

Fall 2024



CHIEFS

The Official Magazine of the International Association of Fire Chiefs



The Science of Morale

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And much more!

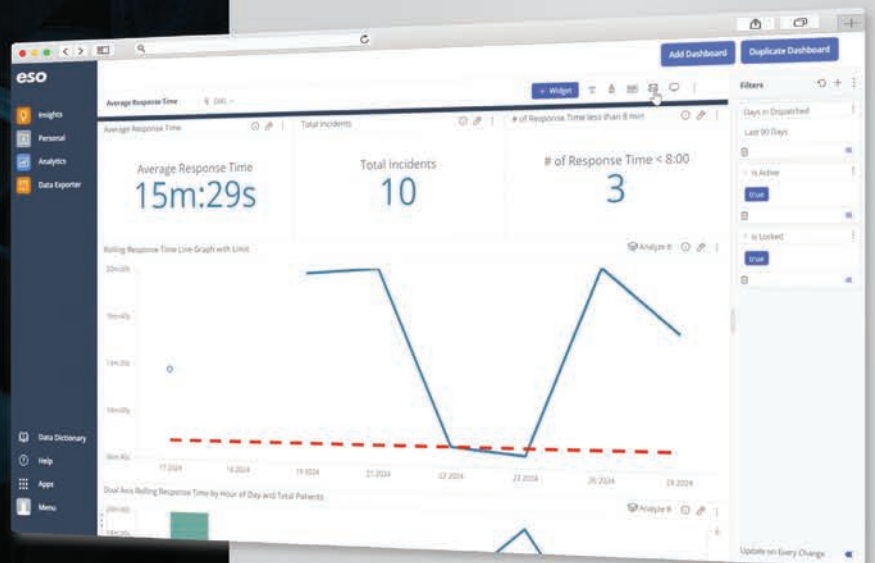


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On Adaptive Leadership

AS OUR MEMBERS know, leadership is a word with a thousand meanings. The approaches, styles, values, and purposes people lead with can look radically different from one person to the next. As a matter of fact, leadership can look different for the same person on different days — and that person's leadership can be just as effective on both of those days, if their foundation is strong.

What is that foundation? What is it made of? Well, a good foundation is neither too firm nor too soft. It moves with the ground but doesn't collapse under strain; it not only carries the weight of a structure but also redistributes it so no one area bears the full burden.

We tend to think of foundations as blocks of immovable concrete. If a foundation is really that unyielding, it will quickly start to crack and weaken. It won't give the structure on top of it the platform it needs to shift and settle over time. If it's too yielding, it won't be much of a foundation at all. Like most things, foundations need balance to work.

Leadership is a lot like that. Strong leadership is built up on a combination of materials both dynamic and stable. You'll read about a few of those components right here in this issue of *iCHIEFS*.

A leader's core values are the elements that never change. For me, these defining concepts are things like loyalty, integrity, humility, conscientiousness, and genuine faith

in the people and organizations I serve. Without these values as my compass-points, I couldn't lead myself, let alone others.

Our association has values like this, too. Our members have helped define them over 150 years, and they've remained firm since Chief John S. Darnell gathered his peers together and held the first meeting of what would become the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). These values represent our broader purpose, which hasn't changed since then.

We see these time-tempered values reflected in our association's day-to-day actions on behalf of its membership. These are core principles like dedication to duty; collaboration with every stakeholder in the collective fire and emergency service; steadfast advocacy that remains the same with or without support from those outside of that service; respect for the history and traditions that forged us; and an undaunted focus on improving the circumstances in which our service operates.

At the same time, we are not the same as we were in 1873. I'm not the same leader I was when I started my career in 2001. My colleagues and mentors have taught me that good leaders learn, improve, and become a reflection of the people they serve — and that means they have to be at least a little bit malleable. They let pride for their people come before personal pride. They listen, take in feedback, and ask for advice when

they need it. When good leaders make mistakes or miss the mark, they don't deny it: they learn from it. They share that learning with others and turn it into strength for all instead of the weakness of one.

I've had the privilege of meeting and working with a lot of great leaders. A number of you are probably reading this message right now. As IAFC President and Board Chair, I've already faced some of the challenges and barriers of leadership. Our association and all its members have faced countless challenges and barriers themselves over the years. Our values have kept us focused, but it's our shared fellowship that's given us the other necessary element of our collective foundation: the ability to adapt often and well when those values require it.

In the near future, this theme is going to be a major one for both me and the IAFC as a whole. It's one that's grown around the stories and experiences you, the members, have shared with us. As an organization formed by leaders, for leaders, we intend to honor those experiences fully as we navigate a changing fire and emergency service together.

At the end of the day, leadership is what drives those changes — by supporting it, the IAFC has become the foundation this service will be built on for many years to come.

Fire Chief Josh Waldo
President & Board Chair



The Science of Morale

While it's a principle often associated with the military, morale exists everywhere people form groups and interact with one another. It is a defining force behind the fire and emergency service and isn't merely a byword or vague HR-branded concept; morale is a well-studied science, and emergency service leaders need to become experts in it if they want to succeed.

To understand the real-world impacts of morale, consider the results of low morale in a workplace:

- Significant increases in staff turnover;
- Higher rates of PTSD, depression, heart problems, divorce, and injury among firefighters and EMTs (see FireRescue1's *What Firefighters Want* survey for a detailed review of these factors);
- Significantly lower rates of productivity in all areas of work;

- Worse incident outcomes for both personnel and victims;
- Increased interpersonal conflict, including escalations to physical fights between personnel; and
- Significant increase in communications crises, sometimes resulting in major PR disasters or even physical harm to personnel, their officers, and patients.

These impacts are all research-backed conclusions from peer-reviewed surveys and studies. The issues noted are quantifiable, specific, and observable. They are pulled from studies cited and funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), National Firearms Association (NFA), Department of Defense, and dozens of well-respected private organizations such as the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and

the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC).

Though low morale affects everything, luckily for us, so does strong morale. Even better, morale can be understood, examined, and directed by educated leaders. It can be broken down into straightforward, actionable steps and achieved the same way other quantifiable outcomes are achieved.

MORALE IS LEADERSHIP

While we often think of leadership as a personality trait, leadership is a learned skill that can be taught and improved upon through specific, well-proven training methods.

According to the most recent *What Firefighters Want* survey by FireRescue1, the top three stressors among firefighters are poor leadership, lack of staffing, and bad personnel management by department leadership. This survey deals almost entirely with issues of

morale, with “stressors” acting as a catch-all term for negative factors that impact individual and group morale among firefighters.

The fact that all three of the top stressors are tied to interpersonal dynamics and, more specifically, to leadership is telling. No amount of rapport between peers can make up for the impact of poor leadership on morale, especially in the context of our fire and emergency service.

A 2005 survey conducted by the Sioux City Fire Department (SCFD) and later cited jointly by FEMA and the USFA provides an informative case study on the relationship between leadership and morale. Titled *A Study of Leadership As It Relates to Morale and Motivation*, the research was conducted in response to a diversity study that “indicated low levels of motivation and morale” that led to “decreased productivity” within the SCFD. Researchers noted that this was a widespread issue, and the Sioux City department was far from alone in facing it.

The study’s conclusions were straightforward: “[The results] indicate that there is a lack of leadership skills and techniques being employed by SCFD staff officers and that this is leading to poor morale and motivation [which leads to] decreased productivity from the human capital of the department.”

Possible solutions to the poor leadership to morale pipeline are many. In the SCFD’s case, recommendations centered around “creating a long-term orientation [program], improving communication, soft-skills training, change management, and use of a leadership and team development system.” In other more severe cases, chronically bad or corrupt leaders have had to be removed altogether.

THE ADVERSITY PARADOX

In the book *Fundamentals of Social Psychology*, the sociologist Emory S. Bogardus states that “[morale] comes nearest to the surface in times of personal crisis and, in the case of the group, in times of conflict and warfare.”

Understanding the principles of morale is a matter of training and study; actually implementing them is all about timing, empathy, and relationship-building.

In other words, stressful circumstances reveal morale in its strongest, purest form. However, this dynamic gives rise to an interesting paradox. If morale is strong, the impact of adversity can be and often is net positive. Bonds are strengthened, group identity is stabilized, and confidence grows among the individuals in that group.

If morale is low, however, good or “easy” circumstances can actually make things worse for the group. Restlessness leads to resentment among peers and officers. Without a problem to face, there is even less incentive than usual for individuals to cooperate and work together. Among first responders, prolonged periods of low call volume or a high number

of “low-stakes” calls often lead to the highest levels of dissatisfaction.

Leaders can either view this paradox as a problem to be solved or a tool to be utilized. Good leadership training will teach you to look through the latter lens on a consistent, productive basis.

One of the best examples of this is a common one: mental health outcomes. If a department’s leadership does their research and seeks out effective solutions to their team’s mental health problems, several things tend to happen. When a leader openly promotes and engages in therapy or other mental health treatment, trust levels increase within the department, as stated in the *Yellow Ribbon Report*, published



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by the International Association of Fire Chiefs' (IAFC) Volunteer and Combination Officers Section.

Trust then leads to greater openness, and openness leads to implementation, which further increases trust and builds a sense of belonging, which is a foundational element of self-development. By actively researching, seeking, and providing strong mental health resources, then openly demonstrating trust and vulnerability by engaging with them, a leader in this scenario

can turn a serious crisis into a unifying experience that significantly boosts morale over the long term.

There are smaller actions a leader can take to create the same positive morale "feedback loop" within their department. Take for example a station in an older building that is seen as uncomfortable, unwelcoming, or otherwise less than satisfactory to its occupants. A morale-minded leader could design and conduct a survey asking for firefighters' input on the station's

layout and design, then visibly implement some of that input.

When it comes to morale-savvy leaders, the mantra should be "Every problem is an opportunity." It may sound cliché, but it's effective. So-called problems often represent a chance to increase what can be referred to as the four "morale multipliers": demonstrations of trust, tangible respect, input implementation, and visible integrity. Learn them well, and the results will start speaking for themselves.

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ART, SCIENCE, OR SKILL SET?

Morale isn't nearly as intuitive as many people assume; the science of morale has rules akin to the laws of physics. Sometimes, these rules seem paradoxical — but their outcomes are at least reliable, if not predictable. Morale is dependent on leadership to the point that "good leadership" may as well be code for "a good understanding of morale." You can study morale and research it like any other observable phenomenon.

At the same time, morale is a living, breathing thing that arises from the day-to-day interactions between highly unique individuals. Leaders who wish to have good morale sense must master the art of observation, and they have to possess a strong set of soft skills to fully utilize the interpersonal pattern morale reflects. This kind of leadership can involve a lot of subtlety. Understanding the principles of morale is a matter of training and study; actually implementing them is all about timing, empathy, and relationship-building.

Morale is something that gets built on a foundation of other skills, most of them having to do with leadership. Leaders don't just train; they experiment. Skilled leaders have learned how to effectively gather input, interpret it, and use it to take action.

Most importantly, morale is the thing you have left when all else goes to ... well, you know. You can't afford to leave it to chance — so don't. Start here. 🔥

Firefighting in the Age of Drones:



Transforming Emergency Response

When civilians hear the term “drone,” they usually picture sleek military aircraft or four-propellered devices used by hobbyists and videographers. The idea of drones being deployed in emergency response scenarios is less familiar but is poised for rapid change.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) are increasingly becoming integral to incident scenes, offering significant benefits to fire and emergency services. As costs decrease and technology advances, drones are transforming firefighting practices, despite some reluctance from departments due to misunderstandings and concerns about their application.



UAV BASICS

Broadly speaking, there are four main categories of UAVs available today: fixed-wing, multi-rotor, single-rotor, and hybrid drones. They have many uses in emergency management, including in the following scenarios.

Monitoring, Surveying, and Mapping: Drones are highly effective for mapping and monitoring fire-prone areas. They offer a cost-effective solution for extensive surveillance, significantly reducing both the frequency and intensity of incidents. For example, a single drone priced between \$1,000 and \$10,000 can map and monitor hundreds of acres more efficiently than ground-based methods.

Investigation and Risk Management: Drones provide a unique perspective for investigating fire scenes and identifying risk factors. They enhance situational awareness with technologies like heat mapping and thermal imaging, aiding in safer and more efficient operations. However, this application often requires specialized and expensive technology, and legal considerations such as privacy rights can limit drone use.

Active Fire Mitigation: While drones cannot yet replace crewed aircraft for large-scale fire suppression, they can carry smaller payloads for targeted applications. They are particularly useful for controlled burns and mitigating small fires. Drones can also assist in targeting hot spots and setting fire barriers, enhancing safety and efficiency in complex scenarios.

Search and Rescue: Drones excel in search and rescue (SAR) missions by covering large areas quickly and providing detailed imagery. They are invaluable for locating victims and delivering essential supplies to hard-to-reach areas. Although costs for SAR-equipped drones vary, their ability to improve rescue operations makes them a worthwhile investment for many departments.

THE RISING ROLE OF DRONES IN FIREFIGHTING

Drones are proving their value in various aspects of firefighting.

“Every time we have aircraft in the air, we realize the cost benefit of having our own aviation assets,” says Jeff Pricher, Fire Chief of Scappoose Fire District.

Traditional aerial resources like helicopters and planes are costly and complex to manage, making drones a cost-effective alternative. Still, successful integration requires a shift in culture.

“Anyone can buy the aircraft, but is the agency willing to dedicate themselves to embracing aviation culture, aviation standards, and being able to follow through with that kind of a change?” Chief Pricher asks, emphasizing the need for commitment to aviation standards and protocols.

To determine whether UAV investment is worth it for your organization, Battalion Chief Bobby Ortiz from Pflugerville, Texas, says you first must define what “worth it” means to you.

“If you’re wanting the ability to help save lives and property with fewer resources, then having an aerial asset such as a drone can do that,” Chief Ortiz says. “In a wildland event, we all want to know where our assets are, both personnel and apparatus. With a bird’s eye view, we can manage accountability and effectiveness.”

Drones enhance situational awareness and resource management, helping departments make better decisions and respond more efficiently.

NAVIGATING COSTS AND RESOURCES

Cost is a major consideration for fire departments when adopting drones. But if an organization determines UAVs are a suitable investment, there are ways to minimize the costs and maintenance of drones.

To manage expenses, Chief Pricher suggests leveraging electronic record systems for tracking flight data and maintenance.

“Relying on paper records or spreadsheets will lead to program failures in the future,” he warns. “The failures could be from a myriad of reasons, but ultimately, in this day in age, we need to make things simple for the pilots as well as the program managers and supervisors. All our decisions will be based upon data. Data-driven decision-making in aviation is the key to identifying trends with your aircraft, pilots, and batteries before there is a problem.”

Electronic systems streamline maintenance and operational tracking, reducing costs and extending the equipment’s lifespan. Departments can also explore collaborative training and resource-sharing to reduce individual costs, as Chief Ortiz suggests.

Lieutenant Fred Carlson from New York City Fire Department further advises departments to consider using simulators for training and purchasing previous-generation models to cut costs while still gaining valuable capabilities.

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Drones face several limitations, including flight time and regulatory issues. Chief Pricher notes that most drones have limited operational time, with typical flights lasting between 25 and 38 minutes, depending on environmental factors like temperature and wind.

“The ability to truly fly beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) is a significant drawback, as is flying over vehicles and people,” Chief Pricher says. “Pilots have to be very careful in this situation to prevent a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) violation.”

Chief Ortiz says departments are trying to work with the FAA to address issues such as BVLOS as well as varying drone performance.

“Unfortunately, not all Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) are created equal and have the same performance characteristics,” Chief Ortiz says. “When seconds matter, the capability matters.”

Lieutenant Carlson also emphasizes FAA regulations and

legal considerations, including privacy concerns and the limitations of drone sizes for certain applications. As technology and regulations continue to develop, departments must remain agile and informed.

OVERCOMING MISCONCEPTIONS

A major misconception about drones is that they are merely gadgets rather than serious tools. Chief Pricher stresses the importance of treating UAVs with the same professionalism as crewed aircraft.

“UAS needs to be considered with the same care and processes that are taken for the bigger crewed aircraft,” he says.

Effective drone operations require adherence to aviation standards, including communication, coordination, and regulatory compliance.

Lieutenant Carlson echoes this, noting that drones are often underestimated as mere toys.

“To be a good drone program, it takes constant training, equipment

maintenance, attention to legislation, and communication with other agencies,” he explains. Establishing a dedicated UAS program can help departments overcome these misconceptions and build robust operations.

Chief Ortiz also addresses the belief that drone programs are unrealistic for smaller organizations.

“Many organizations think that having, building, and maintaining a drone program is too ambitious for their small organization,” he says. “In reality, the smaller organizations benefit greater than larger ones in many cases due to the number or resources they can dedicate to a single incident.”

Drones are revolutionizing firefighting by enhancing aerial perspectives, improving situational awareness, and aiding in resource management. Despite some limitations and misconceptions, leaders in the fire service say drone integration into firefighting operations offers significant benefits.

As technology and regulations evolve, fire departments that embrace drones and invest in their potential can further develop their emergency response capabilities, ultimately better serving their communities. 📍








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Recruitment and Retention In a Changing World:

A Conversation with Workforce

Solutions Expert Ellen Lemieux

Attracting and keeping great employees is a challenge at the best of times, and for many employers, these times are proving especially difficult. The fire and emergency service is no different.

Leaders are facing staffing shortages, high turnover, and a workforce with far different expectations than those of past decades. Navigating this new recruitment and retention (R&R) landscape requires new perspectives and, in many cases, an entirely new skill set than what was needed in years prior.

iCHIEFS sat down with Ellen Lemieux, the Senior Program Manager of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Workforce Solutions program, to gain some insight into how fire and EMS leaders can not only achieve their R&R goals but also exceed them.

We asked the questions you've been asking, and her answers illuminate the leadership mindset required by the volunteers and career first responders of today's service.



Ellen Lemieux,
IAFC Senior Program Manager

***iCHIEFS:* WHAT DO MANY LEADERS "MISS" WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING AN ACCURATE PICTURE OF THE RECRUITMENT LANDSCAPE?**

LEMIEUX: Leaders need to look at it like running a successful business. What's your mission, what's your budget short-term and long-term, who is our competition, what's your unique value and how are you going to market yourself effectively in your community?

***iCHIEFS:* WHAT PERSPECTIVE ARE THEY MISSING WHEN THEY LOOK AT THE ISSUE OF RETENTION?**

LEMIEUX: It's complex and different than it was 10 years ago, and the same old approach isn't working. The reason for being a firefighter and how they serve the community are different and, therefore, you need to implement new ways of looking at how to retain the right staff.

***iCHIEFS:* HOW CAN LEADERS MAKE SURE BOTH POTENTIAL RECRUITS AND EXISTING STAFF FEEL HEARD, SEEN, AND RESPECTED FROM DAY ONE?**

LEMIEUX: Be transparent — ensure open communication. Be fair to both new recruits and existing staff. Provide a weekly update/ newsletter email to everyone. Keep an anonymous box in the kitchen for feedback. Discuss and share these comments with the team each week to create solutions together.

***iCHIEFS:* SOME OF THE BARRIERS TO R&R EXIST OUTSIDE OF THE**

SERVICE. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO LEADERS WHO FEEL DISHEARTENED BY THE FACT THAT MANY OF THE ISSUES THEY'RE FACING STEM FROM ECONOMIC AND QUALITY OF LIFE FACTORS THEY HAVE NO CONTROL OVER?

LEMIEUX: The only way to break down these barriers is to build stronger connections and relationships in each of the fire services' communities. The communities need to be re-educated on the importance of having a fully staffed fire service

available to them. Fires happen, and they can happen to anyone. A fire can affect a whole community's well-being. It can negatively impact the economy within a community. The culture that exists today is that people move jobs and do not always make long-term commitments or connections in their communities. The one thing that never changes is the need for emergency support.

Somehow the fire department needs to become a central part of their communities again, and everyone

in the community needs to support the fire department. Not everyone needs to go into a burning building, but they can support the department in other ways. 🍷

Thank you to Ellen and the Workforce Solutions team for their time and expertise.

If you have a subject or interview you'd like to see featured in the next issue of iChiefs, reach out to us at <http://iafc.org/contact-us> or contact our editor at kvitt@matrixgroupinc.net.



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Legislative Update:



Ken LaSala, IAFIC Director of Government Relations and Policy

Accomplishments and More Work to Do

This summer was extremely busy in Washington, D.C. With the election approaching, Congress began passing legislation, including a major bill for the fire and emergency service. Meanwhile, we also saw the Biden administration move forward with its regulatory agenda. Even though Congress will be in session only for the month of September and a possible “lame duck” session after the election, there still are a few more things to do before the end of the 118th Congress.

APPROPRIATIONS

While the 118th Congress draws to a close, it still must fund the federal government. So far, none of the annual appropriations bills is expected to become law before the October 1 beginning of Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. Instead, Congress will have to pass a continuing resolution to keep the government operating until at least after the election.

Both the House and Senate have begun working on the appropriations

Representative Bill Pascrell, Jr. was one of Congress' strongest champions ever for the fire and emergency service, rightly recognized as the father of the AFG and SAFER grant programs.

bills. The House passed the FY 2025 U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations bill (H.R. 8752) on June 28. The good news is that it would restore funding for the grant programs that received 10% cuts last year. Of note, the House passed an amendment by the late Representative Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ) that would increase funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) programs by \$7.5 million each. In addition, Representative Kevin Mullin (D-CA) successfully offered an amendment to increase funding for the Urban Search and Rescue system to \$56 million. Unfortunately, the

Senate has yet to release its FY 2025 DHS Appropriations bill.

Figure 1 shows how the funding numbers look for fire service programs.

The House bill would restore funding to the AFG and SAFER programs, which were cut by 10% last year. This is important, because both programs received over \$3 billion in grant applications in FY 2023. We are working to maintain the House funding levels for programs like the AFG and SAFER programs in the Senate.

The House Appropriations Committee voted to pass its FY 2025 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and

Figure 1: Appropriations and Budget Request (In Millions (\$))

Program	FY 2023 (Enacted)	FY 2024 (Enacted)	FY 2025 (President's Request)	FY 2025 (H.R. 8752)
AFG	360	324	385	367.5
SAFER	360	324	385	367.5
USFA	60	71.225 ¹	78.614 ²	78.281³
UASI	615	553.5	531	615
SHSGP	520	468	421	520
US&R	37.832	40.832	37.832	56

1. This amount includes \$10 million for the development of the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) program and \$1.25 million for information technology upgrades at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) in the Procurement, Construction, and Improvements (PC&I) account.
2. The USFA base request was \$65.114. This amount includes \$2 million in the PC&I account for the NERIS program and \$11.5 million for upgrades at the NETC.
3. This amount includes \$2 million for the NERIS program and \$11.5 million for upgrades at the NETC in FEMA's PC&I account.

Related Agencies Appropriations Act (H.R. 9029) on July 10. The Senate Appropriations Committee voted to pass the Senate companion bill (S. 4942) on August 1. Both bills propose \$5.5 million for the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer. The Senate bill also includes \$13.5 million for the SIREN grant program for rural EMS.

PASSAGE OF THE FIRE GRANTS AND SAFETY ACT

On July 9, Chief John Butler, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) President and Board Chair, was invited to visit the White House and witness President Biden sign the Fire Grants and Safety Act (P.L. 118-67).

The bill will protect the AFG and SAFER grant programs by delaying their termination until September 30, 2030; authorize \$750 million each for the AFG and SAFER grant programs for each year through FY 2028; and authorize \$95 million for the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) to allow it to fund the development of the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS); develop EMS programs at USFA; and fund an effort to examine the cause of major fires and report on best practices to prevent them in the future.

The passage of the Fire Grants and Safety Act was a major accomplishment in a turbulent and unpredictable Congress. By working together, the IAFC, International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), and other fire service organizations were successful in protecting these critical fire programs.

REMAINING BILLS TO PASS

Even though we passed the Fire Grants and Safety Act, there are other bills that we need to pass this year:

- **Firefighter Cancer Registry Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3821):** This bill would increase the authorization for the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer to \$5.5 million from \$2.5 million. It also would reauthorize funding for this program through FY 2028. The House passed H.R. 3821 on March 7. We now are working to pass the bill in the Senate, after which it would go to the White House for President Biden to sign.
- **Setting Consumer Standards for Lithium-Ion batteries Act (H.R. 1797/S. 1008):** This bill would

authorize the Consumer Product Safety Commission to promulgate regulations for lithium-ion batteries and other components of micromobility devices like scooters and e-bikes. H.R. 1797 passed the House on May 15. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation reported the Senate companion bill, S. 1008, out of committee on July 31. Ideally, the Senate would pass H.R. 1797, which would send it to President Biden for signature.

- **The SIREN Reauthorization Act (S. 265/H.R. 4646):** This bill would reauthorize the Rural EMS Training and Equipment Assistance (REMSTEA) program at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The program helps rural fire and non-profit EMS agencies to receive funding for training and equipment. The bill would reauthorize the REMSTEA program through FY 2028 and remove the 10% local match for the program. In addition, it would require grantees to ensure that EMS personnel are trained to care for people suffering from mental health and substance abuse in emergency situations and clarify that the grant's funds could buy drugs like Naloxone to treat overdoses.
- **The Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act (H.R. 1719/S. 930):** This legislation would allow the families of firefighters who die or become disabled from cancer to be eligible for the federal Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program. The bill would cover 20 separate forms of cancer including malignant melanoma; kidney cancer; colorectal cancer; leukemia; and lung cancer. The bill includes a process for adding more types of cancer to the list of eligible cancers. The Senate Judiciary Committee reported S. 930 out of committee on June 5. The IAFC is working with the other fire and law enforcement organizations to see if we can pass this legislation this fall.

THE OSHA DRAFT EMERGENCY RESPONSE STANDARD

One major project of the IAFC was to submit comments in response to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) draft Emergency Response regulations. The draft regulations would revise and broaden the scope of the Fire Brigades standard (29 CFR 1910.56). The IAFC assembled a team of approximately 30 representatives from the IAFC sections and committees to examine draft regulations to provide comments to OSHA.

In its comments, the IAFC thanked OSHA for its focus on firefighters' health and safety. However, the IAFC also raised concerns about the incorporation of individual standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) by reference, when the NFPA standards are being consolidated. Also, the IAFC recommended that OSHA adopt the wildland firefighting standards for the National Wildfire Coordinating Group for wildland firefighting standards.

The IAFC highlighted the costs of implementing the OSHA regulations for fire departments and described the challenges for volunteer fire departments. In addition, the IAFC asked OSHA to incorporate the 20% bright line test for volunteer compensation when considering the scope of the draft regulations over volunteer fire departments. The IAFC also proposed a graduated timeline for fire departments to comply with the regulations, which would cover a 10-year timeframe.

For the next steps, OSHA will hold administrative hearings on November 12 to hear comments about the draft Emergency Response standards. The IAFC's written comments are available the IAFC website (<https://www.iafc.org/blogs/blog/iafc/2024/07/19/iafc-files-comments-in-response-to-osha-s-proposed-emergency-response-standard>).

A LASTING LEGACY

As you can see, it has been a busy summer with some

notable successes. I would like to acknowledge Representative Bill Pascrell, Jr., who passed away on August 21. Representative Pascrell was one of Congress' strongest champions ever for the fire and emergency service, rightly recognized as the father of the AFG and SAFER grant programs.

In addition, he led efforts to help fire departments prepare for acts of terrorism; protect PSOB benefits for the families of fallen public safety officers; and retrofit buildings, including high-rise residential buildings, with fire sprinklers. We always could count on Representative Pascrell to highlight the needs of local fire, EMS, and law enforcement personnel at Congressional hearings, public events, and on the House floor.

We will miss his leadership in the House of Representatives. Nevertheless, the fight continues to pass legislation to look after the needs of America's fire and emergency service. 🔥



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Connecting At Every Level

In recent months, we've welcomed many new members and corporate partners. They have been drawn to the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) for many reasons. Some are inspired by our legislative victories and advocacy on behalf of fire and EMS leaders; others see the substantial benefits that we offer to the fire and emergency services leadership and our industry partners alike.

Whatever the initial draw, one thing stands out during the many conversations I have had with these new members and partners: the most valuable element of the IAFC is our ability to connect people.

For those of you who attended this year's Fire-Rescue International (FRI) conference in Dallas, Texas, that value was on full display. Our always popular networking events were at capacity, and as a result, we are working to bring you even more networking opportunities next year at FRI and at all of our IAFC conferences. During our final conference general session,

The most valuable element of the IAFC is our ability to connect people.

we watched a series of short interviews with attendees out on the floor. When asked what they valued most about FRI, one answer was repeated again and again.

"We come here to meet up with people from other departments." "I go to this conference every year for the networking opportunities." "I love being able to talk to other officers and share what's happening in our local areas."

The pattern has become clear. The direct benefits and services we offer are highly valued by our membership, but it is the collaboration, collective action, and networking opportunities that provide our greatest, most lasting value to our members. New members and industry partners seek to join the IAFC because we are a

reflection of that membership; our staff and contractors work on our behalf because they feel *connected* to that work as individuals with a shared mission.

The IAFC will continue to pursue the Strategic Initiatives laid out for 2024-25. We experience every IAFC achievement as a collective victory shared through our vast network of relationships that form our organization from the ground up.

No matter the issue and no matter the subject, your voice is our voice — we encourage you to share it proudly and often.

Rob Brown
IAFC Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director

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