



THE REVIEW

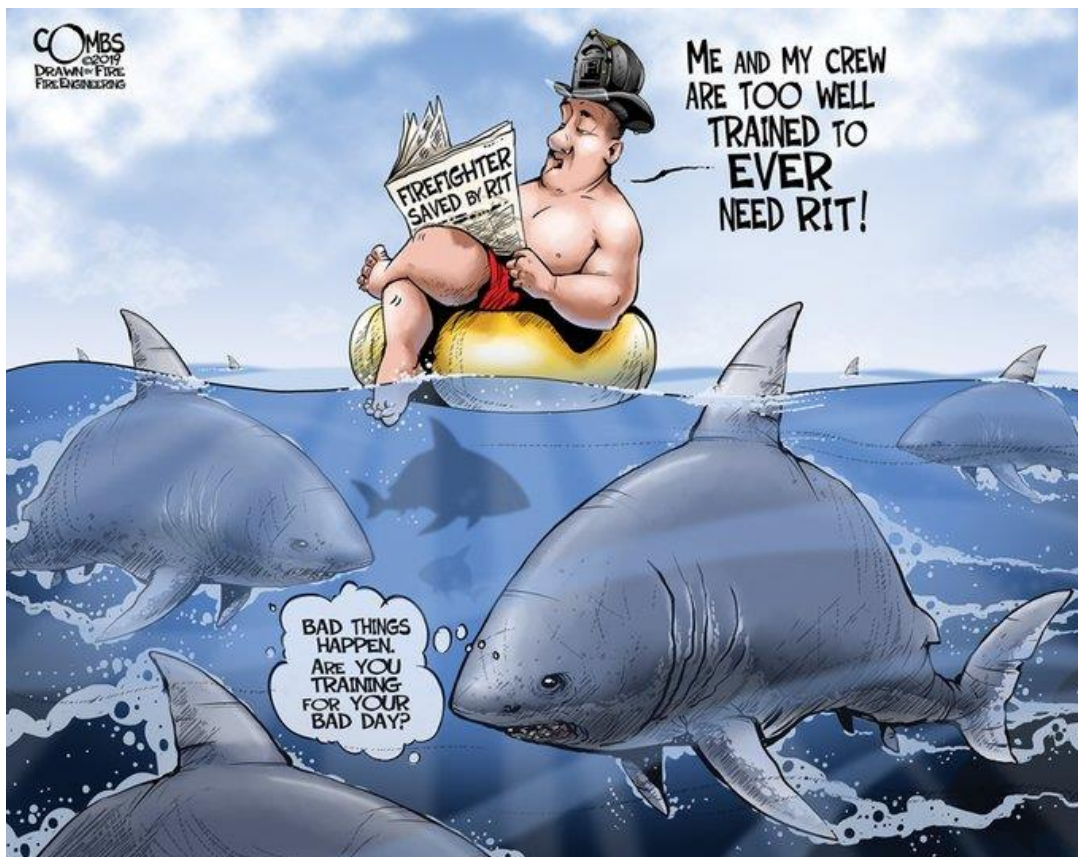
Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – Sept 24, 2021

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"There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long-range risks of comfortable inaction"

– John F. Kennedy



The Chief's Desk

The following question has been posed by a number of CAFMA folks over the last several years: How are we going to recruit? We are certainly in a new age regarding recruitment. Since the state now prohibits residency requirements, we are competing with agencies throughout Arizona for personnel. We also seem to be in a time of transition, as previously discussed, where agencies across the state are experiencing a significant number of retirements. At the same time, the number of people applying for firefighter positions is declining.

Why the decline? The general consensus of fire chiefs is that we are seeing a change in the American culture. In the past, there was a commitment to community service. Today, it seems that many are focused on themselves and not the greater good of a community. Jobs have become portable, and long-term service to one organization seems a thing of the past. In fact, new studies show that a person will move between employers an average of seven times over their career.

People are no longer focused on remaining in one career field; rather, they look for new opportunities to do something different. Additionally, more people seem to work for a few years, then take their savings and travel until they run out of money. It doesn't appear much thought goes into retirement or healthcare.

The culture in the Fire Service is changing as well. When I was new on the job I focused on developing my career, which included taking overtime, working on my days off as the PIO, attending classes and/or conferences, etc. More folks in the Fire Service today would prefer to work their 10 days a month and disappear. I'm not saying it's right or wrong. In fact, there is probably a good balance somewhere in between what I did, and what we are seeing today. It seems the scale tips back and forth, rarely ever landing right in the middle.

While we have worked to improve our pay and benefits, we are still challenged because our area lacks affordable housing and available rentals. This means that as we hire, more people may live outside our area which could create long-term challenges. When a person does not live in, or at least near, the community they serve, it seems that commitment to the community decreases. At that point, being a firefighter becomes more of a job than a calling.

So, knowing the challenges, what are we doing? First and foremost, we worked with our Labor group to tackle pay and benefits. Do we have the best of everything? No, but we are at least competitive. Are we working to improve other areas of compensation where we are not as competitive? Yes, we have a two-year plan to implement the wage scale, improve holiday pay, and develop some type of longevity. We are also working to improve our acting pay, and we would like to address PEHP. **Cont. Page 4**

Upcoming Events:

Sept 27: State Wide Mutual Aid Meeting, Board Meeting Day
Newport New, VA FD
Sept 28: Visit Stations – that is the plan any way, Chino Town Council Meeting
Sept 29: Meet with General McGuire
Sept 30: Meeting with Newport New, VA FD, PV Council Meeting

Board Meetings:

Sept 27 Administration
CAFMA – 1700-1830

‘This is not what I signed up for’: Why some firefighters simply don’t understand the job

By: Bob Horton

It remains perplexing that you could walk into a fire station today and still hear a firefighter grumble, “This is not what I signed up for.”

The reference is typically related to frequent response to low-acuity medical calls, public assists, and perhaps some other service or social needs.

I have been in this industry for 20 years and the calls have always been dominant in the low-acuity medical and social needs categories. What we are experiencing today is, in fact, what I signed up for all those years ago.

So, if we continue to have firefighters who are confused by the types of calls to which they are most likely to respond, then where have we gone wrong?

- Have we not marketed the position description correctly?
- Have we not recruited with a mindset geared toward candidate success in today’s fire service, not to mention tomorrow’s fire service?
- Have we hired the right people, but the culture is not ready to embrace the all-hazards response organization?
- Let’s keep these questions in mind as we consider some solutions to this ongoing issue.

[firerescue1](#)

5 Steps to Retirement Planning in 2021: An Introduction & How-to Guide

By: Tina Orem

Key takeaways

- Retirement planning has five steps: knowing when to start, calculating how much money you’ll need, setting priorities, choosing accounts and choosing investments.
- Generally, the idea is to invest more aggressively when you’re young, and then slowly dial back to a more conservative mix of investments as you approach retirement age.
- You can manage your retirement savings on your own or hire a pro.
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When can you retire?

[When you can retire](#) comes down to when you want to retire and when you’ll have enough money saved to replace the income you receive from working.

- The earliest you can [start claiming Social Security benefits](#) is age 62. However, by filing early you'll sacrifice a portion of your benefits. If you were born in 1960 or later, full retirement age (which is also full Social Security benefits age) is 67. And your benefit will actually increase if you can delay it further, up until age 70.
- Some people [retire early](#) (because they want or have to), and many retire later (again, because they want or have to). Many people find it's best to slowly ease out of the workforce rather than retire abruptly.

The 5 steps of retirement planning

Retirement planning has several steps, with the end goal of having enough money to quit working and do whatever you want. Our aim with this retirement planning guide is to help you achieve that goal.

Step 1: Know when to start retirement planning

nerdwallet.com

Chief's Desk Continued

Studies show that pay and benefits are a short-term motivator and only lead to short-term contentment. There will always be somewhere that has something better. Some have expressed concerns that we will lose people as a result of better pay at a different agency. As of next year, our pay will be at or near the 75th percentile. To that end, comparatively speaking, we are competitive in the market. Some may choose to leave for better pay, others may leave to try a new adventure, and some may leave to explore a different career path.

It's easy to blame the Agency, and sometimes that may be where the fault lies. However, as mentioned above, people simply do not have the same level of loyalty or commitment to their employers or their careers that we used to see in the United States. People are leaving companies and careers that at one point in history no one would consider leaving. We live in changing times, which means we need to recognize the challenges and work to adapt.

Regarding affordable housing, there is not much we can do. When I testified in front of the Senate for the COPs, one Senator stated that he was concerned that if given access to COPs for our PSPRS liability, we might instead buy a hotel like one of the universities. I explained that we already have access to COPs for such purposes. Yes, stating we would purchase a hotel with pension funds was a stretch; however, since he mentioned it, providing short-term housing to attract employees to an area that lacks affordable housing may be helpful – although, not feasible. NO, we are not considering buying a hotel, apartment complex, or building houses – just to be clear. I mean, if we could... But, we cannot, so housing remains what we term a 'wicked problem'.

Our recruitment efforts have been lacking for years as a result of the transition from reserves to hiring outside, to hiring outside of our area. It has been a growth experience trying to find our way. That said, we have a number of things in the works to improve our recruiting efforts.

First, we are seeking new places with greater reach to post our job openings. Second, we are creating a recruitment page for our website. I have to say, the work from the folks in Admin and HR has been outstanding! Kathy has developed a section based on the research she did before her and her family decided the Quad Cities was where they wanted to live. As a result of those efforts, I reached out to Talking Glass Media. They are going to assist with production of a professional video that will capture the 'majesty' of our area. We may even attach a camera to my Jeep and wheel through the forest – for “work” purposes, of course...

This week the production company we hired out of the Valley is filming scenes and B-roll for a series of recruitment videos – four to be exact. The first will be a video entitled *What Does a Firefighter Look Like?* Firefighter Harper, the crew of Engine 540, Lacie and her family, and our Training staff were outstanding in helping make the video a reality! As I write this, I may have forgotten to inform C-shift 53 that they would be assisting as well – my apologies for the “oversight.” 😊 Firefighter Ducharme was super bummed he didn't get on camera this time around. Don't worry Zach, your time is coming...

Our second video will be more specific to hiring Operations personnel for CAFMA. The third will highlight some of the former collegiate and semi-pro athletes that now work for us. This video will be used at both the collegiate and high school level to promote our profession. Our fourth video will focus on CAFMA as an entity with specific emphasis placed on our Non-Operations careers. We want to capture CAFMA as a system that only works when all our collective parts work as one. We believe that this video will help recruiting for all positions.

In the end, we will have at least four videos specific to our Agency, and one that captures the entire Quad City area. These videos will be shared on the recruitment page of our website, social media, at job fairs, etc. Basically, anywhere we can show the videos, that's where you will see them.

We changed our SOG and the Board will vote next week Monday on a policy change that will eliminate our Firefighter 1 and 2 requirements. The change will align us with most of our competition in the state, and open up opportunities to folks who may not have otherwise thought of the Fire Service as a career. We are expanding the talent pool.

In addition, for those not aware, Engineer Adam Wagner has taken on the task of developing a Recruitment Committee. This is an important step for CAFMA. There is nothing better than having our own folks promoting employment with our Agency. If you are interested in assisting, please reach out to Adam.

Folks, this is a team effort. Without you and your input, we cannot succeed. If you have ideas, please share them. Our future is extremely bright, with tremendous opportunity as the communities we serve continue to grow. Help us guide the organization toward a successful future through your participation and commitment to success. Not just organizational success, but success in both personal and professional growth for each of you. Together, there is no end to what we can and will accomplish.