



Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety

Cabinet Secretary Jeff S. Sandy, CFE, CAMS

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OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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December 13, 2019

To: West Virginia Fire Service

From: State Fire Marshal Tyree

Re: Recruitment and Retention Strategies

Dear Fire Chiefs and Members of the Fire Service:

Over the last few years, efforts have been made to assist fire departments throughout our State to develop effective recruitment and retention strategies. We want both West Virginians and those from neighboring states to be a part of the invaluable team of public servants who comprise the fire departments in every community.

The purpose of this letter is to gather knowledge from everyone, whether at the department level or from the county. Through your commitments and sacrifice, many of you have joined arm in arm to build the necessary fire service bodies who provide critical services in your communities and we want to learn from your efforts and strategies.

We would ask for each of you to please provide the methods you are using to add new members to your departments while also maintaining your current valuable members. We'll place what you're doing with recruitment and retention on our website as a central gathering point to share with others. Please provide it to us along with any resource material you may be using, either in typewritten form, by email, or by sharing a link with the current efforts and strategies being made.

Once we receive the various strategies your departments are using, we'll quickly create a Section on our Website titled: ***"Recruitment and Retention Strategies"***. I feel this will be an important step in assisting other departments to increase and enhance their efforts.

The following is a list of ideas of what departments and communities can or already are doing:

Recruitment

- NVFC – Make Me a Firefighter Campaign
- Applying for SAFER Grants to Increase Department Manpower
- Making Department or County-wide First Responder Recruitment Videos
- Hosting Fire Department Open House Recruitment Events
- Using Social Media and Website Development
- Establishing Junior Programs through 4H, Explorer, & County School Fire/EMS Vo-Tech
- Involving people in Community Risk Reduction and Fire Safety Education

Retention

- Length of Service Awards Programs (LOSAP)
- Pay Per Call Incentives
- Other Types of Awards and Incentives
- Shifting department members into responsibilities as: board members, auxiliary members, fire data collection (NFIRS) managers

Whether you are utilizing one of the above strategy ideas or something else, please share what you're doing with us, so that the critical needs within West Virginia communities throughout the State, can have a better opportunity to be fulfilled. If you would like to share what you're doing by email or link, please send it to: wvfirecommissioner@wv.gov

I thank each of you for your valiant service and ask that you never give up in the pursuit of finding and bringing others into this great public service. Be Safe!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. Tyree Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kenneth E. Tyree Jr.
State Fire Marshal

*"The Essence of Life is to Serve
Others and Do Good."*

Aristotle