

RECRUIT NY:

As part of National Volunteer Week, many fire departments will open their doors for the annual RecruitNY recruitment-based open house event. They will provide materials and information regarding volunteerism to interested parties. Those interested are encouraged to contact their local fire station to see if they are participating in the recruitment drive.

Where: Your local fire department

When: April 21 and 22.

To find your local fire department, contact your county's Emergency Management Office.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Steuben - (607) 664-2700

Yates - (315) 536-3000

(visit the website www.recruitny.org for more information.)

DID YOU KNOW?

Outside of NYC, an estimated 95% of all firefighters in New York are volunteers and the state has an estimated 97,000 volunteer firefighters.

Of the more than 1,100 ambulance services in New York, the vast majority are volunteers, and the state has about 33,000 volunteer EMS responders.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EFFORTS

The people in the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes Region depend on volunteers to protect their communities. That is why I introduced legislation (*Assembly Bill A.7154/S.4646*) with Senator Tom O'Mara called the *Omnibus Emergency Services Volunteer Incentive Act* which would provide the following programs for volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel:

- Increase the personal income tax credit an additional \$400 after four or more years of service,
- Exempt motor vehicles used in the performance of such volunteers' duties from registration fees, use taxes and special fees for volunteer license plates,
- Create a volunteer recruitment service loan forgiveness program,
- Increase availability of health insurance,
- Provides safety for employees who are late or miss work because they have responded to an emergency.



Dear Neighbor,

April, 2012

Volunteer firefighters and emergency medical service workers are the protectors and backbone of our rural communities. They not only protect our neighbors but the property taxpayers as well. When a disaster strikes, in an overwhelming majority of circumstances, those who respond will be volunteers who donate their time and risk their lives for their friends and neighbors.

Volunteers provide services worth an estimated \$7 billion. Property tax bills are a concern to all of us. If these services were professionalized, the cost to taxpayers would be significant. Without dedicated volunteers, localities and taxpayers would face even more financial pressures and local property tax bills would skyrocket for residents and business owners. Therefore, not only do we owe our volunteers a debt of gratitude for keeping us safe, but we must also be thankful for the savings they provide all of us in our rural communities.

Unfortunately, many communities are facing a shortage of volunteer personnel. However, recruitment and retention efforts are underway and there are a number of benefits that are available to volunteers, including the following:

- State Income Tax Credit
- Real Property Tax Credit
- Length of Service Award Program
- College Tuition Reimbursement

If you are a volunteer – thank you! It is a great privilege to represent so many dedicated individuals and families who give back so much to their community. If you are not a volunteer, please take the time to thank those who volunteer to keep your community safe and, if you are able to do so, please consider joining your local department.

I'd like to encourage you to participate in the **Annual Recruit NY** weekend by visiting your local fire department on **April 21 or 22** to learn more about volunteering. Please inform your friends or neighbors who may be interested to inquire as well.

Sincerely,

Assemblyman Phil Palmesano

CONTACT

ASSEMBLYMAN

PHIL
PALMESANO

723 Legislative Office Bldg. • Albany, NY 12248

(518) 455-5791

105 East Steuben Street • Bath, NY 14810

(607) 776-9691

ASSEMBLYMAN

PHIL
PALMESANO

Supporting The Southern Tier
and Finger Lakes Regions'

Emergency
Responders



"In times of Emergency, We Can Count On Their Protection"

PHIL PALMESANO

They're just like the rest of us – normal people doing everyday jobs. But then they give so much more. Volunteer emergency responders provide a vital service to our communities. They provide protection and are there to help us in times of emergency.

Supporting The Southern Tier and Finger Lakes Regions'

Emergency Responders

"In times of Emergency, We Can Count On Their Protection"

Please Consider Joining

In many New York State municipalities, emergency services are provided by volunteers and communities are in need of assistance as volunteerism throughout the country decreases. Volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel save their communities a significant amount of money. Without new volunteers, many fire and EMS districts will be left with a lack of help. With so many areas relying on volunteers to provide emergency services, any help that you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

Besides the camaraderie that you will develop with fellow volunteers and the gratifying experience you will feel helping your community, there are a number of benefits that volunteers are eligible to receive.

Once you meet the membership requirements and complete the required probation or

training needs, volunteer benefits include social and organizational benefits, company and state-sponsored training, injury compensation, and often other benefits as well.

Volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers who are active for the entire tax year are eligible to receive a volunteer firefighter and ambulance worker credit or real property tax exemption.

If you'd like to pursue a rewarding career as a volunteer firefighter or would like to find out more about how you can help, you can call 1-800-FIRELINE or contact your County Fire or EMS

Coordinator (numbers in Contact Information). To learn about EMS training, go to <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/ems/training.htm>.



Phil with his two children, Hammondsport Fire Chief Bill Fries and Hammondsport Fire Commissioner Don Howard.

College Tuition Reimbursement for Volunteers

The Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY) has developed the Higher Education Learning Plan (FASNY HELP) as an incentive for people to serve in New York's volunteer fire service. This program will provide tuition reimbursement to student volunteers allowing them to attain up to eighty (80) credit hours from their closest New York state chartered community college, or one located within 50 miles of their primary residence.

Student volunteers will be eligible to have up to 100% of their tuition reimbursed in exchange for maintaining defined grades, and fulfilling defined service requirements as a member in good standing in one of New York's volunteer fire companies. There is no restriction on the type of academic course(s) the FASNY HELP student volunteer can pursue.

For more information, contact John D'Alessandro, FASNY Deputy Volunteer Programs Coordinator at 518-697-3136 or visit FASNY HELP on the web at <http://www.fasny.com/index.php/membership/benefits/fasny-help>.

