



# CHIEFS

The Official Magazine of the International Association of Fire Chiefs

# 150

1873 - 2023

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

HONOR TRADITION EMBRACE INNOVATION



## FirstNet: Connecting Emergency Personnel Nationwide

Page 8

International  
Fire Department  
Exchange  
Page 11

Retention and  
Recruitment  
Toolkit  
Page 13

Legislative  
Update  
Page 15

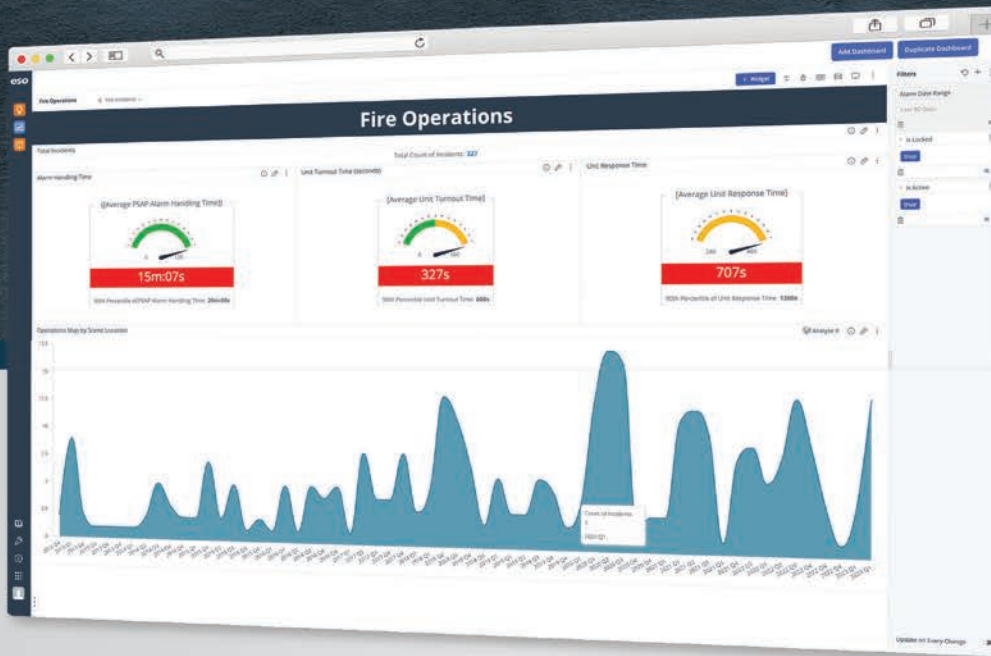
*And much more!*





# ONE SOLUTION

ALL YOUR NEEDS.



A single platform for all of your station's needs — plus robust reporting and built-in dashboards. Explore your options today:

- Records Management System
- Activities
- Asset Management
- Checklists
- Inventory
- Scheduling
- Personnel Management
- Electronic Health Record
- Incidents
- Hydrants
- Permits
- Inspections
- Properties
- Insights



[www.eso.com/one-solution](http://www.eso.com/one-solution)



Professional PPE Processing Solutions



**MEIKO** Protect

# PROTECTING LIVES

Firefighters shouldn't face life-threatening risks *before* or *after* leaving the fireground. **PPE contamination is real, and it's dangerous.**

TopClean Equipment Washers by MEIKO use time, temperature and chemo-mechanical action to provide exceptional cleaning of masks, full SCBA packs, bottles, helmets, boots and more. MEIKO Protect offers professional PPE processing solutions to reduce firefighters' exposure to dangerous toxins and carcinogenic residues lurking on contaminated gear.

MEIKO Protect is committed to supporting the health of first responders – before, during and after a fire. Let us help you take fire hall safety and hygiene to the next level. After all, we have a common goal: **protecting lives.**





# FIRST RESPONDERS GET FIRST PRIORITY.

T-Mobile for Government delivers innovative mobile technology and 5G connectivity to fire and rescue agencies. Discover how we deliver prioritized voice and data services to eligible public safety agencies on the nation's largest 5G network.

To learn more about how we're helping to transform fire services while maximizing budgets, visit us at **Booth 2313** or **T-Mobile.com/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. © 2024 T-Mobile USA, Inc.







# CHIEFS



08



13



11

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- 7 A Message from the IAFC President and Board Chair

## COVER STORY

- 8 Transforming Our Nation's Public Safety Broadband Network

## FEATURES

- 11 International Fire Department Exchange: A Platform for International Cooperation
- 13 Strengthening the Fire Service

## REPORT FROM WASHINGTON

- 15 Legislative Update: Starting to See Some Progress in DC

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE IAFC

- 18 A Message from the IAFC CEO and Executive Director

## 17 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 Marketing & Communications

Rosario Ortiz Davis, MBA, CAE

### Published By: MATRIX GROUP PUBLISHING INC.

Return all undeliverable addresses to:  
PO Box 41270  
1450 Vassar Street  
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

### Publishers

Julie Welsh, Christine Scarisbrick

### Editor-in-Chief

Shannon Savory  
ssavory@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

Jeff Cash  
jcash@matrixgroupinc.net

### Matrix Group Publishing Inc. Account Executives

Colleen Bell, Jackie Casburn, Rob Gibson, Jim Hamilton, Scott Hendren, Touhid Khan, Frank Kenyeres, Sandra Kirby, Andrew Lee, Brian MacIntyre, Lynn Murphy, Caitlin Nakamura, Wilma Gray-Rose, Luke Stevens, Joseph Ukaoha

### Advertising Design

James Robinson

### Layout & Design

Cody Chomiak

©2024 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.



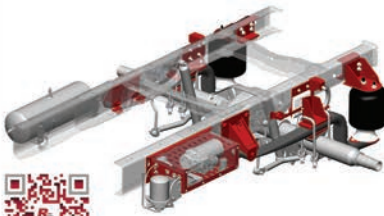


**Reyco  
Granning.**  
SUSPENSIONS  
*Celebrating 100 Years*  
Est. 1924



For a century Reyco Granning has been a trusted, indispensable partner for suspension solutions!

**TransportMaster Benefits**



- Lower Initial Cost
- Reduced Weight
- Reduced Maintenance Cost



**ResponseMaster IFS for Firetrucks**



- Reduced Weight
- Superior Maneuverability
- Reduced Maintenance Cost



Toll Free: (800) 753 0050

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



**HONOR YOUR BRAVEST  
WITH SOLID BRONZE AWARDS**

**LIBERTY ART WORKS, INC.**  
PROUDLY MADE IN THE USA  
888.411.7744  
LIBERTYARTWORKS.COM  
100% USA LABOR  
100% USA MATERIALS

**FIRSTGARD™**

**DESIGNED BY POLICE, FOR POLICE**

**FIRSTGARD™ COLLAPSIBLE CONE PROVIDES INCREASED VISIBILITY AND DURABILITY.**

**PSS** **LEARN MORE AT  
PSS-INNOVATIONS.COM**



# Connecting Heroes: The Vital Role of Communication

**AS JAMES HUMES** once said, “The art of communication is the language of leadership.” Communication is also the lifeline of a fire department, and it is the principle on which all our lifesaving endeavors depend.

As technology improves and society becomes more diverse, our communication strategies will likewise need to improve and diversify. The way leaders define communication within their departments determines their potential, and as first responders, our potential determines the future of entire communities.

In this edition of *iCHIEFS*, you’ll read about the First Responder Network (FirstNet), a crucial development in the public safety communications sphere. Our cover article will explain why a closed nationwide broadband network is crucial for effective emergency services operations — and how the lack of such networks impacted first responders during the 9/11 attacks. I would like to thank Clark County (NV) Fire Department Assistant Chief Brian O’Neal and Michael Varney, Senior Director of Field Operations at the FirstNet Authority, for helping us tell the story of this vital initiative and its lifesaving potential for first responders nationwide.

The FirstNet Authority has existed as an independent agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) since 2012. Since the agency’s

*As technology improves and society becomes more diverse, our communication strategies will likewise need to improve and diversify.*

inception, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) has been a strong supporter of FirstNet’s mission.

We have worked closely with the FirstNet Authority to share the voices of our members — and to ensure the network is built in a way that meets our needs. Although the buildout, deployment, and operation of this dedicated network has steadily grown, recent investments will provide for a significant expansion of this critical infrastructure.

At the IAFC, our mission is defined by our membership. FirstNet was born out of the grassroots “D Block” initiative of the IAFC and other national public safety organizations to address our members’ need for a wireless, nationwide public safety voice and data network to enhance

interoperability and assure “always on access” through priority and pre-emption.

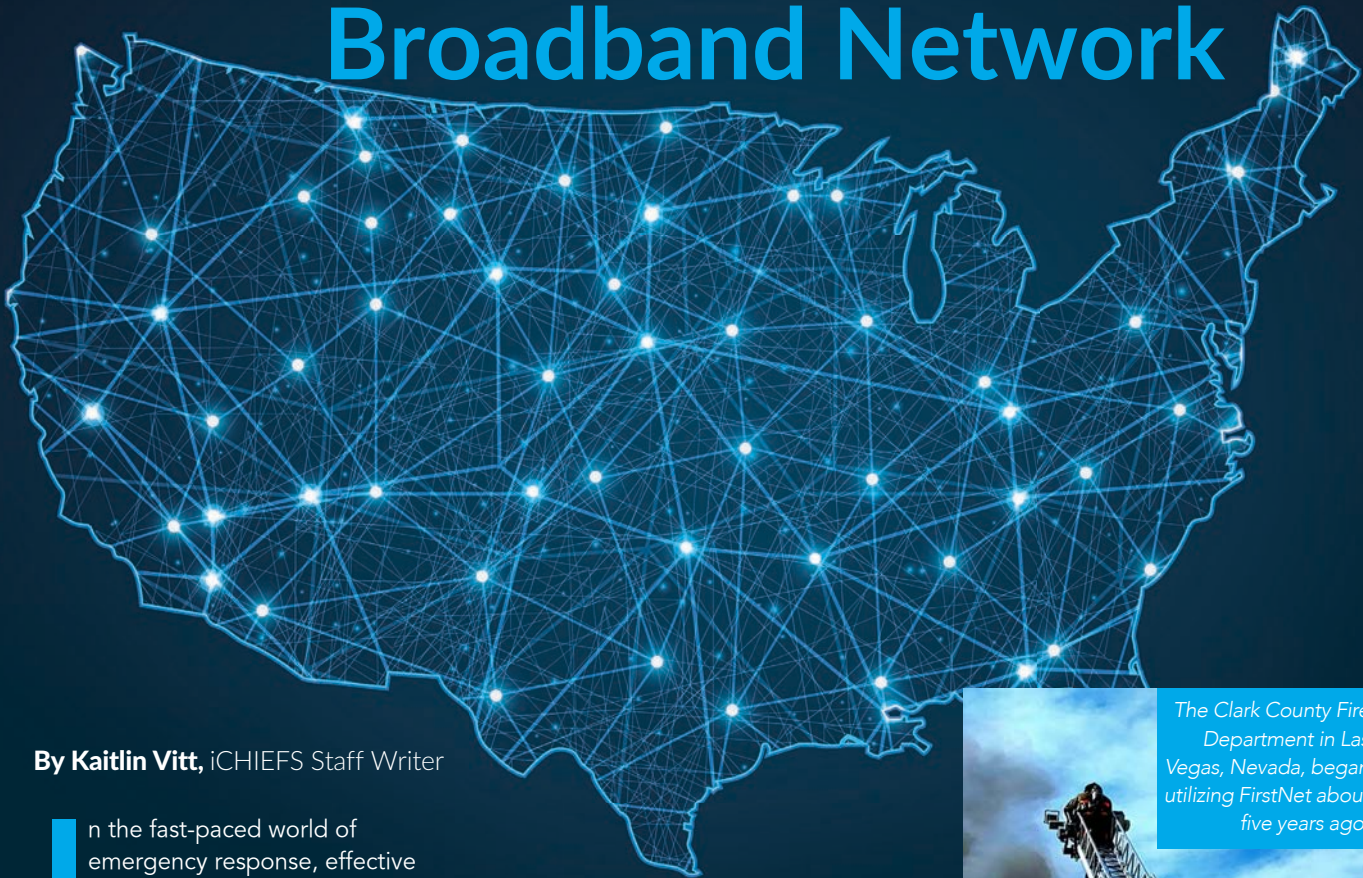
Today, through our close collaboration with the FirstNet Authority, our members have access to such a network and an ecosystem of apps, devices, and capabilities that are innovative, reliable, accessible, and secure. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the FirstNet Authority and their partners as they launch the next phase of FirstNet through a series of strategic investments totaling more than \$8 billion over 10 years.

I encourage you to learn more about FirstNet and what it can do to improve your department’s communications strategy.

**Fire Chief John S. Butler**  
President and Board Chair



# Transforming Our Nation's Public Safety Broadband Network



By **Kaitlin Vitt**, iCHIEFS Staff Writer

In the fast-paced world of emergency response, effective communication can mean the difference between life and death. Many advances in communications technology have taken place over the years, and public safety communications have come a long way since two-channel radios and paper records.

One major development of recent times is FirstNet, the first nationwide broadband network built specifically for public safety. With a dedicated network core that separates public safety traffic from non-public safety traffic, FirstNet is changing the communications landscape for countless first responders.

The FirstNet network, operated by the FirstNet Authority as an independent agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA),

enables the fire service, EMS, and law enforcement to do their jobs more safely and effectively, no matter where they are located.

"Now there's a reliable, secure, dedicated, and prioritized broadband network for us to use to communicate and share data. That didn't exist a decade ago," says Michael Varney, the Senior Director of Stakeholder Collaboration at the First Responder Network Authority, or FirstNet Authority, and a 40-year veteran of the fire service.

"When we were responding to [past] incidents, we had no more priority access to any of those network resources than anybody else. Our fire apparatus had no more priority than the minivan parked next to us at the light with everybody streaming their videos."



The Clark County Fire Department in Las Vegas, Nevada, began utilizing FirstNet about five years ago.



FirstNet changes this. The network is exclusive to emergency services, giving responders the ability to access the resources they need in real-time as they respond to incidents. They can look up information about infrastructure near the scene, locate water facilities, and instantly share data with their response partners, all within a secure, protected network built specifically for their use.

In short, FirstNet ensures emergency responders always have access to the network — resulting in faster, stronger, and more effective communications for all first responders.

### THE LAUNCH OF FIRSTNET

The 9/11 terrorist attacks revealed serious communication challenges among emergency responders. The channels in place didn't allow for interoperability across agencies, and phone lines were quickly overwhelmed with an influx of calls that impeded effective communication among firefighters, EMS, and law enforcement alike.

"Although the problem had been realized for some time, that event really brought it to the forefront," Varney says.

The 9/11 Commission Report recommended the establishment of a nationwide public safety broadband network. For a decade, public safety bodies worked with national associations across all emergency response disciplines to encourage the federal government to develop this network.

In 2012, Congress responded by creating the FirstNet Authority as part of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Jobs Creation Act. The FirstNet Authority began its work as an agency by prioritizing the building, deploying, and operating of a dedicated public safety broadband network. In 2017, they contracted AT&T to create the network. Since then, the network has been built out to cover 99% of the U.S. population.

"There's over 28,000 public safety agencies and organizations that use the network in their daily responses, and that adds up to 5.9 million data connections for different devices that



The Clark County Fire Department has relied on FirstNet for events such as Super Bowl LVIII, using deployable assets such as the SatColt (pictured).

# ROLLNRACK

— Hose Management System —

[WWW.ROLLNRACK.COM](http://www.rollnrack.com)  
262-363-2030  
MADE IN THE U.S.A

## DRAIN · ROLL · LOAD

- "BEST PRACTICES" in the fire service
- Exceeds NFPA 1500 Safety Standards
- Highlighted in IFSTA's Essentials 7
- Qualifies for all Safety Grant Apps
- Prevents riding on rigs to load hose
- ALL hose handled ergonomically

## PROTECT YOUR CREW

SCAN  
TO SEE  
DEMO  
HERE

### SMARTER

USE THE ROLLNRACK SYSTEM  
FOR ALL YOUR HOSE  
TESTING

### SAFER

NEVER LIFT A ROLL OF HOSE AGAIN.  
HOSE IS DRAINED,  
ROLLED AND LOADED SAFELY

### FASTER

SAVE TIME,  
GET BACK IN SERVICE  
FASTER



are connected to the network every day," Varney explains.

In February 2024, the FirstNet Authority launched the next phase of FirstNet: an investment of more than \$8 billion over 10 years to expand the network. Of this, \$6.3 billion will go toward delivering full 5G capabilities on FirstNet, expanding mission-critical services, and enhancing coverage, while approximately \$2 billion will be dedicated to coverage enhancements.

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN LAS VEGAS

The Clark County Fire Department in Las Vegas, Nevada, began utilizing FirstNet about five years ago. The department uses it for routine communications. Most of their chief officers and engine companies have phones with FirstNet service, where they can communicate with each other via audio and video calls, text messages, and messaging apps, as well as with the dispatch office.

"Las Vegas is a fast-growing area, and that's one of the reasons FirstNet has proven so useful for Clark County," says Assistant Fire Chief Brian O'Neal.

"The area is growing faster than the infrastructure build-out can keep up with, so we were really looking for a communications solution that was adaptable to our needs, was able to

grow with us, and that proved reliable in an emergency. That ended up being FirstNet."

While O'Neal said FirstNet took adjusting to at first, the network's support team was helpful in providing resources and guidance.

"They're really responsive. I think the [quality of their] service separates them," says O'Neal. "For the things we do, we can't always rely on [the technology that's] here right now. Sometimes we have to build the network we want to work with. FirstNet is helping us do just that."

The Clark County Fire Department has relied on FirstNet for events such as Super Bowl LVIII, the Formula 1 Las Vegas Grand Prix, and the Electric Daisy Carnival, all of which involve a huge emergency response presence and the use of hundreds of communication channels. The Electric Daisy Carnival is one of the most extreme examples of what an "all hands" event can look like for first responders — it's one of the largest music festivals in the world.

"[The Electric Daisy Carnival] is a challenging event because it's really big. It's spread out. It's 150,000 to 180,000 people packed into the Las Vegas Motor Speedway," Chief O'Neal explains.

The event is far enough outside of town that there isn't a lot of existing communications infrastructure there. FirstNet ensures the responders from Clark County Fire Department can communicate even while they're outside the more urban environment they usually operate in.

"Our communications are resilient, and we're not going to overload the system when we do an event with hundreds of thousands of people, where they're all trying to access their devices," O'Neal says. "We know the network is going to be strong [enough] to handle it, because it's dedicated to our use [alone]."

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

As FirstNet receives further investment, O'Neal says he'd like to see the continued adoption of the network by fire and rescue departments and more buildout of FirstNet infrastructure across the United States, particularly outside of urban areas. O'Neal also highlights the importance of strong communications within large, multilevel buildings.

"As wireless speeds increase, penetration into buildings, it seems, is going down. We need to make sure that when we're going into these giant casinos here, up into towers, or into some of the big stadiums and huge open spaces that we have, we're able to continue to communicate as well as if we were on the outside of that building," O'Neal explains.

"Prioritizing in-building communication and making sure those antenna systems are robust — I think that should be a priority."

To improve and further the development of FirstNet, the FirstNet Authority meets with stakeholders such as the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) — as well as other emergency response organizations, communication centers, and law enforcement agencies — to learn about their operational needs, their experiences using the network, and suggested strategies for filling any gaps identified by responders on the ground.

"The actions we take and the priorities we follow come directly from public safety experts," Varney says.

As the network expands, it's clear that those priorities will only become more critical to its continued success. 💧

**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

Scan to discover the clean air difference!



# International Fire Department Exchange: A Platform for International Cooperation



*IAFC Wildland Fire Policy Committee members and I-FDX participants had meetings during the conference to network and brainstorm around future opportunities to collaborate.*

**T**he 2024 Wildland-Urban Interface Conference, hosted by the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), marked a significant milestone in global firefighting collaboration. The event, held from March 26 to 28 at the Peppermill Resort in Reno, Nevada, brought together fire professionals from around the world to address the unique challenges posed by wildland-urban interface (WUI) fires.

Two general sessions at this year's WUI Conference focused on international panel discussions with the International Fire Department Exchange (I-FDX) participants. This gave conference attendees the opportunity to hear what is being done in other countries and the ability to ask questions of the participants. This proved to be a big hit. In addition, IAFC's Wildland Fire Policy Committee (WFPC) and I-FDX participants had meetings during the conference to network and brainstorm around future opportunities to collaborate.

I-FDX 2024 was a groundbreaking initiative aimed at fostering knowledge exchange, best practices sharing, and building lasting relationships among fire departments from different countries. This



**Mike Maltaverne**, Fire Chief,  
Teton County Fire Rescue

exchange was made possible by the generous sponsorship provided by Skeeter Brush Trucks (Founding Sponsor) and Mystery Ranch-Fire Program (Gold Sponsor). The event attracted representatives from six nations: Australia (New South Wales), Greece, Portugal, Spain, Canada, and the United States.

### **DIVERSE REPRESENTATION**

Each participating country sent a delegation of experienced firefighters, fire service leaders, and researchers. Here's a glimpse of the remarkable individuals who represented their respective nations.



**Mike Connolly**, Lieutenant, Ret.,  
Longmont Fire Department

### **New South Wales Rural Fire Service (Australia):**

- Assistant Commissioner Kelly Quandt
- Chief Superintendent Kelwyn White
- Manager of Bush Fire Planning Melissa O'Halloran

### **Greece:**

- Zisoula Ntasiou (Hellenic Fire Service)
- Anastasios Michalopoulos (Hellenic Fire Service)

### **Portugal:**

- Fabio Silva (Pau Costa Foundation)

### **Spain:**

- Pascale Vacca (Pau Costa Foundation)



#### Canada:

- Deputy Chief Keri Martens (Town of Banff)

#### United States (Reno, Nevada):

- Operations Chief John McNamara (Reno Fire Department)
- Fire Captain Jake Lightfoot (Reno Fire Department)

### FACILITATORS AND SUPPORT

The I-FDX facilitators and host liaison, representing IAFC's WFPC, played a crucial role in orchestrating productive interactions among the participants.

Facilitators included:

- Mike Connolly, Lieutenant, Ret., Longmont Fire Department
- Mike Maltaverne, Fire Chief, Teton County Fire & Rescue
- Justice Jones, Wildfire Mitigation Officer, Austin Fire Department
- Steve Pollock, Fire Chief, Ret., Texas A&M Forest Service
- Zsolt Szoke, Battalion Chief, Ret., Charleston Fire Department

Additionally, support provided by IAFC staff and Mike Zupko ensured the smooth execution of the exchange program in conjunction with the conference.

Thanks to the Nevada Division of Forestry and State Forester Kacey KC, the participants were given the opportunity to tour the Nevada State Emergency Operation

Center, Interagency Dispatch Center, and Aviation Center. They saw demonstrations of firefighting equipment such as personal protection equipment and small and large fire apparatus. This field tour allowed the participants to compare and contrast mitigation and management strategies among the different countries.

### KEY OUTCOMES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The I-FDX 2024 sessions covered a wide range of topics, including incident command systems, recognizing prior learning, wildfire behavior, community engagement, risk assessment, and use of Incident Management Teams. Participants engaged in hands-on exercises, workshops, and discussions, sharing their expertise and learning from their counterparts.

The conference emphasized the importance of adapting firefighting strategies to the unique WUI environment and building resilient communities.

### DISCOVERY AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

During the exchange, participants not only discovered many common fire conditions, a near year-round fire season, and common approaches to prevention, planning, mitigation and response, but also discovered and shared innovative methods and approaches to their wildfire challenges.

Some examples include Canadian province Alberta's approach to volunteer retention, where they provide a 10% income tax credit and cultural burns are currently the primary mechanism of fuel management within Indigenous communities. The practice is as much part of the culture and spirituality as it is fuel management.

Greece's AntiNero Forest Protection Program provides a nationwide approach to wildfire mitigation, where 80% of the land is publicly owned. The FIREPRIME project in Spain fosters a pan-European approach to a culture of prevention and preparedness in the WUI communities.

Additionally, research in Spain addresses a growing need for engineering methodologies that lead

to proactive fire management not only at the landscape level but on all WUI scales. By introducing Structural Vulnerability Indices instead of general risk levels for an area, a more accurate and detailed display of vulnerabilities can be made.

In Portugal, where 98% of the land is privately held, a legal framework, named the Municipal Fire Protection Plans, mandates local strategies for fire prevention and response, including the maintenance of firebreaks, management of fuel loads, and establishment of strategic firefighting water resources.

### BUILDING BRIDGES BEYOND BORDERS

The I-FDX 2024 was more than just an exchange; it was a testament to the global firefighting community's commitment to collaboration. As Assistant Commissioner Kelly Quandt eloquently put it, "Fire knows no boundaries, and neither should our efforts to combat it."

The relationships forged during this exchange will undoubtedly lead to stronger international partnerships, improved firefighting techniques, and enhanced disaster response capabilities.

### LOOKING AHEAD

As I-FDX and WUI 2024 came to a close, participants departed with an increased sense of purpose. Plans for I-FDX 2025 are already underway, with the goal of expanding participation and deepening cross-cultural understanding. The fire service, united by a common mission, stands ready to face the challenges of an ever-changing world.

I-FDX 2024 was a resounding success, laying the groundwork for continued collaboration among fire departments worldwide. By sharing knowledge, experiences, and camaraderie, firefighters are better equipped to protect lives, property, and the environment in the face of WUI fires. 🔥

---

*Mike Connolly is a Retired Lieutenant of Longmont (CO) Fire Department. Mike Maltaverne is the Fire Chief at Teton County (ID) Fire Rescue.*



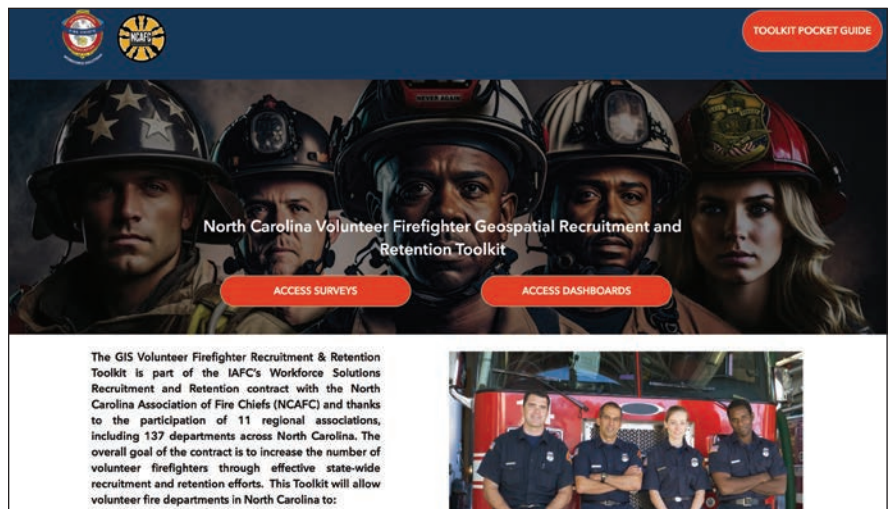


# Strengthening the Fire Service



**Ellen Lemieux**, IAFIC Senior Program Manager

The IAFIC has developed a new cutting-edge toolkit that uses GIS software for geospatial presentation of recruitment and retention data.



The R&R toolkit is available online at [www.ncafc.com/gis-toolkit](http://www.ncafc.com/gis-toolkit).

There are people in the community willing to step up if you do the work to raise awareness of your department's needs and make them feel welcome. But where can you begin?

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) is leveraging technology to attack this challenge. The IAFIC has developed a new cutting-edge toolkit that uses Geographic Information System (GIS) software for geospatial presentation of recruitment and retention (R&R) data. This toolkit addresses the unique challenges facing our fire departments today in every community across the country by offering strategic solutions to enhance recruitment and foster a long-term commitment within the volunteer firefighting community.

The R&R toolkit is designed to identify and match potential volunteers' skills, interests, and availability with the

specific needs of fire departments in any community. By taking advantage of advanced data analytics and machine learning algorithms, the GIS tool assists fire chiefs in streamlining their recruitment processes and creating a more targeted approach to engage prospective volunteers.

## A REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH

Key features of the R&R toolkit include:

- **Skill Matching:** The R&R toolkit evaluates the skills and qualifications

of potential volunteers, utilizing geographic information such as age, gender, and other demographics to align their expertise with the specific needs of fire departments. Ensuring a more targeted and efficient resource deployment maximizes the impact of volunteer contributions.

- **Community Engagement:**

Harnessing the power of geographic data, the R&R toolkit analyzes local demographics and community interests and helps fire chiefs tailor their outreach



efforts to resonate with the unique characteristics of their communities, fostering a sense of belonging and civic responsibility among potential volunteers.

- **Retention Strategies:** Going beyond mere recruitment, the R&R toolkit provides fire departments with valuable insights derived from geographic information. By understanding the geographic factors contributing to long-term commitment, fire chiefs can implement tailored retention strategies that create volunteer satisfaction and loyalty, producing a sustainable and dedicated firefighting force.
- **Data-Informed Decision Making:** Empowered by real-time geographic data and analytics, fire chiefs can make informed decisions to optimize their volunteer force. The R&R toolkit allows them to adapt swiftly to changing community dynamics and evolving firefighting demands, ensuring a proactive and efficient response to the needs of their respective regions.

The R&R toolkit is part of the IAFC's R&R program. Funded by FEMA's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program, the overall goal is to increase

the number of volunteer firefighters through effective recruitment and retention efforts.

This tool will allow volunteer and combination fire departments:

- View volunteer firefighter characteristic profiles by region, county, and department;
- Locate target demographics and points of interest within their community for recruiting; and
- Access recruitment strategies to assist in building plans based on the unique demographics of their community and volunteer firefighters.

The R&R toolkit represents a revolutionary approach for fire chiefs, utilizing geographic information to recruit and retain volunteers strategically. By incorporating this innovative tool into their operations, fire departments can build resilient and community-driven firefighting teams that effectively address the unique challenges faced within each geographic area.

#### **COLLABORATIVE EFFORT**

The IAFC is proud to introduce the R&R toolkit as a groundbreaking solution through partnership with the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs (NCAFC). North Carolina is the first

state to offer the R&R toolkit to their firefighting community with the state of Indiana following. The IAFC and NCAFC launched this new innovative R&R toolkit at the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs Mid-Winter Conference on February 1, 2024.

The IAFC worked with the NCAFC to collaborate with 11 regional associations, including 137 departments across North Carolina, to design this revolutionary new way of looking at increasing the number of volunteer firefighters through effective state-wide recruitment and retention efforts.

The IAFC is currently partnering with the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association to tailor the R&R toolkit for the state of Indiana. The IAFC hopes both states' success will encourage other states to roll out the toolkit in their communities.

As the challenges of recruiting and retaining volunteers continue to evolve, the R&R toolkit offers a forward-thinking approach to address these issues and ensures the safety and well-being of communities across the country.

The R&R toolkit is available online at [www.ncafc.com/gis-toolkit](http://www.ncafc.com/gis-toolkit). 🔥

---

*Ellen Lemieux is the IAFC's Senior Program Manager.*

## 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 2024 Media Kit! Ask how advertising in multiple issues can save you money!**

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





# Legislative Update:



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

## Starting to See Some Progress in DC

**G**ood news! After a months-long slog, we are starting to see signs of progress in the 118th Congress. As the November election approaches, there is a greater focus by the House and Senate leadership on passing legislation. With some luck, we may see critical fire service legislation passed before the end of the year.

### **FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND 2025 APPROPRIATIONS**

One of the biggest signs of progress was that Congress passed legislation to

fund the federal government. As always with this Congress, progress was not a total success.

President Biden signed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Further Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 118-47) into law on March 23. This bill funded a number of federal programs, including those at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Unfortunately, the bills included approximately 10% cuts to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program; the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program; the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI); and

the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP). Meanwhile, the Urban Search and Rescue teams received a \$3 million increase, and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) received an increase of more than \$10 million to begin rolling out its National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) to replace the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

By comparison, President Biden released his FY 2025 budget request in March 11, which included increases for AFG, SAFER, and USFA. Figure 1 shows a summary of how things look.



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

Program	FY 2022 (Enacted)	FY 2023 (Enacted)	FY 2024 (Enacted)	FY 2025 (President's Request)
AFG	360	360	324	385
SAFER	360	360	324	385
USFA	53.212	60	71.225 <sup>1</sup>	78.614 <sup>2</sup>
UASI	740	615	553.5	531
SHSGP	645	520	468	421
US&R	37.382	37.832	40.832	37.832

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. This amount includes \$2 million in the PC&I account for the NERIS program and \$11.5 million for upgrades at the NETC.

At the end of April, the Executive Committee of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) met with staff from both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to discuss the importance of funding the AFG, SAFER, and USFA programs. They discussed challenges that fire departments face in recruiting and retaining firefighters and EMS personnel after the COVID-19 pandemic. They also discussed the skyrocketing cost of fire and EMS apparatus and equipment. Most importantly, they stressed the need to restore funding for the AFG and SAFER programs for FY 2025.

With the slow movement in Congress and the pending election, we may not see any FY 2025 appropriations bills until the end of 2024 or early 2025. In any case, the IAFC recommends that its members use the Independence Day and August Congressional breaks to meet with your Senators and Representatives and tell them to restore funding to the AFG and SAFER grant programs and keep funding improvements at the USFA and the National Fire Academy.

## LEGISLATION

Meanwhile, we have seen better results from the House of Representatives. The House is in the process of passing a number of major pieces of fire service legislation.

## 1. THE FIRE GRANTS AND SAFETY ACT (S. 870)

On May 8, the House passed the Fire Grants and Safety Act (S. 870) by a vote of 393-13 with one member voting "Present."

The bill would:

- Authorize \$750 million each for the AFG and SAFER grant programs from Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 through FY 2028.
- Delay the sunset date of the programs to September 30, 2030.
- Authorize \$95 million for the USFA from FY 2024 through FY 2028. This increased authorization will authorize USFA to fund the rollout of NERIS; develop EMS programs at USFA; and fund an effort to examine the causes of major fires and report on best practices to prevent them in the future.
- Include an audit by the Government Accountability Office of barriers that prevent fire departments from accessing federal funds and also an audit of the USFA.
- Include House-added provisions to the bill to promote greater nuclear energy in the U.S.

The Senate originally passed S. 870 on April 20, 2023. However, since the House amended the bill, the Senate will have to reconsider and pass it. With a September 30 termination date still looming for the AFG and SAFER programs, IAFC members will have to tell their Senators to prioritize the passage of S. 870.

## 2. THE SETTING CONSUMER STANDARDS FOR LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES ACT (H.R. 1797/S. 1008)

One of the emerging fire risks for communities involves the charging and use of micro-mobility devices like electric scooters and e-bikes. These lithium-ion battery fires are causing both firefighters and civilian deaths and present dangerous fire hazards. The IAFC President and Board Chair Chief John Butler discussed this growing risk at a hearing before a subcommittee of the House Homeland Security Committee on February 15.

To address this problem, the House passed the Setting Consumer Standards for Lithium-Ion Batteries Act (H.R. 1797) on May 15. The bill will authorize the Consumer Product Safety Commission to promulgate regulations for both lithium-ion batteries and other charging components of micromobility devices. H.R. 1797 still has to pass the Senate, where there is a bipartisan companion bill (S. 1008).

## 3. THE FIREFIGHTER CANCER REGISTRY REAUTHORIZATION (H.R. 3821/S. 2119)

On March 6, 2024, the House passed the Firefighter Cancer Registry Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3821) by a vote of 413-7. The bill would increase the authorization for the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer from \$2.5 million to \$5.5 million and reauthorize the program from FY 2024 to FY 2028. The National Firefighter Registry for Cancer is now accepting registrations, but it needs long-term funding in order to start getting good research data from it. While there is a Senate companion bill, we just are asking the Senate to pass H.R. 3821 without amendment, so that President Biden can sign it into law.

## 4. THE SIREN REAUTHORIZATION ACT (S. 265/H.R. 4646)

On March 20, the House Energy and Commerce Committee reported the SIREN Reauthorization Act (H.R. 4646). The bill was introduced by Representative David Joyce (R-OH) and has 18 cosponsors.

H.R. 4646 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. It also would 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 or substance abuse emergencies and clarify that the grant's funds could buy drugs like Naloxone to treat overdoses.

The Senate companion bill, S. 265, passed on December 13, 2023. The House bill (H.R. 4646) is the same as S. 265. So, IAFC members should ask their Representatives to consider and

pass S. 265. Then the bill would go to President Biden for signature.

**THE OSHA DRAFT EMERGENCY RESPONSE STANDARD**

On February 5, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) released its new Emergency Response Standard. The standard would replace the Fire Brigades Standard (29 CFR 1910.156) and expand its coverage beyond just industrial fire brigades, The IAFC has assembled a 34-person team from its sections and committees to determine how this new standard would affect metro departments; volunteer departments; combination departments; industrial fire departments; and wildland fire response; EMS; and search and rescue operations. The IAFC plans to

submit comments to OSHA before the June 21 due date.

**STAY INFORMED**

As you can see, there is a lot going on in Washington as the general election approaches. Please take advantage of the Congressional breaks to meet with your members of Congress. The IAFC updates its Hot Sheet monthly at the IAFC Government Relations website ([www.iafc.org/gr](http://www.iafc.org/gr)).

Now is the time to keep Congress focused on saving the AFG and SAFER programs, and addressing other risks like lithium-ion batteries, firefighter cancer, and the challenges of providing EMS in rural areas. 💧

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

**INDEX TO ADVERTISERS \ \**

**Awards, Statues, and Honor Guards**

Liberty Art Works..... 6

**Diesel Exhaust Systems**

Nederman ..... 10

**Fire Fighting Gear Equipment**

Meiko USA Inc..... 3

**Fire Record Management Software**

ESO .....IFC

**Hose Management Systems**

RollNRack ..... 9

**Mobile First Solutions and Communications**

T-Mobile for Business..... 4

**Safety Apparel**

Bunker Boot Mate ..... 17

**SCBA and Supplies**

Empire SCBA and Supplies..... OBC

**Suspension Manufacturer**

Reyco Granning Suspension ..... 6

**Telematics System**

ONSTAR ..... IBC

**Tool and Equipment Mounting Solutions**

Poly-Tech America..... 12

**Traffic Safety Equipment**

PSS-Innovations..... 6



**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](http://BunkerBootMate.com)  
[info@BunkerBootMate.com](mailto:info@BunkerBootMate.com)  
**800-235-9853**

**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).



**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.



# Training for Today and Tomorrow



*Investing in the needs of our members is the cornerstone of our mission.*

The demands placed on firefighters today are greater than ever before, and comprehensive, ongoing training is essential to ensure the safety, effectiveness, and resilience of fire and rescue departments.

Of course, training in the fire service isn't a "one-and-done" effort. The field is continually evolving, with new technologies, procedures, and threats emerging regularly. Ongoing training ensures firefighters stay current with the latest developments in firefighting techniques, equipment, and safety protocols. This adaptability is crucial for responding to modern challenges.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs' (IAFC) Strategic Initiative Plan (SIP) defines the goals that serve as the overarching elements that drive our mission. One of those is to educate current and future fire and emergency service leaders by providing training, education, and professional development opportunities. To that end, the IAFC offers a wide range of education and training resources, programs,

and tools that are available to our members worldwide.

As we continue to execute the IAFC SIP, we have consolidated all IAFC educational programs under one umbrella, implemented learning outcomes to validate our education and training programs, and partnered with others to expand our education programs and course offerings. Our partnership with Columbia Southern University to deliver our Officer Development Program (ODP) online launched this spring — allowing IAFC members and others to access this preeminent IAFC education program worldwide.

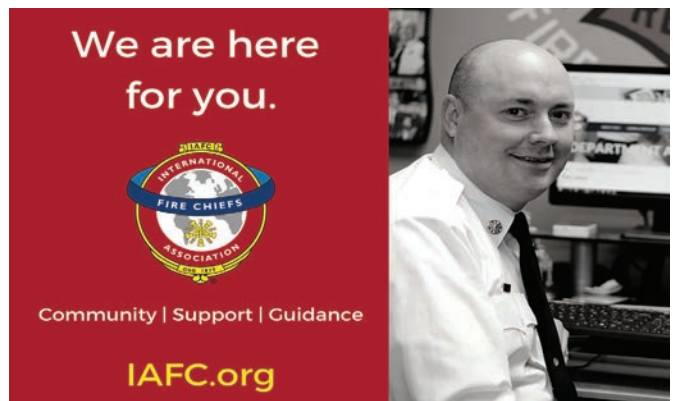
In this edition of *iCHIEFS*, you will read about one of our other IAFC outreach initiatives through our IAFC Workforce Solutions Center to address the growing problem of volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention.

In the article "Strengthening the Fire Service," you will learn how the North Carolina Association of Fire Chiefs (NCAFC), in partnership with the IAFC, collected information from

11 regional associations and 137 departments across North Carolina to develop a GIS Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Toolkit. This unique new toolkit was designed to increase the number of volunteer firefighters throughout North Carolina by identifying target demographics and points of interest within their community and then developing recruitment and retention plans based on the unique makeup of their community.

Investing in the needs of our members is the cornerstone of our mission. These programs and tools mentioned above are just a small sample of the value you receive as an IAFC member. I urge all members to explore and take advantage of all the resources available through the IAFC. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient firefighting force ready to face any challenge.

**Rob Brown**  
IAFC Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director





## Critical data with Automatic Crash Response

In a crash, **built-in vehicle sensors** can automatically alert an OnStar® Advisor who can be immediately connected into the vehicle to speak with the occupant(s). Even if the driver cannot respond, Advisors can request help be sent to the location using **GPS technology** and relay vital crash data — including airbag deployment, vehicle description, propulsion type and **Injury Severity Prediction** — to assist with dispatch decisions, on-scene management and patient care. An **OnStar Emergency-Certified Advisor** can provide pre-arrival medical instructions and remain on the line until First Responders arrive.

[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. Not all vehicles may transmit all crash data. See onstar.com for details and limitations. Certified by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch®. The marks of General Motors, its divisions, slogans, emblems, vehicle model names, vehicle body designs and other marks appearing in this advertisement are the trademarks and/or service marks of General Motors, its subsidiaries, affiliates or licensors. ©2024 General Motors. ©2024 OnStar LLC. All rights reserved.





# OFFERING THE HIGHEST QUALITY RECONDITIONED SCBA



## TOP QUALITY BRANDS

CARRYING INDUSTRY LEADING  
SAFETY EQUIPMENT SUCH AS SCOTT,  
MSA, LUXFER GAS CYLINDERS  
AND MORE!



## WE MAKE IT NEW

OUR RECONDITIONING PRACTICES  
DELIVER ABSOLUTE DEPENDABILITY  
FOR YOUR INDUSTRY NEEDS.



## TOP TESTING

IN-HOUSE TESTING TO ENSURE  
OUR EQUIPMENT EXCEEDS  
INDUSTRY STANDARDS.



## SERVICE

OUR EXPERIENCED TEAM CAN HELP  
YOU FIND THE RIGHT SAFETY  
EQUIPMENT FOR YOUR NEEDS.

## FREE SHIPPING ON ORDERS OVER \$10,000

Empire SCBA & Supplies Inc. provides superior quality refurbished SCBA's, SABA's, SCBA cylinders and other safety supplies to fire departments and oilfield safety companies throughout North America.

**WE WILL PURCHASE OR UPGRADE YOUR USED EQUIPMENT. OTHER SCOTT, MSA & SURVIVAIR MODELS ALSO AVAILABLE.  
WE OFFER LIFETIME WARRANTY ON ALL SCBA.**



**CALL NOW FOR INFO & PRICING**  
**1-888-439-2302**

**WWW.EMPIRESCBA.COM**

**FOLLOW US**

