



Southwest Virginia Firefighters Association Convention Business Meeting June 15, 2019

We Protect Southwest Virginia

15 June, 2019

The Convention Business meeting of the Southwest Virginia Firefighters Association was held on Saturday, 15 June, 2019 at the Meadowview Conference Resort and Convention Center in Kingsport, TN. with 110 members present, representing 21 member organizations.

The business meeting was called to order at 0910 hours by 1st Vice President Bill Nunley. The invocation was given by Mr. Kenny Hancock of the Draper Volunteer Fire Department. 1st Vice President Nunley welcomed everyone in attendance.

1st Vice President Nunley welcomed the following guest and allowed them to address the membership:

Chief Michael Reilly, Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs

- Advised that 70% of all fire departments are volunteer
- Discussed the ATL money distributions
- Reviewed legislative issues
 - See the attached 2019 Congressional Fire Service Institute Report
- This year was a record low for AFG applications

Mr. Jimmy Byer, President of the Virginia State Firefighters Association

- President Byer addressed the group and invited members to the 2019 First Responder Conference / Expo in Hampton, Va., 6-10 August, 2019
- If you are not a member of the VSFA please contact any member of the VSFA if you are interested in becoming a member.

Reports:

President:

Andrew Whitt offered the following report.

- No Report

1st Vice President:

Bill Nunley offered the following report:

- Thanked everyone in attendance
- Thanked the members of Dublin Fire Department and the Convention Committee for the hard work they put in to create a successful convention

2nd Vice President:

Todd Chrisley offered the following report.

- Thanked everyone in attendance
- Recognized Chief Eddie Whittaker of the RFAAP fire department

Treasurer:

Robbie Kiser offered the following report.

- Treasurer's report for the past quarter was read.
- Motion to accept made by Jeremy Williams and seconded by Kenny Hancock
 - **Motion voted and passed**
- Advised the membership that if a member of your department passes please let Robbie know and he will get a donation to the department or organization requested

Asst. Treasurer:

Potsie Smith offered the following report.

- Gave a report on the Convention account
- Motion to accept made by Kenny Hancock and seconded by Mark Smith
 - **Motion voted and passed**
- Requested that the books be audited at the September meeting

Secretary:

Curtis Whitt offered the following report:

- Advised that the association provided 282 man hours of training at this years convention
- Thanked everyone for attending
- Need to be thinking of a replacement in the next year for the Secretary position

Asst. Secretary:

Derek Thompson offered the following report:

- Advised he would have a complete convention report at the September meeting
- Thanked everyone for having the registrations completed and sent in prior to the deadline.
- Advised the attendance for convention was 251 members and gusets

Chaplin / Welfare:

Kenny Hancock offered the following report:

- Thanked everyone that attended the Memorial Service and those that had a part in the service
- Thanked Craig Helvey and Horne Funeral Home for their support of Memorial Service
- Reminded everyone of the Sunday Morning Departure Service
- There were no deaths reported during the last quarter

Sgt. At Arms:

Mark Smith offered the following report:

- Thanked President Andrew Whitt and Dublin Fire Department for the work they put in for the convention

Board of Directors:

David Akers offered the following report.

- If you have any questions or concerns about the association please contact him, any Executive Committee member or association officer
- The Board of Directors met and discussed the following:
 - Mark Smith will be setting up a Twitter account that will be tied to the association Facebook page
 - The southwest will be a sponsor of the Wise Regional School in September

- A motion was made by Mr. John Linkous and seconded by Mr. Mike Hutchison for the association to sponsor the Wise Regional School.
- **Motion passed**
- Working on a brochure for the association
- Convention Coordinator:
 - Would like to have the Coordinator's travel expenses covered when they are looking into convention venues and pre-convention planning meetings
 - A motion was made by Mr. Leon Reed and seconded by Mr. Kenny Hancock to reimburse the Convention Coordinator for travel expenses
 - **Motion passed**

Legislative Committee:

Mike Moles offered the following report:

- Thanked President Whitt, the Convention Committee and the members of Dublin Fire Department for all of the work they put into this convention
- Mr. Moles and the legislators worked with several stakeholder groups during this last session
- Reported that Mr. Charlie Singelton has been having several health issues and has asked the members to keep him in there thoughts and prayers
- VSFA President Jimmy Byer updated the association membership
- Discussed the VOLSAP Program with the membership
- The Legislative Summit will be held 17 July, 2019 in Henrico County
 - At this summit they will be discussing the possible increase in the ATL funding for fire departments
- The 2019 Congressional Fire Service Institute Report will be included with these minutes

Membership Committee:

Leon Reed offered the following report:

- We need help recruiting new members and departments for the association
 - Working on a brochure and info to pass out to prospective members
 - Would like to divide the association into small zones
 - Would like to have someone represent each zone
 - We will be highlighting the benefits and training that the association can offer its members
 - Once this brochure is created it will be shared with the members and will be used as a marketing tool
- If you would like to help please contact Mr. Leon Reed

Training Committee:

Forest Redd offered the following report:

- Thanked the Convention Committee and President Whitt for lining up the training for convention
- Introduced VDFP Chief Dennis Price who offered the following:
 - There will be a EVOC class held in Riner – 17-18 July, 2019
 - Wise Regional School – 6-8 September, 2019
 - NFA Virginia Weekend – 28-29 September, 2019 in Emmitsburg, MD
 - 1403 Compliance Officer in Blacksburg – 22 June, 2019
 - NFA class – 22-23 February, 2020 in Roanoke, VA
 - HazMat Operations in Galax – 20 July, 2019

- New funded training will begin 1 July, 2019
- 1 July, 2019 the VDFP training record management software will be changing to Cornerstone. This will be a slow roll out of the software. If you need training information that is not on the new software please contact your division chief.
- If your department brings on new members get their information to your division chief to have them entered into the training system
- As a good practice you should send your VDFP division chief a current department roster once a year
- The association thanked VDFP for their help with the convention training
 - This year the association provided 282 man hours of training to its members at this convention

By-laws Committee:

Page Brockenbrough offered the following report:

- No report

Rules and Contest Committee:

Mike Moles offered the following report:

- Contest will be in the grass area across from the hotel at 1300 hours
- Captain's meeting will be after the business meeting
- Thanked Mark Bowery and VFIS Insurance for sponsoring the contests

Ways and Means Committee:

Mark Smith offered the following report:

- 50/50 during the meeting, \$206 to the winner

Scholarship Committee:

David Akers offered the following report for Billy Hanks:

- The association will give out 5 scholarships this year at \$500 each
- There were 15 applications this year
- The committee encouraged everyone to apply in the future

Convention Committee:

Jeremy Williams offered the following report:

- Thanked President Andrew Whitt and Dublin Fire Department for their work on this convention
- Thanked everyone on the Convention Committee and everyone else that assisted with the convention and activities
- Thanked the vendors for their support and encouraged everyone to visit the vendors
- Any issues or suggestions contact the committee members

Old Business

No old business

New Business

The Audit Committee reviewed the Treasurers books and reported that the books are in order

- A motion was made to accept the committee report by Jeremy Williams and seconded by Potsie Smith
 - **Motion passed**

Jeremy Williams will be reading the Resolutions at the dinner this evening

The 2019 – 2020 meeting schedule was set as follows:

The Fall Meeting: 15 September, 2019 at Christiansburg Fire Department, Christiansburg, Va.

The Winter Meeting: 19 January, 2020 at Green Spring Fire Department, Green Spring, Va.

The Spring Meeting: 19 April, 2020 at Riner Fire Department, Riner, Va.

Convention Business Meeting: 20 June, 2020 at the MeadowView Conference Resort & Convention Center, Kingsport, TN.

The Nomination Committee offered the following slate of officers for the 2019 – 2020 year:

- President – Mr. Bill Nunley, Green Spring Fire Department
- 1st Vice President – Mr. Todd Chrisley, Christiansburg Fire Department
- 2nd Vice President – Mr. Mark Smith, Blacksburg Fire Department
- Treasurer – Mr. Robbie Kiser, Pulaski Fire Department
- Secretary – Mr. Curtis Whitt, Dublin Fire Department
- Chaplain – Mr. Kenny Hancock, Draper Fire Department
- Assistant Treasurer – Mr. Potsie Smith, Christiansburg Fire Department
- Assistant Secretary – Mr. Derek Thompson, Fairlawn Fire Department
- Sergeant at Arms – Mr. Roy Wall, Dublin Fire Department
- Convention Coordinator – Mr. Barry Simmons, Christiansburg Fire Department
- Motion made to accept the slate of officers except the Convention Coordinator, which will have to come from the floor, was made by Mr. Donnie Reed and seconded by Mr. David Akers
 - **Motion Passed**

The meeting was adjourned at 1040 with Mr. Kenny Hancock offering the closing prayer.

Thanks to the members of the Dublin Volunteer Fire Department for the work hosting the convention

The next meeting will be Sunday, September 15, 2019 at Christiansburg Vol. Fire Department in Christiansburg, Va. at 1300 hours

Respectfully Submitted,
Curtis Whitt
Secretary
Southwest Virginia Firefighters Association
cwhitt@swvafirefighters.com

Attachment:
2019 Congressional Fire Service Institute report



2019

Congressional Fire Service Institute





Protect the AFG/SAFER Grant Programs

Many fire departments across the country cannot afford the equipment, training, and staffing necessary to meet a baseline level of readiness. This situation puts firefighters and their communities in danger.

The AFG and SAFER grant programs augment local funding and provide assistance to meet these needs. To date, the programs are working well to improve preparedness and response capabilities, but more needs to be done. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-6) appropriated \$350 million each for the AFG and SAFER grant programs.

Virginia's Fire Services is asking you to support at least \$405 million each for the AFG and SAFER grant programs in FY 2020.

Virginia's Grant Money

	AFG	SAFER
2017	\$6,082,191	\$6,355,519
2016	\$6,278,941	\$8,234,699
2015	\$8,222,538	\$7,671,435
2014	\$5,466,029	\$12,480,733

Funding for the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and National Fire Academy (NFA)

Many fire service leaders have been concerned about the level of funding that the USFA and NFA receive, and whether they will be able to fulfill their missions and respond to emerging challenges. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-6) appropriated \$45.679 million for USFA. Of that amount, \$1.5 million is allocated for infrastructure improvements at the National Fire Academy.

Because America's fire and emergency service is critically important to national preparedness and response, it needs to have a strong voice within DHS. Also, the fire services needs a consistent and high level of funding.

Virginia's Fire Services is asking you to support \$50 million for the USFA and NFA in FY 2020.

NFA Grant Usage

Federal Fiscal Year	Award Amount	Number of Courses	Students Attended
18	\$20,000	Open Grant	
17	\$20,000	26	470
16	\$20,000	28	488
15	\$20,000	19	331
14	\$20,000	32	610
13	\$20,000	30	481
12	\$24,000	31	438
11	\$26,000	29	467



EMS Grants for Rural Fire/EMS Agencies

Rural fire and EMS agencies often face unique budgetary challenges as they may lack the tax base to provide strong funding and often receive incomplete reimbursements for the cost of providing emergency medical care. As a result, these agencies struggle to afford basic EMS equipment and medications. Additionally, increasing drug shortages have significantly increased the costs of medications that are commonly provided to critically ill and injured patients.

The Supporting and Improving Rural EMS Needs (SIREN) Grant was established in 2018 to provide funding for procuring EMS supplies, recruiting personnel, and running EMS licensure classes. Only public and non-profit fire/EMS agencies are eligible to receive funding. Virginia's Fire Service urges Congress to provide \$50 million for the SIREN grant in FY 2020.

The SIREN grant assists budget-challenged rural fire and EMS agencies in providing life-saving services in their communities. These grants are for public and non-profit agencies located in rural areas. This eligibility requirement ensures that these funds are provided to fire and EMS agencies in need.

Federal Taxation of Volunteer Incentives

State and local governments use property tax rebates and other incentives to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. The Internal Revenue Service views these incentives as income. A previous federal law excluded any property tax benefit and up to \$360 per year of all other state and local benefits to volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel from taxable income. This law expired at the end of 2010.

On February 2019, representative John Larson (D-CT) introduced (H.R. 1241, 2019) the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act (VRIPA), which would permanently reinstate the tax benefit and raise the \$360 cap to \$600.

The taxing of these incentives makes them ineffective and may hinder recruitment and retention of volunteer emergency responders. Furthermore, the number of volunteer firefighters nationwide has decreased from 880,000 in 1984 to 814,850 in 2015 according to the NFPA's U.S. Fire Department Profile. State and local incentives are important when recruiting and retaining volunteers who must struggle to balance their careers and the obligations of today's two-income families.

Virginia's Fire Services ask that you support the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act (H.R. 1241, 2019).





Strengthen Federal Incentives for Fire Sprinkler Retrofit Installations

Automatic fire sprinkler systems are a proven way to reduce the chances of being killed or injured in a fire as well as significantly limit damage to a building. Congress recently allowed fire sprinkler systems to qualify for deduction under Section 179 of the tax code. However, when Congress passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (P.L. 115-97) in 2017, it contained an unintentional drafting error which prevented fire sprinkler systems from qualifying for bonus depreciation until 2027 and then qualifying for a 15-year depreciation period after 2027.

In March 2019, senators Pat Toomey (R-PA) and Doug Jones (D-AL) introduced (S. 803, 2019), the Restoring Investment in Improvement Act, which fixes this error and allows fire sprinkler systems, in addition to other “qualified improvement properties” (QIPs) recognized under Section 168 of the tax code, to qualify for these accelerated depreciation rates.

When Congress passed their tax reform bill in 2017, they wanted to incentivize property owners to make their buildings safer through the installation of fire sprinkler systems and other fire alerting and suppression systems. However, the drafting error in P.L. 115-97 limits the ability of property owners to take full advantage of these incentives. S. 803, 2019 is a bipartisan and cost neutral bill to correct this drafting error and strengthen tax incentives for fire sprinkler retrofit installations.

Virginia’s Fire Services is asking you to support or cosponsor S. 803 and correct the QIP drafting error.

Improve Hazardous Materials Response Training for First Responders

The national energy boom has focused attention on the importance of safely transporting crude oil and other hazardous materials across the country. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), the overall volume of crude oil moving by rail has quadrupled in less than a decade. Recent incidents in the transport of crude oil have demonstrated the need for local fire and emergency services to be prepared for hazmat incidents.

In FY 2015, Congress created the ALERT grants to provide hazardous materials training for volunteer or remote emergency responders. The IAFC was awarded \$2.6 million in ALERT grant funds to develop a training program in coordination with the IAFF, NVFC and the other major fire service organizations. The grant program is focused on providing training for incidents involving rail shipments of crude oil, ethanol, and other flammable liquids. The training will consist of both in-person and web-based components. The FY 2019 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-6) would allow funding for the ALERT grants.

Virginia not only has numerous railways within the Commonwealth, but we have already experienced several hazardous material train derailments. These types of incidents are not only expensive to respond to, but they cost localities significantly to ensure personnel are trained to have adequate response resources.

Federal funding for web-based and in person training can help Virginia fire departments prepare for potential incidents involving the transportation of crude oil or other hazardous materials.

Virginia's Fire Services is asking you to reauthorize PHMSA to use unspent funds under the Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grants program to continue funding the ALERT grants.



Legislative Activity and Impacts

The 2018 and 2019 General Assembly Sessions in Virginia yielded several legislative initiatives that seek to enhance Virginia's Fire Services.

Virginia's Legislative Initiatives

HB728 (2018)

The bill amends § 9.1-203 of the Code of Virginia by directing the Virginia Fire Services Board to develop a modular training program for volunteer firefighters. This includes Firefighter I and Firefighter II certification, as well as the creation of an online training program for the aforementioned courses.

HB1412 & SB670 (2018)

The bills amend the Code of Virginia by adding sections numbered 9.1-203.1 and 32.1-111.5:1 related to firefighter mental health awareness training. Both bills require fire departments and emergency medical services agencies to develop mental health awareness training for their personnel.

Furthermore, the bills require that such personnel who receive the training shall receive appropriate continuing education credits. The intent of the amendments is consistent with the Agency's efforts to enhance mental health training and resources availability to Virginia's Fire Services.

SB346 (2018)

The bill amends § 38.2-401 regarding the Fire Programs Fund. This legislation authorizes funds in the Fire Programs Fund to be utilized towards purchasing equipment that assists in limiting the exposure of firefighters to carcinogens such as diesel exhaust removal systems, decontamination equipment, and commercial extractors. As cancer risk among firefighters has been a nationally growing concern, the Agency continues to work with the Virginia Fire Services Board to ensure funding policies are able to meet the evolving needs of the fire services.

SB887 (2018)

The bill amends § 40.1-79.1 of the Code of Virginia regarding exemptions for participation in volunteer fire company activities by juveniles. The bill removes the requirement that participation by minors in fire company activities requires local government authorization. Additionally, the bill enables juveniles to participate in nonhazardous activities and/or courses of a volunteer fire company, including fire prevention. Lastly, the measure directs the Virginia Fire Services Board to adopt a junior member policy that provides guidance to fire and rescue departments in developing and administering nonhazardous training courses and programs.

HB1804 (2019)

The bill adds cancers of the colon, brain, or testes to the list of cancers that are presumed to be an occupational disease covered by the Virginia Workers' Compensation Act when firefighters and certain employees develop the cancer. The measure will become effective if reenacted by the 2020 Session of the General Assembly.

Move Over Law (2019)

Accidents caused by drivers who fail to move over have increased recently. In Virginia, many drivers do not realize that the law requires a driver in these situations to move over into a more distant lane, unless it would be unreasonable or unsafe to do so. If they cannot move over safely, then the driver is required to proceed with caution at a safe speed. During the 2019 Legislative Session, Virginia sought to expand the law to include almost any vehicle that has flashing lights on the shoulder. Additionally, under the proposal any driver who fails to move over would be charged with reckless driving.

Cancer Prevention and Mental Health

The risks that come with a firefighter's job are risks that we in the Fire Service know all too well. Approximately half of the total reported active or retired firefighter deaths in Virginia in 2018 were attributed to cancer. Thanks to several groups in Virginia's Fire Service, like the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA), Virginia Professional Fire Fighters (VFFF), and the Virginia State Fire Association (VSFA), the collective effort to draw attention cancer prevention and mental health awareness matters resonated with Governor Northam. This was reflected by his signing of the Firefighter Mental Health Awareness Bill that went into effect July 2018.

Virginia's Ongoing Efforts

Fire Programs Firefighter I + II programs and comprehensive resources, are being revised to address cancer prevention and mental health awareness for Virginia's firefighters in 2019. These programs were piloted during the Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference in February 2019.

Cancer Prevention & Risk Reduction

Prevention and Care of Firefighter Burns/Carcinogen Reductions and Cancer Risk Program: a two-part program offered in a Train-the-Trainer format. This program covers burn risk reduction; appropriate PPE gear selection, care and maintenance; and the burn care processes, burn center treatment, and returning to full duty protocols. NFPA 1403 Live Fire Training & Use of Decontamination Wipes/Gross Soap and Water Decontamination: addresses the use of decontamination wipes and the removal of structural firefighting PPE completely prior to entering rehab and the Gross Soap and Water Decontamination at the completion of all VDFP live fire training burns or at burn buildings funded by VDFP Burn Building Grants.

Mental Health Awareness

In 2018, VDFP provided approximately 14 Train-the-Trainer classes across the Commonwealth for the NFFF's Stress First Aid course, which will equip at least one instructor with the curriculum in each of the VDFP's seven divisions. Fire Programs also maintains a comprehensive list of mental health awareness programs that meet General Assembly legislative criteria.

On the Horizon for 2019

Fire Programs will look to further partnerships with other state agencies and solidify partnerships with established organizations in the Commonwealth to broaden the training curriculum regarding cancer prevention and mental health awareness.

Mental Health First Aid for Fire/EMS will be incorporated into the VDFP training curriculum during 2019. The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services initiated this Train-the-Trainer program in 2018 through grant funding.

Firefighter I and II curriculum are being updated in 2019 to fold in carcinogen reduction and cancer prevention measures (including gross soap and water decontamination) and mental health awareness information, as both topics are addressed in the 2019 Edition of NFPA 1001: Standard for Professional Qualifications, which provides the guidance for foundation firefighter courses.

Virginia Fire Services Demographics

The Virginia Fire Service consists of:



9%	28%	63%
Career	Combination	Volunteer

FY 2018 Snapshot

Delivered

1835

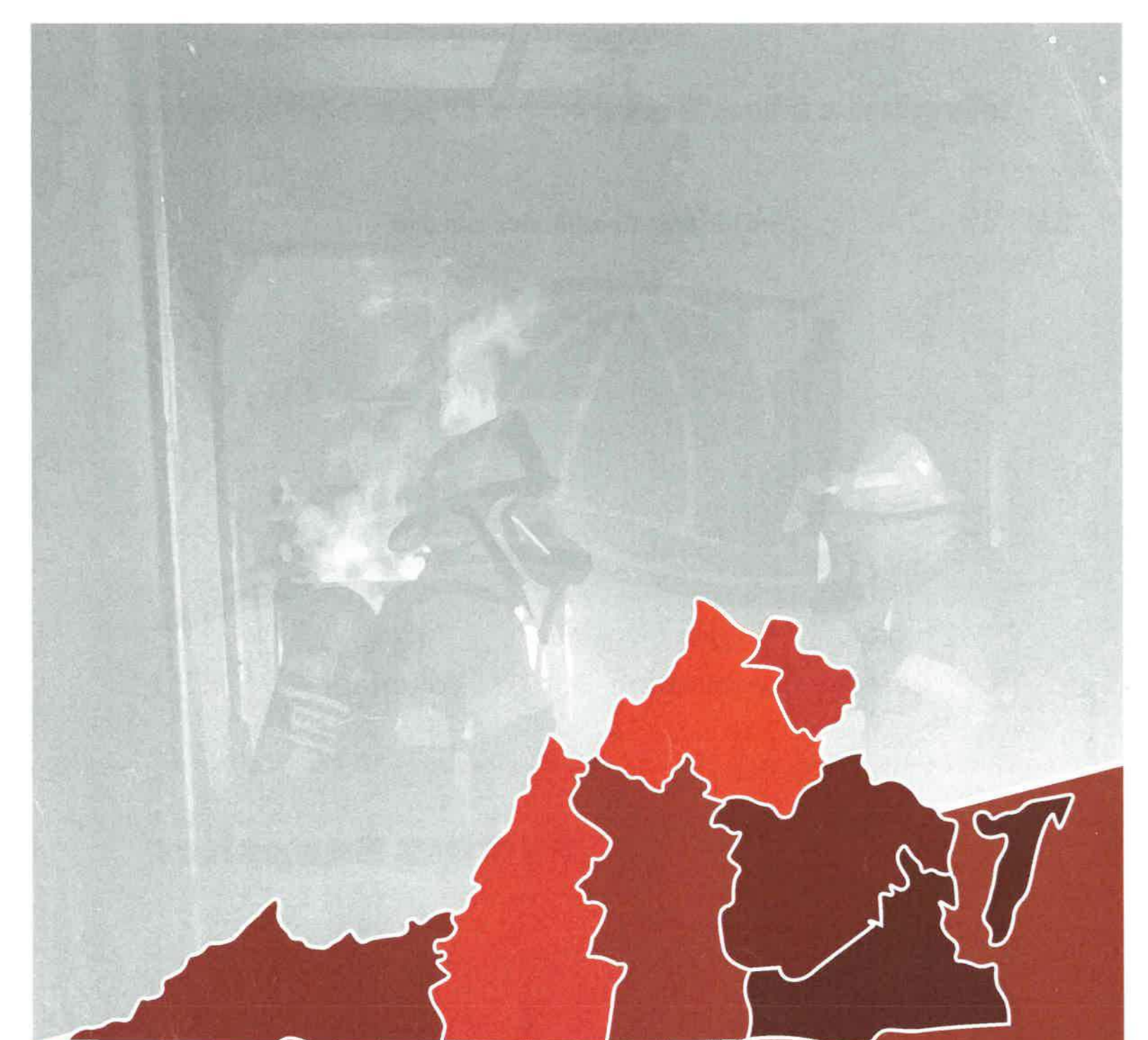
Courses

Served

28,483

Students





Virginia Department *of* Fire Programs

Leaders in enhancing public safety

www.vafire.com

