

IMPROVING THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Improving the Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters

Within the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Abstract

The research problem was that the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department has not been successful in the recruitment of volunteer firefighters, which has resulted in insufficient numbers of personnel during firefighting operations. The purpose of this applied research paper was to identify what motivates people to become a volunteer firefighter, to identify what were considered the industry best practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters, and to determine what strategies the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department should implement to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. The descriptive research method was used for this applied research project. The research approach entailed evaluating collected literature on the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters, as well as identify industry best practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Literature was explored to answer the following research questions: a) What motivates people to become volunteer firefighters?, b) What are considered the best industry practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters?, and c) What strategies should the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department implement to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters? In addition, a survey was created in an attempt to determine what motivates people to become volunteer firefighters.

Research procedures included review of available, applicable literature and the development of an online survey instrument to gather additional information on what motivates someone to become a volunteer firefighter. The results of the literature review and survey, which also are the recommendations, suggest that the department should consider incorporating the following into its recruitment and retention program: improve volunteer

applicant screening to determine their motivation for joining the department, evaluate the current leadership of both career and volunteer officers, evaluate current training programs, and implement a formal recruitment and retention program that includes various incentives for our volunteers.

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Within the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department

Introduction

Throughout the United States most communities are protected by volunteer fire departments (International Association of Fire Chiefs [IAFC], 2004; Carter, 2009). However, in recent years volunteer fire departments throughout the nation are finding it more difficult to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters (United States Fire Administration [USFA], 2007; Nedder, 2009). This is a real problem for localities that depend on volunteer firefighters, especially as those departments begin to struggle with increased demand for core emergency services, while the numbers of volunteer firefighters are decreasing (IAFC, 2005; D'Intino, 2006). Volunteer firefighters save these localities on average \$37 billion a year (USFA, 2007; Ettinger, 2009). In today's economic climate, most localities depend on volunteers to provide emergency services (USFA, 2007; Ettinger, 2009).

The research problem is that the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department has not been successful in the recruitment of volunteer firefighters, which has resulted in insufficient numbers of personnel during firefighting operations. The purpose of this applied research paper is to identify what motivates people to become a volunteer firefighter, to identify what are considered the best industry practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters, and to determine what strategies the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department should implement to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. The descriptive research method is used

for this applied research project. The research approach will entail evaluating collected literature on recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters, as well as identify the best industry practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Literature will be explored to answer the following research questions: a) What motivates people to become volunteer firefighters?, b) What are considered industry best practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters?, and c) What strategies should the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department implement to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters? In addition, a survey was created in an attempt to determine what motivates people to become volunteer firefighters.

#### Background and Significance

The Martinsville Fire & EMS Department is a small career/volunteer combination department that covers eleven square miles, serving approximately 13,800 citizens from two stations. The department is comprised of twenty-nine uniformed full-time employees, three civilian full-time employees, eight uniformed part-time employees, and twenty-four volunteers. The department is composed of four divisions that include: Administration, Operations, Inspections & Code Enforcement and Emergency Management & Safety. Division full-time staffing levels are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: *Full-Time Personnel Division Assignments.*

<b>Division</b>	<b>Uniformed Personnel</b>	<b>Civilian Personnel</b>
Operations	25	0
Administration	1	1
Inspections & Code Enforcement	2	2
Emergency Management & Safety	1	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3</b>

Our volunteer fire company staffing levels, based on their certification status, are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: *Volunteer Staffing Levels by Certification.*

	<b>Support</b>	<b>Firefighter</b>	<b>EMS</b>	<b>Both Firefighter &amp; EMS</b>
<b>Total:</b>	10	6	1	7

The department provides fire prevention and protection services, emergency medical services (EMS) at the advanced life support (ALS) level, and operations level response to hazardous materials incidents. In addition, emergency management functions and citywide safety programs are coordinated and managed through the department.

The City of Martinsville is a small community located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, 45 miles south of Roanoke, Virginia. Martinsville has a Council/Manager form of government. Martinsville attracts visitors from all over the world for NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, Camping World Truck Series, and Late Model Stock Car Racing at the Martinsville Speedway.

Cultural activities include the Virginia Museum of Natural History and the Piedmont Arts Association.

During the late 1990's the city lost many jobs in the furniture and textile industries due to the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) and the expanding global economy. Unemployment rates skyrocketed, and Martinsville consistently has had the highest unemployment rate in Virginia. For April, 2012, Martinsville's unemployment rate was 15.7% as compared to the Virginia Statewide average of 5.4% (Virginia Employment Commission [VEC], 2012). The city has also experienced a 10% reduction in its population 2000 to 2010 (United States Census Bureau [USCB], 2012). Population estimates for the City of Martinsville are listed in Table 3 (USCB, 2012).

Table 3: *Annual Estimates of the Population for City of Martinsville.*

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
<b>Estimate</b>	15,416	13,821	- 1,595	- 10.3%

The outcome of these facts has resulted in a diminishing tax base, which has had an adverse effect on the Fire & EMS Department's budget.

The Fire & EMS Department's Fiscal Year 11/12 Total Budget is \$2,552,737, of which \$2,069,680, or 81%, is personnel expenses. For the past several years the only adjustments to the department's operating budget have been minor line item reductions, and a Capital Budget has been virtually non-existent. The city, in its current economic state, cannot afford any budgetary increases that are not justified by significant improvements in the delivery of services.

Historically, the department has recruited from its volunteer ranks to fill both part-time and full-time firefighter positions. During this period our career staff was mostly an older group, who preferred to drive and operate apparatus. The volunteer fire company was basically the fire suppression section for the department. However, by the mid 1990's, all of those who were interested in employment with the department had been hired. All part-time and full-time positions that have been filled since 2000 have come from outside our volunteer fire company. This has caused a transition within the department.

Today, the career staff of the department is a much younger group. They not only drive and operate apparatus, but actively perform fire suppression activities. It is our volunteers that are now the older group. Our volunteers are still allowed to both drive and operate apparatus, and perform fire suppression activities; however, most are either unable to do so due to their age or simply choose not to obtain the necessary training to perform those duties.

The department has attempted (and continues to do so) to recruit volunteer firefighters to replenish their ranks. Traditional recruitment methods have been utilized, which include radio and print media ads. However, there is no formal recruitment and retention program within the department. The department has been able to keep its number of volunteers to around twenty-five, but of those currently on the roster approximately 60% are over the age of forty and have assumed more of a support role within the volunteer fire company and no longer are answering emergency calls.

This applied research project is directly related to the National Fire Academy's Executive Leadership course. The goal of this course is that, "The Executive Fire Officer (EFO) will develop the ability to conceptualize and employ the key processes and interpersonal skills used by

effective executive-level managers” (United States Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2011, p. SM 1-7). Executive Leadership is the fourth and final course in the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officer Program. This course provided the Executive Fire Officer student with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to effectively and efficiently perform at the executive level (DHS, 2011). This applied research project will utilize the knowledge gained during this course to identify what motivates people to become a volunteer firefighter and the best industry practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

The United States Fire Administration (2012) website lists the following goals in their strategic plan:

- (1) Reduce risk at the local level through prevention and mitigation.
- (2) Improve local planning and preparedness.
- (3) Improve the fire and emergency services’ capability for response to, and recovery, from all hazards.
- (4) Improve the fire and emergency services’ professional status.
- (5) Lead the Nation’s fire and emergency services by establishing and sustaining USFA as a dynamic organization. (Goals Section)

This applied research project supports these goals by conducting research to identify what motivates people to become a volunteer firefighter and industry best practices that will improve the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters within our department. The knowledge gained through this applied research project will allow department administration to develop and implement programs that will increase the number of volunteer firefighters on scene during firefighting operations.

## Literature Review

The objective of the literature review process is to collect and evaluate available literature on what motivates people to become volunteer firefighters and the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Research was conducted at the National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center located in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Literature examined for this applied research project included written texts, scholarly journals, trade journals, fire service publications, and internet databases and sites. The focus of the research was to identify relevant sources that directly relate to this research problem.

Fire departments must understand what motivates someone to become a volunteer firefighter (USFA, 2007). By understanding what motivated a person to become a volunteer firefighter, the department can then work to ensure that individual's needs are met (USFA, 2007). If the department can meet the individual's motivational needs they are less likely to leave the department (USFA, 2007). Volunteers will lose their motivation if the department fails to meet their expectations or if they begin to feel that they are not needed (Ettinger, 2009; USFA, 2007).

According to a report by the USFA (2007), departments should ask potential members about their motivations for becoming a volunteer firefighter prior to joining. This will ensure the individual is joining for the right reasons (USFA, 2007). In addition, officers can follow up with their volunteers to ensure the department is meeting their motivational needs (USFA, 2007). The report (USFA, 2007) states, "This helps the leaders understand the members' needs and make sure that things are in place to keep them motivated" (p. 64). Once a department understands what the motivational needs are of its members, it can design programs aimed at

meeting those needs (USFA, 2007). Simply put, a department that understands its member's motivations and designs programs to meet those motivations is more likely to retain those volunteers over time (USFA, 2007).

However, departments must take into account that some people may have negative motivations for becoming a volunteer (USFA, 2007). If an individual desires to be a volunteer firefighter for the wrong reasons, that individual will most likely not make a good member (USFA, 2007). It is important for departments to recognize those potential members during the screening process so they can avoid future problems, such as personnel conflicts within the department (D'Intino, 2006; USFA, 2007).

According to the USFA (2007), volunteer firefighters are more easily retained if their motivation for volunteering is to provide a service to the community. In a dissertation by Sargent (as cited in D'Intino, 2006) on satisfaction and retention of volunteer firefighters, it was determined that altruism was the most satisfying reason for volunteering. This trait of selfless public service sheds light on why firefighters are willing to risk their lives to save others (IAFC, 2004). This trait is also a key marker for departments to look for when screening new volunteers (USFA, 2007). In an article by Joe Nedder (2009), he lists the following as key reasons for why people become volunteer firefighters: to help those in the community; a deep desire to belong to the fire service; the thrill and excitement of the job; a sense of fulfillment; and a desire to belong within a recognized group that has social interaction (p. 14). A report to the Minnesota Commissioner of Public Safety ("Final Report", 2006), lists several responses to the question, "What makes me want to volunteer?" (Feedback from Surveys Section). Some of those responses include: ability to help out in my community to make it a little safer to live in;

belonging to a group, camaraderie, and community support keeps me motivated; giving back to our community; and desire to help the community (“Final Report”, 2006, Feedback from Surveys Section). The complete list can be found in Appendix A. The USFA (2007) report also lists a number of reasons for becoming a volunteer firefighter, which include: need for a sense of belonging to something important; helping the community; sense of obligation to the community; and helping a fellow person in need (p. 150). The complete list can be found in Appendix B.

In a survey of active volunteer firefighters, conducted by D’Intino (2006), respondents had high levels of satisfaction and motivation. According to this survey (D’Intino, 2006), the majority of the respondents listed selfless reasons for being a volunteer firefighter. Ninety-five percent of those respondents indicated that being a volunteer allowed them the opportunity to give something back to their community (D’Intino, 2006). In a similar question, eighty-eight percent advised that it was important to serve their community (D’Intino, 2006).

A survey of Virginia firefighters (Virginia Fire Chiefs Association [VFCA], 2011) was conducted to help develop recruitment strategies. Specifically, there were two questions geared at gaining some insight into respondents’ motivations for being a firefighter. Question Nine (VFCA, 2011) asked, “What are the things that continue to motivate you to be a firefighter?” (p. 16). The top five responses were: service to community; personal fulfillment or enrichment; fire response; friendship and camaraderie; and receiving or delivering training (VFCA, 2011, p. 16). Question Ten (VFCA, 2011) asked, “What are some of the other things that continue to motivate you to be a firefighter?” (p. 18). The top five responses for this question were: sense of a personal obligation to the community; the adrenaline rush firefighters get

from the profession; use of equipment available to firefighters (the truck, tools, etc.); the sense of having a “family” connection to others in the fire service; and the fact that the fire service requires them to maintain physical fitness (VFCA, 2011, p. 19).

The ability to recruit and retain quality volunteer firefighters is one of the most important elements to the overall success of any volunteer or combination department (Ettinger, 2009; IAFC, 2004; Rufer, 2010; USFA, 2007). The IAFC (2004), in its “Blue Ribbon Report” gave several suggestions for programs that improve recruitment and retention efforts. In summary, the report (IAFC, 2004) recommends: departments ensure that members have access to necessary training in basic and advance firefighting skills; allow and encourage individual talent and skill to enhance the overall efficiency, safety and effectiveness of the department; institute a program to evaluate members’ physical ability to perform the activities and tasks of their job description; provide ongoing educational opportunities that reinforce training standards and safety; provide some sort of benefit programs to encourage long-term participation; provide insurance coverage to cover injuries that occur while performing duties; develop a recruitment program to ensure adequate staffing; and implement an appropriate award and recognition program.

A report (“Final Report”, 2006) to the Minnesota Commissioner of Public Safety outlined several ‘best practices’ for the successful recruitment and retention of volunteer personnel. Some of these programs include: fire and EMS certification courses offered during senior year in high school; first responder child daycare programs where parent can drop off a child on short notice to be cared for while the parent answers the emergency call; onsite training

programs; and departments that are managed and run like professional operations (“Final Report”, 2006, Best Practices Section).

One of the most effective recruitment methods is direct face-to-face contact between current firefighters and potential volunteers (D’Intino, 2006; VFCA, 2011). Often a new volunteer has either a family member or friend already within the fire department (D’Intino, 2006; Nedder, 2009). The VFCA (2011) survey revealed that fifty-eight percent of the respondents joined the fire service because of a friend or family member referral. Another forty-two percent joined due to personal contact with a firefighter (VFCA, 2011).

In his article, Rielage (2009) outlines what he calls “tried-and-true” recruitment methods: be visible, simplify the process, start young, show gratitude, and ride with pride (p. 25). Being visible means actively participating in major community events (Rielage, 2009). Take advantage of these events to spread fire and life safety messages, inform public of all the good things your department is doing, and share how they could help (Rielage, 2009). Make the application process simple and painless. Utilize a standard application process and assign a mentor to assist the applicant through the process and to orient them to the department (Rielage, 2009). Implement a junior firefighter program to spark the interests of high school students (Rielage, 2009). Partner with local schools and other youth organizations to promote volunteerism and community service (Rielage, 2009). Show your department’s appreciation for its members. Hold annual community events to recognize longevity and special-merit awards (Rielage, 2009). Events such as these can also serve as recruitment opportunities for your department (Rielage, 2009). All personnel within the department must have a sense of pride in

what they do and a common set of moral and ethical values (Rielage, 2009). When people see a professional organization, they want to be a part of it (Rielage, 2009).

Nedder (2009) suggests in his article that recruitment plus training equals retention. Anyone who joins an organization wants to fit in and be accepted (Nedder, 2009). According to Nedder (2009), "In a fire and EMS setting, the only way to assist him and have him fit in is by training" (p. 16). Nedder (2009) goes on to explain that no matter how you interact with other members of the department, if you cannot perform at a fire or EMS call, your peers will view you as being an inferior member of the organization (Nedder, 2009). If a department fails to provide its members with the necessary training to do their jobs, and they begin to feel like they are not being accepted by their peers, they will eventually leave the department (Nedder, 2009). Nedder (2009) sums it up with his statement. "People do not want to fail. Lack of training is setting people up to fail" (p. 18).

In his article, Rufer (2010) identifies three key elements for successfully recruiting and retaining volunteers. First, Rufer (2010) advises that there must be skilled leadership within the department. Several sources cited in this research paper have mentioned leadership as the most important element in recruiting and retaining volunteers (Carter, 2009; D'Intino, 2006; Ettinger, 2009; IAFC, 2004; IAFC, 2005; USFA, 2007). There is a direct, and indirect, relationship between the recruitment and retention of volunteers and the leadership of the department (Ettinger, 2009; IAFC, 2004; IAFC, 2005; USFA, 2007). Ettinger (2009) states, "Effective leadership helps to retain members as well as reduce dissatisfaction, while ineffective leadership is the most common reason for a decline in membership" (p. 68). The second element in Rufer's (2010) article is the department's training program. As noted earlier in

Nedder's (2009) article, training is an important part of a department recruitment and retention program. Rufer's (2010) third element for successfully recruiting and retaining volunteers is a formal recruitment and retention program. In years past, people came seeking to volunteer, but now departments must actively reach out to them (Nedder, 2009; Rufer, 2010). Simply hanging out a sign asking for volunteers, is not a formal recruitment and retention program (Rufer, 2010). Rufer (2010) states, "Formal recruitment programs are written and targeted and include a planning process in which a needs assessment is performed and measurable benchmarks are documented for evaluating effectiveness" (p. 14).

D'Intino's (2006) research suggests that financial benefits or incentives encourage recruitment and retention. The top four incentives were: providing college tuition for volunteer firefighters and their families; providing state of the art personal protective clothing; providing state income tax credits for volunteer firefighters; and providing state of the art firefighting apparatus and equipment (D'Intino, 2006, p. 14). In the report to the Minnesota Commissioner of Public Safety ("Final Report", 2006), there are several responses to the question, "What would entice you as an incentive to stay involved with your volunteer organization?" (Feedback from Surveys Section). Some of those responses include: a pension plan; paid for call time; a well run organization; and better compensation, less federal mandatory training ("Final Report", 2006, Feedback from Surveys Section). The complete list can be found in Appendix C. While financial benefits are helpful, they alone will not retain volunteers (D'Intino, 2006).

Incentive programs can be highly motivational (USFA, 2007). Most have little to no cost associated with them and can go a long way to acknowledge the dedication and achievements of your department's volunteers (USFA, 2007). Departments should implement several types of

incentive programs to ensure there is something for volunteers of all ages, experience and rank (Ettinger, 2009). The USFA (2007) report lists a few suggestions, such as: select a member of the month or year; cover the reasonable expenses associated with training courses; award top responder with a family vacation; and give flowers to spouses on special occasions (p. 111). A complete list of incentive suggestions can be found in Appendix D.

In summary, the objective of the literature review process was to collect and evaluate available literature on what motivates people to become volunteer firefighters, and identify the best industry practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters to determine what strategies our department should use in the development of its recruitment and retention program. This author realizes that there are many factors that affect an individual's motivation for becoming a volunteer, as well as the recruitment and retention of volunteers. However, those issues are outside the scope of this applied research project and therefore omitted.

### Procedures

This applied research project utilized the descriptive research method to explore available literature to determine what motivates people to become volunteer firefighters and identify industry best practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters to determine what strategies our department should use in the development of its recruitment and retention program. The procedures used to gather the needed information began with recognition of the stated research problem; which is, the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department has not been successful in the recruitment of volunteer firefighters, which has resulted in insufficient numbers of personnel during firefighting operations. The data collected during the research was used to answer the following research questions: a) What motivates people to

become volunteer firefighters?, b) What are considered the best industry practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters?, and c) What strategies should the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department implement to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters? In addition, a survey was created in an attempt to determine what motivates people to become volunteer firefighters.

The first phase of the applied research project was to conduct a review of available, applicable literature. Research literature for this applied research project came from written texts, scholarly journals, trade journals, fire service publications, and internet databases and sites that were discovered while performing research for this paper. Research was conducted at the National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center located in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Utilizing the National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center Card Catalog, a search was conducted to identify literature related to volunteer recruitment and retention. The focus of the research was to identify relevant sources of information directly related to the research problem, research questions, and ultimately the intended purpose of this applied research project.

Secondly, an online survey instrument was developed and distributed to gather additional information on what motivates someone to become a volunteer firefighter. A popular online survey site, Survey Monkey, was chosen due to its ease of use and relatively low cost. This survey was modeled after the VFCA (2011) survey utilizing terms and wording from the USFA (2007) report, as this author has little experience with the design and use of surveys. The survey was distributed via e-mail to local fire department contacts asking them to redistribute to other persons within their contacts that were involved in the fire service. It is

unclear who actually received this survey or the sample size, but the intent was to target as many fire service personnel as possible. The e-mail contained an explanation of why the survey was being conducted along with a link to the survey itself. The link to the survey was made available from April 9, 2012 through May 2, 2012. During this period there were 203 respondents to the survey.

This author realizes that the topic of volunteer recruitment and retention is quite broad and that there are numerous factors that affect the success or failure of any recruitment and retention program. The purpose of this applied research was to identify what motivates people to become volunteer firefighters and identify the best industry practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters to determine what strategies our department should use in the development of its recruitment and retention program. Therefore, this applied research project focused on relevant sources of information that directly related to the research problem, research questions, and ultimately the intended purpose of this applied research project. However, as noted by D'Intino (2006), there is little data on what motivates someone to become a volunteer firefighter.

This author's lack of experience with the use of survey instruments is another limitation. The survey's purpose was to gather more information on what motivated the respondent to become a firefighter. However, some of the survey questions were not specific enough, nor all inclusive enough, to gather individual motivators for becoming a volunteer firefighter. Respondents were limited to a list of sixteen generic motivational reasons for becoming a volunteer firefighter; however, they could select all that applied. This list of motivational reasons came from the USFA (2007) list, which can be found in Appendix B. The survey was

distributed via e-mail to local fire department contacts asking them to redistribute to other persons within their contacts that were involved in the fire service. It is unclear who actually received this survey or the exact sample size. There were 203 respondents to the survey. It is reasonable to expect that a more focused survey instrument, distributed to a known population size, would yield more in depth data.

## Results

In this applied research project, three research questions were developed based upon the problem statement and purpose of the research. Utilizing the descriptive research method, relevant literature was collected and examined for information to answer each of the research questions. In addition, a survey was created in an attempt to determine what motivates people to become volunteer firefighters. The results of the literature and site visits are organized by each research question.

### *Research Question #1: What motivates people to become volunteer firefighters?*

The literature review revealed that it is important for fire departments to understand what is motivating their members to join (USFA, 2007). When a department knows its members' motivations, it can develop programs to meet those needs (USFA, 2007). If a department is meeting their member's motivational needs, they are less likely to leave the department (USFA, 2007). Departments that fail to meet the needs of its members will fail to recruit and retain members (Ettinger, 2009; USFA, 2007).

It was also noted that determining a volunteer applicant's motivation should be a part of the screening process for membership (USFA, 2007). It was noted that volunteer firefighters who were motivated to join to provide a public service to the community were more easily

retained (D'Intino, 2006; "Final Report", 2006; Nedder, 2009; USFA, 2007). Altruism was a key trait for departments to look for while screening new volunteers (USFA, 2007). The literature review revealed many reasons or motivations for people to want to become a volunteer firefighter (D'Intino, 2006; "Final Report", 2006; Nedder, 2009; USFA, 2007). Some of those motivators include; desire to help those in the community, a sense of obligation to the community, and opportunity to give something back to the community (D'Intino, 2006; "Final Report", 2006; Nedder, 2009; USFA, 2007).

Last year, a survey of Virginia firefighters (VFCA, 2011) was conducted to help develop recruitment strategies. Specifically, there were two questions geared at gaining some insight into respondents' motivations for being a firefighter. Question Nine (VFCA, 2011) asked, "What are the things that continue to motivate you to be a firefighter?" (p. 16). The top five responses were: service to community; personal fulfillment or enrichment; fire response; friendship and camaraderie; and receiving or delivering training (VFCA, 2011, p. 16). Question Ten (VFCA, 2011) asked, "What are some of the other things that continue to motivate you to be a firefighter?" (p. 18). The top five responses for this question were: sense of a personal obligation to the community; the adrenaline rush firefighters get from the profession; use of equipment available to firefighters (the truck, tools, etc.); the sense of having a "family" connection to others in the fire service; and the fact that the fire service requires them to maintain physical fitness (VFCA, 2011, p. 19).

An online survey instrument was developed and distributed to gather additional information on what motivates someone to become a volunteer firefighter. The survey was distributed via e-mail to local fire department contacts asking them to redistribute to other

persons within their contacts that were involved in the fire service. The e-mail contained an explanation of why the survey was being conducted along with a link to the survey itself. The link to the survey was made available from April 9, 2012 through May 2, 2012. During this period there were 203 respondents to the survey. The survey along with responses can be found in Appendix E.

Question 1 of the survey asked respondents, "Have you ever been, or are you currently, a volunteer firefighter?" This question was asked to determine if the respondents have been, or still are, a volunteer firefighter. Of the 203 respondents, 194 or 95.6 percent indicated yes they have been, or still are, a volunteer firefighter. Nine or 4.4 percent of the respondents have never been a volunteer firefighter. Based on the responses to this question, almost all (95.6 percent) of the respondents have been or still are volunteer firefighters.

Question 2 of the survey asked respondents, "Which of the following best describes your current status within the fire service?" This question was asked to determine respondents' status within the fire service. Of the 203 respondents, eight-eight or 43.3 percent were strictly all volunteer; fifty-seven or 28.1 percent were strictly all paid; forty-one or 20.2 percent were paid, but volunteered while off-duty; nine or 4.4 percent were volunteer, but worked part-time as paid, and eight or 3.9 percent were retired and no longer involved with the fire service. Based on the responses to this question, nearly half (43.3 percent) were strictly volunteer, while nearly another quarter (20.2 percent) were career firefighters that volunteered while off-duty.

Question 3 of the survey asked respondents, "If you began your fire service career as a volunteer and now you are paid, do you still volunteer in the fire service?" This question was

asked to determine how many respondents, who began their career as a volunteer, remained a volunteer after becoming a career firefighter. Of the 203 respondents, ninety-nine or 48.8 percent stated this question did not apply, as they were strictly all volunteer status. Forty-six or 22.7 percent continue to volunteer after becoming a paid firefighter. Fifty-eight or 28.6 percent no longer volunteered after becoming a paid firefighter. Respondents that indicated they no longer volunteer in the fire service were asked to briefly explain why. Those responses can be found in Appendix E.

Question 4 of the survey asked respondents, “How long have you served in the fire service? (Please include all of your years of service, regardless of your volunteer and/or paid status.)” This question was designed to identify how long respondents have served in the fire service. All 203 respondents answered the question. The top three answer options were: Twenty-five years or more service 38.4 percent, eleven to fourteen years of service 11.3 percent, and twenty to twenty-four years of service 10.8 percent. All of the responses can be found in Appendix E. Responses to this question showed that the vast majority, 69.4 percent, have been in the fire service ten years or more.

Question 5 of the survey asked respondents, “Thinking back to when you first decided to become a volunteer firefighter, which of the following reasons motivated you to volunteer? Select all that apply.” This question was designed to determine what motivated the respondent to join the fire service. Respondents were not limited to only one answer, but rather asked to select all that applied. All of the response answer options came from the USFA (2007) *Leading Reasons for Becoming a Volunteer Firefighter*, which can be found in Appendix B. All 203 respondents selected at least one of the answer options for this question. Over three-quarters

(76.4 percent) of the respondents selected helping the community as their motivation for becoming a volunteer firefighter. The next two highest selected responses were: helping a fellow person in need 57.1 percent, and desire to face a new challenge 53.7 percent.

Question 6 of the survey asked respondents, “Now that you have been involved in the fire service, which of the following reasons continue to motivate you to remain in the fire service? Select all that apply.” Again, respondents were not limited to only one answer, but rather asked to select all that applied. In addition, other (please specify) was added as a selection to allow respondents to list any motivational reasons not included in the response answer options. The remaining response answer options were the same as in Question 5. All 203 respondents selected at least one of the answer options for this question. In addition, thirty-two of the respondents entered a response in the other (please specify) selection. Those responses can be found in Appendix E. Over three-quarters (77.8 percent) of the respondents selected helping the community as their motivation for remaining in the fire service. The next two highest selected responses were: helping a fellow person in need 69.0 percent, and sense of obligation to the community 56.2 percent.

The final question of the survey, Question 7, asked respondents, “From the list below, please indicate the level of motivation for you to remain in the fire service? Select an answer in every row.” Utilizing the same response answer options as in Question 5, respondents were asked to rate each answer option as to its level of motivation for them to remain in the fire service. This is the only question in the survey that some of the respondents skipped (see Appendix E). Of those that responded to the question, the top three motivators were: helping the community, helping a fellow person in need, and possibly saving a life.

*Research Question #2:* What are considered industry best practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters?

The ability to recruit and retain quality volunteer firefighters is one of the most important elements to the overall success of any volunteer or combination department (Ettinger, 2009; IAFC, 2004; Rufer, 2010; USFA, 2007). The literature review revealed several suggestions for the successful recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Rufer (2010) states there are three elements for successfully recruiting and retaining volunteers. Agency leadership was the most cited reason for success or failure of volunteer recruitment and retention efforts (Carter, 2009; D'Intino, 2006; Ettinger, 2009; IAFC, 2004; IAFC, 2005; USFA, 2007). There is a direct, and indirect, relationship between the recruitment and retention of volunteers and the leadership of the department (Ettinger, 2009; IAFC, 2004; IAFC, 2005; USFA, 2007). Ettinger (2009) states, "Effective leadership helps to retain members as well as reduce dissatisfaction, while ineffective leadership is the most common reason for a decline in membership" (p. 68). Departments that are managed and run like professional operations are more likely to recruit and retain quality volunteers ("Final Report", 20006).

The second element in Rufer's (2010) article is the department's training program. Training is an important part of any department's recruitment and retention program ("Final Report", 2006; Nedder, 2009; Rufer, 2010). Department members must have access to necessary training in basic and advanced firefighting skills (IAFC, 2004). In addition, volunteers at all experience levels and rank need ongoing training to ensure they can perform their duties safely, effectively and efficiently (IAFC, 2004). In Nedder's (2009) article, he states that the best way for volunteers to fit in is through training. Ettinger (2009) states that volunteers want to

feel like they belong and training is one way for a department to assist them in acclimating into the organization.

Rufer's (2010) third element for successfully recruiting and retaining volunteers is a formal recruitment and retention program. In years past, people came seeking to volunteer, but now departments must actively reach out to them (Nedder, 2009; Rufer, 2010). Simply hanging out a sign asking for volunteers, is not a formal recruitment and retention program (Rufer, 2010). Rufer (2010) states, "Formal recruitment programs are written and targeted and include a planning process in which a needs assessment is performed and measurable benchmarks are documented for evaluating effectiveness" (p. 14).

Another effective recruitment method is direct face-to-face contact between current firefighters and potential volunteers (D'Intino, 2006; VFCA, 2011). Often a new volunteer has either a family member or friend already within the fire department (D'Intino, 2006; Nedder, 2009). Being visible and participating in community events is an ideal way to encourage face-to-face contact with potential volunteers (Rielage, 2009). The VFCA (2011) survey revealed that fifty-eight percent of the respondents joined the fire service because of a friend or family member referral. Another forty-two percent joined due to personal contact with a firefighter (VFCA, 2011).

Offering fire and EMS certification courses in the high school setting is another successful recruitment tool ("Final Report", 2006; Rielage, 2009). Implementing a junior firefighter program can also spark the interests of high school students (Rielage, 2009). Departments can also seek out other youth organizations to partner with to promote volunteerism and community service (Rielage, 2009).

Incentive programs can also encourage recruitment and retention (D'Intino, 2006; Ettinger, 2009; "Final Report", 2006; USFA, 2007). Some of these programs include: recognition and awards programs, monetary incentives and tax breaks (D'Intino, 2006; Ettinger, 2009; "Final Report", 2006; USFA, 2007). A complete listing of incentives can be found in Appendixes C and D. Departments should implement several types of incentive programs to ensure there is something for volunteers of all ages, experience and rank (Ettinger, 2009). However, D'Intino (2006) advises that while financial benefits are helpful, they alone will not retain volunteers.

*Research Question #3:* What strategies should the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department implement to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters?

Strategies that the Martinsville Fire & EMS department should consider incorporating into its recruitment and retention program are: improved volunteer applicant screening to determine their motivation for joining the department, evaluate the current leadership of both career and volunteer officers, evaluate current training programs, and implement a formal recruitment and retention program that includes various incentives for our volunteers. As noted in the Background and Significance section, the department has not been successful in recruiting and retaining volunteer firefighters. Knowing that the lack of volunteers has led to insufficient numbers of personnel during firefighting operations provides the necessity to initiate improvements.

### Discussion

The literature review discovered that it is important for a fire department to understand what motivated an individual to apply as a volunteer firefighter (USFA, 2007). By knowing the individual's motivation, a department can ensure that the individual is joining for the right

reason and the department can ensure it offers programs that meet the individual's motivational needs (Ettinger, 2009; USFA, 2007). Determining a volunteer applicant's motivation should be a part of the screening process for membership (USFA, 2007). Volunteer applicants who indicated their motivations for becoming a firefighter are to help those in the community, a sense of obligation to the community, or other altruistic reasons are more likely to be retained (D'Intino, 2006; "Final Report", 2006; Nedder, 2009; USFA; 2007).

In a survey by the VFCA (2011), it was noted that leading motivation of the respondents to continue as a firefighter was service to the community and a sense of personal obligation to the community. In another survey by D'Intino (2006), the majority of the respondents listed selfless reasons for being a volunteer firefighter. Ninety-five percent of those respondents indicated that being a volunteer allowed them the opportunity to give something back to their community (D'Intino, 2006). In a similar question, eighty-eight percent advised that it was important to serve their community (D'Intino, 2006). The survey developed and distributed by this author revealed that seventy-six percent of the respondents indicated the leading reason for them becoming a volunteer was to help the community. In the same survey, seventy-seven percent of the respondents indicated that helping the community motivates them to remain in the fire service. Respondents to this survey also rated helping the community as the highest motivator for them to remain in the fire service.

It seems apparent from the literature review and the surveys that service to the community is a key motivator for firefighters. In addition, the literature review along with the surveys provides ample justification for departments to consider the motivation of volunteer applicants during their screening process.

The literature review also revealed several best practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Utilizing Rufer's (2010) article, where he suggests there are three elements for successful recruitment and retention of volunteers as the framework, almost all of the literature review supports his position. Agency leadership was the most cited reason for success or failure of volunteer recruitment and retention efforts (Carter, 2009; D'Intino, 2006; Ettinger, 2009; IAFC, 2004; IAFC, 2005; USFA, 2007). There is a direct, and indirect, relationship between the recruitment and retention of volunteers and the leadership of the department (Ettinger, 2009; IAFC, 2004; IAFC, 2005; USFA, 2007). Departments that are managed and run like professional operations are more likely to recruit and retain quality volunteers ("Final Report", 2006).

The second element in Rufer's (2010) article is the department's training program. Training is an important part of any department's recruitment and retention program ("Final Report", 2006; Nedder, 2009; Rufer, 2010). Department members must have access to necessary training in basic and advanced firefighting skills (IAFC, 2004). In addition, volunteers at all experience levels and rank need ongoing training to ensure they can perform their duties safely, effectively and efficiently (IAFC, 2004). In Nedder's (2009) article, he states that the best way for volunteers to fit in is through training. Ettinger (2009) states that volunteers want to feel like they belong and training is one way for a department to assist them in acclimating into the organization.

Rufer's (2010) third element for successfully recruiting and retaining volunteers is a formal recruitment and retention program. In years past, people came seeking to volunteer, but now departments must actively reach out to them (Nedder, 2009; Rufer, 2010). Rufer

(2010) states, "Formal recruitment programs are written and targeted and include a planning process in which a needs assessment is performed and measurable benchmarks are documented for evaluating effectiveness" (p. 14).

Other volunteer recruitment and retention suggestions discovered during the literature review included direct face-to-face contact, targeted recruitment of high school students and incentive programs. Face-to-face contact with potential volunteers is an effective recruitment method (D'Intino, 2006; Rielage, 2009; VFCA, 2011). Partnering with high schools and other youth organizations to offer fire and EMS certification courses and to promote volunteerism and community services have proven to be successful recruitment methods ("Final Report", 2006; Rielage, 2009). Incentive programs can also encourage recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters (D'Intino, 2006; Ettinger, 2006; "Final Report", 2006; USFA, 2007). Examples of incentive programs include: recognition and awards programs, monetary incentives and tax breaks (D'Intino, 2006; Ettinger, 2009; "Final Report", 2006; USFA, 2007).

In summary, the ability to recruit and retain quality volunteer firefighters is one of the most important elements to the overall success of any volunteer or combination department (Ettinger, 2009; IAFC, 2004; Rufer, 2010; USFA, 2007). The literature review shows that departments must develop a formal recruitment and retention program (Rufer, 2010). There should be a planning process in which a needs assessment is conducted, recruitment and retention strategies developed and implemented with measurable benchmarks so that the program's effectiveness can be evaluated (Rufer, 2010). During the development of their recruitment and retention program, departments must include training programs for both new and current volunteers (Ettinger, 2009; "Final Report", 2006; IAFC, 2004; Nedder, 2009; Rufer,

2010). Consideration must also be given to the leadership of the department, as leadership was the most cited reason for the ultimate success or failure of any volunteer recruitment and retention program (Carter, 2009; D'Intino, 2006; Ettinger, 2009; IAFC, 2004; IAFC, 2005; USFA, 2007).

### Recommendations

The purpose of this applied research paper is to identify what motivates people to become a volunteer firefighter, to identify what are considered the best industry practices for the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters, and to determine what strategies the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department should implement to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. Based on the knowledge gained during the Executive Leadership course and the findings of this applied research project, the following are recommendations for the administration of the Martinsville Fire & EMS department to consider while developing its volunteer recruitment and retention program:

1. Evaluate the current leadership of the department, both career and volunteer. A concerted effort must be made to ensure that all of the leaders share the same vision, mission and core values of the department. Consider mandatory leadership training for both career and volunteer staff. This training should be done annually to ensure all personnel remain focused on moving the department forward.
2. Develop a formal recruitment and retention program. Development of the department's recruitment and retention program should go through a planning process. Both career and volunteer leadership must conduct a needs assessment; establish recruitment and retention strategies to be implemented with measurable benchmarks

for evaluation purposes. Special consideration should be given to programs that result in direct face-to-face contact with potential volunteers; targets the recruitment of high school students; and incentive programs, such as recognition and awards programs, monetary incentives and tax breaks.

3. Develop a volunteer training program. Basic fire and EMS training must be provided for all new volunteers. In addition, an ongoing training program should be in place to keep current volunteers knowledgeable and able to perform their duties.
4. Revise the current volunteer application process. More focus should be placed on the screening process. Specifically, each applicant's motivation for joining the department should be scrutinized. The application process should also be simple and easy to follow.
5. Consider instituting a program to evaluate volunteer members' physical ability to perform the activities and tasks of their job description. The department's current physical abilities test for new career firefighters could easily be modified for use with new volunteers.

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## Appendix A

## Feedback from Surveys: What makes me want to volunteer?

- The ability to help out my community to make it a little safer to live in.
- I have been in a volunteer F.D. for 16 years. I originally started after watching “Rescue 911”, yeah I know, kind of corny, but as time goes on I find belonging to a group, comrade, and always being able to do something new or different (i.e., work on committees, work on grants, fire prevention, go to instructor school on a new topic) which keep me energized and focused. I also find the community involvement in our fund raisers and community support helps keep me motivated.
- The feeling of knowing we are giving back to our community.
- It’s a way to give back to the city and help the unfortunate out.
- Being able to put my skills to work, seeing how working together and caring can make a difference.
- Desire to help the community.
- I believe we are here to take care of each other and should do so at each stage of our lives as we are able to. It is also a wonderful learning opportunity.
- Helping our community and people.
- To service an important need.
- Community service.
- To help people.
- Enjoy helping people.
- Keep up license.

- Community needed.
- I think that this is as unique as each individual. There are many reasons for people to join. Some that come to mind quickly are: adrenaline rush, family ties, 9/11 (patriotism), friendship association, desire to do good for fellow people, and many others. Most start off their service being “gung ho” and attend as much training as possible at the area sectional schools. Usually at this time in their life they do not have other commitments pulling them back. As time goes on, and commitments increase, the challenge is to keep their interest in the department. I believe that instead of looking for 20 year people we, in this service, need to focus on 10 – 15 years. After this time frame, most are burnt out and losing interest in the fire service.

(“Final Report”, 2006, Feedback from Surveys Section)

## Appendix B

### Leading Reasons for Becoming a Volunteer Firefighter

- Need for a sense of belonging to something important.
- Desire for achievement.
- Increased responsibility.
- Desire to face a new challenge.
- Recognition and reward.
- Desire for growth and development (possibly for other careers).
- Need to have fun.
- Enjoying one's environment.
- Helping the community.
- Sense of obligation to the community.
- Helping a fellow person in need.
- Possibly saving a life.
- To someday become a career firefighter.
- My neighbor is one.
- I had a fire once and want to help protect other from that sort of devastation.

(USFA, 2007, p. 150)

## Appendix C

Feedback from Surveys: What would entice you as an incentive to stay involved with your volunteer organization?

- A pension plan, part-time licensing program. My fiancé would like more lenient time obligations.
- We are struggling with this issue; we currently pay our volunteers for time spent on a call but, not for call time. It just seems to be the general consensus that we would have more volunteers if they were paid for call time taken.
- A well run and organized organization. One where people are working together and not fighting each other. An organization that isn't afraid to take people's ideas and try them. An organization that isn't afraid of change. I think training opportunities such as the National Fire Academy, FDIC, MN state fire schools, etc. Keep members motivated also.
- Free or low medical through the city/state after 20 years of service.
- As long as I can, but some benefits would be nice.
- More volunteers.
- Better compensation, less federal mandatory training.
- Some type of additional income.
- Compensation.
- I will always stay involved no matter what.
- More pay.
- I would like to take less nights.

- I believe that the pension plan is the one and ONLY tool that we have. We need to have something that is out there to entice them to stay committed over the long haul. I'm not talking about 20 years either. I'm talking about that 10 year target. If they stay longer, great, but the average individual's most productive time resides in the 5 to possibly 15-year range. There are far too many distractions in today's life styles to keep interest levels up for long periods of time. The rising training requirements are also a major hurdle to overcome. The state needs to assist the firefighter's relief plans. Also it should be much easier to raise money, or use budget dollars, for our relief plans.
- Hourly pay is not the "hook" that will keep the young firefighters with our organizations. They join initially for many of the reasons listed above. Over time, as requirements increase, is where we are losing them. I believe that a \$2,500 to \$3,500 a year plan is in order for the volunteer departments. They also need to start vesting times sooner and have them fully vested at 15 years versus 20. Being able to carry over your time served from one department to another is also a must.  
  
After reaching the 15 - year mark there should be incentive to stay an additional 5 - years and so on. Most plans are at 20 years because they cannot afford anything else and it is too much work to try and make a change within the city government.  
  
I wish I had more time to organize my thoughts on this topic. I truly believe that this is a crucial retention tool that needs desperate attention soon.

(“Final Report”, 2006, Feedback from Surveys Section)

## Appendix D

## Volunteer Incentives

- Select a member of the year or month, for both operational and administrative positions.
- Ask local merchants for discounts or gift certificates for volunteers at local businesses.
- Recognize volunteers who complete training courses with certificates, plaques, or by featuring them in the local newspaper.
- Award outstanding volunteers with subscriptions to fire or EMS magazines.
- Cover the reasonable expenses associated with sending a volunteer to a special out-of-town training class.
- Award outstanding members with all-expense paid trips to State Firefighter Association meetings or training conferences.
- Award a top responder with a family get-away trip to a local hotel or resort.
- Occasionally excuse members who have given certain numbers of years of service from work details or mandatory duty nights.
- Excuse the "member of the month" from housework.
- Exempt volunteers from local utility bills (water, trash, etc.).
- Issue officers fire department vehicles that they can take home.
- Give the top responder of the department a reserved parking spot.
- Give flowers to spouses on special occasions.
- Permit members to use the station washer and dryer for personal use.
- Provide an area and tools for car maintenance at the station.
- Provide free videos, cable television, and movie channels at the station.

- Create departmental trading cards with pictures of the volunteers (good for the kids).
- Provide physical fitness facilities at the station.
- Provide free meals to members on duty or at training.
- Give volunteers passes to local sporting events. (Local sporting teams often will donate to the department to give away.)

(USFA, 2007, pp. 111-112)

## Appendix E

## Volunteer Firefighter Motivation Survey

Question #1: Have you ever been, or are you currently, a volunteer firefighter?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	95.6%	194
No	4.4%	9
<i>Answered Question</i>		<i>203</i>
<i>Skipped Question</i>		<i>0</i>

Question #2: Which of the following best describes your current status within the fire service?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strictly all volunteer status	43.3%	88
Volunteer status, but may work part-time paid	4.4%	9
Paid status, but may volunteer while off-duty	20.2%	41
Strictly all paid status	28.1%	57
Retired, no current involvement with the fire service	3.9%	8
<i>Answered Question</i>		<i>203</i>
<i>Skipped Question</i>		<i>0</i>

Question #3: If you began your fire service career as a volunteer firefighter and are now paid, do you still volunteer in the fire service?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Question does not apply (strictly all volunteer status)	48.8%	99
Yes	22.7%	46
No	28.6%	58
If no, please briefly explain why not		41
<i>Answered Question</i>		<b>203</b>
<i>Skipped Question</i>		<b>0</b>

**Number**      **If no, please briefly explain why not.**

1. Have a second job.
2. I did volunteer for the first 20 years of my paid career. However, factors such as more work responsibilities and a desire to spend more time with my family caused me to stop participating in the volunteer system. However, as I am nearing retirement from my paid position, I expect to again become part of the volunteer ranks sometime in the future.
3. Burn-out.
4. I dedicate plenty of my time doing not paid services for the fire department. I actively work with Volunteers.

5. I was a full time firefighter, who served 5 years as Chief of a volunteer department.  
Couldn't "retire" as command and go back to a volunteer department without rank and my neighborhood department wouldn't consider other.
6. Not enough time.
7. Time constraints in previous years. Now that I am retired I am considering returning.
8. Never was a volunteer firefighter.
9. N/A.
10. I do not live in an area that has any combination or volunteer fire departments.
11. I use to, but I now serve as a deputy fire chief and just don't have time.
12. Time constraints.
13. Full time deputy chief for the local fire department where I live.
14. No desire.
15. But did volunteer for a few years before full time work and family commitments made it too difficult. I work in the Fire Service in bushfire planning and community engagement (IAP2 model).
16. Work in a different state than I volunteered.
17. I was paid ff first & now do both.
18. I started as volunteer then was career, was injured and now volunteer.
19. I was both career and volunteer until I retired March 2011.
20. Too much politics and drama within the volunteer service.
21. Current position is administrative and I have too much to do to volunteer these days.

22. It is very difficult to volunteer due to the economy and having to work more than one job and raise a child. The politics involved in being a volunteer make it difficult and caused me to lose interest in being a volunteer.
23. I have not found the time to volunteer while being a full time Fire Chief. I am expected to respond 24/7 since we are a small department.
24. I have retired as a career and do nothing but volunteer now.
25. Yea, I volunteer though the dept. b/c they can't pay OT and I volunteer through the union.
26. Hired to full time.
27. Limited time. I teach at the State Fire Academy on the weekends, and the majority of my students are volunteer.
28. I do volunteer for Pub Ed but recently lost my infant son, so while I may volunteer I am focusing on family.
29. No opportunities to do so.
30. Question does not apply (strictly all paid status).
31. I volunteered then transitioned into a career role for a volunteer agency. I "retired" with 17 years and one day of combined service. (1.3 years Volunteer, and 15.9 paid) I left for better opportunities along with interior turmoil. I was hired on a 100% career department nearby.
32. I am the paid chief of the department and essentially I work as many hours as it takes with no extra pay (exempt status).
33. Chief (part-time) of Combination department, Full time Captain at all paid department.

34. Hired by same department.
35. Not enough time and our agency prohibits it based on FLSA laws.
36. Not permitted by my department.
37. Volunteered in same department hired in.
38. Began as paid; I still am also a volunteer in another district.
39. I am a Career FF in the City I currently live in; also I have a growing family and do not have time to volunteer for a fire department.
40. Currently working as a chief officer, so lack of time is big reason. Also, the community where I live is a paid FD.
41. I have always been employed by a career department.

Question #4: How long have you served in the fire service? (Please include all of your years of service, regardless of your volunteer and/or paid status.)?

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Less than 1 year	3.9%	8
1-3 years	9.9%	20
4-6 years	10.3%	21
7-9 years	6.4%	13
10-14 years	11.3%	23
15-19 years	8.9%	18
20-24 years	10.8%	22
25 years or more	38.4%	78
<i>Answered Question</i>		<b>203</b>
<i>Skipped Question</i>		<b>0</b>

Question #5: Thinking back to when you first decided to become a volunteer firefighter, which of the following reasons motivated you to volunteer? Select all that apply.

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Need for a sense of belonging to something important	44.8%	91
Desire for achievement	36.9%	75
Increased responsibility	17.7%	36
Desire to face a new challenge	53.7%	109
Recognition and reward	10.8%	22
Desire for growth and development (possibly for other careers)	32.0%	65
Need to have fun	23.6%	48
Enjoying one's environment	15.3%	31
Helping the community	76.4%	155
Sense of obligation to the community	40.9%	83
Helping a fellow person in need	57.1%	116
Possibly saving a life	44.3%	90
To someday become a paid firefighter	34.5%	70
Family member was a volunteer firefighter	23.6%	48
Neighbor was a volunteer firefighter	11.3%	23
Had a fire once, and wanted to protect others from that sort of devastation	3.9%	8
	<i>Answered Question</i>	203
	<i>Skipped Question</i>	0

Question #6: Now that you have been involved in the fire service, which of the following reasons continues to motivate you to remain in the fire service? Select all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Need for a sense of belonging to something important	35.0%	71
Desire for achievement	34.0%	69
Increased responsibility	37.9%	77
Desire to face a new challenge	49.3%	100
Recognition and reward	9.9%	20
Desire for growth and development (possibly for other careers)	35.0%	71
Need to have fun	25.6%	52
Enjoying one's environment	35.0%	71
Helping the community	77.8%	158
Sense of obligation to the community	56.2%	114
Helping a fellow person in need	69.0%	140
Possibly saving a life	43.8%	89
To someday become a paid firefighter	15.8%	32
Family member was a volunteer firefighter	7.9%	16
Neighbor was a volunteer firefighter	2.0%	4
Had a fire once, and wanted to protect others from that sort of devastation	0.5%	1
Other (please specify)	15.8%	32
<i>Answered Question</i>		203
<i>Skipped Question</i>		0

**Number      Other (please specify)**

1. Easy job, good pay.
2. When I transitioned from volunteer to paid it became a job. I miss the volunteer feeling.
3. It is my professional career for last 20 years.
4. It is my hobby, and they actually pay me to do it.
5. The opportunity to make a difference in the national fire service and as a chief of a department.
6. Love & Appreciation for the forces of nature.
7. People depend on you.
8. Participating with people (firefighters) that are now my friends.
9. Education - I'm an instructor.
10. It's just something I still love to do and want to share my experience with new incoming volunteers.
11. Job, pays the bills.
12. Can't get anyone to join so I can leave.
13. It is now in my blood and could not think of doing anything else.
14. Comrade in fire service.
15. It is my career.
16. Family.
17. Meaningful work environment and a sense of "family" within our fire service.
18. Found that I really enjoy the work.
19. The sense of accomplishment, help train new firefighters.

20. To train some of the new (know-it-all) guys so they don't make the same mistakes.
21. I have been in it so long I don't know what else I would do.
22. Important to not, I am and always have been a career FF.
23. Obligation to the other FF's who depend on me to be there.
24. Family lives in first due.
25. It feels natural. This is who I have become.
26. Now full time.
27. Help others to become career firefighters.
28. Great Training.
29. Career now, not volunteer anymore.
30. Career.
31. Officer rank.
32. Pay the bills at home.

Question #7: From the list below, please indicate the level of motivation for you to remain in the fire service? Select an answer in every row.

Answer Options	Doesn't motivate me	Motivates me a little	Motivates me a lot	Rating Average	Response Count
Need for a sense of belonging to something important	33	74	88	2.28	195
Desire for achievement	31	84	80	2.25	195
Increased responsibility	38	81	74	2.19	193
Desire to face a new challenge	18	66	111	2.48	195
Recognition and reward	103	71	17	1.55	191
Desire for growth and development (possibly for other careers)	50	69	75	2.13	194
Need to have fun	52	88	51	1.99	191
Enjoying one's environment	27	90	74	2.25	191
Helping the community	7	37	151	2.74	195
Sense of obligation to the community	26	61	108	2.42	195
Helping a fellow person in need	9	42	144	2.69	195
Possibly saving a life	16	61	111	2.51	188
To someday become a paid firefighter	111	28	38	1.59	177
Family member was a volunteer firefighter	129	30	18	1.37	177
Neighbor was a volunteer firefighter	144	22	9	1.23	175
Had a fire once, and wanted to protect others from that sort of devastation	152	13	9	1.18	174
				<i>Answered Question</i>	200
				<i>Skipped Question</i>	3