



Colorado State Fire Chiefs – Volunteer & Combination Section

Leadership for Colorado's Fire & EMS Services

Section Priorities and Positions

For updates to this page, email David Wolf (david@firewolfllc.org)

The mission of the Volunteer & Combination Section of Colorado State Fire Chiefs is to support the interests of all agencies who utilize volunteer firefighters to protect their communities. Of the 375 fire agencies in the State of Colorado, it is estimated that 40% are entirely volunteer and another 45% are a combination of volunteer and career staff. This section seeks to support those 85% of fire agencies in their service to their communities.

1. Funding Stability

Funding for Colorado's Fire Service is variable across the state, based on the communities that are being protected. Small volunteer departments may be funded entirely through donations, while districts receive property tax and municipalities receive sales tax. Growth of communities and increasing demands, along with increasing costs of providing services, has outpaced growth in revenue.

The Section is focused on finding solutions to these challenges by seeking stability in property taxes and increasing potential revenue sources for fire agencies.

2. Retention & Recruitment

Our members are our most valuable asset. Agencies need the tools and resources to ensure they can retain their current talent and continue to bring in new membership. As community demographics evolve, each community's ability to meet that need locally can be impacted. Rising costs of labor also add challenges to agencies with funding limitations as we compete against each other for the same pool of talent.

The Section is focused on supporting agency efforts to retain their current membership and provide resources to enhance agency recruitment efforts for both volunteer and career members.

3. Training

Our agencies respond to all hazard incidents, and the scope and complexity of those calls has increased through time. The training requirements and expectations placed on members has continually increased, so getting high quality training to our agencies is paramount.

The Section is focused on ensuring all volunteer and combination agencies have access to the necessary training and equipment to meet the risk of their community, and that barriers to training can be reduced and removed whenever possible.

ACTIONS: Funding Stability

For updates to this page, email Brad White (bwhite@grandfire.org)

Committee Members:

Brad White, Grand Fire Protection District
Carl Tatum, Hanover Fire Protection District

Proposals

- Assessment Rate Stability
 - Minimize reductions in Residential Assessment Rate
 - Minimize variability in all Assessment Rates
 - Recognize outsized impacts to property tax funded districts
- Additional revenue sources
 - Enable Fire Protection Districts to levy additional taxes
 - Sales Tax
 - Lodging Tax
 - Others?
 - Encourage Districts to utilize local solutions with different options
 - Provide training and resources to organizations that may need to pursue local ballot initiatives
 - Still require vote within District (TABOR)
- Separation from municipal/county oversight
 - Fees for service / plan review / impact fees / mitigation fees
 - Not require approval by Municipality or County for adoption of fees
 - Provide ability to levy other fees for use / service fees as applicable
 - Modify statutory limitations on growth related impact fees to offset a larger area of need (operational needs)

ACTIONS: Retention & Recruitment

For updates to this page, email

Committee Members:

David Wolf

Tim Lavin, Greater Eagle Fire Protection District

Proposals

- Resources to support current members
 - Tax reduction or waiver for volunteer firefighters
 - Financial incentives for volunteering
 - Healthcare Benefits
 - Updated pension options to meet generational priorities
- Increased state support for retention programs
 - Cover costs of Volunteer Pension programs
 - Financial match for defined contribution (LOSAP) programs
- Resources to increase membership
 - Funding to support recruitment
 - Wider campaign programs to promote volunteerism
- Continue our involvement and support in the CFC Retention and Recruitment committee.
- Expand our VCOS membership statewide to create a larger pool of ideas and resources to solve problems.

ACTIONS: Training

For updates to this page, email Brad Davidson (brad.davidson@lajuntacolorado.org)

Committee Members:

Brad Davidson, La Junta Fire Protection District
Michael Krupa, Durango Fire Protection District

Proposals

- Reduction of certification fees
 - Lower financial burden of certification, especially for smaller agencies
- Increase in state training resources
 - Additional instructors from DFPC
 - Additional training props and resources facilitated by DFPC
 - Additional funding for regional training sites and training programs
 - Develop leadership and management based programs that focus on workplace satisfaction to increase retention of existing volunteers.
 - Regionalized training efforts to accommodate travel and time limitations of volunteers
- Exterior fire academy certification
 - Establish DFPC standard for Exterior Firefighter
- Online / hybrid academies and training opportunities