



OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

THE GATED WYE

OCTOBER 2024



WELCOME TO FIRE PREVENTION MONTH

October means fire prevention has arrived in Oregon. Each year we celebrate home fire prevention and remind our fellow Oregonians of the many ways of how we can be safe!

This year we're focused on the basics, the importance of working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and why you and your family should have a home fire escape plan.

[Read more on page 2.](#)

OSFM'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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CELEBRATE FIRE SAFETY IN OCTOBER



October is Fire Prevention Month, and this year, the Oregon State Fire Marshal and the Oregon fire service are encouraging all Oregonians to "Celebrate Fire Safety" by taking steps to reduce the risk of fires at home. With the change in seasons and cooler temperatures, now is the perfect time to focus on keeping your family and home safe from fire hazards.

Last year, there were 2,518 home fires in our state, resulting in \$119.5 million in losses to homeowners. Cooking remains the leading cause of home fires, followed by home heating. Shockingly, in 417 of those fires, no smoke alarm was present, highlighting the critical importance of having working alarms in every household.

Fire Safety Tips to Practice at Home:

- **Make sure smoke alarms are working.** Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms, and outside sleeping areas. Test them monthly and replace batteries as needed.
- **Create a fire escape plan.** Make sure your household has an escape plan, and everyone knows at least two ways out of every room. Practice the plan regularly.
- **Stay alert while cooking.** Never leave food cooking on the stove unattended. Always have a lid or cookie sheet nearby to quickly smother small flames in case of a fire.
- **Use heating equipment safely.** Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating devices like space heaters. Always plug space heaters directly into the wall —extension cords can overheat and start a fire.
- **Use candles with care.** Consider using battery-operated candles, which are much safer. If using real candles, always extinguish them before leaving the room or going to sleep.

To learn more about Fire Prevention Month, [visit our website](#).

OSFM MOBILIZES FOR RECORD 17 CONFLAGRATIONS

The historic wildfire season continued into September. This summer the Oregon State Fire Marshal mobilized to 17 conflagrations statewide, deploying 88 task forces from Oregon's fire service and brought in more resources from four neighboring states to battle the fires.

In early September, Oregon Governor Tina Kotek invoked the Emergency Conflagration Act for several significant fires across Oregon, including the Copperfield, Rail Ridge, Shoe Fly, and Service fires. These incidents were driven by challenging weather conditions, like high winds and extreme heat, causing rapid fire growth and threatening communities.

The OSFM Incident Management Teams were instrumental in coordinating efforts alongside local, state, and federal agencies, providing critical structural protection for homes and critical infrastructure.

Oregon State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple emphasized the importance of staying prepared, noting that while some cooler weather is expected, fire season is far from over. "We remain committed to using all available resources to protect lives and property," she said.

With fire conditions still volatile, the OSFM urges Oregonians to remain vigilant and stay informed of evacuation notices as the season pushes into October.



ENGINE PROGRAM DELIVERIES PASS HALFWAY MARK

We're happy to share that the OSFM Engine Program has reached the halfway point for delivering engines and tactical tenders! This program is seeing success across the state as we work to modernize the Oregon fire service and keep our communities safer.

In September, Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department celebrated their new tender with a special ceremony. Firefighters took part in a tradition by pouring a bucket of water from their old 1955 tender into the new OSFM tactical tender, symbolizing the connection between the two. Then, they pushed the new tender into the bay to mark the start of its service.

The new tender replaces the old one, which was no longer up to standard, and will help Gearhart respond to wildfires and other calls more effectively and protect the community better.

We look forward to more celebrations like this as we continue to improve fire service resources in Oregon!

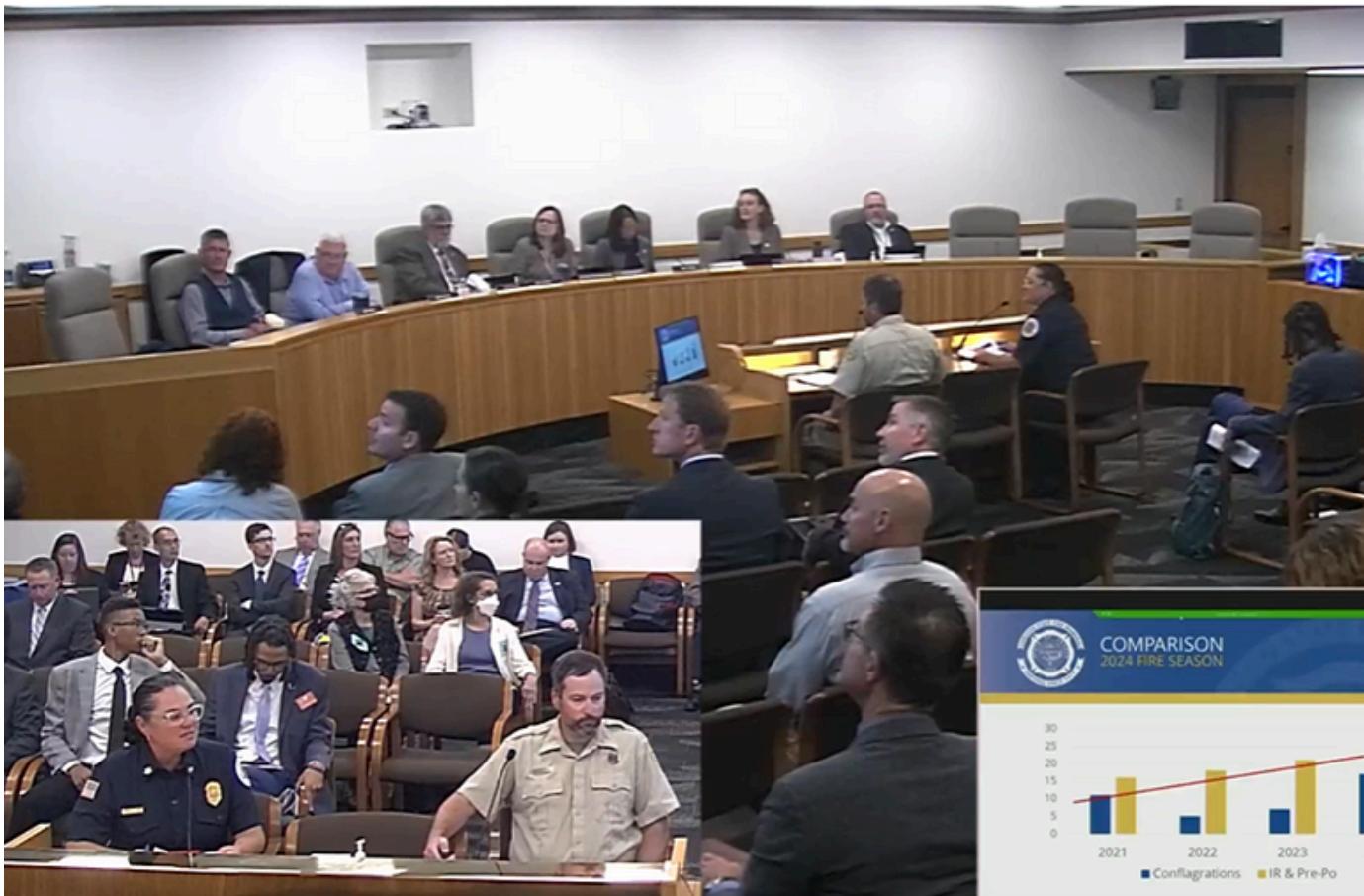


REMINDER TO SUBMIT STAFFING GRANT REPORTS

Attention, 2024 Wildfire Season Staffing grant recipients! As we head into the fall months, here are some important reminders to submit end of year reports.

- Mid-reports were due Friday, September 27, 2024
 - Submit completed reports to osfm.grants@osfm.oregon.gov
- Last day to work on grant funds is October 31, 2024
 - Final pay days may be dated in November.
- Final reports and Fire Chiefs Survey will be due November 22, 2024
 - Expect email with details by end of October.
- Fire Agencies selected for audit, will be contacted directly by December 20, 2024
 - Audit materials will be expected in January 2025.





OSFM LEADERSHIP PRESENT AT LEGISLATIVE DAYS

The Oregon State Fire Marshal took part in the September legislative days, delivering six presentations. These presentations were made both independently and in collaboration with partners from the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (ODEM), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), the Governor's Office, and with Eugene-Springfield Fire Chief Chris Heppel.

The team presented on the 2024 wildfire season to several legislative committees as well as the recently released urban search and rescue report, and progress being made by the Oregon wildfire funding workgroup. One of the agency's priorities is securing funding for the wildfire season staffing grant in 2025.

Legislators expressed strong support for the work of the OSFM, fire departments across Oregon, and their partners. During the session, the OSFM's request before the emergency board was approved, securing \$4 million in unscheduled funds from the 2024 legislative budget to cover mobilization costs for the 2024 fire season. The agency will need to request additional funding from the Emergency Board in December, or at the next available opportunity, to cover the remaining costs.

OREGON FIRE SERVICE REMEMBERS CHIEF HAHN

*In Remembrance of Chief William "Bill" Hahn
(Feb. 27, 1947 – Aug. 5, 2024)*



Bill Hahn served as the fire chief for the Dallas Fire Department from 2007 to 2013 when he retired. He served his community for 42 years at Dallas Fire. Before becoming the fire chief, Bill was the fire marshal from 1988 to 2007. Bill joined Dallas Fire in 1968 as a medic for the Dallas Ambulance Service and was one of Oregon's earliest EMT IIIs, which in today's certification standards is considered a paramedic.

Bill was a past president and a long-time member of the Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association and served on the Fire Service Accreditation Board. Bill founded a babysitting class that was offered by Dallas Fire on an annual basis that provided young people with basic babysitting skills. Bill was part of the long-standing Marion and Polk Fire Investigation Team, one of the longest standing fire investigation teams in Oregon.

In Bill's retirement years, he served on the Dallas City Council and continued to support Dallas Fire & EMS' growth.

In 1967, he married Alice Trosper and they celebrated an amazing life together for 57 years. Alice was a huge supporter of Bill's fire service and ambulance careers. She was a constant presence at annual activities at Dallas Fire and was a very talented quilter and was eager to show people her work. Sadly, Alice passed on July 22, 2024.

The OSFM would like to thank Bill and Alice's surviving daughters, Kim (Gert) Zoutendijk, Shelly Hahn, and Michelle Hahn along with their grandchildren, Michael, and Jessica Zoutendijk, for supporting their father and grandfather in being involved with Oregon's fire service and providing guidance and support to Dallas Fire & EMS.



HEALTH AND SAFETY COLLABORATIVE UPDATE

The Oregon Fire Service Health and Safety Collaborative has been actively developing since our June kick-off. We've held subject-specific meetings, approved an operating plan, and set initial priorities. Our mission is to support fire service agencies statewide, and we're off to a strong start, connecting with fire service partners locally and nationally. Our subject matter experts are addressing the key health and safety issues facing Oregon firefighters.

While building our foundation, we're providing resources, training, and a clearinghouse of information for firefighters statewide. Training, organized by topics like Behavioral Health, Cancer Risk Reduction, Physical Health and Fitness, and Incident Safety, is now available on the [Oregon Fire Service Health and Safety Collaborative website](#), hosted by the OSFM.

Highlights include:

- **Behavioral Health Awareness:** 15–30-minute video modules, designed for use in briefings or training sessions, to foster real conversations around mental health.
- **Cancer Risk Reduction:** Consolidated training, including Gavin Horn's video, The Hierarchy of Contamination Control, and links to the Firefighter Cancer Initiative Seminar Series.
- **Physical Health and Fitness:** A 1582 toolkit is in development. Be sure to check out this research-based roundtable on cardio-respiratory fitness standards from Sara Jahnke and her team.
- **Incident Safety:** Resources from Firefighter Safety Stand Down Week, including instructional materials and the Lahaina Fire After Action Report, are available on our website.

We encourage you to [visit the site](#) and reach out to us at osfm.ofshsc@osfm.oregon.gov. Your input is crucial to our work. Stay safe, do good work, and take care of each other.





HAZMAT TRAINS IN ALBANY

Training is a vital part of being prepared for any emergency. In September the OSFM hazmat program and local emergency planning committee folks helped with a full-scale drill at the rail yard in Albany. The event was hosted by the Mid-Valley Local Emergency Planning Committee.

The drill was focused on a hazardous material leak from a rail car. The teams worked through everything from being called out to the incident to decontamination. This training was made possible through a Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant.



2024 SILVER SPARKY AWARDED

Congratulations to Garnet Cooke, the 2024 recipient of the Silver Sparky Award!

For the last eight years, Garnet has been a tireless advocate for wildfire preparedness, attending local events, fairs, and other gatherings to share wildfire preparedness information. Her engaging presentations, including her hands-on demonstrations about reducing fire risks, have helped countless Oregonians better protect their homes. What is so special about Garnet is that she does this all on her own; she is not affiliated with any organization.

She understands the importance of wildfire preparedness and works tirelessly to share that information with her community. Her dedication and passion for wildfire prevention have made a lasting impact, and we're proud to honor her with this award!

Thank you, Garnet, for your hard work and commitment! To learn more about the sparky awards or see other winners, [visit our website](#).



SWEARING-IN CEREMONY HELD



On September 19, the Oregon State Fire Marshal held a swearing-in ceremony to welcome three members to its team. Michael Pargeter was sworn in as the new cardlock and LPG program coordinator, Dan Giles took on the role of hazmat rail trainer, and Steve Takis joined as deputy state fire marshal for Coos County.

These new additions bring specialized expertise and experience to the agency, further enhancing its ability to protect Oregon communities. We'd like to congratulate all three on their new positions and look forward to their contributions.





20
24
REPORT



CONVENING OF THE FIRE SERVICE REPORT RELEASED

Oregon's fire service is struggling with increasing demands and limited resources, according to a report from the 2024 Convening of the Oregon Fire Service. Fire agencies across the state are dealing with more emergency calls, staffing shortages, and funding problems.

The fire service is crucial for responding to fires, medical emergencies, and other crises. However, population growth, social issues like drug overdoses, and wildfire threats have drastically increased the need for emergency services. Despite this, fire service budgets have stayed the same, raising concerns about their ability to keep up.

Challenges:

1. More Emergency Calls: From 2019 to 2023, 63% of calls were for medical and rescue services. The rise in drug overdoses and fires in homeless camps has strained fire service resources, but these calls aren't fully funded.
2. Fewer Firefighters: Both career and volunteer firefighter numbers are declining, especially in rural areas. Financial pressures and health issues make it hard to recruit and retain personnel.
3. Wildfires: Oregon's wildfire season is longer and more severe, but temporary funding for wildfire protection programs has run out, leaving fire agencies underfunded.
4. Funding Gaps: Evolving building regulations and outdated tax systems have left fire agencies struggling to cover growing service demands, particularly in rural areas.

Proposed Solutions: The report recommends taking proactive steps, including:

- Expanding EMS funding for social issue calls.
- Investing in firefighter recruitment and retention.
- Continuing funding for wildfire prevention programs.
- Updating tax systems and exploring new funding models.

The report calls for immediate action, warning that without long-term investment, Oregon's fire service could be overwhelmed, putting communities at risk. [Read the report here.](#)



RURAL FIRE PROTECTION STATUTE REPORT **COMPLETED**

A new report from the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM), prompted by House Bill 2522, recommends updates to modernize the statutes that govern Oregon's rural fire protection districts (RFPD). Released in August 2024, the report outlines major challenges these districts face and suggests changes to help them operate more efficiently as demand grows.

Challenges Identified

RFPDs were created more than 50 years ago to provide fire services in areas outside city limits. Today, they handle much more, including emergency medical services and disaster response, but they are still governed by outdated laws and funding structures.

Identified Issues Include:

- Lack of funding: Many districts don't have enough tax revenue to meet growing needs, especially with more EMS calls and fires in rural-urban areas.
- Cost recovery difficulties: Fire districts often can't recover costs for services provided to visitors or tax-exempt properties like state parks.
- Declining volunteer workforce: Recruitment and retention of volunteers, historically vital for rural fire services, have become increasingly difficult.

The task force proposes several immediate and long-term solutions:

- Update ORS 478: Modernize the laws governing RFPDs to reflect their current responsibilities and allow them to collect fees from areas that increase service demand.
- Improve cost recovery: Develop new ways to help fire districts recover costs from visitors and tax-exempt properties, such as using recreational passes to fund emergency response.
- Enhance EMS funding: Increase reimbursement rates for Medicare and Medicaid, and allow more flexible patient transport options, such as taking patients to urgent care instead of hospitals.
- Address volunteer shortages: Offer incentives for volunteers and improve recruitment by focusing on better work-life balance, mental health support, and benefits for firefighters.

The report recommends both short- and long-term legislative changes to address these challenges and ensure RFPDs can continue serving rural communities. Collaboration between fire services, local governments, and community stakeholders will be essential to making Oregon's fire protection system sustainable. [Read the report here.](#)



USAR REPORT SUBMITTED TO OREGON LEGISLATURE

The Oregon State Fire Marshal is proposing to bring back the state's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) program, which shut down in 2012 from funding issues. This program, originally started after the 9/11 attacks, is designed to respond to building collapses and other large emergencies.

The 2024 report highlights Oregon's vulnerability to natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, wildfires, and severe storms, especially focusing on the potential devastation of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. The OSFM plans to create four regional USAR teams that can handle smaller rescues with the long-term goal of upgrading to a statewide team to manage more serious incidents, like collapsed buildings.

Recommendations:

- Four regional USAR teams would be created initially.
- Two full-time employees would be hired to run the program.
- Local fire agencies would receive training in rescue operations.
- Eventually, the goal is to upgrade to a statewide team with stronger capabilities.

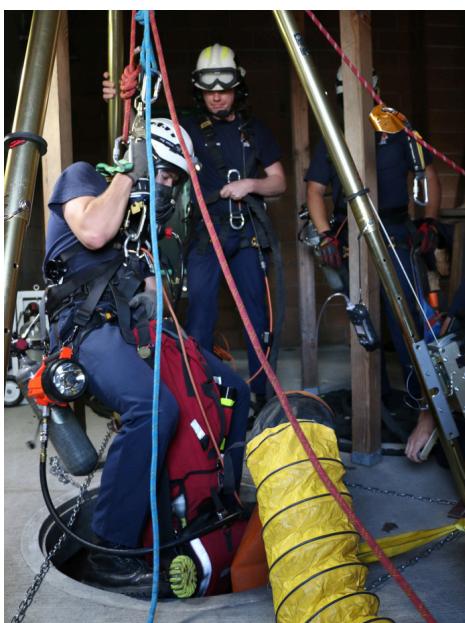
The initial cost is estimated at \$6.5 million, with \$4.3 million needed every two years to keep it running. Building a full statewide team would require another \$2.5 million.

Funding and Partnerships

To keep the program going, the OSFM suggests using state grant dollars, general funds, or new fees and taxes. They also stress the importance of collaboration with local fire departments, state agencies, and emergency management organizations to make the program successful.

Rebuilding the USAR program would greatly improve Oregon's ability to respond to disasters, saving lives by speeding up rescue efforts. The OSFM is urging lawmakers to secure funding and ensure the state is ready for future disasters.

[House Bill 2484 Report - Urban Search & Rescue](#)





CODES CORNER

HAUNTED HOUSE SAFETY

Once again, it's the season for ghosts and goblins to temporarily haunt buildings across our state. The Oregon Fire Code (OFC), Appendix Q, has requirements for these attractions, set up for no more than 90 days. As a type of "special amusement building," fire departments can create an operational permit using OFC Section 105.5.3 to administer code requirements and help the owner safely use the building as a haunted house.

Like any occupancy, safe exiting during an emergency should be the fire code official's top concern, but haunted houses can pose unique challenges. Unchecked, they commonly have poor lighting, purposely disorienting lights, uneven walking surfaces, extension cords powering special effects, maze-like corridors, intentional obstructions, and combustible decorations. The temporary nature adds to the challenge of making sure they're safe.

Here are some of the important requirements from the Oregon Fire Code:

- Make sure corridors are at least four feet wide and dead ends extend no more than 50 feet. The exit doors must be kept unlocked, unobstructed, be at least three feet wide, 6 feet 8 inches high and marked with an exit sign. All stairs must be lit. While the fire department can determine the occupant load, groups cannot be more than 20 people. Small children need to be accompanied by an adult. You may ask that some type of public address system, that can be heard throughout the haunted house, be added to the required emergency plan.
- 2A:10B:C fire extinguishers shall be mounted in a visible location and accessible within 50 feet for staff who know how to use them. Decorations need to be noncombustible or treated following the requirements in OFC Section 807. Candles and other open flames are not allowed, and temporary heaters are prohibited. Wiring needs to be installed with an electrical permit.
- Regardless of whether you require an operational permit, the operator of the haunted house is required by the fire code to contact you for the opportunity to conduct a fire safety inspection.

We all expect our haunted houses to be scary, but not because they are unsafe. The Oregon Fire Code helps make sure everyone enjoys a fire safe start to the holiday season.

REGISTER FOR UPCOMING OFMA CONFERENCE

Register today for the Oregon Fire Marshals Association Technical Education Conference October 23 and 24. Join the OFMA for two days of learning and networking on the latest developments in fire safety technologies.

This years conference will focus on mobile food unit inspections, electric vehicle fires, industry updates and a presentation on leading across generations.

The conference will be held at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training in Salem. Learn more and [register here](#).

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ASSOCIATION

LEADING ~ SERVING ~ SUPPORTING

**SCAN TO
REGISTER**



HMEP GRANT APPLICATION PERIOD OPENS IN OCTOBER

2025-2026 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grant Application Now Open!

The HMEP Grant helps communities prepare for emergencies involving hazardous materials. It provides funding for training, planning, and exercises to improve local emergency response.

Who Can Apply?

State, local, and tribal governments are eligible to apply. Priority will be given to Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs).

What Does the Grant Cover?

The grant supports projects that help communities plan for and respond to hazardous materials incidents, including transportation accidents.

Applications are now being accepted. Be sure to apply by the deadline to secure funding for your community's safety efforts! Learn more on our [website](#)!



WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



KRISTI SAYER

Kristi Sayer joined the team as the Community Right to Know assistant. She has 24 years of experience at Maps Credit Union where she held a variety of roles, most recently as the lead learning and development specialist, training staff on culture, processes, core systems, IRAs, and integrity service. Kristi was also the office manager for the Children's Educational Theater for several years. A lifelong resident of the Salem-Keizer area, she enjoys walking, hiking, boating, beach outings, and spending time with family and friends. Welcome, Kristi!

ALEX DYE

Dr. Alex Dye joined our team as a research analyst 3 in the Analytics & Intelligence Unit. He will provide research and analytical support to our grant staff and grantees while contributing to exciting research projects. Alex comes from the Oregon State University College of Forestry, where he spent the last five years as a research associate specializing in wildfire risk mapping applications for the Pacific Northwest and California. Outside of work, Alex enjoys walking his husky, playing volleyball, and exploring Oregon's beautiful forests. Welcome, Alex!



WANT TO JOIN OUR TEAM?

Join the Oregon State Fire Marshal team and help protect communities across Oregon from fires and hazardous materials! With over a century of service, OSFM is dedicated to ensuring safe and resilient communities. Our mission to protect people, property, and the environment drives everything we do, and we're looking for passionate professionals to join our dynamic team.

Whether you're interested in fire prevention, emergency response, or public safety education, OSFM offers a range of opportunities.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to see current job openings and take the first step toward a rewarding career with us. Become a part of the team that's shaping a safer Oregon!

**SCAN TO SEE
CURRENT JOB
OPENINGS**





FROM THE INTERNET

Union Fire and EMS took part in important LifeFlight training this September to help them work better with air ambulance services.

This training is especially important for rural communities, where hospitals are farther away. It helps make sure ground crews and LifeFlight can work smoothly together, getting patients the care they need faster. If you saw a helicopter landing in town earlier in September, it was all part of this training to keep our community safe!

[Check out more photos here.](#)

HONORING THE FALLEN

In September, members of Eugene Springfield Fire joined other firefighters, law enforcement, and military personnel in the Autzen 9-11 Memorial Stair Climb. Held in memory of those lost on September 11, 2001, participants climbed 110 flights of stairs, symbolizing the height of the World Trade Center.

At the 78th floor, they rang a bell to honor the lives lost in the line of duty, before continuing to complete the climb.

This event, organized by the Fourth Alarm Foundation, was a meaningful way to reflect, connect, and honor the sacrifice of those who served. Multiple generations of firefighters climbed together, reinforcing the strength of community and service. [See more photos here.](#)



ANALYTICS & INTELLIGENCE Reporting Reminders

Has there been a fire related death or serious injury?

Please remember to submit a Fire Casualty Report Form (ORS 476.210). The form can be found at: [Fire Casualty Report Form](#)

**Note: the form must be completed by the primary responding fire agency and in addition to the NFIRS Fire Incident Report.*

Has there been a change in your agency's contact information or leadership?

If so, please remember to complete the appropriate contact update form found here: [Fire Agency Contact Update Forms](#)

Have a NFIRS question? Need Coding Help? Struggling with Elite?

If you need help related to incident reporting or the state repository, please reach out to the Fire Incident Reporting System Program Coordinator Michelle Vold.
(503-586-6568 | michelle.vold@osfm.oregon.gov)



CONTACT US

Have a story idea or something you would like to know more about?

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