



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 20, 2023**

## **FIREFIGHTERS COMBINE TRAINING, FUN AT ANNUAL CONVENTION**

**Uniontown, PA** - Firefighters work hard, but this week, local departments are getting to have a little fun, too. The 85<sup>th</sup> annual Fayette County Fireman's Association Convention is being held all week long at the Farmington Volunteer Fire Department grounds at 119 Elliotsville Road.

The convention challenges firefighters' endurance with multiple competitions based on skills they will use in the course of their jobs. The event also features food, live entertainment, and even a parade.

Farmington VFD Chief Brian VanSickle explained the hosting department is selected from among those who express interest in writing. He noted the department hosted the convention in 2019 and will do so again in 2025.

"We enjoy it," he said. "The fairgrounds behind our station are set up for all the sporting events we do that come along with the convention."

There is plenty of room for popular events like the Bucket Brigade, during which teams of firefighters compete to put out fires the old-fashioned way – by passing buckets of water down a line.

VanSickle said the Farmington VFD enjoys having other departments come to their grounds for the week. He said "about 30 or 35" of the fire departments in the county usually participate in the convention.

The convention also is popular with the public, who are invited to the fire station grounds to view the competitions for free. Kids even can take part in several activities.

"In 2012, we created kids' events," VanSickle said. "The kids actually get to do, on a smaller scale, all of the same events (that we do)."

VanSickle said the kids' events are open to any child who wants to join in the fun. "Any kid that shows up, if they want to get wet, they're more than welcome to participate," he said.

Prizes are awarded for first- and second-place finishers in each of the convention's events, and participation-based prizes, including such possible items as equipment for fire trucks, are also drawn.

The convention opened Sunday with the association's 101<sup>st</sup> Memorial Service at Farmington Bethel Church, 526 Elliotsville Road. Each year, the fireman's association remembers those it has lost in the past year. This year's service memorialized 29 association members, as well as the nine members who have died in the line of duty over the past century.

Following the memorial service, the Past President's Banquet was held at the Stone House Restaurant and Inn.

Monday's events included the tug-of-war and the fire truck pull, and the battle of the barrel was held on Tuesday. The Firefighter Bucket Brigade and Kids Bucket Brigade took place Wednesday.

The remaining schedule of events includes:

#### **Thursday**

- Firefighter Gear Scramble, 6:30 p.m. Firefighters race to put on their bunker gear, run across to put on their air packs, then run to the finish line. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m.
- Forceable Entry Drills, followed by the Kids Stationary Hose-Laying Competition.
- Wing Night fundraiser.

#### **Friday**

- Stationary Hose-Laying Competition, 6:30 p.m. This will be followed by a new event, the Firefighter Challenge, in which firefighters will be at the starting line in full equipment and breathing apparatus and cross an obstacle course, making their way through other scenarios on the way to the finish line.
- Kids Battle of the Barrel.
- Classic rockers The Elliottsville Road Band.
- Steak Night.

#### **Saturday**

- Annual meeting of the Fayette County Fireman's Association, 10 a.m., in the fire station.
- Firemen's parade, 4 p.m. along Elliottsville Road by the fire station.
- Barbecue Chicken Dinner Night, 5 p.m.
- The Greg Dahl Band – southern rock, blues and outlaw country, 8 p.m.

Van Sickle listed Nemacolin, Somerset Trust Company and Stone House Restaurant and Inn as the event's main sponsors. For more information, visit the "Fayette County Firefighters' Association" on Facebook.

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*This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) and Hotel Tax Grants in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.*

For more information, contact Kristi Kassimer Harper, Public Relations Specialist, at 724-437-4571, [kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info](mailto:kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info) or Jamie Rankin, Journalist, at 724-437-4571, [jamierankin13@gmail.com](mailto:jamierankin13@gmail.com).