

**Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy
Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report
October 20, 2021**

Meeting Schedule

December 3, 2020

March 10, 2021

August 31, 2021

The U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy (NFA) (Board) reviewed the NFA in 3 areas of responsibility and submits the following report for fiscal year (FY) 2021.

FY 2021 is going to be remembered as a challenging time by many across the world for the events that took place and those that did not as a result of the effects of COVID-19. Around the nation, career and volunteer fire and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel demonstrated their resolve by serving their communities and responding to incidents undeterred through the pandemic.

An examination of National Fire Academy programs to determine whether these programs further the basic missions, which are approved by the Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NFA continued to be a mission-critical organizational unit within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It directly supports FEMA's USFA mission to support citizens and first responders to ensure that, as a nation, we work together to build, sustain and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards.

On an annual basis, the NFA provides training and education to over 96,000 students on an annual basis (96,840 average over 5 years) of career and volunteer fire service personnel, through classes delivered in person on its Emmitsburg, Maryland, campus and through partnerships that enable 2- and 6-day classes to be offered around the nation with state and metropolitan fire training organizations and colleges/universities. The COVID-19 global pandemic continued to have a significant impact on the NFA's ability to deliver training opportunities in 2021 just as it did during FY 2020. This resulted in the cancellation of hundreds of classes in both Emmitsburg and around the nation.

NFA staff worked with its FEMA training partners at the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and Center for Domestic Preparedness to create robust guidelines. These guidelines were completed in close coordination with FEMA's medical, legal, safety and health, human resources, and leadership teams. The guidelines developed met those established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and various federal workplace health and safety directives. These guidelines included reduced campus population; social distancing; changes to the NFA's heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system's air exchange; student

temperature checks; increased sanitation practices; and changes to on-campus food service. The NFA staff actively engaged with local county health agencies to ensure established guidelines implemented at the NFA also met local requirements in addition to those of the CDC. In partnership with state fire training academies, the NFA continued to deliver off-campus classes on a regional basis. Procedures were developed to ensure NFA classes and instructors followed local/state health guidelines for the safety and health of students and instructors at each respective location. This was done with much success and enabled NFA staff to not only offer classes on a state-by-state basis, but also to reallocate NFA classes to other states that could host classes from those states that were unable to. With the majority of in-person on-campus NFA classes cancelled until the spring of 2021, the NFA offered additional classes to states that had the ability to host training.

While in-person, on-campus delivery classes were suspended until the spring of 2021, staff used the time to diligently develop new offerings, implement new and upgraded technology, provide quality control and updates to existing offerings, and enhance outreach and communication across all programs. For the first time ever, the NFA delivered several 2-day classes in a virtual format using the virtual platform Zoom. While the technology was basic and courses selected for this delivery platform were limited, it enabled the NFA to deliver more than 60 classes to career and volunteer fire and EMS personnel around the nation. This also enabled the NFA to reach students in remote communities around the country who have never had the opportunity to attend an NFA class. This outreach was successful, and plans are underway to continue the use of virtual deliveries to augment in-person classes.

NFA staff has continued to contract with subject matter experts (SMEs) to ensure that courses are current and relevant. The work of NFA staff is commendable as it works to embrace technology to meet the needs of the fire service during the COVID-19 pandemic. While technology does provide additional opportunities, it cannot replicate the student-instructor, student-student and student-staff interactions that take place on the NFA campus and during in-person regional classes. It is important to recognize that career and volunteer fire service personnel in many portions of our country do not have the ability to take advantage of NFA distance-learning opportunities — especially those in tribal and rural communities — because of a lack of digital infrastructure and connectivity.

The suspension of in-person delivery of classes at the NFA in Emmitsburg did have significant impacts on both the Managing Officer Program and the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program. The anticipated implementation of a new learning management system (LMS) in FY 2022 will directly address this gap in services and lead to more flexible delivery going forward.

NFA staff worked to transition those completing the fourth year of the legacy EFO Program into a Zoom format. While not an ideal environment, it enabled the participants in the final year of this program to successfully complete their studies and earn a certificate of completion. NFA staff worked to convert the third year EFO legacy class into a virtual format with no success due to the number of exercises and activities that require multiple participants and specialized equipment. This delay meant that training for these students would be halted until they could return to in-person classes at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) campus. Managing Officer students, and those in the new EFO Program, experienced similar delays

because of limitations and lack of an LMS. With the return of in-person classes at the NFA as of spring 2021, both Managing Officer and legacy EFO classes are being held in person with much success.

The pandemic also had a negative impact on the scheduled delivery of the new EFO Program. The suspension of in-person classes at the NFA, and no access to an LMS, delayed the program by approximately 1 year. NFA staff is working to update the classes that were created based on feedback received during pilot deliveries and is developing the remainder of the courses that will be offered in person and virtually as part of the updated EFO curriculum. Because of the importance of the EFO Program, the allocation of limited staff resources to this project, and the delays that have been encountered, the review and update of the Managing Officer Program has been halted by the NFA until next year at the earliest.

Table 1 provides a 5-year history of students applying for and accepted into the EFO and Managing Officer Programs.

Table 1: EFO and Managing Officer Program application data

	EFO Program			Managing Officer Program		
	Applied	Admitted	Admit %	Applied	Admitted	Admit %
FY 2017	268	163	60.8	218	153	70.2
FY 2018	298	189	63.4	240	153	63.8
FY 2019	252	37	14.7	229	129	56.3
FY 2020	145	0	0.0	267	85	31.8
FY 2021	244	89	36.5	240	100	41.7
Total	1,207	478	39.6	1,194	620	51.9
Average	241.4	95.6	35.1	238.8	124	52.8

Note: The information provided in this chart came from the FY reports in the NETC admissions system. The numbers may be different in other documents based on the way the data is included in each line or category. It may also be different based on when the data was pulled since the information is entered continuously.

NFA staff has engaged in active communications and outreach efforts with not only students and instructors, but also with national fire and EMS stakeholder organizations. The use of social media as a communications vehicle has also been embraced.

The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) under the National Fire Programs (NFP) division at USFA has been working with the NFA to update NFIRS training for program managers as well as end users. The “National Fire Incident Reporting System: Program Management” course will now include how fire departments can access their own data through the data warehouse to efficiently use the data submitted to the NFIRS national database. Currently, NFIRS captures data on more than 29 million incidents a year. Additionally, 27 NFIRS training videos have been made available to meet training needs for NFIRS users who are using the modernized screens.

In partnership with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), the inaugural NFIRS Week, held from Feb. 22-26, was a success, with over 1,400 participants participating in 5 different webinars. Plans are underway for next year's event.

In the spring of 2020, the National Fire Data Center (NFDC) NFIRS team created a national NFIRS Special Study and dashboard to provide counts of COVID-19 occurrence or suspicion of COVID-19 presence during the fire service incident response. While the NFIRS COVID-19 Special Study is optional for the fire service, as of Oct. 20, 2021, the study reported 11.9 million incidents indicating COVID-19 was a factor during responses. The NFIRS COVID-19 Special Study links 2,070,404 fire service personnel responses to 574,697 incidents in which COVID-19 was either confirmed or suspected, as of Oct. 10.

To address COVID-19 issues specifically related to fire service incident response, the NFDC NFIRS team quickly created its first-ever special study dashboard to capture data in 2020. The NFIRS COVID-19 Special Study has reported 11,320,506 responses to date from 10,773 reporting fire agencies. The study also shows the impact that COVID-19 has had on on-duty firefighters with 74 fatalities reported as of Oct. 20, 2021.

NFIRS Modernization 10 was implemented in October 2020. It enhanced the user's experience with the system both on data entry and retrieval and provides a single sign-on portal and self-reset account features that have been requested for many years. With the modernization, the NFDC will begin to focus on data quality. Of the more than 30,000 fire departments in the United States, approximately 6,000 do not report their fire data to NFIRS.

An update of the document "America Burning" is underway with the IAFC and anticipated for completion by the end of 2021. This process involved bringing together a broad base of both fire service and non-fire service constituents to ensure that all aspects on the continuing American fire problem are considered. Because of our nation's wildfire issues, the document, "America Burning: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)," is also being completed by the NFP staff, SMEs and contractors. The Board is supportive of the enhanced emphasis on wildland urban interface (WUI) to include the pursuit of funded positions, development of an additional training curriculum and enhanced delivery.

The NFA continues to play a vital role by serving as a single point of contact for national, state, local, tribal and territorial fire and EMS stakeholder groups by soliciting their input on course development, delivery and outreach. The NFA also supports federal partners, including the Department of Justice/Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Department of Defense (DOD); and other components. The NFA has also established and maintains partnerships with state and federal wildland fire agencies. In addition to its federal partners, the NFA continues to work closely with all major fire and EMS stakeholders daily.

National Fire Academy Overview

Resident classes are reserved for those requiring high-level discussion/interaction, specialized simulation or modeling capabilities, close supervision and counsel, or the introduction of new

subject areas. The demand for these successful programs has created a backlog of students requesting admission. This has been compounded by COVID-19. The NFA continues to leverage its resources through delivery of regional and state courses through its partnerships with state and local training providers and a growing number of online distance-learning courses.

The suspension of in-person training delivery at the NETC campus resulted in innovative ideas with virtual deliveries and enhanced partnerships with state fire training academies.

As mentioned previously, the NFA staff embraced Zoom deliveries by identifying 8 2-day classes that could quickly and easily be converted into a virtual delivery format. Zoom has never been used by the NFA for course delivery. This innovation enabled 62 classes to be delivered to 1,389 students. The Zoom delivery format enabled students from every corner of the nation to participate in an NFA class. For many of these individuals, it was their first exposure to the NFA.

Many states were unable to deliver planned 2- and 6-day classes offered by the NFA due to various local and state health and safety guidelines. The COVID-19 pandemic also had a negative impact on State Weekends planned for the NFA campus. Rather than have these classes go unused, NFA staff worked to reallocate these classes to states that were able to host in-person deliveries. Through this innovative scheduling model, 312 classes were offered to 5,557 participants. This is an increase of 101 classes and an increase of students by 1,642 from FY 2020.

The suspension of on-campus classes at the NFA in Emmitsburg had the largest negative impact on training due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The NFA was only able to offer 131 in-person classes, once it was safe to do so, to 1,901 participants. This is a decrease from FY 2020 by 2 classes and 953 participants. As noted above, additional 2- and 6-day classes were made available through our state delivery network due to classes not being able to be delivered in Emmitsburg.

While in-person classes at the NFA campus were unable to be offered until April 2021, online training opportunities were embraced around the nation. A total of 69,287 fire and EMS personnel attended online classes offered by the NFA. This is an increase of 9,036 from FY 2020, or 15%. The primary use of online classes was the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), which has its courses hosted by the NFA. While the primary audience of NWCG classes are state, tribal and federal wildland firefighters, many state and local structural fire agencies with WUI responsibilities also access these online training opportunities. One example of a state fire training system accessing this system is Oregon, which had more than 400 members of the National Guard, already trained as wildland firefighters, complete their classroom elements of recertification training by using this system.

Innovation at the state fire training level continued with NFA State Fire Training Grant funds. State fire training organizations offered 1,092 classes to 16,196 participants. This is an increase of 179 classes and 3,101 participants from FY 2020, or 7.7% and 9.0%, respectively. State partners also embraced virtual learning delivery formats during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide much-needed professional development opportunities to career and volunteer fire and EMS personnel in their respective states.

Overall, the combined efforts of the NFA in FY 2021 resulted in 96,584 participants receiving NFA training through 2,068 offerings around the nation. This is an increase of 252 offerings and 12,195 participants, or 13.9% and 14.5%, respectively, from FY 2020.

The EFO Program saw significant national interest with 244 applications submitted for consideration for 150 available seats.

Table 2 represents the course topics and the number of those courses that were cancelled due to the pandemic in FY 2021.

Table 2: FY 2021 course backlog

FY 2021 course backlog	
Commercial Fire Sprinkler System Plans Review (R0263)	16
Command and Control of Incident Operations (R0312)	61
Fire Inspection Principles I (R0390)	38
Plans Review for Fire and Life Safety (R0393)	37
Fire and Emergency Services Training Program Management (R0445)	23
Managing Effective Fire Prevention Programs (R0671)	12
New Executive Chief Officer (R0763)	20
Fire Investigation: Essentials (R0772)	115
Fire Investigation: Electrical Systems (R0776)	15
Fire Investigation: Case Preparation and Testimony (R0790)	19

Note: The information provided in this chart came from the FY reports in the NETC admissions system. The numbers may be different in other documents based on the way the data is included in each line or category. It may also be different based on when the data was pulled since the information is entered continuously.

The following charts reflect the student completions in each of the course delivery areas during FY 2021.

Table 3: Course delivery student completions

FY 2020 and 2021 program participation comparison								
	FY 2020 final		FY 2021 preliminary		Difference		Difference	
	Offerings	Attendees	Offerings	Attendees	Offerings	Attendees	Offerings	Attendees
NFA sponsored								
Resident:								
2-day	20	428	23	342	3	-86	15.0%	-20.1%
2/6-day	83	1852	69	917	-14	-935	-16.9%	-50.5%
6-day (pilot)	3	68	7	120	4	52	133.3%	76.5%
10-day	23	506	32	522	9	16	39.1%	3.2%
Subtotal - Resident	129	2854	131	1901	2	-953	1.6%	-33.4%
Off-campus:								
2-day	172	3102	201	3270	29	168	16.9%	5.4%
6/10-day	16	318	31	531	15	213	93.8%	67.0%
Mediated	23	495	18	367	-5	-128	-21.7%	-25.9%
Virtual			62	1389	62	1389	100.0%	100.0%
Subtotal - Off-campus	211	3915	312	5557	101	1642	47.9%	41.9%
Total - NFA sponsored	340	6769	443	7458	103	689	30.3%	10.2%
State sponsored								
6-day	641	9042	799	11777			24.6%	30.2%
Approved	272	4053	293	4419	21	366	7.7%	9.0%
Total - State sponsored	913	13095	1092	16196	179	3101	19.6%	23.7%
College	563	4274	533	3643	-30	-631	-5.3%	-14.8%
LMS		60251		69287		9036		15.0%
Total - NFA	1816	84389	2068	96584	252	12195	13.9%	14.5%

Note: The information provided in this chart came from the FY reports in the NETC admissions system. The numbers may be different in other documents based on the way the data is included in each line or category. It may also be different based on when the data was pulled since the information is entered continuously.

The Board commends NFA staff for the partnership it has established with its on-campus neighbors at FEMA EMI. This partnership enables the 2 organizations to not only share classroom facilities but also includes each organization sharing the training opportunities of the other with their respective stakeholders.

The NFA staff continues to pursue new applications for technology in course delivery, administration and information dissemination. The NFA continues to add courses to the materials download feature, giving state fire training agencies and contract instructors direct access to NFA 2- and 6-day course materials. This provides users with real-time access to NFA course materials. Currently, 60 courses are available that state fire training offices can download. Access to these course materials is also available to state EMS organizations.

The NFA awards continuing education units (CEUs) for all NFA courses through the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET). This year, the NFA has been recognized as its own IACET-accredited provider. This is extremely beneficial to a growing number of NFA students who are required through their departments and/or states to meet continuing education requirements for certification. For FY 2021, 1,644 students were awarded 7,750 CEUs for completing multiple offerings of 31 NFA courses. In addition, the NFA is a “Preferred Provider” with the International Code Council (ICC). This program recognizes and promotes ICC-approved educational opportunities as they relate to codes, standards, building construction and other subject areas.

The American Council on Education (ACE) reviewed and approved 21 NFA courses in November 2020. 8 of these courses were new, and 13 reviewed by ACE were for the 3-year re-review requirement. It is important to note that 1 of the new EFO classes was evaluated and approved at the graduate level, which was a goal of the Board when it asked NFA staff to update the EFO Program to increase its academic rigor while compressing the time commitment of participants from 4 to 2 years. The ACE review process provides an independent and objective third-party assessment of the NFA’s academic quality, as well as a tangible benefit for students who can use the credits to pursue higher education through other academic institutions.

NFA’s Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) program connects the NFA with 2- and 4-year colleges and universities engaged in fire and emergency services degree and certificate programs. More than 100 colleges and universities are currently active in the FESHE program. The FESHE Recognition certificate is an acknowledgement that a collegiate EMS degree program meets the minimum standards of excellence established by FESHE professional development committees and the NFA. FESHE concentrates on degree programs that emphasize firefighting response, fire prevention, fire administration and EMS management that lead to an associate or bachelor degree. More outreach is planned in FY 2022 to increase awareness of FESHE to colleges and universities not currently involved in the FESHE process. Long-term partnerships will explore high school-based programs that are making youth aware of career opportunities in emergency services.

The NFA continued a systematic study of its resident courses with students and their supervisors to determine long-term training effectiveness. During FY 2021, 218 students and 134 supervisors responded to the Long-Term Evaluation. As with previous years’ responses, students indicated that they were able to transfer the training skills and learning to their jobs, and supervisors reported improved performance. The data shows:

Table 4: Long-Term Evaluation results

Long-Term Evaluation reporting elements	2018	2019	2020	2021
Students reporting they were able to apply NFA training at home	91.0%	94.3%	93.9%	88.1%
Students reporting NFA training improved their job performance	97.1%	96.3%	96.4%	91.8%
Students reporting they shared NFA training with their peers	97.9%	95.1%	97.2%	91.7%
Students reporting they conducted formal courses with NFA material	24.8%	23.6%	24.2%	17.0%
Students reporting they established new policies and procedures based on NFA training	77.1%	72.5%	70.8%	63.2%
Supervisors reporting improved performance from NFA training	90.9%	89.4%	92.3%	92.5%
Supervisors reporting improved departmental performance	91.1%	86.9%	91.4%	91.7%
Supervisors who say they will recommend NFA training to others	97.4%	96.4%	96.9%	96.2%
Supervisors reporting NFA benefits outweigh costs	94.7%	92.4%	95.2%	93.9%

Note: Data reported was derived from NFA Long-Term Evaluation forms sent to both students and their supervisors 4 to 6 months after the NFA training class ended. This information comes from the Training, Administration, Planning and Analysis Branch.

An examination of the physical plant of the National Emergency Training Center to determine the adequacy of the facilities for the National Fire Academy

The size, age and scope of the NETC campus facility continues to offer both challenges and opportunities. The historic nature of many of the NFA buildings also needs to be noted due to the complexity this adds to the ongoing maintenance and repair work done on campus. On behalf of students and other stakeholders, the Board appreciates the tremendous support FEMA has provided to address capital improvement and maintenance issues on campus. We applaud the continued outstanding work of the NETC Management, Operations and Support Services (MOSS) Division to manage the physical plant and numerous activities held on campus each year. We would be remiss if we did not also acknowledge the hard work done to implement and maintain COVID-19 health and safety guidelines for students, staff, instructors and others on campus at NETC.

While much progress has been made, particularly relating to Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and energy efficiency, deferred maintenance continues to be a critical issue. There continues to be a significant deferred maintenance need at the NETC. Replacement of aging roofs and HVAC systems on campus is greatly appreciated and long overdue. The HVAC and roof replacement schedule, as proposed by NETC’s MOSS, needs to be completed in a timely manner. With a deferred maintenance list of more than \$18 million anticipated over the next 5

years, the Board strongly recommends that FEMA allocate a significant amount of additional funds to maintain the NETC campus. The Board commends FEMA and NETC staff in their ongoing efforts to upgrade and maintain the aging physical infrastructure.

The replacement of the more than 20-year-old fire alarm and detection system on the entire campus is a priority not just for life safety but because the USFA should be the role model for the nation in the fire prevention arena. The Board is pleased with the work done to replace the fire alarm and detection system in various buildings on campus to date and appreciates that the work should be completed by the end of FY 2022.

The NETC campus also needs a state-of-the-art physical fitness, health and wellness center for use by students, instructors and staff so the NFA can lead the fire service by example as it does in so many other areas.

Installation of solar panels on appropriate campus facilities now spans 6 buildings with work underway on the seventh (Building J). The goal of all buildings having solar panels would be the desired outcome of the Board, but we realize that this is not realistic, nor possible, because of the historic preservation constraints many of the structures on campus are governed by. The replacement of lighting fixtures with energy-efficient (i.e., light-emitting diode) solutions is recognized and appreciated. The Board commends MOSS staff for its ongoing efforts to seek energy-efficient options across the campus.

The Board is pleased to see the work at the main entrance completed. The temporary trailer that had been the welcoming point for students, staff and guests for many years is gone. New structures for security officers and a new welcome center are now in place. The work done by NETC's MOSS and NFA staff to create a secure and professional appearance while preserving the historic trees along the main entryway is appreciated.

The Board was appreciative of the long-standing efforts to create and implement an online admissions application process for NETC. This system is currently being used by EMI students and on-campus NFA students. Online efforts will move to off-campus NFA classes during FY 2021. The ultimate goal is a paperless admission system.

The area of information technology (IT) and systems remains a priority for the Board. The NFA needs better technology for a robust, academically sound and secure online learning platform. Simply stated, the staff at the NFA are very limited in the ways they can communicate with students and support off-campus programs. Specifically, the NETC needs enhancements to the campus-wide wireless system to include unrestricted Wi-Fi, file-sharing capabilities and access to information via cloud-based solutions.

The timely replacement of the LMS continues to be a high priority for the Board. The lack of the LMS is impacting the work of the NFA and leading to frustration and a lack of confidence by students and staff. This is an urgent matter that needs immediate resolution.

To meet current technology requirements, the NFA needs to continue to upgrade the classroom environment. Although there have been recent improvements, students and Board members

experience issues with internet connectivity and campus-wide access. As an example, the DHS/FEMA firewall prevents access to many sites necessary for research, collaboration and data storage.

While the Board understands the complex nature and importance of information security and the need for DHS/FEMA to protect the work of full-time staff and various assets, there is an immediate and business need for the NFA to be able to communicate with students off campus. In comparison, the DOD has figured out a way for military service academies to conduct their educational programs for the men and women attending these institutions using current technology without impacting IT security. We ask that DHS/FEMA give the IT needs of the USFA and NFA the same attention so that they can accomplish their mission of serving fire service personnel across the country. The Board recommends appropriate funding and DHS/FEMA IT staff support to improve internet and data access on and off campus, and the campus IT infrastructure to support the growing number of courses that are delivered to complete the FEMA mission.

With the growth and importance of IT, the Board once again recommends that the NFA and USFA seek a full-time Chief Information Officer and create a branch to oversee and manage all enterprise functions. The Board appreciates the time and attention given to the needs of the NFA campus and students by the FEMA Chief Information Office to this important matter.

An examination of the funding levels for National Fire Academy programs

The USFA and the NFA continue to demonstrate commendable stewardship with respect to fiscal responsibility. While the operational budget has remained relatively stable, inflation results in higher costs for operations. The USFA has had to leave several positions vacant as it does not have adequate funds to cover all the employees' salaries and benefits costs. It is imperative that the USFA and NFA receive an increase in funding to maintain their mission and the expected role they play within DHS/FEMA. This need is even more paramount due to the backlog and the need for training through the NFA caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The USFA bears the cost of NETC maintenance. Appropriate cost sharing needs to be addressed by FEMA.

The NFA is unique in the federal government because its specific mission is to train state, local, tribal and territorial first responders and their leaders, not primarily federal employees. A reduction in resident classes at the NFA would result in a degradation of incident management capabilities, community risk reduction, hazardous materials response, and arson detection and prosecution.

While there is a cost to both on-campus and off-campus training, it is important to recognize that every emergency and disaster starts and ends locally. To the extent that a community has a well-trained, well-led cadre of first responders, that emergency stays local. If it is poorly handled, or if it is so large that the local forces are overwhelmed, it may trigger a state and federal response. It is in the interest of both DHS and FEMA to try to keep local emergencies local. Currently,

NFIRS captures data on more than 29 million incidents a year over 24,000 reporting fire agencies.

While training has a cost, the lack of training is even more expensive in terms of life loss (both civilian and firefighter), property damage, litigation, economic impact and societal effects. According to the USFA data, in calendar year 2019, there were 65 on-duty firefighter fatalities and 3,704 civilian fatalities (<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/>). In calendar year 2020, there were 102 on-duty firefighter fatalities. The National Fire Protection Association estimated that there were 60,825 firefighter injuries in calendar year 2019. Reports from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health state that some of these deaths and injuries could have been averted through training. Above all else, the NFA was created to prevent those tragedies. The Board continues to recommend an emphasis on firefighter health and safety as a part of the overall training mission.

Unfortunately, the global COVID-19 pandemic required that all Board meetings be held in a virtual format, which did not enable the Board to visit the campus and evaluate facilities and programs in person as it has in previous years. We hope to return to campus next year.

The Board would like to thank the dedicated and passionate staff of the NFA, NFP and MOSS Divisions, who are responsible for the USFA's success.

The Board has concerns regarding delays that have been experienced in the past with the vetting and approval process for new Board members, and those who are seeking renewal. These delays of the past impacted the ability of the Board to carry out its tasks and Board meetings. This is noted not as a criticism of the USFA or NFA, but as a concern regarding the length of the federal process.

The Board applauds the USFA for 47 years of dedicated service in support of the nation's fire, EMS and emergency services in the unwavering pursuit of a safer nation.

Fiscal Year 2021 Board of Visitors

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