

Call/Volunteers Serving Today to Protect Your Tomorrow

SMOKE Showin'



Spring 2015 • vol. 24 • no. 88

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association

RED LIGHTS AND SIRENS

How, when, and where
volunteers should use
red lights and sirens
on personal vehicles

MCVFA/SAFER Update

Gear Giveaways

Fire Districts

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1-888-731-FIRE (3473)



IF YOU SEE NO WAY OUT
THEN JUST REACH OUT

MAKE THE CALL TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

Talk to someone you love. Talk to a friend or colleague.
Or, talk to counselors trained and experienced in
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Fire/EMS Helpline: **1-888-731-FIRE (3473)**.

Find resources to Share the Load at www.nvfc.org/help.

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The Fire/EMS Helpline is in partnership with American Addiction Centers. | Have questions about the Share the Load™ program? Dial 202-887-5700.

2015



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SPRING 2015

INSIDE

4

MCVFA GEAR GIVEAWAY

These departments took
advantage of MCVFA's gear
giveaway last fall.

7

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

A list of the Association's
important legislation...we
need your support.

10

ON-CALL UNEMPLOYMENT

We are reprinting the
governor's letter explaining
on-call unemployment.

6

MCVFA OFFICER OPENINGS

if you're interested in
becoming an MCVFA officer,
then read this.

8

FIRE DISTRICTS

This fourth installment
looks at the fire districts in
Massachusetts.

14

RED LIGHTS AND SIRENS

The red light and siren
controversy is finally
explained in detail.

16

GLOBE GEAR GIVEAWAY

The application period is
now open for the 2015
Globe Gear Giveaway.

19

MCVFA/SAFER PROGRAM UPDATE

The MCVFA is offering
recruitment supplies at no
cost to your department.



COLUMNS

5

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

6

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

21

TRAINING INFO

22

REGIONAL NEWS

To All Call/Combo/Volunteer Chiefs

If you received this issue of *Smoke Showin'* and your members did not, your
department is either in arrears on its dues or is not a member of MCVFA.

Please contact the vice president serving your area or the MCVFA office to
become a member in good standing.

www.mcvfa.org

www.mcvfatravel.com

MCVFA Gear Giveaway

Late last fall, the MCVFA offered an opportunity for two MCVFA member fire departments to receive six sets of complete turnout gear at no cost. From helmet to boots and everything in-between. The purchase of the gear was funded by a donation to the MCVFA from the Massachusetts Charitable Fire Society and Globe Manufacturing provided us discount through Firematic. The Buckland Fire Department and the Williamsburg Fire Department have been chosen to receive the new turnout gear.

Buckland Fire District in southwestern Franklin County serves a population of 980 people covering an area of 17 sq. miles. All the turnout gear for their firefighters is greater than 10-years old with the newest set being 14 years old.

The Williamsburg Fire Department has 29 firefighters serving 2500 people. 28 sets of gear are more than 10 years old and 25 sets are either damaged or contaminated. The most compelling part of their application was the story of three members who wanted to attend a Call/Volunteer Firefighter I/II class in a nearby town and had to be denied because the department did not have nor could they borrow any compliant gear. As the Chief stated "this was a lost opportunity to start these members out right and give them the training that we all know could help save a life".

These departments will be working with us and representatives of Firematic to get their people outfitted. We will keep you up to appraised on how the program goes.

This story would not be complete without some mention of the third runner-up application received from the Phillipston Fire Department. They are a combination department in northwestern Worcester County with two career firefighters and 28 call/volunteer firefighters serving a population of 1803. Relatively they are in better shape compared to the two selected departments with only one set of out of date gear but 29 more sets will expire in July 2015 and 40% of the gear is either damaged or contaminated.

While Phillipston was not selected, the MCVFA is attempting to assist them. We are working with our vendors and other partners to see if we can help them get some new turnout gear also.



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Home delivery of *Smoke Showin'* is one of the many benefits of MCVFA membership.

Share the Load

I would to talk about a benefit that is offered to our members through the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC).

It is called "Share the Load," A support program for Firefighters and EMTs. Kenn Fontenot is the NVFC Director from Louisiana and Chair of the Health, Safety and Training Committee and a big supporter of this program. He is quoted as saying "...we are at increase risk of experiencing behavioral health concerns at some point in our fire service careers." I totally agree with this statement.

The fire service is a stressful occupation for every firefighter. Call and volunteer firefighters have the same situations as our career colleagues including balancing the needs of the family and household but lost of us have us have to deal with a full-time job that actually puts food on the table and a roof over our heads. All of these can lead to behavioral health issues. We, as a group and as an individual, need to know how to identify the early signs of a behavior health issue and have a plan to deal with these issues before they come to a bigger problem.

Behavioral health issues often are subjects that people don't like to talk about. They just "suck it up and move on" and think that it is ok. However, this is not healthy the way to deal with them. You need to know that behavioral health issues are treatable and curable. The little things that you don't think are a problem others may see them as a sign of a serious problem. Some signs of a behavioral health issues include not eating properly, sleeping problems, anxiety, and drug and alcohol abuse, which might be indicators of addiction and depression. They can also be signs of a physical health issue.



Tom Burnett
President

***For more information on Share the Load go to: www.nvfc.org/help
American Addiction Center's 24-hour helpline: 888.731.FIRE (3473)***

I speak from personal experience having lost two family members to suicide back in the mid-90s. It took me a long time to understand how and why these two individuals could leave the people that loved them so much. Since then I have come to learn the signs of emotional distress and as I think back, I wonder if, knowing what I know I know now, could I have helped them? This is why I think the conversation needs to be started and open dialog about the issues, signs and treatments begun. It will help us all in the fire service to know we are taking care of our own.

As part of this program, the National Volunteer Fire Council has partnered with the American Addiction Center. For more information on Addiction or Behavioral Health in the fire service, please visit their website at www.nvfc.org.
Stay safe.



Legislation That Needs Your Help

The 2015-16 Massachusetts Legislative Session began on January 7, 2015, and members of the Legislative Committee were quickly at legislators' offices.

The committee traveled to Boston on January 14 to petition several key legislators to support the MCVFA's Legislative Agenda. I can report that we were successful in getting our message across in regards to legislation important to our membership. In addition, we reached out to the membership to have their local legislators sign on as co-sponsors to our legislation.

As of this writing, the legislation listed had not yet received a bill number. Both the Senate and House clerks were working diligently to assign legislation to a committee as well as attaching a bill number.

During the last session, then Governor Deval Patrick signed the Fire Districts bill on the last day of the session. This legislation covers all firefighters in the Commonwealth that are members of a Fire District.

The Death Benefits bill also passed but we became aware of several errors in the language in the final law. We reached out to Senator Eldridge and his staff about making corrective amendments to the law and they have indicated that a bill will be submitted.

Once the bills are assigned numbers and committees, we will begin to testify at the Statehouse during the committee hearings. There are other bills the MCVFA will be following that are of interest to both the Association and the Fire Service in the Commonwealth. We will get this info out to our members as warranted.

One bill that we all should be interested in will be the Fire Sprinkler bill. As firefighters, we can all relate to the benefits of sprinklers in homes. The Massachusetts Fire Sprinkler Coalition will be pursuing this legislation once again.

We are in the process of updating our e-mail list for Engage (formerly known as CapWiz). This tool has been a great benefit to the legislative process in Massachusetts, as well as on the Federal level. It is because of your action and use of this tool that we are able to make our legislators at both levels aware of the importance of certain pieces of legislation concerning the Fire Service.

We urge you to reach out to your local legislators in both the Senate and the House. As constituents, they do care what your concerns are and appreciate when you contact them.

The MCVFA Legislative Facebook page may be found at www.facebook.com/MCVFAlegis.

Legislative Success

As the 2013-2014 legislative session ended on December 31, 2014, the MCVFA succeeded in getting legislation passed to assist fire districts. The legislation, An Act Relative to the Indemnification of Certain Fire Districts, was signed by the Governor on January 6, 2015 and is known as Chapter 455 of the Acts of 2014.

This new law clarifies that fire districts have some of the same powers and authority as city and town fire departments when it comes to firefighter funerals, call/volunteer firefighter disability, accepting gifts and certain pension credits.

Fire Districts only have the power and authority specifically given them by their enabling legislation or specifically given them by state statutes. For instance, if a state law says that a city or town fire department may (or may not) do something, the law doesn't apply to a fire district fire department because a fire district is not a city or town. Over the years this distinct has created some conflict and confusion for fire districts. In one case a fire district got into a controversy about whether or not it could accept donated boat because state law only said cities and towns could accept in-kind gifts of tangibles.

Other fire districts have tended to ignore the



Chief Joe Maruca

attorney at law
Legislative Committee Co-chair
Representative to EMCAB
EMCAB Training Committee

Kevin Connolly

Legislative Committee Co-chair



distinctions and operated as if they have the same powers of a city or town fire department until challenged.

The MCVFA identified a number of areas that had been controversial in recent years and drafted legislation to insert fire districts into those state laws. Then it would be clear that fire districts have these powers.

The first change is to GL Chapter 32 Section 57B. This law allows retirement boards to credit call firefighters with service if they retire as career firefighter. The laws only mention city and town firefighters. This legislation inserted fire and water districts into the law.

Section 85H of Chapter 32 which provides for permanent disability for call firefighters who are disabled in the line of duty only mentioned city and town

firefighters, now it includes firefighters from fire or water districts.

The law that allows cities and towns to provide up to \$15,000 towards the cost of a funeral for a firefighter who is killed in the line of duty, GL Chapter 41 Section 100 G ¼, was amended to include fire and water districts. This is a local option law that needs to be accepted at a town or district meeting.

Finally, Section 53A ½ of Chapter 44 of the General Laws was amended to allow the prudential committee of a district to accept in-kind gifts in the same manner as a board of selectmen may accept in-kind gifts in a town.

There are 26 fire district fire departments in Massachusetts.



The 2015–16 MCVFA Legislative Agenda

by Kevin Connolly

MCVFA Legislative Co-Chairman

MCVFA-Sponsored Legislation

FIREFIGHTER LICENSE PLATE Allows the Registry of Motor Vehicles to furnish to Firefighters in the Commonwealth, or to the surviving spouse of a firefighter killed in the line of duty, a distinctive registration plate which shall display on their face a design indicating their status as firefighters.

DEATH BENEFITS TO SURVIVING SPOUSES OF FIREFIGHTERS AND OTHER EMERGENCY PERSONNEL Closes an important gap in the protections provided to the families of call/volunteer firefighters who may be killed in the line-of-duty in Massachusetts.

PROVIDE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS WITH A LOCAL OPTION REAL ESTATE TAX EXEMPTION Allow cities, towns or fire districts to provide a real estate tax credit for a volunteer firefighter or a volunteer emergency medical technician (EMT).

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MASSACHUSETTS FIREFIGHTERS' ACADEMY TRUST FUND Allows those filing separate or joint state tax returns to voluntarily contribute all or part of any Refund or to voluntarily add an amount onto any amount due, to the Massachusetts Firefighters' Academy Trust Fund established pursuant to section 165A of Chapter 6.

Bills of Interest to the MCVFA

ENHANCED FIRE PROTECTION IN NEW ONE AND TWO FAMILY DWELLINGS - Allows any city or town, which accepts the provisions of this section, any newly constructed building or any existing building substantially rehabilitated to be protected throughout with an adequate system of automatic sprinklers installed in accordance with the provisions of the state building code.

TO PROHIBIT DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS BY EMPLOYERS ON EMPLOYEES SERVING AS VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY RESPONDERS - Amends Chapter 149, section 177B to include volunteer emergency responders to current legislation, who may work at an emergency shelter.

SMART RETIREMENT PLAN FEES - Allows the State Treasurer to establish a sliding scale for administrative fees paid by call firefighters or other part-time or intermittent emergency response personnel of the deferred compensation SMART retirement plan.

CREATION OF TECHNICAL RESCUE REGIONS AND COORDINATING COUNCIL - To provide organization and coordination of technical rescue training and services, acquisition of emergency equipment and receipt and distribution of monies received as a means of providing resources to for the coordinated delivery of technical rescue services.



Fire Districts

In this fourth installment in a series about the various forms of fire departments and powers of fire chiefs found in Massachusetts we examine fire districts. There are twenty-six (26) fire districts in Massachusetts. I am the chief of a fire district.

By Chief Joe Maruca

Unlike the other fire department forms we've looked at (Board of Engineers, Strong Chief and Weak Chief), a fire district is created by the Commonwealth and not the town.

Fire Districts are created only when a city or town chooses not to organize a fire department. According to General Law Chapter 48 Section 61, before a fire district can be created the town must consider a petition to create a fire department at a town meeting and refuse or neglect to do so. If the town chooses to create a fire department, then no district can be created. This procedure dates back, in one form or other, to 1844.

At this point in time, I don't believe there are any parts of Massachusetts left without an organized fire department, and therefore, I don't think it is possible to create any new fire districts in this manner.

A fire district is governed by a district meeting that is similar to an open town meeting. Each fire district has a moderator who has the same powers as a moderate in towns with a town meeting (GL Chapter 48 Section 66).

Massachusetts Fire Districts

Adams Fire District
Barnstable Fire District
Bondsville Fire & Water District
Buckland Fire District
Centerville- Osterville- Marstons Mills FD
Cotuit Fire District
Dalton Fire & Water District
Dartmouth Fire District #1
Dartmouth Fire District #2
Dartmouth Fire District #3
Deerfield Fire District
Hyannis Fire District
Montague Center Fire District

Onset Fire District
Palmer Fire District #1
Shelburne Falls Fire District
Shelburne Fire District
South Deerfield Fire District
South Hadley Fire District #1
South Hadley Fire District #2
Three Rivers Fire District
Turners Falls Fire District
Wareham Fire District
West Barnstable Fire District
Williamston Fire District
Worthington Fire District


Defunct

Millers Falls Fire & Water District
Palmer Fire & Water District
Thorndike Fire & Water District

Water Only/No Fire Department

North Dighton Fire District
Colrain Fire District #1
Lanesborough Fire & Water District
Great Barrington Fire District
Bernardston Fire & Water District

Any errors? Any department forgotten? Let me know.



Fire District executive authority is given to a prudential committee. Prudential committees are roughly the equivalent of a combined board of selectmen and finance committee from a town form of government. According to GL Chapter 48 Section 71, the prudential committee “shall expend, for the purposes prescribed by the district, the money so raised or borrowed, and shall choose a treasurer. This means that the prudential committee must use its money only for the purpose of the district. For instance, they can’t use district funds to pay for playgrounds or other non-firefighting purposes. Districts and their prudential committees must stick to doing those things that fire departments generally do (this includes public water systems).

Fire districts can raise money through taxation (GL Chapter 49 Section 69) “for the purchase of engines and other articles necessary for the extinguishment of fires, for hydrant and water service, for the purchase of land, for the erection and repairs of necessary buildings, for the erection and maintenance of street lamps within their limits, for the purchase, operation and maintenance of ambulances.” This law reinforces the concept that the actions of the fire district are limited to do those things that fire departments do and nothing else. The power to purchase ambulances was added to the law in 1950.

Did you notice the statement about raising money for street lamps? This is a curious power for a fire district and it goes all the way back to 1844. So, as chief of the West Barnstable Fire Department, I am also the West Barnstable Superintendent of Streetlights! (We have 91 streetlights in West Barnstable.)

Once the fire district is legally established then the fire district creates a fire department by appointing a chief engineer (think “fire chief”) and “as many assistant engineers, enginemen, hosemen, and hook and ladder men as they may consider necessary.” The law limits these appointments to no more than seventy-five (75) per engine and twenty-five (25) per hook and ladder. You can also have five hosemen for each 150’ of hose. This is pretty archaic stuff.

Traditionally (GL Chapter 48 Section 65), the choosing of the chief engineer and assistant engineers was done annually

by ballot at the district meeting or district election. Then the law was amended in 1970 to allow the chief engineer and assistant engineers (typically two) to be chosen for terms of not more than three years. In 1997, the law was again amended to allow for allow prudential committees to appoint the chief engineer and assistant engineers for “an indefinite period of time”. Chief engineers and assistant engineers can be removed, for cause, by the prudential committee.

The powers of the chief engineer and assistant engineers are essentially the same as those given to chief engineers and assistant engineers of departments organized under a Board of Fire Engineers. This means that they have the powers set forth in GL Chapter 48 Sections 1 to 7 for firewards. (See my article on Boards of Fire Engineers in the April 2014 edition of *Smoke Showing*.) A reading of these sections, particularly sections 2, 3, 6 and 7 make it clear that the firewards are in charge of firefighting operations. They are expected to go to the fires (and wear a badge of identification) and direct firefighting operations. These statutes have been on the books since 1711.

However, fire districts have the option in the last sentence of GL Chapter 48 Section 65 to accept the provisions of section 42 of GL Chapter 48, the so-called “Strong Chief” law. This would appear to be done at vote of the district meeting in the same manner as a town would accept the law and it would replace the traditional powers of the chief engineer with those of a “strong chief”. Fire Districts do not have the option to adopt the so-called “Weak Chief” law (GL Chapter 48 Section 42A).

Many of you who serve in fire districts are by now scratching your head in puzzlement wondering why your fire district isn’t exactly run quite as I’ve described. The reason that many fire districts vary is that they have been modified over the years to accommodate the needs of their communities. You can modify any of these laws by asking the legislature for permission. The fire district or town or even citizens can petition the legislature to modify the structure of a particular fire district, and the legislature is almost always going to allow the modification so long as there is no opposition to the change. A modification done in this manner only

applies to the one fire district that request the change.

For instance, two years ago my district successfully petitioned the legislature for authorization to provide library services to our community. Some districts have modified the powers of the chief this way. Other districts have used this method to change to or away from elected treasurers, clerks and auditors. As a result, there are numerous variances from fire district to fire district.

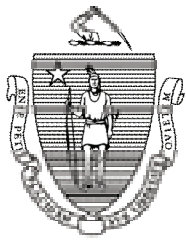
It is also worth noting that that even though it’s unlikely that any new fire district can be created using Chapter 48 of the General Laws, the legislature can and does occasionally create what I’ll call quasi fire districts. The MassPort Fire Department, the Devens Fire Department and the Joint Base Cape Cod Fire Department are examples of fire departments created by the Commonwealth to provide service to special geographic areas. These departments get their authority and structure from the legislation that created them.

While Massachusetts doesn’t have many fire districts, compared to its total number of fire departments, fire districts are more common nationally. In some states like Pennsylvania, the fire district is the more common form of organization of fire departments. Connecticut has a great many fire districts, as does Rhode Island.

Fire Districts aren’t the only kind of districts found in Massachusetts. There are water districts, electric light districts, recreation districts, road districts, sewer districts and refuse districts. In total, there are 144 local districts of varying types in Massachusetts.

If communities wanted to create a regional fire department or find ways for their fire departments to collaborate in a more formal way, creating a fire district using this structure would probably not be a good option. It really wasn’t designed to for such a use. Instead, the best way to create a regional fire department would be to draft special legislation spelling out the terms, powers and procedures for the specific region and towns. Or, towns could use a written memorandum of understanding to have a more formal collaboration and sharing of resources and expenses. We’ll tackle these topics next time.





THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LT. GOVERNOR

*This is being reprinted as a
service to our members.*

JOANNE F. GOLDSTEIN
SECRETARY

MICHELLE R. AMANTE
ACTING DIRECTOR

ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS

March 20, 2012

Cities and towns are exempt from charges and paying Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits for individuals working for them as on-call firefighters or on-call emergency medical technicians (EMTs), provided they properly and timely complete the required forms.

“On-call” means there is an agreement between the employee and employer that the employee will work on an as-needed basis with no set schedule of hours. Pertaining to on-call firefighters and on-call EMTs, in accordance with Chapter 151A, § 6A(5), wages earned by those working in this capacity on a temporary basis in case of fire, storm, snow, earthquake, flood, or similar emergency, and who are paid solely on a per incident basis, are exempt and cannot be included in determining an employee’s unemployment insurance benefit rate.

There are three critical actions a municipality must take to receive the exemption and to preserve its appeal rights on this claim as required by G.L. c. 151A, § 38(a).

- **Indicate the employee’s employment status as “still employed” and provide wage information on the Wage and Separation Information form (Form 1062) as requested.**
- **Write in the comments section on the form that the employee is an on-call fire fighter or an on-call EMT paid per call or event (whether on a flat rate or hourly basis).**
- **Return the form within the ten days as prescribed by law to the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA).**

DUA will process the returned Wage and Separation Information form. Checking the box next to “Still employed” will prompt a review of the claim and, once verified, these wages will not be included in determining the wage base of the claimant. If benefits are awarded and the municipality believes the determination was erroneous, the municipality must appeal the determination within the mandated time-frame.

During the benefit year, a claimant may need to “reopen” his/her claim due to a benefit year separation. In this circumstance the municipality will need to recertify that the claimant is still working as an on-call firefighter or EMT. It is important that you again return the wage and separation form sent to you to ensure that these wages will not be included and so you can preserve your appeal rights.

Interested in Being an MCVFA Officer?

Nominations Are Now Open

The Association bylaws created the Elections Committee to oversee the entire elections process. Every April, the Elections Committee must notify the membership of positions whose term of office will conclude on December 31.

This announcement opens the nomination process. Anyone interested in being a candidate for any of these positions, including

incumbents, should express their intentions to the MCVFA Office by July 1.

The Elections Committee will then review all potential candidates to determine their eligibility and submit a slate of qualified candidates to the Delegates and Alternates by August 15.

Positions to be decided at the annual State Meeting in October are:

President of the Association

Tom Burnett of Whitman is the incumbent.

Eligibility:

- A candidate must be a duly elected sitting Vice President, a Past President or a sitting President eligible for reelection under Article 3 Section 2(a)
- In the event that no eligible candidate is able or willing to run for the office of the President, any member in good standing with a continuous membership in the Association for at least five (5) consecutive years may stand for election for the office of President provided that such member is a category B-1, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-6 or B-7 member.

Secretary of the Association

David Sullivan of Seekonk is the incumbent.

Eligibility:

- Any Active Member of this Association who has been an active member in good standing for three (3) consecutive years is eligible to hold this office.
- A candidate must be a B-1, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-6, or B-7 member.

Positions to be decided at Regional meetings held by September 20 are:

Region 1 Coordinator: 2-Year Term

Tom Rose of Rehoboth is the incumbent

Region 3 Coordinator: 2-Year Term

Ryan Cheney of Sherborn is the incumbent

Region 4 Vice President: 2-Year Term

Kevin Connolly of Northfield is the incumbent

Region 5 Coordinator: 2-Year Term

Chris Martin of Alford is the incumbent

Eligibility:

- Any Active Member of this Association who has been an active member in good standing for three (3) consecutive years is eligible to hold this office.
- A candidate must be a B-1, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-6, or B-7 member.

If you have any questions about the election process or the duties of the various positions, please contact the Elections Committee at elections@mcvfa.org or you may call Larry Holmberg at 413-296-4247.

A REMINDER

Your 2015-16 Dues Year will be coming up soon!
Dues notices will be going out around April 15.
We appreciate your timely payment.



- The membership Committee

www.mcvfa.org

MCVFA Members

Join the NVFC For the Extra Low Price of \$15



The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) has partnered with the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association (MCVFA) to offer huge savings to Massachusetts first responders. Members of MCVFA can join the NVFC for just \$15 per year—that's half off the normal cost of Individual Membership.

You strive to be the best first responder you can be, and the NVFC is there to help you every step of the way. With benefits ranging from training and health and safety programs, to insurance coverage and national representation, the NVFC is here to support you.

"The NVFC provides volunteer firefighters, EMTs, and rescue personnel with tools, resources, programs, and advocacy to help them be their best on and off the job," said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. "We are pleased to partner with MCVFA to provide Massachusetts volunteers with all of the benefits of NVFC membership at this incredibly low annual rate."

As a member of the NVFC, you will enjoy a variety of exciting benefits you can use all year long.

- Stay informed with NVFC newsletters and alerts.
- Protect your loved ones with a \$10,000 AD&D policy, eligibility for home and auto insurance, and access to a federal credit union.
- Expand your knowledge with on-demand training, education discounts and scholarships, and NVFC resource guides and manuals.

- Access resources such as sample documents, members-only giveaway programs, and more.
- Utilize programs such as the Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program, Share the Load support program, National Junior Firefighter Program, Fire Corps, and the Wildland Fire Assessment Program.
- Enjoy discounts on gear, equipment, grant-writing services, industry trade shows and publications, fire department background checks, travel, shopping, and more.

The NVFC is the only national association solely dedicated to supporting the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC focuses on issues critical to volunteers, including health and safety, standards and codes, training, recruitment and retention, funding, and more. By joining the NVFC, you will join the voice of the volunteer at the national level while gaining access to benefits and resources that impact your life. You can also join the EMS/Rescue Section and be a part of a group of individuals who are committed to volunteer EMS and rescue operations at no additional fee.

To take advantage of this special offer, contact mcvfa@mcvfa.org. Learn more about the NVFC at www.nvfc.org/ BeYourBest.



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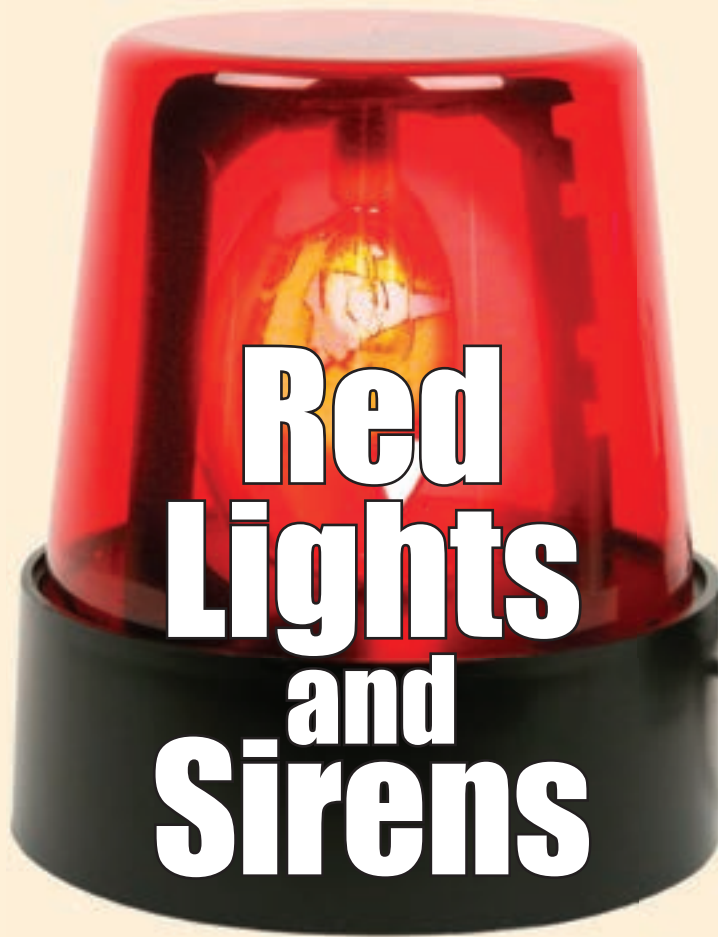


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FIRE EQUIPMENT COMPANY, INC.



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One of the topics that comes up regularly is the use of lights and sirens by call/volunteer firefighters and off-duty career firefighters on their privately owned vehicles.

As a call/volunteer firefighter or career firefighter you can have red lights and a siren on your privately owned vehicle for the purpose of responding to emergency calls. To do so, you must have the permission of your fire chief. There is nothing that requires your fire chief to allow this. Once your fire chief has given you permission for red lights you must get a Red Light Permit from the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles pursuant to GL Chapter 90 Section 7E. Red light permits must be renewed every two years.

Red light permit applications must be signed by the fire chief. They are submitted by your fire department to the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles Red Light Section in Boston. There is no application fee and applications are generally processed without difficulty in a few days.

If you are a member of more than one fire department or emergency service, you cannot use a red light permit issued by one department for responding to calls with another department. If you belong to two departments you need two red light permits. When you look at the permits you will notice that they state on them which department you are using the permit in connection with.

Massachusetts does not regulate the type and number of red lights you may put on your car or truck, or the type of siren you install. Your fire chief can regulate this. Your department can and should have written standard operating procedures/guidelines for the installation and use of red lights and sirens.

There is no state license or permit for sirens. The decision on whether or not you can install and use a siren on your personal car

or truck is for your fire chief to make. The law, Chapter 90 Section 16, only says that call and volunteer firefighters can have and use sirens on their personal cars in the "official line of duty". It is up to your chief to define what the official line of duty is. I recommend that fire chiefs grant this permission in writing and that a copy of the permission be carried in the vehicle.

Once you are permitted to install and use red lights and a siren you must remember that as you are responding to emergency calls you are under the command and control of your fire chief. Your car is functioning as if was fire apparatus. These mean that you must follow the rules set forth by your chief and state law.

When using red lights and a siren (in your private car or in a fire truck) you must come to a complete stop before proceeding through a red light or stop sign. (GL Chapter 89 Section 7B) You must stop for school buses that have their red flashing light on in the same manner as all other traffic. And you must slow down when passing pedestrians and bicycles. Pedestrians have the right of way even over fire trucks (GL Chapter 90 Section 14).

When using reds lights (and siren) you may exceed the speed limit if you exercise "caution and due regard under the circumstances for the safety of persons and property". (GL Chapter 89 Section 7B) If you are exceeding the speed limit and you hit another car, a pedestrian or a fixed object it is likely that you were not

by Chief Joe Maruca



exercising caution and due regard for the safety of persons and property. You will be found at fault.

The law clearly indicates that your ability to exceed the speed limit is based upon the circumstances of your response. If you are on your way to station coverage or to check-out burning without a permit, and not a true emergency, you better follow the speed limit.

Massachusetts has what it calls the “universal speed law” (GL Chapter 90 Section 17) that applies to all drivers at all times and it says that your speed must be reasonable and proper having due regard to traffic, the use of the way and the safety of the public. Let me use a recent case from Louisiana to demonstrate what can happen.

In 2014, in Tallulah, Louisiana, a fire truck

responding with lights and sirens to an emergency call collided with a deputy chief’s car responding with lights and sirens to the same emergency call. Louisiana’s universal speed law and its laws on the use of lights and sirens are similar to Massachusetts. Both vehicles were approaching the same blind intersection, controlled by traffic lights, from different angles, with their lights and sirens on. The deputy chief had a green light and the fire

truck had a red light. The court found the driver of the fire truck liable for the accident because he was driving too fast, about 10 miles per hour over the speed limit. Under the circumstances, the fire truck driver couldn’t stop in time to avoid the crash because of his speed. He was driving too fast for circumstances. The lesson of this is that if you are driving over the speed limit or you go through a red light (even after stopping), and you hit something, you are going to be liable. You don’t have an absolute right of way. (Young v. Marsh, No 49, 496-CA, 2014 WL 646532 (La. Ct. App. 11/19/14))

So save the use of red lights and sirens for true emergencies. Use them to respond to life threatening incidents and not to every little call. Stop at red lights and stop signs. Be safe.





MCVFA

Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters' Association

MERCHANDISE



Gildan, 99% Cotton/1% Poly, T-SHIRT, Maltese Cross, Gray, MCVFA on back
(S – XL) **\$13.00** plus postage
(2X – 3X) **\$15.00** plus postage



Gildan, 100% Cotton, T-SHIRT, Maltese Cross, Navy Blue, Pre-Shrunk
(M – XL) **\$10.00** plus postage
(2X – 3X) **\$12.00** plus postage
MCVFA on back (not shown)
(M – XL) **\$13.00** plus postage
(2X – 3X) **\$15.00** plus postage



Gildan, 99% Cotton/1% Poly, T-SHIRT, Maltese Cross, Pink, MCVFA on back
\$15.00 plus postage (YL – 3X)
Portion of sale will go to the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition



MCVFA 16 oz. Coffee Mug
\$8.00 plus postage

MCVFA Merchandise also has Men’s and Ladies Golf Shirts, Baseball Caps with MCVFA Logo, Sweatshirts, Decals, Pins, Patches, Helmet Stickers, Portfolios and Novelty Banks. We are currently working to get this on the website. In the meantime, to order any items, or for more info, contact merchandise@mcvfa.org.



Like us on Facebook

Join your fellow firefighters on Facebook!

The official MCVFA and MCVFA Legislative Facebook pages are your place to get news and information concerning the Massachusetts Call Volunteer Firefighters’ Association

www.facebook.com/MCVFAff
www.facebook.com/MCVFAlegis

And make even more connections by following us on Twitter



www.twitter.com/MCVFA



Globe Gear Giveaway

In Partnership with DuPont and
the National Volunteer Fire Council

DuPont™
Kevlar® | DuPont™
Nomex®



Supporting Those Who Serve

Application Period Now Open for 2015 Globe Gear Giveaway

Globe, DuPont Protection Technologies, and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) partner to give away 52 sets of turnouts.

Globe, DuPont Protection Technologies, and the NVFC are partnering to help resource-constrained fire departments obtain needed turnout gear. The application period for the 2015 Globe Gear Giveaway program is now open, and eligible departments can apply for four sets of CLASSIX® turnout gear for their members. Thirteen department awards will be made, for a total of 52 sets of gear.

"We are very pleased to be partnering with Globe and DuPont Protection Technologies on this outstanding program to help better equip and prepare local volunteer fire departments," said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. "Many volunteer departments are struggling to provide adequate protection to their firefighters, and this program has a significant impact on assisting those most in need. We thank Globe and DuPont Protection Technologies for giving back so generously to those who serve."

"At Globe, firefighter safety is not just our business – it's our passion," said Rob Freese, Globe Manufacturing Company Senior VP of Marketing. "We're grateful for the service provided by volunteer firefighters across the country and glad that we can improve their safety and performance with the most advanced turnout gear."

"DuPont is proud to be working together with Globe to support the NVFC again this year on this much needed gear donation program. With our strong commitment to help protect our protectors we want to help ensure that they have the right gear to focus on their job and



their communities. Working with Globe we can make the best for the best—100% of Globe's turnout gear is made with DuPont™ Nomex® and Kevlar® fibers providing proven protection and top performance," said Lisa Roessler, North American Marketing Manager, DuPont Protection Technologies.

The Globe Gear Giveaway program launched in 2012 to celebrate Globe's 125th anniversary. As the world's largest and most trusted manufacturer of structural firesuits in the world, Globe wanted to give back to the fire service and enhance the safety and readiness of our nation's first responders. To date, the program has provided 247 sets of new turnout gear to 43 departments in need to help them improve the safety and protection of their firefighters. All Globe gear is made with DuPont™ Nomex® and

Kevlar® fibers, providing proven protection and top performance.

To be eligible to apply for four sets of Globe gear, departments must meet the following requirements:

- be all-volunteer or mostly-volunteer (over 50%)
- serve a population of 25,000 or less
- be located in the U.S. or Canada and legally organized under state/province law
- demonstrate a need for the gear
- department or person applying must be a member of the NVFC

View full criteria at www.nvfc.org/globe-gear-donation.

Globe is helping departments meet the membership criteria by providing the first 200 non-members to apply with

a complimentary NVFC Department Membership. To take advantage of this offer, applicants can select that they are not a member when asked on the application form. Once the 200 memberships are reached, the form will be updated to reflect this.

Learn more and apply for Globe gear today at www.nvfc.org/globe-gear-donation. The deadline to apply is June 1, 2015. Winners will be announced monthly between July and December.

About Globe

Firefighters need to be prepared to perform at their peak, on every call. That's why Globe delivers the most advanced, best-fitting, and longest lasting protection by listening to our customers, creating breakthrough designs, and applying the engineering skills of the nation's most trusted turnout gear manufacturer. Globe turnout gear is designed to protect you, move with you, and improve your performance. It's athletic gear for firefighters. Learn more at www.globeturnoutgear.com.

About DuPont Protection Services

DuPont Protection Technologies (NYSE: DD) has been bringing world-class science and engineering to the global marketplace in the form of innovative products, materials, and services since 1802. The company believes that by collaborating with customers, governments, NGOs, and thought leaders we can help find solutions to such global challenges as providing enough healthy food for people everywhere, decreasing dependence on fossil fuels, and protecting life and the environment. For additional information about DuPont Protection Technologies and its commitment to inclusive innovation, please visit <http://www.dupont.com>.

About the National Volunteer Fire Council

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides invaluable tools, resources, programs, training, and advocacy for first responders across the nation. www.nvfc.org.



NEED A SCHOLARSHIP?

LET US HELP!

The Massachusetts Call Volunteer Firefighters' Association
will be awarding the

Robert J. Hindley Memorial Scholarship

Five \$750 Scholarships

for an MCVFA member or immediate family member

Don't miss out on this excellent opportunity!

For eligibility information and requirements, please visit

www.mcvfa.org/scholarships

The deadline for applications is May 1, 2015



www.mcvfa.org

Turn Your Vacations into Donations



**Do you currently book travel at websites like Priceline, Cheaptickets, or Travelocity?
The Massachusetts Call Volunteer Firefighters Association is proud to announce
another easy way to contribute!**

mcvfatravel.com

By booking your travel through the site, 40% of the royalties will be donated to the MCFVA. Now, when you book your family vacation or embark on a romantic cruise, you can also support the MCVFA.

MCVFA Travel is powered by the same websites you normally use to book travel - Priceline.com, Travelocity.com, Hotels.com and Cheaptickets.com - so you get the same great features and low prices!

Thank You for Your Support!

Please note the Massachusetts Call Volunteer Firefighter Association is not involved with your travel arrangements. When you book travel through mcvfatravel.com, you are dealing directly with the vendors just like you would on sites like Travelocity.com or Priceline.com.

On the site, you can take care of all of travel needs:

- Plane Tickets
- Hotels
- Cruises
- Rental Car
- Vacation Packages
- Weekend Escapes
- Travel Insurance
- Rail Travel
- Timeshares
- Apple Vacations
- Disney Vacation
- Sporting Events
- Concert & Theater Tickets
- Theme Park Tickets
- Golf Tee Times
- Passport & Visa Services
- Honeymoon Services
- Restaurant Reservations
- Flowers
- Foreign Currency Exchange
- Buy New and Used Cars
- Collette Vacations
- Golf & Spa Vacations
- And more!



MCVFA/SAFER Program Update



Combina-tion Department



Explorer



Junior Firefighter

Almost 45 months ago, the MCVFA was awarded a \$1.745 million FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. The grant is scheduled to run to July 13, 2015 but we may request a six-month extension.

Since July 2011, the Grant process has had its challenges. One of the stated goals was to gain 150 new call/volunteer firefighters and EMTs. Another goal was to retain existing firefighters and to increase their value to their departments and themselves. In order to do this we:

- reached out to about 150 fire departments looking to partner with us.
- ran media campaigns using television, radio, newspapers, and billboards with varying degrees of success. Unfortunately, the majority of the responses received came from areas not served by call and volunteer fire departments. Those individuals were directed to other volunteer opportunities like CERT, MRC, Fire Corps, Emergency Management teams, etc.
- offered college scholarships to new and existing firefighters and EMTs. While you think it would be easy to give away money, this has been the most frustrating portion of the project because of the lack of applicants and the inability to get paperwork back from the recipients.

Once the grant is complete, we will issue a final report on the successes and failures of the grant program. But we still have a few months left and as I write this we still have about \$700,000 to spend.

A new media campaign will begin soon. You'll see and hear our PSAs again, which are available for any department's use. More billboards will be used; in certain areas of the state, they have demonstrated their ability to generate new recruits.

We have also developed a recruitment poster and vertical banner and we will be contacting every MCVFA member department about getting a set of these recruitment tools. Several departments received an early run of the posters and at least from empirical evidence had very good success with them. You'll find a poster/banner order form in this issue. They are available in generic or customized versions. The standard package includes:

- 12 – 8 ½" x 11" posters
- 6 – 11" x 17" posters
- 1 – 79" x 33.5" retractable banner
- an electronic pdf version of the poster for future use

See Next Page for Application

These items are available in either customized or generic versions. As we've rolled this program out, questions and requests have come in about other types of fire organizations like combina-tion departments, explorer posts, and junior firefighter programs and whether we have anything for them. The simple answer is yes.

As long as what you want to say fits into our basic format then ask and we can probably accommodate you. If you want a different combina-tion of type or size of poster or banner, or you want posters but not the banner then ASK. Often we can accommodate.

There is no cost to any department and all items will be shipped to you. However, one word of caution, this program is part of the MCVFA SAFER Grant, which is scheduled in July, so don't wait to order your poster package!

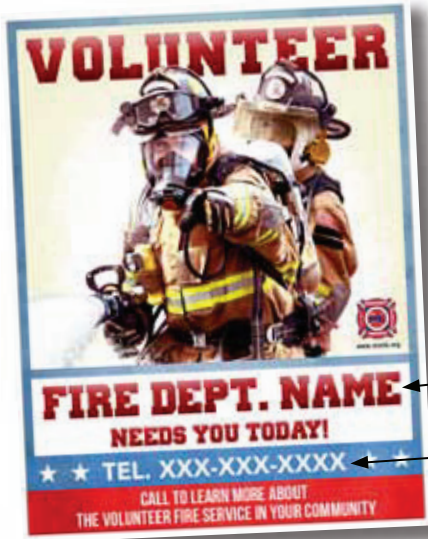
If you have questions regarding the poster/banner package, please contact Susan Dyer at recruit@mcvfa.org or 443-994-3350.

For questions concerning the MCVFA/SAFER program, contact Larry Holmberg at treasurer@mcvfa.org.



Recruitment & Retention Posters & Banner Order Form

Customized Posters



Sizes & Quantities

8.5 x 11
12 Quantity

11 x 17
6 Quantity

A Fire Department Name:

B Fire Department Phone Number or Website:

Customized Banner



Vertical Banner with Retractable Stand

79" Height x 33.5" Width

A Fire Department Name:

B Fire Department Phone Number or Website:

Generic Posters & Banner



Poster

Sizes & Quantities

8.5 x 11
____ Quantity

11 x 17
____ Quantity



Banner

Vertical Banner with Retractable Stand
(79" Height x 33.5" Width)

1 Quantity

Contact Person: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Point of Contact for Approval: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Ship to:

Questions: Contact Susan Dyer at recruit@mcvfa.org or 443-994-3350.

High-Voltage Electrical Awareness

You respond to a vehicle accident with wires down. An injured victim is trapped in the auto. After you perform an initial scene assessment, then what? What problems could you encounter? What hazards do you face? What is your next step? Will your next step cause you to become part of the problem?



Fire departments often respond to incidents before the utility company arrives. How do we handle high-voltage emergencies in the field? What is “Step Potential”? How do we deal with emergencies involving electrical transformers? What are all of the wires on a typical telephone pole? What is the difference between transmission and distribution lines? Does Mother Nature play a part in the hazards we face?

The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA) has developed the High-Voltage Electrical Awareness prop and training program to prepare firefighting personnel to deal with these situations. The program covers the problems emergency workers face in a high-voltage emergency including both hazards and safe procedures. The 4-hour training includes classroom time and a display/awareness presentation using the MFA’s electrical prop. The program familiarizes first responders with electrical transformers, insulating caps, fuses, lightning arrestors, capacitor banks, various electrical meters, and primary and secondary power lines.

Request the Program

To request the High-Voltage Electrical Awareness prop and training program, complete the standard MFA Course Request Form, which can be found on the MFA Applications Forms and Policies webpage. For more information, contact Program Coordinator Robert Haskell at Robert.Haskell@state.ma.us.



send your training-related articles to

Larry Holmberg

PO Box 176 • Chesterfield, MA 01012 • editor@mcvfa.org





I would like to thank the members of the Westport Fire Department for hosting our January Meeting. It was nice see many of you there. Senator Rodrigues and Representative Schmid joined us for this meeting to discuss our legislative goals. They were both pleased to hear from us and happy to continue to work with us in support of our legislative mission.

One thing that came out of this meeting is the fact that when we, as voters, are asking for support on a particular bill or other legislative item, both stated that they would prefer a phone call from our membership versus a mass generated email like we currently use. The legislators indicated that they receive thousands of these types of emails daily and that they would rather have a constituent take the time to call them and explain why they support a particular bill and what benefits will come from their support. Both the Senator and Representative felt that if someone only contacts them via a mass generated email, the bill must not be overly important to this person; but a phone call shows strong personal interest, which raises the interest level of the legislator.

The moral of the story is do not be afraid to pick up a phone and call your Senator or Representative to tell them why they should support a cause you believe in.

SAVE THE DATE

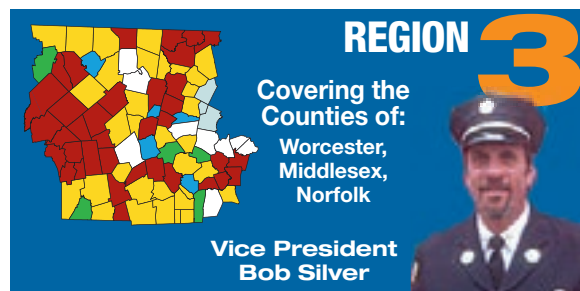
The Annual Region 1 Chiefs Night will be April 8, 2015. Hosted by the Plympton Firefighters Association, it will be held at the Upland Sportsmen's Club, 67 Upland Road, Plympton, MA. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Region 1 is now on Facebook!! That's right, please visit and like the new Region 1 Facebook Page. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/pages/MCVFA-Region-1/580941745375250>. This page is in addition to the Official MCVFA Facebook page. Here I will post regional announcements, upcoming events throughout the region, regional meeting dates and anything essential to the region or fire service. Please take a moment to visit and like both MCVFA Facebook pages. The link to the Official MCVFA Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/MCVFAff?ref=bookmarks>.

Facebook is just one of the tools we use to try to keep our members up to date. These days email addresses are vitally important to us as a communication tool, which is why we always ask for them. Please supply your address when your Delegate requests it during the department renewal process.

In closing, I would like to wish all the recruit firefighters well in their quest towards certification as Firefighter I/II as they start the Call/Volunteer Recruit Training program currently under way at the Fall River Training site. Good Luck to all in this program.

If you have any questions or comments about MCVFA State/Region 1 business please feel free to contact me. My email address is vpregion1@mcvfa.org and my phone number is 508-509-3531. You may also contact your Regional Coordinator, Tom Rose, at reg1cor@mcvfa.org.



I would like to start by thanking Greg Silverio for his seven years of service to the MCVFA. Greg was the one to inspire me to get involved with the MCVFA. My goals as new VP for Region 3 are to increase membership, which can increase benefits, and to improve communication between the MCVFA and its member departments.

Our first meeting of 2015 was held in Sherborn at the Sherborn Fire Department. We were lucky enough to get a

few of the district specialty vehicles, the District 7 PPV truck from Sutton Fire, the District 14 command vehicle, and Sherborn Fire's 5" hose



reel truck, for a show and tell. Also in attendance was the District 14 Fire Warden Tom Muisse from DCR. The goal of these meetings is to get the member departments together to inform them of all the things that are going on with the MCVFA and to give the departments a chance to mingle and discuss any possible resources and training opportunities. We also inform the members of any legislative issues concerning our members and their departments. Meetings are open to all departments in the region, member or nonmember. We encourage nonmember departments to come to the meetings to see what we have to offer. Only department members are allowed to vote when association matters require a vote. Our goal is to hold a minimum of four meetings a year and to hold them in a variety of locations in the region, North-South-East and West. If you are receiving this magazine, please pass it long and encourage your neighboring departments to check us out.

I want to improve communication between the

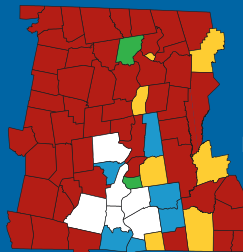


MCVFA and its member departments. One of my immediate steps to improve communication was to start a Facebook page for Region 3 departments. I hope that this page will allow Region 3 departments to share information with other departments regarding training opportunities, fundraiser announcements, available resources, and other shared concerns or interests. The State Association and the Legislative Committee also have Facebook pages.

Our goal is to assist our members, and the only way it will work is if we can communicate with each other.

Please get involved with the Regional meetings, send an email, call me direct with any request, questions, or concerns, or use the new Facebook page, it is for you to post pictures, notices, fundraisers, training opportunities, and resources. **If you are the department delegate or alternate delegate and are not receiving e-mail notifications about the region meetings please send your e-mail address to vpregion3@mcvfa.org.**

We are here for you.



REGION 4

Covering the Counties of
Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire

**Vice President
Kevin Connolly**

I hope by this time, spring has sprung and we are done with the snows of this past winter. I'm glad we were able to share our snow with our brothers and sisters in the eastern part of the state!

A few local departments had the good fortune to accept



photo by Chief John Greene

delivery of fire apparatus. Montague Center received a 2013 Spartan that seats 6, has a 1,500 gpm pump and 1000-gallon tank. It is powered by a 380 hp Cummins with Allison Automatic Transmission. This unit, even though used, was never put in service. It has only 3,500 miles on the odometer and 9 hours on the pump.

The other piece belongs to Colrain Fire. It is a

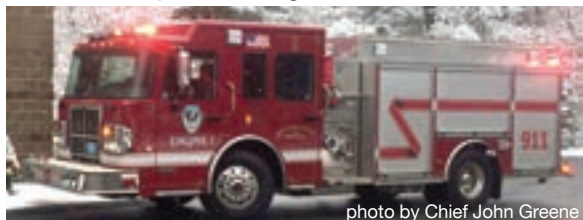


photo by Chief John Greene

2014 HME Silver Fox 4x4. It has a 1500 gpm pump, 700-gallon tank and a 30-gallon foam tank.

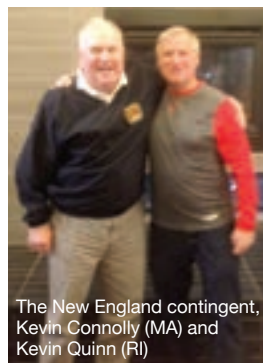
We'd like to wish each department the best of luck with these new additions!

The last few meetings have been well attended. I'd like to thank the members for getting out and participating. The May meeting, tentatively scheduled in Hatfield, will be our regional/legislative breakfast meeting. We will be inviting local legislators to chat with us regarding our Legislative Agenda. I hope that I can get a good representation from the members in the region to attend. It is scheduled for Sunday, May 17 at 9:00 a.m.

I had the opportunity to again attend the National State Benefits meeting. This year it was held in Oklahoma City, OK. The attendees were from across the



Entrance to the
Oklahoma City National Memorial



The New England contingent,
Kevin Connolly (MA) and
Kevin Quinn (RI)



Reflecting Pool
(formerly NW 5th Street)

continues on next page



(l) Entry to the Oklahoma State Fire Museum; (c) One of the rigs in the museum; (r) Another old time rig

United States representing state firefighter associations. The topics addressed during the three-day conference included legislative issues, recruitment and retention, health and wellness, member benefits and social media.

During the three days, we also had the chance to visit the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum, located near the site of the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building, as well as the State of Oklahoma Firefighter Memorial and Museum.

This conference is a great way to network with Fire Associations throughout the U.S. to help solve similar problems that we all face. It is also an excellent resource for new ideas.

In closing this issue's column, please feel free to contact me if I can be of service. I also wish to urge any member to attend any regional meeting. These meetings ARE open to any interested member; you do not have to be the delegate or alternate.



Hinsdale FD's Rehab #9

*article and photo by Ray Bolduc
(Hinsdale Fire Department)*

Chief Turner recognized the need for a dedicated Rehab vehicle during inclement weather and other operations. A retired school bus was purchased and then extensively modified to meet our requirements. Some of the things that were done include:

- the seats removed and reinstalled parallel to the sidewalls
- a rack installed to hang frozen turnout gear to thaw out as well as additional interior lighting.
- a wall installed at the rear of the bus to create a "head" area as well as an independent heating



system along with an electrical service area.

- an 8 KW generator installed to provide an independent power source.

Rehab 9 also carries a microwave oven and coffee makers and is stocked with coffee, cocoa, water, gatorade, energy bars, and instant soups to support the needs of the firefighters.



Additional items will be added as needed. This vehicle is available through the mutual aid system. For further details about Rehab 9, you may contact the author at 413-822-6856.

The Berkshire County Fire Upcoming Training Classes

More than a year ago, I started The Berkshire County Fire Training – Upcoming Classes page and group on Facebook. My goal was to help keep emergency personal up to date on any upcoming classes, either coming from the Massachusetts Fire Academy or hosted by local fire/

EMS departments. Two reasons why I created the page was to help fill classes and to help prevent classes from being cancelled. When courses are posted on the group or page, this gives the training officers and members plenty of time to sign up for a course that he/she is interested in. We also encourage local fire departments to publicize what they've been doing by uploading pictures and stories from recent drill nights so other departments can see what others are doing and maybe bring back that information to their departments. So the next time you are on Facebook look us up and put in a group request to The Berkshire County Fire Training – Upcoming Classes. And remember to share your photos and comments with the group.

Pancake Breakfast To Help Lanesborough FF Beat Cancer

by Andy McKeever

reprint permission courtesy of iberkshires.com

photos by Andrea Fitzgerald, Adams Fire Dept

Proceeds from the fire department's Super Bowl breakfast won't go to the association this year.

Instead, all of the funds raised are going to the family of Lt. Devon Whalen, who is battling Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Whalen was diagnosed last year with the disease. He recently returned home after an extended stay in Boston for treatments.

"He went through one whole regiment of treatment already and they thought it worked, but it didn't," said PJ



Pannesco, who heads the Lanesborough Volunteer Firemen's Association.

"He's a tough kid, a fighter."

Just in his early 20s, Whalen had

wanted to be a firefighter since childhood. His father, Don, a Pittsfield Firefighter who started in Lanesborough, used to bring Devon and his brother Kyle with him to the station. As soon as he could, Devon joined the volunteer department.

"It's in his blood," Pannesco said. "He's been around since he was a baby."

And they can't keep him away. Whalen continued to show up at calls until right before Christmas.



The annual breakfast held every Super Bowl Sunday typically raises money for the association's maintenance of the fire station. But this year, the association is giving all the money to the Whalen family to help offset the out-of-pocket costs associated with the treatments.

"We hope we run out of food and have to turn people away," Pannesco joked when asked about fundraising goals.



The volunteers typically feed some 200 people at the all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast. This year, they're hoping to at least double that and are planning to pull out trucks out of the bay to make room for extra seating.

"The more people we feed, the more money we raise. And that means more money can go to the Whalen family," Pannesco said.

The breakfast starts at 7:30 on Sunday morning and continues until 11:30 a.m. But if there are still people wanting food and they still have it, Pannesco said they'd go until as late in the day as needed.

Former Lenox Fire Chief John 'Jack' Stringer remembered as 'pillar of community'

by Clarence Fanto

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The Berkshire Eagle Newspaper

He was a widely respected, admired fire chief who came up through the ranks and served more than four decades in the town's department.

He was also a one-man band as a house builder, handling foundations, masonry, roofing, plumbing and electrical wiring for homes in several neighborhoods.

But most of all, John "Jack" Stringer, who died on Wednesday at the age of 89, set an example for the town's first responders.

Born in Pittsfield and a lifelong resident of Lenox Dale, Stringer attended local schools, leaving after the eighth grade to work with his father, Victor, on building projects.

After serving in the Marine Corps during the Korean War, he started his own business as a building contractor and joined the fire department in 1952, becoming an officer three years later and eventually, foreman and



John "Jack" Stringer, center, flanked by his son John J. Stringer and grandson B. Jacob "Jake" Stringer

deputy chief in the Lenox Dale station.

In 1981, he was named Lenox fire chief, serving until his retirement in 1994. For some of that time, he was also the town's building inspector.

Stringer led the department in fighting major fires at Valleyhead School for Girls, Foxhollow resort, the Quincy Lodge and the Dakota restaurant, all in the late 1980s.

"He was one of the most kind-hearted guys I've known," said Fire Chief Daniel Clifford. "He would do anything for anybody."

"He was old-school, a strong leader," Clifford added. "He had his own way of doing things and he wanted everyone to follow his set of rules."

He credited Stringer for helping modernize the department through the purchase of three engines and larger-capacity hose.

"I loved Jack and I'll deeply miss him," said Clifford, who was appointed fire chief in 1998 following Jeffrey Lane's four-year stint in the post.

"Jack Stringer was a dedicated resident who gave of himself to the town for more than half his life," said Selectman David Roche. "He was a low-profile, hard-working guy."

"He led a storied life and had a storied career as a public servant," said Lenox Police Chief Stephen O'Brien. "He was a dedicated pillar of the community."

"He was like an uncle to me; I knew him all my life," said Lenox Senior Police Officer Timothy Sheehan. "An honest and good man, he sacrificed a huge amount of time, talent and treasure to the town of Lenox, the Lenox Dale Fire Station and St. Vincent de Paul Church."

For Sheehan, "he was a true role model. Lenox would be an even better place to live if there were more people like Jack Stringer."

"He was a hard worker, a good guy who demanded a lot from you but he was fair and appreciated your dedication and service to the town," said Police Officer and Deputy Fire Chief William Colvin. "He was a mentor, a very dedicated family man with a big heart. He would help anybody."

Thomas Bosworth, a lifelong friend who grew up with Stringer in Lenox Dale, described him as "a very giving, generous person, and very accomplished in the building trades."

"I learned a lot from him, he was a very good dad who provided well for all of us," his son Bruce Stringer, a Stockbridge police officer and volunteer Lenox firefighter, said. "All his children moved on and succeeded, based on his teaching us his skills. I'm really honored that he was my dad."

"He was tough in a good way, a take-charge guy," Stringer added. "He was an honest man who always wanted to deal with honest people."

In 2009, the town dedicated its newest fire truck, a modern rescue pumper, to Stringer in a surprise ceremony that brought tears to his eyes.

Among Jack Stringer's other survivors is son John J. Stringer, a member of the Lenox Fire Department, and daughter Joanne Stringer, of Sagamore Beach. Grandson, B. Jacob "Jake" Stringer, is a part-time Stockbridge police officer.



Mass Fire Academy Surface Ice Rescue Class in Lenox

Photos by Ben James
Southampton FD



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