



# ILLINOIS FIRE SERVICE HOME DAY

## **MEDIA CONTACT:**

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## **19th Annual Illinois Fire Service Home Day Highlights Important Issues to the Attention of State and Federal Legislators**

Glenview, IL (June 13, 2025) – Over 100 representatives from across Illinois' fire service organizations recently gathered in Glenview, IL, for the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association of Illinois' 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Fire Services Home Day, held this year at Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy (NIPSTA.)

The fire professionals were joined by elected officials and staffers from several state and federal offices with 20 fire service vendors displaying key equipment used in the fire service.

Paul Darley, President and CEO of Darley, a fire and defense equipment supplier in Itasca, IL, founded and co-chairs the annual event with retired Schiller Park Fire Chief Tom Deegan.

Various equipment and vehicles were on display during the event and were all purchased through funds from the Assistance to Firefighters Grant during the past 20 years. The events are held to keep fire service issues in front of Illinois' federal and state legislators.

According to the FAMA (Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association) FEMSA (Fire and Emergency Manufacturers and Services Association) Government Affairs Committee, "The Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program was established by Congress in 2001 to assist communities in equipping our nation's first responders, including firefighters and EMS personnel." Local fire departments can apply for grants to purchase new and needed equipment to replace older, outdated equipment that no longer meets the safety standards of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Speakers included James Rivera, Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM), Chief Chad Hoefle, President, Illinois Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA), Jill Ramaker, Executive Director, Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy (NIPSTA), Glenn Ericksen, CEO, Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), Kevin Lyne, Section Chief, Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), Chief Alan Wax, President, Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association (MFCA), and Jim Keiken, Director, Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI).

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program fills essential equipment gaps for approximately 1.1 million first responders nationwide. This grant ensures that firefighters have access to the necessary tools and resources to perform their duties effectively and enhance public safety.

The significance of the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program was also stressed. This program is crucial for helping fire departments increase or maintain the number of trained frontline firefighters available in their communities. By supporting the SAFER program, the need to ensure that fire departments are adequately staffed to respond to emergencies and protect the public was empathized.

The reauthorization of the AFG and SAFER Programs ensure continued federal support for local fire departments, helping them maintain safety and emergency response capabilities.

Additionally, funding for fiscal year 2025 has been approved for both the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the Urban Search and Rescue Response System (USAR.) The USFA provides critical training for first responders, maintaining a cutting-edge force prepared for various emergencies. The USAR system is vital for disaster response, deploying specialized units to disasters across the country.

Jim Keiken, Director of the Illinois Fire Service, spoke highly of the opportunities provided to him in being a resource to so many prospective members of the fire service but to also be recognized as a leading training resource in the world. Keiken added "I get the chance to interact with my peers from across the country and to an extent across the world and what I've seen is second to none in what we do and the way we do it."



*Paul Darley (standing), CEO of Darley, fire and defense equipment supplier, founded and co-chairs the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Illinois Fire Service Home Day, held at NIPSTA in Glenview, IL.*



*Representatives from more than 50 Illinois fire service organizations and 20 fire service-related vendors participated in the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Illinois Fire Service Home Day.*



*Chief Alan Wax, Hoffman Estates Fire Department (President, Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association), is photographed speaking at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Illinois Fire Service Home Day, held at NIPSTA in Glenview, IL.*



*Jim Keiken, Director, Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI), presented The State Training Academy at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Illinois Fire Service Home Day, held at NIPSTA in Glenview, IL.*



*Kevin Lyne, Section Chief, Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS), presented Funding a Coordinated Response at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Illinois Fire Service Home Day, held at NIPSTA in Glenview, IL.*



*Jill Ramaker, Executive Director, Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy (NIPSTA), presented at the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Illinois Fire Service Home Day, held at NIPSTA in Glenview, IL.*