



**“For the People’s Good” Since 1886**

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### **An Open Letter to Virginia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Organizations**

Dear reader,

**Greetings from the Virginia State Firefighters Association (VSFA). To those of you with member fire departments or rescue squads, thank you for your decision to be a part of this historic and meaningful association. To those of you considering joining or renewing your membership, let me assure you that you are moving in the right direction.**

**The VSFA has existed continuously since 1886.** The Association has survived some of the toughest times in American history, including the challenges that the fire and emergency medical services (EMS) in Virginia faced in two world wars, the Great Depression, the Great Recession, global pandemics that started in 1918 and 2020, and major emergencies attributed to hurricanes, tornadoes, derechos, earthquakes, and wildfires. We remain a strong and vibrant association and we are taking purposeful steps to maintain and improve our value to you.

**Our Association exists “For the People’s Good,” a motto taken seriously and with great loyalty.** That includes advocacy for fire and life safety legislation, fighting against bills that would cause harm or reduce resources, and supporting the rights of the authorities having jurisdiction across the Commonwealth of Virginia to choose the type and method of delivering fire and EMS as they wish. We provide training opportunities to help our members sharpen their skills, and we host conferences and other special events that promote learning, networking, and vendor interactions that allow our members to gain perspectives, see what is new or emerging in our field, and expand the personal and professional relationships that promote understanding the big picture and staying grounded in your communities.

**The VSFA is constantly working to support local fire and EMS interests through statewide initiatives.** As fire service personnel ourselves, we understand the challenges of fundraising, meeting new expectations, developing capabilities, and maintaining the real and mobile property and equipment it takes to get the job done. In Virginia, the fire service receives remarkably little fiscal support from the

state, yet our brothers and sisters in law enforcement see huge amounts of earmarked funding to meet their needs every year. Take note: Every law enforcement official in the Commonwealth belongs to a state association. That provides them with a strong foundation for representation and advocacy through a unified voice. Less than half of the fire departments and fewer than that of the EMS organizations are members of the VSFA; think about it. We count career, volunteer, and combination agencies in our membership. **We believe that there is no reason why every fire department and EMS organization in Virginia should not be members of this Association.**

**We have a track record of providing value for what remains the lowest dues for a statewide public safety association in Virginia, by:**

- **Supporting favorable legislation in Richmond and Washington, D.C.**
- **Working with state agencies to assure they are meeting your needs**
- **Establishing benefits such as discounts on goods and services**
- **Providing access to and sharing news and information through direct representation in your area, through our website and hotline, and through our official publication, *The Virginia Firefighter*, now an exclusive section in every edition of *Virginia Fire News*, available six times every year in both print and digital formats at remarkably low rates**
- **Upgrading our webtools and practices to bring our operations squarely into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

We are confident that for your modest investment in annual membership, you will not only benefit from these initiatives and activities, but **your paid dues will also provide for a \$10,000 line of duty accidental death benefit for your members should that ever be needed.**

Please don't wait another day; renew your membership or join the VSFA!

Sincerely,

*Pete*

John S. "Pete" Kirby  
President, Virginia State Firefighters Association

