

Firefighting Content for Maryland & Beyond



VOLUME XIV: ISSUE III

# VOLUNTEER TRUMPET

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION



Winter Safety Tips  
2024 SMVFA ANTIQUE MUSTER  
EASTERN SHORE FIRES  
MARYLAND FOREST SERVICE



Photo by William Sherman





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## 10 Tips to Stay Safe on the Road this Winter

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, especially when driving. Snow, ice and sleet can increase the risk of accidents.

On average, winter weather directly or indirectly contributes to over 540,000 vehicular accidents in the United States. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that approximately 120,000 police-reported crashes in 2021 occurred during snowy or sleet conditions. Follow the tips below to stay safe on the road.

### 1 – Check the Weather Before You Go

Be aware of the winter risks in places you visit, from blizzards to avalanches to ice storms. Check the local weather forecasts and warnings before heading out.

### 2 – Get your Vehicle Winter Ready

Make sure your car is ready for winter weather. Consider installing snow tires.

### 3 – Maintain Your Vehicle

It is a good idea to keep your car regularly maintained throughout the winter season.

### 4 – Remove Snow and Ice from Your Car

Before driving in snowy weather, removing all snow and ice from your car's windows, roof and lights is crucial to ensure visibility and prevent accidents. This will help you see and be seen by other drivers.

### 5 – Slow Down and Increase Your Follow Distance

When driving, increase your following distance from 3-4 seconds to 5-6 seconds. It takes longer to slow down and stop on icy roads. Leave more space between your vehicle and the car in front of you. This will give you more time to react if you need to stop suddenly.

### 6 – Avoid Sudden Movements

Avoid sudden stops or sharp turns that can cause you to lose control of your car. Abrupt changes in speed or direction can cause your vehicle to skid or slide. When accelerating or decelerating, do so slowly and smoothly.

### 7 – Use Your Headlights

Visibility can be poor in snowy conditions, and using your headlights to see and be seen by other drivers is critical.

### 8 – Know How to Handle a Skid

If your car begins to skid, remain calm and steer in the direction you want to go. Avoid slamming on the brakes, which can cause your car to spin out of control.

### 9 – Know What to Do if You're Stranded

If stranded, you should display a sign that indicates you are in trouble. The National Weather Service suggests tying a bright-colored cloth to your antenna or door. When the snow lets up, raise the hood to signal for help.

### 10 – Keep an Emergency Kit in Your Car

In case of an emergency, it's essential to keep an emergency supply kit in your vehicle.

By following these tips, you can stay safe and avoid accidents while driving in winter weather. Remember, it's always better to be prepared and take extra precautions when the roads are hazardous. Stay safe, stay alert and stay #WinterReady!



# Editor's Corner



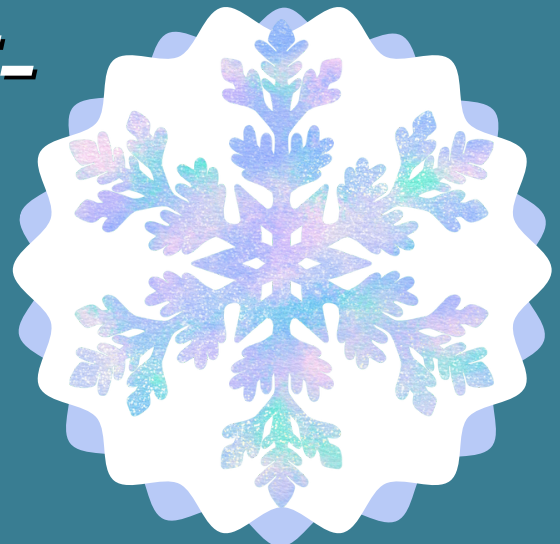
For my thirteenth topic, I would like to discuss the **significance of collaboration and the value of disagreements**. Recently, an election occurred, resulting in numerous changes across the nation. While it is crucial to focus on future progress, let us examine this from the perspective of fire and EMS services. Some of the most productive conversations I have experienced are disagreements within the firehouse. Engaging in respectful discussions on various topics can be highly educational. It is essential for both leadership and frontline personnel to understand each other's perspectives. One of the most detrimental factors in the volunteer fire service is a closed mindset. A closed mindset hinders growth and indicates an unwillingness to learn, which is detrimental to any organization. It is important to recognize that not every disagreement will lead to change, but it demonstrates professionalism and openness, which are beneficial to any relationship. As we all know, a healthy relationship is essential!

*Because this section of the newsletter is meant to share ideas and start conversations, I want to hear from the readership new topics that I should cover and ways that we can work on expanding the readership of the Trumpet. If you want me to write about an issue, please send ideas to Jonathan Dayton at [jonathan.m.dayton@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.m.dayton@gmail.com). About the Editor: Jonathan is a volunteer Firefighter/EMT serving Allegany County, MD. MSFA Committee Chairperson, Assistant Secretary, Allegany Garrett Counties Volunteer Fire Rescue Association Past President, President and Public Information Officer, Member of the Maryland Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council, and Nation Fire Service Speaker and Educator. Jonathan holds an associate's degree in Fire Science and bachelor's and master's degrees.*

*Jonathan*

## **-FIND THE SNOWFLAKE-**

We're back with the "FIND THE \_\_\_ Challenge" for this month! This time you are tasked with finding the snowflake (to the right), hidden somewhere throughout this issue. Starting on **November Jan 1st**, once you find it you must email Stephen Jenkins ([sjenkins@msfa.org](mailto:sjenkins@msfa.org)). It can be located on ANY page EXCEPT the front and back cover, and they will not be all together. The first correct person to discover it will win the opportunity to submit one free 1/4 page ad!





# MSFA News

## Is your Department “NERIS-Ready”? NERIS Updates Available Here: <https://fsri.org/programs/neris>

NERIS Version 1 Launch to Support Data Modernization for the Fire Service:

“On November 4th, the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) launched, marking a major advancement in incident data collection for U.S. fire departments. This secure, cloud-based platform delivers all-hazards data and analytic tools that will empower fire and EMS leaders to enhance community safety and make better operational decisions. NERIS is built to address emerging challenges, including lithium-ion battery fires, wildland-urban interface incidents, and extreme weather conditions. After extensive beta testing with over 60 departments, NERIS Version 1 will now onboard 100 additional departments by the end of 2024.

This is part of a phased adoption strategy that will test the new platform at every step. Beginning in January 2025, NERIS will undergo a 12-month nationwide rollout, eventually replacing the legacy National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) as the primary reporting tool for fire and emergency response for the nation’s approximately 27,000 fire departments.” -FSRI.

### MSFA Committee Meeting Dates/Notices:

\*All Committee Chairs: Please send any upcoming meeting/training dates to [KLoveless@msfa.org](mailto:KLoveless@msfa.org) so they can be posted in the weekly reports. Please send any requests to use the Zoom link at least two weeks before your meeting.

- The Convention Committee will meet on January 6, 2025, at the Odenton VFD. Steering committee at 1800hrs. Full committee at 1900 hrs. An email to all committee members will be sent shortly.
- The Safety Committee will meet on February 9, 2025, at SHA Hanover Complex Blvd, Hanover, MD, from 1100-1400 and again on May 4, 2025, at the Sudlersville from C 1100-1400. Contact Chair Jon Black with any questions at [cdrb2115@comcast.net](mailto:cdrb2115@comcast.net)

### Convention 2025; June 15 – 19, 2025, Ocean City, MD

The Request for Instructor Proposals is Now Open: Teach at the Beach in 2025!

- If you are an instructor and have a relevant topic to cover next June, we would love to hear from you!
- Seminars should focus on state or federal policy or issues and have a positive impact on Maryland’s fire and emergency services. Seminars intended solely to promote for-profit programs or activities that specifically benefit an individual or organization will not be considered.
- Seminars should be either 1.5 hours - 4 hours in length. The only exceptions are PDI courses and the EMT Skills class.
- Proposals should be submitted by January 15th. Submit your seminar here: <https://convention.msfa.org/registration/instructor-proposal/>
- Online Links: Department Credentials/Registration, Exhibitor Registration, Sponsorships, and Program book ad submissions will open on January 1st, 2025.
- Convention Website: The Convention and Conference website will be updated shortly to reflect all events and programs for 2025. Please visit the site often for all important convention content! <https://convention.msfa.org/>

### Upcoming Training Opportunities

- January 18, 2025; Mark G. Falkenhan Operational Leadership Seminar; Carroll County Public Safety Training Center. Register here <https://www.mfri.org/register/SEM-136-S001-2025/seminars>
- February 22-23, 2025 - Maryland Weekend at the NFA The 2025 brochure and registration application are located here: <https://zone.mfri.org/izone/schedule/export/file/SEM/119/S001/2025>
- March 22, 2025 - Public Fire and Life Safety Seminar, 0800-1700; MFRI Headquarters, College Park, MD. Registration will open soon.



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**Scott Cain**

*26 years firefighting*

*8 years in insurance*

[vfis.com/scott](http://vfis.com/scott)

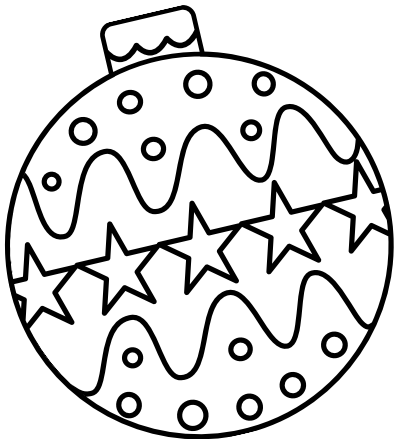
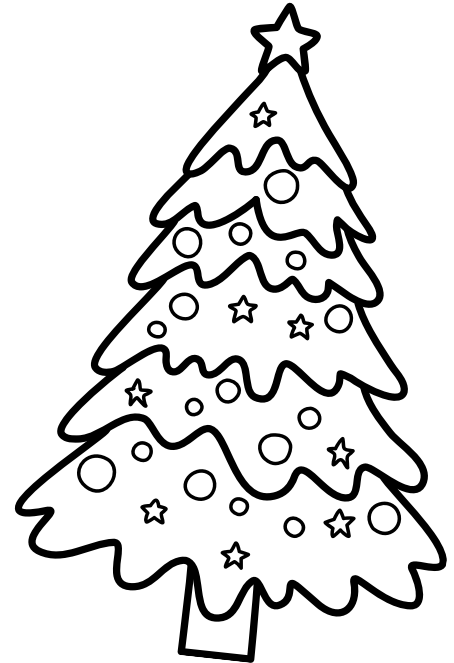
800.233.1957





# KIDS CORNER

Hey kids! Fire Dog Spotty has some coloring pictures for you! Get some crayons, markers, or colored pencils and let your creativity flow! (Ask a trusted adult for help!)

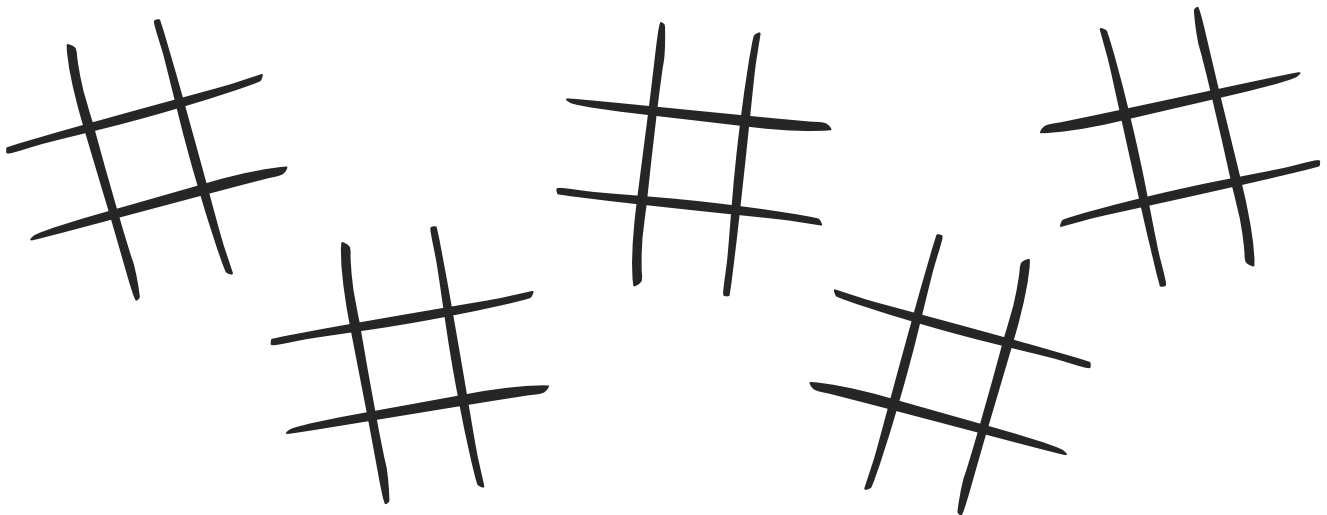




## PREVIOUS ISSUE WORD SEARCH ANSWER KEY:

V A P P L E S S D I O Q V Z E  
P W H N N D S W E A T E R R G  
P H L C Z H U B O Z H Z W W  
Q T I A E V O E F C M K C F N  
L F H A Q A V J K I P C B A Z  
F J X A W Q F N G E W P L L H  
G V K I N T U R K E Y U A L U  
T I O Y T K J H D U G M N U D  
B E N L M L S H L I O P K S X  
G A T N U T W C Y J S K E J D  
Q N E R A N E S I D X T M Q  
O X F A E M T K Z V R N X R R  
A Z X D R N O E E B T A R J K  
F H U W C M L N E X Q N N T R  
R C U T R H E G U R V H G T O

## CHALLENGE YOUR FREINDS IN TIC-TAC-TOE!



**The Odenton Volunteer Fire Company is proud to have eight Life Members with over 50 years and counting of dedicated active service.**

*Wylie L. Donaldson, Jr. – 72-years of service*  
*Wilbert "Bill" H. Lewis – 63-years of service*  
*William "Bill" P. Rose, Jr. – 61-years of service*  
*Charles "Chuck" F. Olson – 54-years of service*  
*David W. Lewis – 52-years of service*  
*Craig B. Harman – 52-years of service*  
*Timothy "Tim" A. Hammond – 52-years of service*  
*Robert L. (Bob) Rose – 51-years of service*

It is noted that David Lewis is Past President of the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA) and is current President of the Cumberland Valley Firemen's Association. Craig Harman is in his last year as company President. Wylie Donaldson holds the title of Chief Emeritus and Chuck Olson holds the title of President Emeritus. Tim Hammond is an active apparatus driver and still has a regular duty night. Bob Rose is also an apparatus driver, when needed. Seven of the members are very active on their respective committees. Wylie, David, Craig, and Bob all served as President of the Anne Arundel County Volunteer Firefighters Association (AACVFA). All eight of the above are in the AACVFA Hall of Fame with Wylie, Bill L., David, Craig, and Bob in the MSFA Hall of Fame. External awards for these gentlemen are many. We salute these members for their commitment to the volunteer fire service.



**PUBLIC  
EDUCATION  
NETWORK**

**MEET OUR  
REPRESENTATIVE  
FROM MARYLAND**



## Teresa Ann Crisman

**Community Risk Reduction Director  
Office of the Fire Marshal – Maryland State Police**

When asked her favorite part of being an NFPA fire and life safety network representative, Teresa said, "I think it is the best program we have to support each other. The program is all about helping each other and networking."





2024 Southern Maryland Volunteer Firemans Association Antique Apparatus Muster - La Plata, MD  
JPC Photography  
tony@jpcphotography.com



**Chip's Firehouse Logbook**  
**More Eastern Shore Fires**  
**By Chief Clarence "Chip" Jewell**

Salisbury was not the only town struck by a major fire on the Eastern Shore. The town of Delmar, situated north of Salisbury, straddling the Maryland and Delaware border, was destroyed by two major fires. The first was in 1892, and the second was in 1901. Many of the towns on the Eastern Shore had major fires in the 1890s, especially on the Lower Shore. When neighboring fire departments sent aid to those towns, they would load their equipment up on a train that would take them to the town, where they would unload and start to fight the fire.

In the case of Delmar in 1892, it was noted that there was no source of water to put out the fire. Water had to be taken from the tanks on the train engines sitting in the rail yard at the time. It would not be until 1911 before Delmar would have a water utility that would supply fire hydrants and sufficient water pressure to put out fires. The following report was published in the Salisbury Advertiser on August 20, 1892:

Eighty-seven houses burned, including Every Business Place, the Hotel, the Railroad Station, and M. E. Church Fire was seen to burst from the roof of the building, corner of Railroad Avenue and Grove Street, occupied by Mr. Tyre as a post office. Being a frame structure, the flames, fanned by a brisk wind from the north-west, soon enveloped the entire building, and before the thoroughly aroused populace could take action, the fire was spreading from house to house and continued to spread until ten acres on which thickly stood eighty-seven buildings of various kinds, mostly wood, had been burned over.

The burned district extends from Grove Street on the north, down Railroad Avenue on the west three squares south to Elizabeth Street, and east from Railroad Avenue two squares to Second Street. In this territory stood every business house, the hotel, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the railroad station, all of which were burned. The fire did no damage west of the railroad track. The origin of the conflagration is supposed to have been the igniting of a match by a mouse in an old sugar barrel that stood in the hall on the second floor of the post office building.

The Salisbury fire service responded promptly to an appeal for help, but because Delmar is an inland town with no artificial water supply, "... having no natural streams nearer than two miles, our boys could do little toward keeping up a stream of water. What water they did get was drawn off the tanks of a number of engines."

The 1901 Delmar fire consumed 10 acres, destroying nearly every building in its wake. The fire destroyed almost the entire Delaware side of the town. According to the Baltimore Sun, the fire started in the second story of a barn owned by William T. Sirman. Within minutes, the fire spread throughout the town. A special telegram was sent requesting the Salisbury Fire Department. An engine and hose wagons were loaded on a



Special train within an hour of the discovery of the fire. It was reported that the train ran the 7 miles to Delmar in 5 minutes. The lack of water hampered the firefighting efforts. The only available water was taken from railroad engines. The engines would run to a water tank, fill up the locomotive tank with water, and the fire department engines would pump from them.

The fire burned an area from East State St. to Front St. to Grove St. to Second St. to New Street. To Railroad Ave. Only a brick structure owned by Eligah Freeny was left standing. In all, more than 60 buildings were destroyed by the fire. It was reported that the winds were blowing at hurricane force, thus rapidly spreading the fire. Fire Chief Welsh of the Wilmington, Delaware Fire Department ordered two steam pumpers to respond to the town, but when the engines were being loaded onto rail cars, word was received that there was no water for the engines to use to fight the fire, and the engines did not respond.

On November 23, 1888, a major fire nearly destroyed the entire town of Pocomoke City. Reports in the Baltimore Sun advised that almost 70 buildings were burned, including the town hall, two hotels, 38 stores, and several dwellings. People attempted to move their belongings from their houses in advance of the flames. The fire was believed to have started as the result of a defective flue at Dr. D. J. Truitt's drugstore. The flames extended into the roof when the fire was discovered, consuming the entire building. A heavy north wind soon pushed the fire into surrounding structures, consuming everything in its path. Many merchants had fully stocked their stores for the winter and lost nearly everything. The fire was not brought under control until approximately 10 PM.

Another serious fire that destroyed much of the area along the Pocomoke River occurred in August 1900. The fire started at the Schoolfield & Barnes saw and planing mill. The fire burnt approximately 6 acres of buildings, lumber, and cordwood and threatened the buildings of New York, Philadelphia, and Norfolk Railroad and several residences. The fire was discovered around 6 o'clock and spread to the river shore, consuming rafts, boats, and buildings. Railroad employees used a bucket brigade to save several houses. The drawbridge over the Pocomoke River was scorched, but it was saved and is still usable. In 1882, another Lower Shore town was nearly destroyed by fire. The fire broke out in Crisfield around 4 AM in the morning.



occupied by James Booth used as both a store and dwelling. By 10AM, the fire consumed a section of store houses and residences on the north side of the Eastern Shore Railroad. A strong northwest wind fanned the flames from Somer's Cover to the end of the wharf. According to the Baltimore Sun, two-thirds of the town's business district was destroyed. Booth was held by Magistrate Horsey after evidence of arson was found. Another man last name Hall was also arrested in the town of Westover in connection with the arson. Another fire in April of 1883, almost exactly one year later, destroyed 12 buildings in the lower part of Crisfield.

Crisfield was struck by fire again in 1884 when approximately 40 buildings were destroyed in a massive blaze. According to the Baltimore Sun, the fire was supposed to have started in the pool-room of John Burgess and believed caused by a defective flue or explosion of a gasoline lamp. The newly purchased steam fire engine was summoned and was able to at first help contain the fire, but a malfunction rendered the engine useless and the fire rapidly spread throughout the town. Railroad properties were not damaged. The steamer Eastern Shore docked on the wharf and used it's donkey engine pump to help wet down the wharf and save it from destruction. The first oyster building built in Crisfield was among the structures destroyed.

Crisfield continued to have destructive fires destroy large parts of the community. In March of 1887, a fire believed to be caused by a defective flue destroyed at least 7 houses along with barns and stables. The fire engine was summoned, but there was a lack of water. Another destructive fire occurred in May of 1912 when a fire broke out in an area of the town known as the Island of Jersey, home to scores of crab-picking and oyster houses. In addition to the actual structures, nearly a dozen boats used for oystering and crabbing were destroyed.

The fire fighters were no match for the extremely strong wind. The building of Tawes and Company was soon in flames with stored tanks of gasoline in inside. Fire shot 50 feet into the air, spreading to buildings occupied by J. E. Pruitt & Co. oyster packing and F. G. Elmore crab meat dealer, as well as other smaller crab and oyster operations. The large oyster packing operation of J. A. Stubbs was also consumed in flame. Nearly everything on the "island" was destroyed, even burning sailboats floated in the harbor. The large plant of the Crisfield Machine Company was one of the last buildings destroyed.

Crisfield continued to experience major fires into the 1900's. Major fires occurred in 1906, 1907 and 1914. One of the largest fires occurred in March, 1928 when a fire started in the Arcade Theater and nearly destroyed most of the business district. Fortunately, the nearly 50 people that were in the theater when it caught fire evacuated without panic. The Pennsylvania Railroad station, Atlantic and Pacific store, American Store, Commercial Hotel, Lyrie Theater, Tawes wholesale grocery, Eastern Shore Gas and Electric building, and several other downtown businesses were totally destroyed. Western Union

and the telephone company building were both destroyed, leaving the town without communication. Assistance from Pocomoke City, Princess Anne, Salisbury, Delmar, as well as Laurel and Seaford, Delaware sent assistance. The First Maryland Infantry, Company L, was called to duty to patrol the streets.

Most of the major fires that nearly destroyed the entire towns occurred on the Lower Shore. Though Easton and Cambridge have both experienced large fires in the last 150 years, none of the fires that I have researched in those Eastern Shore cities fires decimated either city, though the riots in Cambridge in 1967 did destroy large sections of the town due to civil unrest.

It is also interesting to note that, with the exception of the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904 and several large fires in the town of Mt. Airy, few fires destroyed cities on Western Shore. Possibly one reason larger fires primarily occurred on the Eastern shore is because most of the towns west of the Chesapeake Bay were primarily built with brick, not wood. The veins of red land dirt in Central Maryland and Western Maryland lent to several brick manufacturing plants that were built well before the Civil War. In my hometown of Frederick, nearly all the houses in the downtown area were made of brick and still standing today. The United Fire Company firehouse, which is still in use in Frederick, was built in 1848 primarily of brick.

Why then did Baltimore burn in 1904 when most buildings were brick and mortar, some buildings even considered "fireproof"? (See February 2018 Volunteer Trumpet article for more details on the Great Baltimore Fire) A tremendous explosion occurred within minutes of the first arriving units in Baltimore, totally involving the primary building with fire and setting fire to 7 adjacent buildings. Strong winds carried embers throughout downtown Baltimore and into many buildings that had shattered windows blocks away from the explosion allowing the embers to enter into the buildings and ignite contents. Additionally, trash and rubbish was piled in the alleyways between the downtown businesses, immediately igniting from burning embers. Many businesses had cloth canopy covers over the sidewalks that burned instantly upon the landing of an ember.

Another factor in the 1904 Baltimore fire was the lack of standard hose couplings. Thus, many responding fire departments were unable to hook hoses together or use Baltimore fire hydrants. Once the winds died down, a stand was made at Gwynn Falls that required 37 steam pumpers to pump directly from the river. Finally, the fire was contained, but smoldering ruins were still discovered as much as 7 months after the fire was considered extinguished.

As noted, the archives of the Baltimore Sun has been a great source of information for this column. I also want to thank the City of Salisbury and the Salisbury Fire Department for the picture of the 1886 Salisbury Fire in the last issue of the Volunteer Trumpet.

**Have a Happy and Safe 2025! CHIP**



**Celebrating 130 Years of Service:  
The Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office and  
Its Partnership with the Volunteer Fire Service**

In 2024, the Office of the Maryland State Fire Marshal marked a historic milestone—its 130th anniversary. As the oldest State Fire Marshal's office in the United States, the OSFM has protected Maryland's residents and property for over a century. Established in 1894, it also proudly holds the distinction of being the second-oldest state public safety agency in Maryland, following only the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Police, which was founded in 1868 as the State Oyster Police.

Since our beginning, we have worked closely with the Maryland State Firefighters Association to protect the state's residents. This partnership has been vital in shaping policies and laws, preventing fires, and educating the public on fire safety. Our long-standing collaboration remains focused on the shared mission of safeguarding Marylanders' lives and property.

Over the decades, the Office has undergone several transformations. Initially part of the Insurance Commission, the Fire Marshal's position was downgraded in 1916 after lawmakers deemed it redundant. However, in 1964, under Governor Tawes, the Office was revitalized and moved to the newly formed State Fire Prevention Commission. In 1970, it transitioned to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, where it remained for 27 years before becoming an integral part of the Maryland Department of State Police in 1997.

Throughout our history, the Office has remained at the forefront of fire safety efforts in Maryland. Our sworn deputies, fire safety inspectors, fire protection engineers, and professional staff have consistently worked to investigate fires, enforce critical safety regulations, and implement public education programs to prevent fires and save lives.

To commemorate our 130th anniversary, the OSFM, with the assistance of Major Dalaine Brady of the Maryland State Police, organized a month-long exhibition at the MSP Museum in Pikesville titled *From Obsolescence to Relevance: A 130-Year History of the Office of the State Fire Marshal*. The exhibition, which took place during October's Fire Prevention Month, allowed the public to learn about the agency's rich legacy and our continued efforts to prevent fires in Maryland communities.

We deeply value our long-standing partnership with the Maryland State Firefighters Association as essential to our legacy. Colonel Roland L. Butler, Jr. and I sincerely appreciate President Carey's presence at our celebration in October. Working alongside volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel across the state has been a privilege, and we are excited to continue this important partnership.

Together, we remain committed to creating a fire-safe Maryland for all.

**Acting State Fire Marshal Jason M. Mowbray**







As of mid-November, the Eastern United States, including Maryland, has been experiencing unusually dry conditions. Eastern and southern Maryland are currently experiencing severe drought and parts of western Maryland are even facing extreme conditions. This has caused a heightened degree of fire danger within the state which has increased the number of wildfires that fire departments and the MD Forest Service have responded to.



Type 4 engine at the Abell Fire

**From November 1st to 21st**, the State of Maryland enacted a **statewide burn ban**. This is the first time a statewide ban has been enacted since 2006 and only the fifth occurrence since Maryland became a state! Burn bans are a legal measure that help reduce human caused wildfires.

**What exactly constitutes as burning?** The burning in question during a burn ban refers to **open air burning**. This includes fire where any material is burned in the open or in a receptacle other than a furnace, incinerator, or other equipment connected to a stack or chimney. This means burning for reasons such as a **campfire or using charcoal are not allowed** during a burn ban, however a propane grill is allowed but not recommended near wooded areas.

Despite some rainfall, Maryland is still several inches behind average rainfall for the state during this time and we continue to be in a drought.

Though Maryland entered the burn ban on November 1st, we have been seeing the effects of the drought beginning in June. Since October 1st, the Maryland Forest Service has responded to 80 fires and counting, all of which being human caused. It is essential during this time to



Conducting "mop-up" operations at the Croom Road Fire



be aware of the burn ban and be mindful of your surroundings. The highest cause of wildfires right now is due to debris burning.

Fighting wildfires under these conditions has proven to be difficult. Spring and Fall are usually a good time for the forest service to conduct prescribed burn activities. This is due to foliage dying back and drying out as well as leaf fall allowing the sun to dry out the understory. This fact combined with drought conditions has also contributed to the difficulty in which it is to fight fire in these conditions. With this fall die back, there is also a thick layer of duff accumulating. What the forest service refers to as duff is decaying plant matter that covers the forest floor. When fire enters the duff, it makes it extremely difficult to put out entirely. This drought compounds the issue with the accumulating duff as the forest service has not been able to conduct any controlled burns this season to aid in reducing it. Wildland firefighters often work with limited amounts of water that has to either be hiked into the woods via hoses from brush trucks or with small tanks attached to UTVs. A large amount of water is needed especially with such high drought conditions to ensure these types of fires are out. The duff layer needs a large amount of water to be fully put out and can easily reignite again after being seemingly extinguished. This duff also helps retain a lot of heat to the ground which enables fire to get into the ground and start burning roots! A side effect of these ground fires is higher tree mortality than would normally be expected from normal wildfires due to all of this heat remaining in the ground due to the extreme drought.



Spreading wildfire in Wicomico County on the left and dozer constructed control line on the right

These types of fires are not only difficult to extinguish, but require days of patrolling to make sure they do not pop back up again. Another difficulty with fighting these types of fires is that something can happen that the forest service refers to as “skunking”. This is when a low grade fire burning close to the ground slowly starts spreading out. If a fire “skunks” into a heavy load of fuel, causing the fire to flare up and potentially send embers across the fireline that could cause spot fires.



Conducting a burnout at the North Shore Road Fire

Along with brush trucks and UTVs, the forest service utilizes bulldozers as well to help fight these fires. By using a bulldozer, a line can be created in which the fire cannot cross. The



bulldozer can be used to scrape down to the bare mineral soil and create a barrier between the “black” and the “green”; the “black” being what has burned already, and the “green” as what has not. After this line is created, sometimes something called a “burnout” can follow. A burnout is when drip torches containing a mix of gas and diesel fuels are used to create a controlled fire that will consume any remaining fuel left for the wildfire within the black. This helps remove unburnt fuels so the fire cannot come back, even if there is still some vegetation smoking within the black.

Although the statewide burn ban has been lifted, Maryland will have to get some significant precipitation to decrease the fire danger. Until then, we all have to do our part to continue to be cautious and keep natural resources safe and prevent wildfires.



Wildfire response in Wicomico County with bulldozer and transport



Picture of **Dale Bowen**, MSFA legislative committee member attends **Senator Mike Jackson** crab feast fundraiser.



### ***The Volunteer Trumpet***

**A publication of the Maryland State Firefighters Association**

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***Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and  
Happy New Year!***



[linktr.ee/MSFA1](https://linktr.ee/MSFA1)

**THE MISSION OF THE MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION IS TO SERVE, PROMOTE, ADVOCATE, AND REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF THE VOLUNTEER FIRE, RESCUE, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES OF MARYLAND.**