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3rd Vice President

COUNTY FIRE COORDINATORS
ASSOCIATION OF THE
STATE OF NEW YORK



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Director

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September 25, 2018

Fire Chief's

Over the past several years, the volunteer fire service has experienced a significant decline in the number of volunteer firefighters. Staffing has fallen dramatically in recent years and has resulted in a diminished and crucial number of available personnel 24/7/365. The Fire Coordinators of New York State have recognized this and identified this decline in volunteers as the number one issue facing every volunteer fire department in NYS. In many areas of the state, the fire service is faced with a "public safety emergency". Dropped calls, lack of qualified officers, understaffed equipment and delayed responses have resulted and are just some of the issues that are most disturbing and concerning. Although we realize there are many volunteer fire departments that are still high performing agencies, we obviously know that they are the exception and not the rule.

The Fire Service Alliance is a working group of fire service associations which includes the Fire Coordinators' Association, Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY), NYS Association of Fire Chiefs (NYS AFC) and the Association of Fire Districts of NY (AFDSNY). This Alliance is focusing on various approaches to recruitment and retention as we address the issue of declining numbers in the volunteer fire service. Every fire service association has recognized and expressed the same concern regarding the lack of adequate staffing and is committed to working together to find solutions. We are compelled to look for a new model in providing emergency services to the State of New York. Tomas Rinaldi, the President of AFDSNY, said it best "We are not going to recruit our way out of this."

The first step in solving this problem is to accurately identify the scope of the problem. This can only be achieved through feedback from everyone involved. The NYS Fire Coordinators have been tasked with collecting current data but we need **your** help.

- 1) We kindly request that you take a moment to complete the *Fire Chief's Survey* by clicking on the following link ([Fire Chief](#)) where you will be asked to provide detailed data regarding your specific fire department. Please submit your completed survey electronically by **October 31, 2018**.
- 2) We also request that you *electronically* circulate the attached letter to your department personnel. The letter is embedded with a link to the *Firefighter's Survey* (identification is optional).

All results will be used by the NYS Fire Service Alliance to develop a plan and strategy to address the on-going staffing shortage we are all faced with today. A preliminary report of the data collected will be presented at the Regional Fire Administrators Conference (RFA) (November 15-16, 2018). A final report will be presented in December at the Fire Service Alliance meeting.

Feel free to contact your fire coordinator with any questions you may have.

Input from all levels of the volunteer fire service is crucial to our success. We ask that you join us in being part of the solution!

Sincerely,

NYS Association of Coordinators, Staffing Committee

Edward Tremblay (Saratoga)
William Streicher (Wyoming)
Vini Tankaseli (Orange)
Timothy Yaeger (Genesee)
Matt Beckwith (Chenango)
Eric Day (Clinton)
Everett Erickson (Ulster)
John Farrell (Greene)
Scott Pike (Schenectady)
Steve Santa Maria (Fulton)
Jonathan Schultz (Niagara)
Doug Shattuck (Madison)
William Schutt (Genesee)