

# Smoke Showin'

The Official Publication of the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer Firefighters Association

## COVER STORY

### Essex District Attorney Attends Call/Volunteer Firefighter Graduation



There was no shortage of friends, family, and fire service personnel when Call/Volunteer Recruit Firefighter Class #102 graduated from the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, but there was a little bit of law enforcement, too – the newly elected Essex County District Attorney, Paul F. Tucker, was in attendance.

The 33 members of Class #102 graduated on March 1 at Lynnfield High School after hundreds of hours of classroom instruction and in-person training on nights and weekends. They represented the fire departments of Boxford, Dunstable, Hamilton, Ipswich, Lynnfield, Merrimac, Middleton, Newburyport, Rockport, Rowley, Topsfield, Wenham, and West Newbury – all but one of which lie within Essex County.

#### *Ipswich Graduate is an Essex County Prosecutor*

In addition to recognizing all the graduating firefighters from his jurisdiction, DA Tucker was also on hand to support one in particular – Ipswich Firefighter Michael Varone, who serves as an assistant district attorney in his office. Later, the DA recounted how impressed he was at the graduating class and their brothers/sisters call and volunteer firefighters from across Massachusetts who answer the call when their communities need them.

“They do this above and beyond their full-time jobs and commitments and will be ready to go at a moment’s notice,” DA Tucker said. “I wish them all safety as they engage in a vital form of public service.”

March was a banner month for the Call/Volunteer Recruit Firefighter Training Program. One night after Class #102 graduated in Lynnfield, Class #103 graduated in Stow, with 23 recruits from the fire departments of Belchertown, Dudley, East Brookfield, Grafton, Hopedale, Leicester, Millville, Northbridge, Phillipston, Southbridge, Sturbridge, Upton, West Boylston, and Winchendon.

“Our call and volunteer firefighters make an immense contribution to their communities and the Commonwealth every single day,” said State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey. “These graduates have embraced a proud tradition of service, steeped in history, and ready to confront 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.”

## FEATURES

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### Brooks and Academy Team Up to Launch Hero Collection for First Responders



Brooks and Academy Sports + Outdoors have partnered to create exclusive first responder shoes and socks to benefit the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) and Beads of Courage. The Hero Collection features special designs that recognize the courageous spirit of our nation’s firefighters and medical workers, and the positive impact running can have on mental health and wellness.

Brooks’ purpose is to inspire everyone to run their path to a better self by creating the best running gear, tools, and experience. As one of the nation’s largest sporting goods and outdoor retailers, Academy Sports + Outdoors believes in bringing their communities the gear they need to have more fun out there. The Hero Collection aims to honor and give back to those who serve their community every day.

For every purchase of the Hero Collection, a donation is made to the NVFC and Beads of Courage to support frontline responders. This is the second time Brooks has created a limited-edition collection to benefit the fire and medical services. In 2021, the NVFC received \$25,000 through the sale of the Brooks x Academy First Responder shoe collection.

“We are grateful to Brooks and Academy Sports + Outdoors for supporting our nation’s fire and emergency medical services through the Hero Collection,” said NVFC chair Steve Hirsch. “First responders are there for their communities every day, and this collection honors their dedication, service, and sacrifice by shining a spotlight on all they do.”

You can find the Brooks Hero Collection exclusively at Academy for a limited time. Shop [in store](#) or [online](#).

## Boost Volunteer Recruitment with a Free Movie Screening of “Odd Hours, No Pay, Cool Hat”



### New documentary takes viewers into the heart of the volunteer fire service

The new feature-length documentary [Odd Hours, No Pay, Cool Hat](#) goes behind the lines of America’s volunteer fire service to follow the inspiring journey of volunteer firefighters from across the U.S. as they encounter heart-breaking challenges and exhilarating triumphs to fulfill a single mission: Serving their community. Heart-warming, humorous, and thrilling, this sweeping portrait of bravery will capture hearts and inspire.

The 90-minute film will be released nationally later this summer, but volunteer and combination fire departments can host a local screening now to bolster volunteer recruitment. A screening event can be used to deepen the connection with the community, raise awareness of the work of volunteer firefighters, recruit new members, and even raise funds and support for your department.

Hosting a screening is easy. When you sign up to host a screening, you’ll receive:

- Movie screening access (free for fire and EMS departments/agencies)
- Free how-to-host guide
- Free discussion guide
- Free social media toolkit
- Access to the “Odd Hours” support team for assistance
- An unforgettable event with your friends, colleagues, and community

See this [Community Screening Guide](#) and [fill out this form](#) to register to host a screening. Once you fill out the form, the film team will be in touch to answer your questions and assist you along the way.

### **About the Film**

“Odd Hours, No Pay, Cool Hat” is a tribute to the 700,000 volunteer firefighters across the U.S. It showcases the diversity of people and places the volunteer fire service reaches, and also the remarkably consistent themes, imagery, and motivations tying their stories together. It answers the question of “why do people choose to do this” while also highlighting the need to preserve

and protect one of America's most critically necessary treasures – its first responder volunteer corps.

At a fragile and fractured point in American history, the film is entertaining, hopeful, and optimistic. It suggests that when it comes to the most desperate and important moments of our lives, we will drop everything and come together to help our neighbors.

To learn more about “Odd Hours, No Pay, Cool Hat?” visit [www.oddhoursfilm.com](http://www.oddhoursfilm.com) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

This film is presented by John Deere in association with the NVFC, HoldFast Features, and Vignette.

## **The 2023 Safety Stand Down Quiz is Now Live – Test Your Knowledge on Lithium-Ion Battery Response**



In support of this year's Safety Stand Down campaign, June 18-24, the Safety Stand Down Sweepstakes Quiz is now live, featuring questions that reinforce key messages and practices behind this year's theme, "Lithium-Ion Batteries: Are You Ready?"

Each year, the Safety Stand Down campaign and sweepstakes quiz are organized by the [National Fire Protection Association® \(NFPA®\)](#), [International Association of Fire Chiefs \(IAFC\)](#) Safety, Health & Survival Section, the [National Volunteer Fire Council \(NVFC\)](#), and the [Fire Department Safety Officers Association \(FDSOA\)](#), with the collective goal of focusing attention on a particular responder safety concern during the third week in June. This year's Safety Stand Down works to help ensure that firefighters know how to safely handle lithium-ion batteries in a variety of situations and scenarios.

During the week of Safety Stand Down, fire departments across the country are asked to suspend all non-emergency activities and train on lithium-ion battery response; an entire week is provided to ensure that all shifts and personnel can participate. Leading up to [Safety Stand Down](#), fire service leaders and training officers can visit the campaign web site to access a wealth of information, training, and resources that can help prepare for these efforts. New content and event updates will be added to the web site in the weeks to come.

**Take the quiz before June 21 to be entered into the sweepstakes**

In support of this year's Safety Stand Down, emergency services personnel are encouraged to take and promote the quiz. Those who complete it by Wednesday, June 21, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. ET will be automatically entered in a sweepstakes where 200 randomly selected participants will win a limited-edition challenge coin commemorating the 2023 theme. The quiz is available on the Safety Stand Down web site at [www.SafetyStandDown.org](http://www.SafetyStandDown.org).

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#### **About the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)**

The [IAFC](http://www.iafc.org) represents the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide. IAFC members are the world's leading experts in firefighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public safety legislation. Since 1873, the IAFC has provided a forum for its members to exchange ideas, develop professionally and uncover the latest products and services available to first responders.

#### **About the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)**

The [National Volunteer Fire Council](http://www.nvfc.org) (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 critical tools, programs, education, and advocacy for first responders across the nation.

#### **About the Fire Department Safety Officers Association (FDSOA)**

The [Fire Department Safety Officers Association](http://www.fdsOA.org) was established in 1989 as a non-profit Association. Its mission is to promote safety standards and practices in the fire, rescue, and emergency services fields. FDSOA works to help first responders achieve proficiency, skills, and safety; and promotes the safety and health responsibilities that Safety Officers have to departments and communities.

#### **About the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®)**

Founded in 1896, NFPA® is a global, self-funded, nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property, and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. The association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research, training, education, outreach, and advocacy; and by partnering with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission. For more information, visit [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org). All NFPA codes and standards can be viewed online for free at [www.nfpa.org/freeaccess](http://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess).

## **Tattoos, Piercings & Green Hair – Oh My!**

*Chief Joe Maruca, West Barnstable Fire Department*



## **“The Crown Act” Is Now Law**

I noticed that Massachusetts enacted a new law that prohibits discrimination against people because of how they wear their hair. “I thought, how odd? What could this be about, and I wondered if it has any implications for fire departments.” So, I looked up the new law, called The Crown Act. The following is what I learned and some thoughts after reading the law.

The Crown Act, Chapter 117 of the Acts of 2022, appears to amend state law to make it unlawful for school athletic programs to discriminate against students based on hairstyles that are historically associated with race. There’s no real issue here for the fire service or is there?!

I remember, not so long ago, the hiring committee at our fire station debated about hiring a volunteer with tattoos all over his arm. I have heard comments about potential volunteers with red, green, or purple hair: “Here’s trouble” or “that’s not going to work”. Some departments require firefighters to cover piercings and tattoos with tape or a bandage or something. Well, in a world where I hear department after department complain about not being able to get enough volunteers, I have to say --- let’s stop worrying about tattoos, piercings and hair color.

As a child of the sixties, I thought we were done worrying about how people wear their hair! When I was child almost nobody had tattoos, but today it is estimated that 30% of Americans have at least one tattoo. The average person with a tattoo has four of them. Tattoos are mainstream. It is time to stop worrying about tattoos at a time when recruiting call/volunteer firefighters and EMS providers is difficult enough.

I can tell you from personal experience in my own fire/EMS department that our patients and customers do not care about these issues. They care about the quality of the service. We survey those we serve and not one patient has ever made a comment in writing or verbally about the volunteers in our department and their exposed tattoos. (It is worth noting that 60% of our district residents are over 65 years of age.)

### ***Be Mindful of Exceptions***

Yes, there can be, and are, some situations where a tattoo on a volunteer firefighter would be inappropriate. Fire/EMS departments need to manage these situations. Tattoos that are obscene, advocate violence or criminal behavior should not be visible. There are few a taboo words in our society. Tattoos that support a particular political point (we need to be neutral when doing our jobs) should be concealed as well. The same applies to T-shirts, jewelry, and anything else that would be visible to the people we serve while in the performance of our job.

The accompanying policy provides a model that can be adopted by your department to help manage those rare, but difficult situations that involve truly offensive displays.



The question we must all answer about our new volunteer firefighters is whether they fight fire and provide great EMS. The color of their hair and how many earrings they have is irrelevant. Nobody has ever died because their rescuer had green hair.

### ***Focus On What Matters***

So, back to The Crown Act: It does, in fact, apply to all employers and workplaces in Massachusetts. So, yes, it has a direct application to all our fire stations (workplaces), emergency incidents (workplaces), and our departments (employers).

The Crown Act came about because two Massachusetts high school students were banned from all extracurricular activities, including the prom, because they wore braided hair extensions. Yes, really, I can see it happening and bet you can too. Don't let these non-issue issues get in the way of what really matters when recruiting new volunteers for your department.

### **Model Policy: Fire/EMS Tattoos & Wearing Apparel**

Personnel shall not display, when on-duty, in the performance of duty, or when representing the department, inappropriate tattoos, marks, clothing, jewelry, or other wearing apparel that include, but are not limited to, tattoos or marks that exhibit or advocate discrimination; advocate for or against a particular political party, candidate or agenda; marks that promote or express gang, supremacist, or extremist group affiliation; and marks that depict or promote drug use, sexually explicit acts, criminal acts, or obscene material, as determined at the sole discretion of the Fire Chief.

All such tattoos, marks, clothing, jewelry, or other wearing apparel deemed inappropriate shall be covered or removed.

*Publishers Note: The author, Chief Joe Maruca is 64 years old, has naturally graying hair, no tattoos, no piercings, and still doesn't know how to use his iPhone 5.*

## **Red Lights & Sirens on Privately Owned Vehicles**

***Chief Joe Maruca, West Barnstable Fire Department***



As a call/volunteer firefighter or career firefighter you can have red lights and a siren on your privately owned vehicle (POV) for the purpose of responding to emergency calls. To do so, you must first have the permission of your fire chief. There is nothing that requires your fire chief to allow this.

### ***The Process***

Once your fire chief has given permission for red lights a Red-Light Permit must be obtained from the Massachusetts Registry of Motor

Vehicles (RMV) 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 RMV Red Light Section in Boston. There is no application fee and applications are generally processed without difficulty in a few days. Applications are submitted electronically.

### ***Know the Policies***

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. This statement of department is in box labeled “IN CUSTODY OF”.

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.

### ***A Word About 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.

### ***Follow the Rules***

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 were a fire apparatus. This means 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. Further, 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 exceeding the speed limit and hit another car, a pedestrian, or a fixed object, it is likely that you were not exercising caution and due



regard for the safety of persons and property. You and your fire department will be found at fault.

### ***Mind the Speed Limit***

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, fix a beeping detector with no report of smoke/fire, or to check on burning without a permit, and not a true emergency, you better follow the speed limit.

Massachusetts has what is called the “universal speed law” (GL Chapter 90 Section 17) that applies to all drivers at all times. It states that your speed must, at all times, 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 to demonstrate what can happen. While the law varies from state to state, I think Massachusetts would have resolved these two cases in a similar manner.

- In 2018, a New Jersey firefighter and his department, Wenonah Volunteer Fire Company, had to pay \$4.6 million to a woman who suffered fractures to her legs, neck, arms and ribs requiring multiple surgeries, and who was left confined to a wheelchair. The firefighter, responding in his private car, drove through a red light without stopping. The firefighter was charged with careless driving, failure to stop at the red light and creating a risk of a motor vehicle crash. The firefighter paid \$100,000 and the fire department paid \$4.5 million.
- In 2014, in Tallulah, Louisiana, a fire truck responding lights and sirens to an emergency call collided with a deputy chief’s car responding 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 could not stop in time to avoid the crash because of his speed. He was driving too fast for circumstances. The lesson here is that if you are driving over the speed limit or go through a red light (even after stopping), and you hit something, you are going to be liable. You do not have an absolute right of way.

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.

## **LEGAL AND POLICY**

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### **Nero’s Law Extension & Training Changes**



The Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) in the Department of Public Health (DPH) has extended the deadline for all emergency medical service providers to be trained in police dog treatment and transport pursuant to NERO's Law.

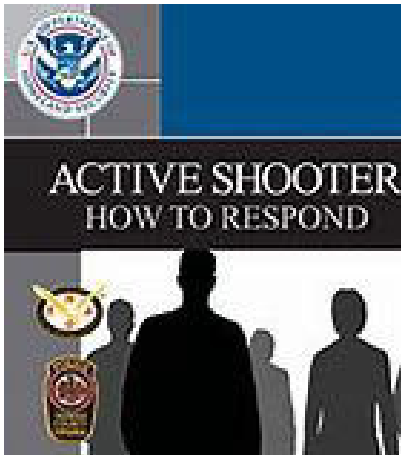
Nero's Law training must be completed by February 10, 2024 (unless your department gets a wavier).

Initial Nero's Law training requires 3 hours (1.5 hours of class/didactic + 1.5 hours of practical/hands-on), but the refresher training, every 2 years, only requires 1.5 hours of classroom/didactic training.

For more detail see Administrative Requirement (AR) 2-270.

*Photo from Yarmouth Police Department Facebook*

## **Active Shooter/Hostile Event Training Required (ASHER) For All Ambulance Services**



The Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) in the Department of Public Health (DPH) now requires that all EMTs, Medics, and First Responders who work in an ambulance service have 1 hour of ASHER Training every 2 years.

Initial ASHER Training must be completed by August 1, 2023.

For details see OEMS Administrative Requirement (AR) 2-280.

## **MCVFA Legislation Update**

The following bills have been presented to the state house from the MCVFA Legislative Committee. Mostly, all have been assigned bill numbers and committee assignments for the 2023-2024 legislative session. One bill, the perennial Firefighter License Plate, arrived after the cutoff date but may still survive as a late-filed bill.

Additional fire-service related bills have been filed by others, and we will monitor these with interest. The same holds true of EMS-related bills. Updates will be reported on the MCVFA Legislative Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/MCVFAlegis/](http://www.facebook.com/MCVFAlegis/)).

Bill #	Bill Title	Sponsor	Committee
H.2832			
S.1831	An Act providing volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians with a local option real estate tax exemption	Howitt Gobi	Revenue
H.2533		Gentile	
S.1652	An Act relative to death benefits to surviving spouses of call and volunteer firefighters	Eldridge	Revenue
S.2309	An Act to honor our veterans who serve as emergency responders	Brady	Veterans and Federal Affairs
SD 2455	An Act authorizing voluntary contributions to the Massachusetts Fire Fighters Academy Trust Fund	Oliveira	unassigned
SD 2520	An Act relative to call and volunteer firefighters and EMTs (Disability)	Mark	unassigned

## EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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### Grant Writer Now Available to Support MCVFA Members—At No Cost!



MCVFA is pleased to announce a wonderful opportunity for our members, with the availability of a volunteer with a successful record of grant writing. This individual is available to support any department with their grant writing needs.

Our volunteer grant writer has successfully secured a range of grants, including the acquisition of Equipment (self-contained breathing apparatus, Wildland Protective clothing, Washer/Extractor, Radio Communications Equipment, Structural Protective Clothing) Vehicles (Aerial Tower Quint, Pumper/Tanker) and FEMA Reimbursements—all of which have span state and federal grants to support first responders. Your department may be able to benefit from these programs as well.

Interested departments should reach out to Membership Secretary Kathy Bird at [kibird@verizon.net](mailto:kibird@verizon.net) to connect with our grant writer. This is an extraordinary offer and a great way to take full advantage of grant writing resources!

## UPDATES FROM THE REGIONS

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### Region 1

Greetings to the MCVFA family. As we turn the clocks to spring ahead this year, I for one look forward to a busy and productive spring and summer. With several trips planned, the one I look forward to the most is the 2023 NVFC R&R Conference, in Oklahoma City this June.

#### *Recruitment & Retention Resource*

I have personally focused on the national trends of not only the fire service, but many volunteer and civic organizations continue to struggle with recruiting and retaining members. As previously stated, our goal at MCVFA is to assist departments with various programs to meet their goals. With that I can say that a small group of MCVFA members have completed a small PowerPoint presentation for member departments to utilize for their own purposes. This project is a culmination of national and state association meetings, and conference information, bunched together in the hopes of providing some valuable assistance in recruiting and retaining members.

Please contact me via e-mail at your convenience for more information or to obtain a copy of the presentation file.

Lastly, I thank you all for doing what you do for your community and fellow citizen. As the actor Robert DeNiro said in my favorite movie, "Backdraft": "The funny thing about firefighters is, night and day, they're always firefighters." Be the best firefighter, EMS provider, or EMA professional you can be 24/7. Stay safe and have a great summer, everyone!

*Lt. Christopher J Hajder, NREMT  
Swansea Fire Department  
Executive Vice President  
MCVFA*

### Region 1 Update: Past and Present

As I write this, radios crackle in the background with the multiple brush fires that our brother and sister firefighters have been dealing with during this dry spell, in the heart of brush season. The sheer number of calls brings me back to a time when I started as a call-firefighter with the Wareham Fire Department in April of 1984.

I was assigned to Station 2, which was and is currently staffed with all call personnel. I have fond memories of getting to the station early in the morning to reserve a spot on Forestry-376, our large ex-military brush breaker. We would frequently have a full crew ready to respond the moment the tone dropped, and the horn started to blow. Often, we were on the road before the tones, as we monitored the local fire towers, and knew they were lining up a fire in our area. Our large map on the wall allowed us to pinpoint fires as the towers shot out lines. Fast forward years later, and how times have changed. Considerably.

At the station the other day I was speaking with one of our new recruits, and I showed him how the towers worked and how to line up the smoke. I assured him that this was a tried-and-true method in early fire detection. The most important thing I told him was to listen to the numbers that the towers were putting out. Where the two lines crossed is where the action was. No sooner than saying this did a career fire captain interject that with the plugging in of just a few numbers, an app now identifies the location of the smoke. I felt a bit older, and more than a little out of touch!

### ***The “Bug” Never Goes Away***

While I didn’t know about the app, I feel as excited about brush season today as I did back as a teenager in the 1980s. The excitement of that time always comes out during early spring every year. It is easy to see I had, and still do, that bug in me. Long gone are the call firefighters hanging around in the station, and truthfully there just are not the volume of fires we had in the past. What I was trying to sell to that new recruit, was that very bug, the one that so many of us possess. The bug that makes us jump out of bed on a cold winter night to go help a complete stranger. The bug that makes us hustle to the station, so we can grab a seat on the apparatus. Unfortunately, that seems a bit elusive these days. I believe it is our job, to get the people in, and help foster their love of the fire service.

### ***The Need for Recruitment and Retention***

To that end, realizing that recruitment and retention is a critical issue in the modern fire service, a few of us in Region 1 are planning to videotape our seminar presentation, addressing recruitment and retention needs. When that video is completed it will be made available to any fire department that is interested. That would allow us to get the message across the state. Of course, I always love a road trip, and would gladly offer the class myself, if requested. We will keep people posted when this video is available.

Thank you for letting me reminisce a little as I trekked down memory lane when the fire service was simpler, and there was a great enthusiasm in being part of the fire department. It is my sincere hope that the people entering the fire service feel that same spark. It is up to us to be that spark, to attract and sell “bug” to a new generation of firefighters.

Stay safe,  
*John Walcek*  
*Vice President, Region 1*

## **Region 2**

### ***Trains, Planes and Automobiles, what fuel source do they use? Hybrid, Electric, or Solar?***

The Essex County Fire Chief's Association Training Division, in Cooperation with NorthEast Squad Concepts, LLC, presented a class on handling hybrid and electric vehicle incidents. A 3-hour course covered fire department response and operations at incidents involving such vehicles as well as Lithium-Ion Battery Backup Systems, micro-mobility (e.g., E-scooters, bicycles), and the Tesla solar roof. A tour of a Tesla Model 3 was offered to review operations and safety features. The class was well attended and hopefully will be offered in your area.

### ***Location, Location, Location***

This year is the 10th anniversary of the deadly fertilizer plant explosion in West, Tx. The explosion led to 15 fatalities — including 12 first responders — and injured more than 250. On April 17, 2013 at 7:51 pm a fire at the West Fertilizer Co. storage facility detonated approximately 30 tons of ammonium nitrate. The blast destroyed a middle school, a high school, a two-story apartment complex, and a 145-bed nursing home. About half the homes in the town were damaged. The explosion was so powerful that the [U.S. Geological Survey](#) registered it as a 2.1-magnitude earthquake. The sound of the explosion was heard 80 miles away. A decade after the deadly fertilizer plant explosion in West, Tx, the community has rebuilt itself, but chemical safety advocates worry that regulators haven't done enough to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring. I worry about the massive size of pre-plan for this type of incident. It makes me think of the hazards in my own town, with the use of pool chemicals and farming fertilizers. Yet, I am thankful for the cooperation of my fire department, the local school community, and the preplanning that is already in place. In addition, I think of the yearly Seabrook, NH, nuclear pre-plan information that I receive each year and wonder how many people in the community actually read it.

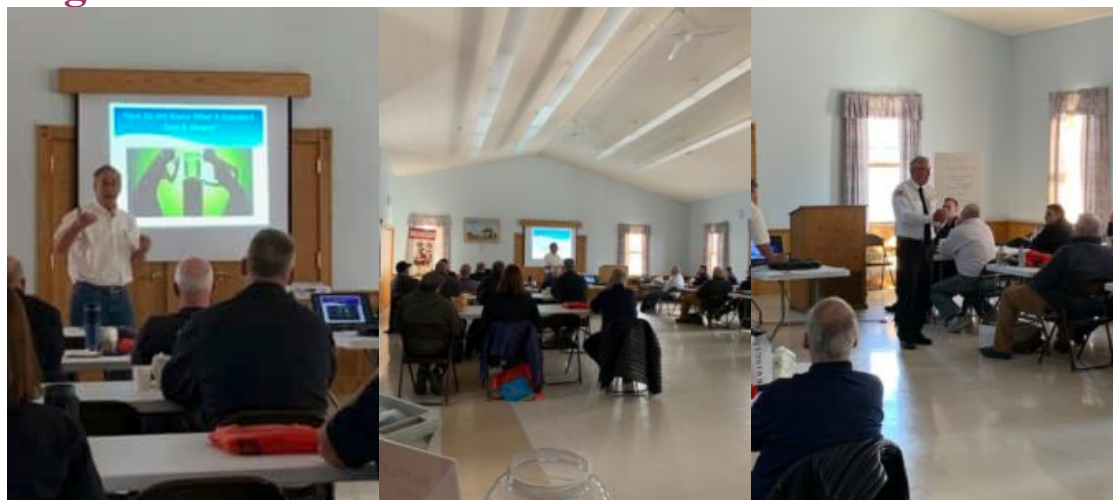
### ***Assisted Living, Rehab Facility, or Congregate Housing?***

Just as pre-planning for the above situations is vital to the safety of a community, so is pre-planning with private- and state-funded housing facilities. The Massachusetts Department of Health regulates nursing homes, rehab, and long-term care facilities. The housing authorities offer elderly and non-elderly handicap, disabled, or developmentally delayed adults opportunities for assisted living programs—these are populations that stand to benefit the most from preplanning. Speak with your local private and/or state funded housing facilities and see if they are receptive to the opportunity to pre-plan with the fire department. If not, start small, build a relationship with the facility, and perhaps offer a blood pressure clinic, a file-of-life clinic, or CPR class for the staff of the facility. If you have concerns, contact the Massachusetts Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. An Ombudsman Representative works with residents and their families to resolve concerns about their quality of life and care within long-term care facilities. To find a local ombudsman program serving the city or town in which the facility is located, call 617-727-7750.

*Lisa Evans*  
*Region 2*  
*MCVFA*



## Region 4



After a 1-month delay due to the inclement weather, Region 4 held their regional meeting in March. It was hosted by the Westhampton Fire Department in their new public safety building. Fifteen members representing 11 fire departments and the Massachusetts State Police from the region were present and given a tour of the new facility by Chief Dave Antosz following dinner. The new building replaces a much older, smaller building and offers more opportunity with greater space. We congratulate the firefighters and the townspeople on this transition and wish them well with their new station.

Following the tour, the meeting was brought to order, the business of the Association and discussion on various topics ensued. Assistant Chief Jonathan Miller of Monson, a member of the Fire Training Council, provided a report on the various programs the council has been working on.

### ***Small-Town Fire Chiefs Roundtable and Seminar***

On Saturday, March 18, Bernardston F.D., along with MCVFA Region 4, hosted the Small-Town Fire Chiefs Roundtable and Semina, presented by the New England Volunteer Fire and EMS Coalition (NEVFEC). NEVFEC is comprised of the six New England states of NVFC membership. The seminar was held at the United Church Community room in Bernardston. Lunch was graciously served by members of the United Church of Bernardston.

The seminar helps volunteer fire chiefs and the fire service to better protect their citizens and property and to have a better understanding on how to address obstacles encountered in providing rural emergency services. This program was created to learn how to implement NFPA standards to benefit departments, how to increase and improve training, and to enhance volunteer recruitment.

Deputy Chief Kevin Quinn (retired) of Union Fire District #10, South Kingston, RI, was the keynote speaker and moderator. Chief Quinn formerly served as NVFC chairman and now serves

as the current first vice chair. Chief Joe Maruca of the West Barnstable FD was the lead instructor and also serves as MCVFA Director, representing Massachusetts to the NVFC.

Approximately 30 fire chiefs and firefighters from Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire attended. Sessions included fire chief's authority under NFPA standards, recruitment of volunteer firefighters, how to connect and communicate with millennials in the fire service, small town fire department training programs, and review of NFPA 1410. At the end of the day, a round robin discussion provided participants with a forum to raise and address current challenges in their departments. The program was well received by those in attendance.

If any region might be interested in hosting this program in the future, please feel free to contact me.

As a reminder. MCVFA Annual Dues are due by July 1, 2023. Please make every effort to get them paid in a timely fashion!

*Kevin Connolly  
Northfield F.D.  
Past President, MCVFA*