinkler Mount**

**Industrial Worksite Fire Control Equipment Rental**



Outside Access - More Useable Space - Several Models

**ESM-8 Sprinkler Kit**

**A.S. Roach Fire Services Ltd 780 719 9584 www.asroachfire.com**

**NEW!**

OguraRescueTools.com

EMPOWERS  
BMW  
POWER

**Outperforms larger tools by easier operation combined with flexibility.**

**Ogura**®

Follow Ogura Rescue Tools  
on YouTube and Instagram!

Distributed in North America by:

**Midwest R**

info@MWRescue.com

See us at: FDIC Indianapolis, April 27-29, 2023, Booth 6170





The new Apex X-Strut® takes the popular design of our Auto X-Strut® and beefs it up for even more capability.

- /// Pin Free / Twist Free
- /// Quick Release Heads
- /// Rugged Load Limits
- /// On Board Ratchet Strap
- /// Protection from Over Extension
- /// X-Strut Add-on Jack
- /// Accepts Extensions\*

\* Accepts one 12" Super X Extension per strut on both standard and short length struts.

**/// RES-Q-JACK®**

STABILIZATION ELEVATED

Distributed in Ohio by:

**escue Products**

877-732-3206

• Fire House Expo, September 25-29



*Fire Chief Tim Sendelbach stresses the need for those in the fire service to think critically rather than resort to tradition.*



# Challenging the Status Quo Through Critical Thinking

By Kaitlin Vitt, *iCHIEFS* staff writer

**T**he fire service is an ever-evolving sector, which means the way fire service leaders work, lead, and think needs to adapt with the times.

Tim Sendelbach, the Fire Chief of Loveland Fire Rescue Authority (LFRA) in Colorado, stresses the need for those in the fire service to think critically. Fire chiefs should consider whether the decisions they make focus externally on the “customers” (the public) or focus internally on those in the department as a matter of tradition and pride.

“The profession is changing. Our calls we’re going to be changing,” says Chief Sendelbach, who is also Vice President and Chief of Public Safety Operations for iFIRE

International, and who is in his 36th year with the fire service. “We’ve got to be critical of how we do this moving forward and feel a little uncomfortable sometimes as we try new things.”

For example, very few calls today – around 4%, Chief Sendelbach says – require advanced life support (ALS) intervention, yet traditional deployment systems focus mainly on ALS models.

While that may have worked for a particular time, the industry needs to shift.

“Today is a much different system, and we really haven’t re-gearred the system toward a model response that reflects what the data is showing.”

## **WHO IS THE BENEFICIARY IN YOUR DECISIONS?**

You make decisions every day as a fire chief. These decisions can affect many people, including those in the department and those in the community.

“We pride ourselves on being humble servants, selfless in nature,” he says. “The next time you’re asked to make a decision financially, ask yourself who is going to be the beneficiary.”

Perhaps a department notices morale is low, so the chief decides to get leather helmets to motivate firefighters. In this case, the beneficiary is the firefighter because service to those in the community, or the “customers,” doesn’t change.

"I always think you need to look out for your people, but when it comes to the customers we serve, we need to make every effort to ensure they're happy come November (election day)," Chief Sendelbach says. "If the customer would ever look at that list and see decisions the fire chief has made benefit the firefighters more than the customer, things likely won't go well."

We can look to Chief Sendelbach's department in Loveland for an example of a decision that benefits both the department and the customer.

When the department's 10th fire station opened, instead of purchasing a fire engine, the department moved an engine from an existing double company station to the new station. At the double company station, the department added a quick-response vehicle (QRV).

This allowed the department to respond more quickly and in a larger area.

"A traditional template would be put another engine in service. The reality is that would have cost the taxpayers an extra \$250,000 to \$300,000 to do that, whereas the reality is, the situation didn't demand that," Chief Sendelbach says. "We put an alternative response vehicle in there, created cost savings, didn't compromise or hinder the safety of our personnel, and ultimately provided a higher level of service."

### BACK UP YOUR DECISIONS

Chief Sendelbach says one of the most controversial things when discussing alternatives to traditional thinking in the fire service is when you start manipulating firefighting tactics.

"Many people want to hang on to [traditional] tactics, not because they're more effective, but because the firefighters like cutting holes in roofs and doing traditional tactics," he says.

"The customer wants you to put the fire out in the most effective and efficient manner as possible. A fire chief has to stand up and say, 'We're going to go with the research. We're going to modify our tactics to reflect more effective and efficient tactics, not tactics that bring us personal satisfaction and joy.'"

*"We've got to be critical of how we do this moving forward and feel a little uncomfortable sometimes as we try new things."* - Fire Chief Tim Sendelbach

Chiefs can look to UL Fire Safety Research (UL-FSRI) for facts and empirical research that can help drive and inform the fire service about changing tactics.

"Whether it be cancer prevention or behavioral health risk, a multitude of folks out there are doing research to help fine-tune our profession. [Fire chiefs] just have to be open-minded and willing to accept it," Chief Sendelbach says.

### GROWTH THROUGH DISCOMFORT

Critical thinking is important at all levels in the fire service to ensure the public and the department know the

reasons and benefits behind decisions. And at times, critical thinking can feel uncomfortable. Inspired by the book *Hunting Discomfort*, by Sterling Hawkings, Chief Sendelbach says discomfort can be a good thing.

"As a fire chief or chief officer, we have a responsibility to stretch and force our people to stretch and do some things they're uncomfortable with, but not in a hazardous way," Chief Sendelbach says.

"Growth comes by being uncomfortable. Whether it's physical fitness or mental and cognitive development, all those things require us to be uncomfortable." 💧

**HONOR YOUR BRAVEST WITH SOLID BRONZE AWARDS**

LIBERTY ART WORKS, INC.

PROUDLY MADE IN THE USA

LIBERTYARTWORKS.COM

888.411.7744

100% USA LABOR  
100% USA MATERIALS

# Recruitment and Retention Dos and Don'ts

By Kaitlin Vitt, *ICHIEFS* staff writer

It's an issue fire departments are constantly trying to overcome: how can the fire service best attract and retain qualified firefighters?

Solutions to recruitment and retention issues are closely connected and overlap in many ways.

Experts say it starts with accurately portraying the fire service, straying away from the traditional "we go to big fires and exciting calls every day" videos. Instead, departments should highlight the range of job opportunities – from office jobs to those in the field – and the impact fire service employees can have on the community.

Maybe it's moving a piece of furniture or a rug at someone's home to prevent a future lift-assist call, or maybe it's installing a car seat or smoke alarm.

"Is that the fun and exciting stuff? Probably not," says Josh Waldo, Fire Chief of the Bozeman Fire Department in Montana since 2015. "Are you making an impact in that person's life, in a way we might not even fully understand? Absolutely."

## LOOKING WITHIN

Chief Waldo has been a part of the fire service for 22 years. He says recruitment and retention is an industry-wide problem, one occurring at all levels in volunteer, paid, and combination departments.

He suggests departments ask recent hires if there was anything that gave them pause about joining the fire service. It's also a good idea to go to high schools to talk with students – before they have a set career path in college – about if



*"Is that the fun and exciting stuff? Probably not. Are you making an impact in that person's life, in a way we might not even fully understand? Absolutely."* – Fire Chief Josh Waldo

they've considered a career in the fire service, and if not, why.

Chief Waldo also recommends fire departments examine their hiring processes. This isn't about lowering standards, he clarifies. A standard needs to be met, from a physical and a psychological standpoint. But he recommends looking at any specific requirements that could be barriers to some groups in the community.

For example, some departments require applicants to be certified firefighters. For someone who is working two jobs, trying to get into school, or is a single parent, they might not have the resources to complete the certification.

"You just disqualified a whole bunch of people who could be great for your department and your community, but until you really analyze

that, maybe you don't even know you're doing it," Chief Waldo says.

Waldo also emphasized the need for fire departments to show what systems are in place to support candidates and employees through mental health challenges and cancer risks, two important and timely topics.

Addressing this might be one of the best ways to make the most ground in the shortest amount of time, for both recruitment and retention, he says.

"If you listen to the fire service talk today, we're very good at admitting we have a mental health crisis and we have a cancer crisis," Chief Waldo says.

"Where I don't think we're doing a good job, maybe because we're not ready to talk about it, is telling potential candidates, 'Listen, you're

going to experience some challenges in your career, whether mentally or physically, but let us talk to you about the programs and services we have in place to support you.”

### SHOWING EACH PERSON'S VALUE

Trisha Wolford, Fire Chief of the Anne Arundel County Fire Department in Maryland since 2019, has been a part of the fire service for 17 years. She says that while her department still sees many applicants, not as many follow through with accepting a position.

Chief Wolford suspects a number of reasons, including the desire for a flexible position that offers a work-life balance, concerns about mental and physical health, and worries that candidates' personal life won't be a good fit for the fire service.

“These are great opportunities to look at our employees and say, ‘Maybe they're onto something. Maybe we should be trying something new,’” Chief Wolford says. “Fire departments pilot a lot of things,

*“Fire departments pilot a lot of things, like new tools, apparatuses, station models, and delivery models, so listening to your number one asset – your people – is the most important thing we can do.” – Fire Chief Trisha Wolford*

like new tools, apparatuses, station models, and delivery models, so listening to your number one asset – your people – is the most important thing we can do.”

She focuses on those in her department as individuals, making sure they know they each play an important role and that they are supported.

For example, she says she wants to show women interested in joining her department that she is thinking about them and any barriers they may face. As such, Chief Wolford helps women in her department who are breastfeeding protect their breast milk

so they don't have to worry whether their child will have healthy milk.

“I try to make sure everyone understands that while there's over 1,000 of us and I can't think about everyone at once, I can think about how different individuals can contribute to the system,” she says. “I think some of those personal things that make a difference and make someone feel like an individual are things I try to capitalize on.”

Chief Wolford adds that she talks with members about how they can overcome barriers early on, even before recruit school, so they know the department is an environment they can thrive in from day one. 🌱

## Connect With 12,000+ Fire Service Leaders Every Issue!

*iCHIEFS* connects IAFC members across North America and internationally, reaching decision makers in thousands of career, combination, and volunteer fire departments. These leaders are the world's experts in firefighting, EMS, terrorism response, hazmat response, wildland fire suppression, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public safety industries.

Showcase your expertise, services, products, and technologies to the readers of *iCHIEFS*! The publication is produced three times per year and features added distribution at major sector events throughout the year.

Reach out to request the 2023 Media Kit! Ask how advertising in multiple issues can save you money!

Email: [sales@matrixgroupinc.net](mailto:sales@matrixgroupinc.net) • Phone: 866-999-1299



# How To Build a Fire Department



In 2018, legislation passed enabling the creation of the Carroll County Department of Fire and EMS.

By Bill Rehkopf, IAFC

Carroll County, Maryland, is situated west of Baltimore and north of the District of Columbia. It is close enough to those cities to be considered a bedroom community, while retaining a largely rural, agricultural atmosphere.

The county is currently protected by 14 individual volunteer fire companies, operating under common standards and guidelines set by the Carroll County Volunteer Emergency Services Association (CCVESA). Most of the departments have both fire services and EMS running out of their stations and receive county funding to support paid staffing for EMS

personnel and fire service apparatus officers.

CCVESA had long recognized that a combination career/volunteer system would be needed to ensure proper fire protection for Carroll County in the future. In 2018, state legislators, at the urging of CCVESA, passed enabling legislation for the creation of the Carroll County Department of Fire and EMS (CCDFEMS).

Fire Chief Michael Robinson joined CCDFEMS as Director in 2021. Recently, *iCHIEFS* sat down with Chief Robinson in his office to talk about the evolution of the Carroll County fire service.

***iCHIEFS: GETTING A CONSENSUS OF VOLUNTEERS TO AGREE TO EVOLVE INTO A COMBINATION***

**DEPARTMENT CAN BE A VERY TOUGH CONVERSATION. WHAT DOES THAT SAY ABOUT THE CARROLL COUNTY VOLUNTEERS?**

**ROBINSON:** It speaks volumes about the volunteer leadership, that they would have the foresight to determine that it is an issue and was moving beyond their existing capabilities. So I've got to give them credit for making that recognition.

During the day, 80% of what we do is EMS, with both advanced life support (ALS) and basic life support (BLS) transport units. On top of that, we have a lot of "smells and bells" alarms and the like. But, unlike 30 to 40 years ago, when volunteers were tasked around once a week, we're now looking at, in some places, as many as 10 responses a day. It's just no longer feasible to solely rely on the volunteer fire service.

***iCHIEFS: YOU'VE ALREADY HIRED AN EMS CHIEF, AN OPERATIONS/TRAINING CHIEF, AND SECURED A CONTRACT FOR A FULL-TIME MEDICAL DIRECTOR. NOW YOU'RE HIRING CAREER LIEUTENANTS FOR THE VOLUNTEER STATIONS. I'M SURE ONE OF THE BIG QUESTIONS IN EVERY CHIEF'S MIND AS THEY READ THIS IS, "THIS IS GREAT...BUT HOW ARE YOU PAYING FOR IT?"***

**ROBINSON:** Obviously, funding is an issue. We have signed a memorandum of understanding with all 14 fire companies, which took over a year. It's similar to a union collective bargaining agreement, in terms of "this is what the volunteer companies will do, and this is what the CCDFEMS will do." That was really a milestone.

Some of the money will come from the county absorbing 100% of the EMS billing money currently collected by the volunteer companies. We will still fund the fire companies to the

tune of approximately \$8 million a year in either direct funding and/or goods and services.

We're also starting to consolidate. For example, if we have 14 different electrical bills, the county gets a huge savings by pulling all of that together. If the individual departments are getting fuel for \$2.50 a gallon, by consolidating those things we may be able to get it for \$2.

We're also removing the burden of retirement health insurance workers compensation from the volunteer departments. Some of our bigger companies have as many as 30 employees to pay health insurance for. You're talking a half million dollars a year.

And we've combined all the insurance policies, which addresses the question about the liability of putting career personnel in volunteer-owned stations.

Any money that the companies make from fundraising, which is substantial in some cases, will now all go back to supporting the needs of the departments and will no longer be used to fund health insurance.

### **ICHIEFS: HOW DOES POLITICS PLAY INTO YOUR PLANNING AND FUNDING?**

**ROBINSON:** Right now, a couple dynamics play into that. Currently, we have a conservatively elected board of commissioners, and their objective is not to raise taxes.

Secondly, our statewide dynamics are changing with a new governor, who is a Democrat. That means, politically speaking, that a conservatively oriented Carroll County may not have "most favored" status in terms of getting state windfall grants. So, we have to look outside the box in terms of federal grant funding and other creative methods of getting the revenue.

### **ICHIEFS: WHAT WILL CDFEMS LOOK LIKE IN 2025?**

**ROBINSON:** We're hiring 250 people over the next two years. Right now, we're hiring 16 lieutenants, 12 of whom will be station lieutenants. They'll work 24 hours on, 72 hours off shifts. While we may not be able



*Fire Chief Michael Robinson joined the Carroll County Department of Fire and EMS as Director in 2021.*

to compete with the pay of other jurisdictions, we can compete with the hours.

At our busier stations, we'll have two transport ALS units, while the others will have a single ALS transport. We'll also start out with a single fire apparatus driver/operator. We'll have options such as putting a medical unit out of service in order to respond to a fire call in the first-due area. We'll have at least a three-person engine company get out the door immediately, assisted by our surrounding stations.

### **ICHIEFS: WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL GOAL IN ALL OF THIS?**

**ROBINSON:** My motive is no more than getting to know everyone and getting them to know me so that I can serve everyone better. I spent 33 years as a career firefighter in Baltimore County, 15 as a chief officer. But my roots are in the volunteer service.

One of the things we believe is that there should not be any separation among career and volunteers. In order to coexist, you've got to have equivalent standards and you've got

to treat everybody the same. It doesn't matter whether our folks are getting a paycheck or not; we will all follow the same standard.

Our goal is to create our own culture of a successful combined and integrated Carroll County Department of Fire and EMS. 🔥

**21% of firefighter injuries are leg injuries.**

Help prevent them with a set of Bunker Boot Mates.

**Order today to reduce their risk!**

**BUNKER BOOT MATE**

US Patent 10266093

BunkerBootMate.com  
info@BunkerBootMate.com  
800-235-9853



**Ken LaSala**, IAFC Director of Government Relations and Policy

# Legislative Update: Government Relations Outlook

**T**he 118th Congress has been seated with a Republican majority in the House and a Democratic majority in the Senate. When the 117th Congress finally adjourned in December, it managed to pass important fire and EMS legislation. However, much work is to be done in a challenging, divided Congress.

## FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2023 APPROPRIATIONS AND THE END OF THE 117TH CONGRESS

Before leaving town, the 117th Congress passed a large omnibus appropriations bill (P.L. 117-328). The bill funded federal programs for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. Overall, the results were mixed.

As you can see, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program and Staffing for Adequate Fire and

Emergency Response (SAFER) grant programs maintained their funding, while the United States Fire Administration (USFA) saw an increase. We are concerned by cuts to the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) and State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP). The Volunteer Fire Assistance program also saw an increase to \$21 million; the National Firefighter Cancer Registry saw an increase to \$5.5 million; and the SIREN grant program for rural fire-based and

third-service EMS was increased to \$10.5 million.

Congress also took other actions in December. The urban (2%), rural (3%), and super-rural (22.6%) add-on payments for the ambulance transport of Medicare patients were extended through 2024. Congress also passed legislation requiring federally assisted housing to have either hard-wired smoke alarms or 10-year smoke-alarms with non-rechargeable and non-replaceable batteries by the end of 2024.

In addition, Congress passed legislation to authorize the USFA to conduct on-site examinations of major fires to assess the cause-of-origin of the fire along with other factors, such as tactical response and civilian fire safety. Using its analysis, the USFA can issue a public report to state, local, and federal authorities that discusses the fire and ways to prevent similar fires. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also was directed to develop training and guidance to prevent exposure of firefighters to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Finally, Congress created a presumptive disability for federal firefighters that serve at least five years and suffer from a list of 16 conditions including heart attack, stroke, and various forms of cancer.

## 118TH CONGRESS

As we start the 118th Congress, the major legislative priority of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) will be protecting the AFG and SAFER programs. They are scheduled to expire on September 30, 2024. We also will need to reauthorize funding for the USFA. These programs are vital to the fire and emergency service, and it will take a concerted effort to pass legislation to protect them. Legislation was introduced last year to authorize funding for USFA, AFG, and SAFER and to extend the sunset for the AFG and SAFER grant programs through September 30, 2032. However, it was blocked from passage.

In the first quarter of this year, we will have the opportunity to pass legislation to fund a nationwide transition to Next Generation (NG) 9-1-1. NG 9-1-1 funding will allow public safety answering points to receive calls for help through voice, text, pictures, streaming video, and other data and relay it to first responders at the incident. The effort is estimated to cost \$15 billion, so we will have to rely upon the proceeds from federal spectrum auctions to pay for it. The Federal Communications Commission's authority to auction spectrum ends on March 9, so Congress will have to pass legislation

**Figure 1. Funding for the Major Fire Service Programs (in millions (\$))**

Program	FY 2020 (Enacted)	FY 2021 (Enacted)	FY 2022 (Enacted)	FY 2023 (President's Request)	FY 2023 (Enacted)
AFG	455 <sup>1</sup>	460 <sup>2</sup>	360	370	360
SAFER	355	560 <sup>3</sup>	360	370	360
USFA	46.844	49.269	53.212	60 <sup>4</sup>	60 <sup>5</sup>
UASI	665	705	740	711.184	615
SHSGP	560	610	645	616.186	520
US&R	37.832	37.832	37.382	37.832	37.832

1. Includes \$100 million in AFG funding from the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136).
2. Includes \$100 million in AFG funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2).
3. Includes \$200 million in SAFER funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117-2).
4. Includes over \$2 million from FEMA Procurement, Construction and Improvements (PCI) account.
5. Includes over \$2 million from FEMA Procurement, Construction and Improvements (PCI) Account.

soon to extend it. We are trying to add the NG 9-1-1 legislation to this effort.

The IAFC also is working on legislation to address mental wellness issues. The Helping Responders Overcome (HERO) Act includes funding for peer support programs in fire departments. It also would create educational resources to help mental health professionals better provide service to fire and EMS personnel suffering from post-traumatic stress. Finally, the bill would create an anonymous suicide registry similar to the national firefighter cancer registry to support research into preventing public safety suicides.

The IAFC joins with the other fire service organizations in asking the Biden administration to address the supply chain crisis in the fire and EMS apparatus and equipment industry. Fire departments are seeing delivery dates for equipment increase by years and major increases in the cost of

fire apparatuses and equipment. The IAFC has met with staff from the White House and Departments of Commerce, Transportation, and Homeland Security to ask for help in fixing this problem.

We must pass important bills in the 118th Congress, such as a bill to protect the AFG and SAFER grant programs. To explain the importance of these programs to your Senators

and Representatives, I recommend that you visit Washington for the National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner on May 23. Also, you can download our legislative Hot Sheet and send emails to your members of Congress about major legislation at [www.iafc.org/gr](http://www.iafc.org/gr).

*Ken LaSala is the IAFC's Director of Government Relations and Policy.*



**Special Pricing**  
FEDERAL EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE  
(FEMA) AFG & SAFER

585.368.8866  
Contact@GGProcess.com  
PO Box 39  
Spencerport, NY 14559

**\$1,600**  
25% Savings!

[www.GGProcess.com](http://www.GGProcess.com)

## Nederman

**Nederman**  
4404-A Chesapeake Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28216  
Tel: (855) 925-1609  
Email: [info@nederman.com](mailto:info@nederman.com)  
Web: <https://fire.nederman.com>

Nederman diesel exhaust removal systems are ergonomic, safe, effective and designed to fit your exact station needs.



**Darley**  
Paul Darley  
325 Spring Lake Drive | Itasca, IL 60143  
Tel: 800-323-0244 | Email: [pauldarley@darley.com](mailto:pauldarley@darley.com)  
Web: [www.darley.com](http://www.darley.com)

You serve others. We serve you.  
Founded in 1908, Darley provides the highest quality pump, technology, and equipment solutions for first responders around the world. With origins in Midwest manufacturing, Darley offers a complete line of unmanned systems, immersive training technology, equipment and pumps. More information is available at [www.darley.com](http://www.darley.com).

Please support our advertisers who help make this publication possible.

**Awards, Statues, and Honor Guards**  
 Liberty Art Works..... 15

**Diesel Exhaust Systems**  
 Nederman ..... 11

**Fire Record Management Software**  
 ESO ..... IFC

**Grant Writing**  
 G&G Municipal Consulting and Grant Writing.....21

**Hose Management Systems**  
 ROLLNRACK.....8

**Mobile First Solutions and Communications**  
 T-Mobile for Business.....OBC

**Plan Review Work Stations**  
 iPlanTables .....22

**Rescue and Extrication Products**  
 Midwest Rescue Products Inc. ....12-13

**Safety Apparel**  
 Bunker Boot Mate ..... 19

**Telematics Systems**  
 OnStar ..... IBC

**Tool and Equipment Mounting Solutions**  
 Poly-Tech America.....22

**Wildfire Sprinkler Kits and Trailers**  
 A.S. Roach Fire Services Ltd. .... 11

**Wildland Firefighting Equipment and Gear**  
 Vallfirest..... 4



# iPlanTables.com

info@iplantables.com 888-836-2727

**Join over 100 fire jurisdictions who have chosen iPlanTables workstations!**

- Electronic Plan Review
- GIS Mapping
- Onsite Incident Review
- Aerial Maps

**Features**

- 43"-75" Touchscreen Monitors
- Electric Lift & Tilt
- Side Monitor for Code Books
- PC Included
- Battery Back-up
- Touchscreen
- Mobile Cart

**IAFC FRI**

**MADE IN USA**

**Electronic Plan Review Workstations**



## Critical crash data before you arrive on scene.

While responding to a crash, you need accurate information quickly. OnStar® and RapidDeploy work together to share critical crash details electronically so you can make more informed decisions for safer on-scene management and field triage **before arriving on scene.** With RapidDeploy, 911 centers can relay vital information that includes vehicle location and propulsion type, air bag deployment, direction of impact, and probability of severe injury.

LEARN MORE AT [ONSTAR.COM/PUBLICSAFETY](https://onstar.com/publicsafety)



OnStar plan, working electrical system, cell reception and GPS signal required. OnStar links to emergency services. Service coverage varies with conditions and location. See [onstar.com](https://onstar.com) for details and limitations. ©2023 OnStar LLC. All rights reserved.



# First responders get first priority.

**With mobile-first solutions developed for fire services, T-Mobile® for Government is committed to delivering critical connectivity to first responders.**

---

Through our Connecting Heroes® program, we provide exclusive discounts on purpose-built technology solutions for fire and rescue services—all on the nation's largest 5G network. Plus, WPS-enrolled agencies receive priority network access and preemption at no additional cost.

To learn more about how we're helping to transform fire services while maximizing budgets, visit us at [Booth 2227](#) or [T-Mobile/PublicSafety](#).

**T** T-MOBILE  
FOR GOVERNMENT

For state & local fire, police, and EMS agencies' first responder lines; eligibility verified. Coverage not available in some areas and may be impacted by emergencies; check your response area. Priority access & preemption for WPS-enrolled users. Capable device required for 5G. Some uses may require certain plan or feature; see T-Mobile.com. T-Mobile, the T logo, and the magenta color are registered trademarks of Deutsche Telekom AG. © 2023 T-Mobile USA, Inc.