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National Fire Heritage Center

Annual Report

January 1, 2017 to
December 31, 2017

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Introduction

The National Fire Heritage Center (NFHC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization working to preserve the written history of “fire in America.” We support individuals, fire departments, libraries, museums and others who wish to collect, catalog and preserve fire-related writings. The NFHC is both a fire history archive and a documentation preservation project. Our collection of over 14,000 cataloged items consists of written documents and three-dimensional items donated by the public and private sectors. Materials are cataloged, preserved and made available to NFHC visitors and online researchers.

The current housing of the archive is shared with the Frederick County Maryland Fire/Rescue Museum Incorporated. They display several pieces of fire apparatus such as a 1939 Ahrens-Fox Engine, a 1945 Ford Pumper, an 1893 Charles T. Holloway Hose Carriage and other units that are displayed periodically.

**The NFHC
“Preserves the Perishable”
of America’s Fire History**

Organizational History

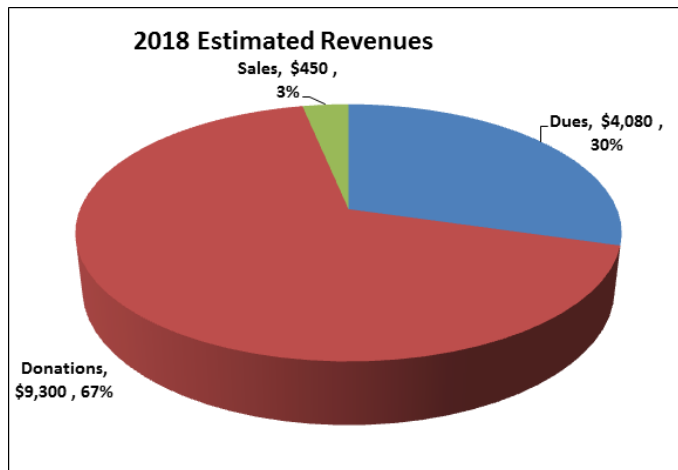
The National Fire Heritage Center, Inc. (NFHC) was created by a group of current and retired fire service professionals and supporters on September 24, 2007. Beginning in early 2002, a formal study was commissioned by the United States Fire Administration (USFA) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ascertain if a national fire-specific archive was needed or if one or more might already exist, and if not, whether one could be sufficiently justified. Comprehensive research was accomplished; the conclusion warranted that such an undertaking is necessary. Nothing at that point ever existed, plus important and valuable materials were already being lost at an alarming rate. Justification of the need and how such might best be undertaken was identified in a 2003 FEMA document *Heritage Hall: A Proposal to Archive the History of the Fire Service-Fire Protection Disciplines in America*. The organization entered an agreement with the Frederick County Fire/Rescue Museum at that time. Fire department members and fire protection professionals donated money and time to start the archive system.

**In 2017 the NFHC and Fire Museum
received over 1,200 visitors**

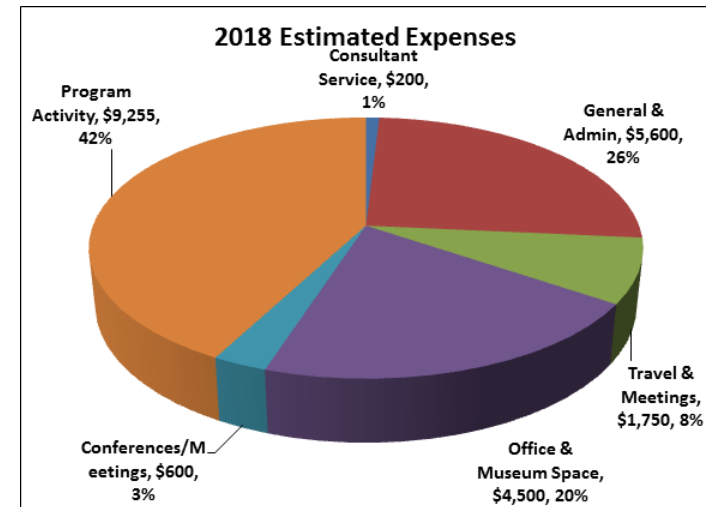
Since the beginning, the National Fire Heritage Center has provided key support to the Frederick County Fire/Rescue Museum and participates in special events and tours. The collaborative organizations and their staffs participate in a range of activities related to the preservation of the history and heritage of the American Fire Profession.

Financial Report

Fiscal year 2017 was a financial and programmatic success for the National Fire Heritage Center (NFHC). 2017 was the first year in the last four to experience a net financial gain. The adopted budget was an aggressive one that set revenue estimates nearly double the average of the three prior years. The result exceeded that aggressive budget target by 21%! The largest contributors to the revenue gain were two large donations, one from the National Fire Sprinkler Association (\$5,000) and the other from the Institution of Fire Engineers (\$2,000.) A significant and long term activity of invoicing for membership dues was reinstated in 2017 resulting in \$2,800 in collected dues and which also resulted in an additional \$1,650 in donations. A special fund raising campaign raised more than \$5,000. Cost control efforts by our passionate and dedicated staff helped to bring actual expenses in at 37% below budgeted expenses for the year.



The budget for fiscal year 2018 continues the efforts to raise the level of support for the NFHC began last year while maintaining a conservative approach to forecasting to preserve a sound financial position. Revenue projections are increased for membership dues while not assuming the same participation from corporate and other partners with their donations. This in no way suggests that fund raising efforts will slide; on the contrary, the board and staff intend to continue an aggressive pursuit of gifts and grant support to grow our base, preserve our collection, and increase our programs. The revenue budget is projected at \$13,830 with expenses projected at \$21,905 for a planned net loss of \$8,075. It is important to note that this is a planned loss. Our reality is in knowing, we would report a loss in our financial reports this year since we raised more than \$5,000 near the end of 2017 for archival shelving to protect the collection while knowing that the actual expenses would be posted in early 2018. The estimated additional \$3,000 net loss is anticipated resulting from expenses to occupy a new space with the collection and part of the business operations. With help from our board of directors, staff, membership, individual and corporate supporters we would hope to see the net loss replaced with another amazing gain for the year! The end of 2017 saw the completion of the first annual audit.



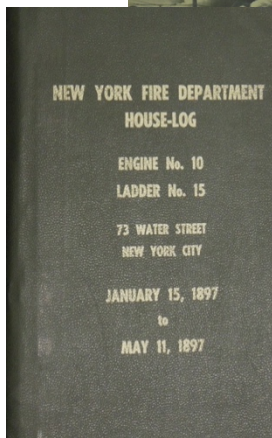
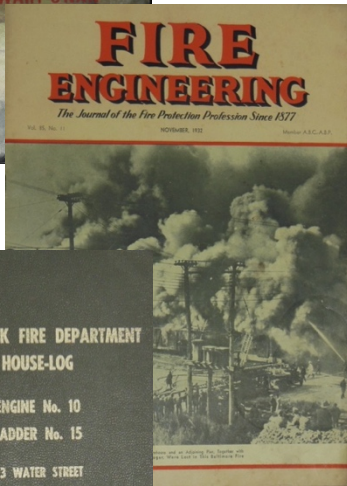
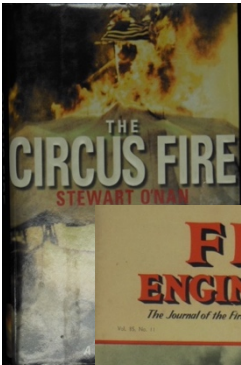
Sources of Income

The NFHC is funded exclusively from private donations, membership dues, and the merchandise sales from the NFHC bookstore. The NFHC will also begin to aggressively pursue grant opportunities in 2018 as it relates to the organizational mission and our strategic direction.

NFHC survival relies on funding from donations & memberships

Donations

Monetary donations have enabled the NFHC to purchase new shelving units it desperately needed, and will continue to need, as the cartons of donated material gets cataloged. The NFHC also receives non-monetary donations of goods and services from a variety of individuals and organizations. Time is a valuable commodity, the NFHC also recognizes the time and efforts of the NFHC staff, Fire Museum Committee and many local fire department members who support, foster and encourage the NFHC. The NFHC continues to receive donations of three-dimensional fire department and fire protection paraphernal and memorabilia from the personal collection of retirees and the public.



Memberships

Since the beginning, the NFHC has sold annual memberships to both raise funds and gain a commitment to the mission of the NFHC. Members

receive a personalized certificate of membership, a letter of acknowledgement, a Challenge Coin and a Lapel Pin. As of December 31, 2017, the museum has 135 regular members. Renewals will be requested for expired memberships.

IFSTA donated 305 cartons of written material weighing in at 5 tons

Merchandise Sales

The NFHC sells merchandise to help raise money and to reduce duplicate or donated material that doesn't fit within our mission. The NFHC Bookstore exists at the Fire Museum as well as merchandise that is advertised from the NFHC website.

Major Accomplishments

Throughout 2017 the NFHC has seen the completion of several important projects such as the installation of the fire sprinkler system and the completion of our first financial audit as well as the continuation of several significant programs like the induction of three new names to Hall of Legends, Legacies and Leaders, and a 2017 winner for the Franklin Writer's Award. The successes of 2017 propel the NFHC organization into the new year with a renewed sense of purpose. In 2018 the NFHC will address resource and infrastructure issues including the revision of the organizational by-laws and renewed fund raising efforts.

Fire Sprinkler Installation

Following months of massive work, planning and coordination, in concert with the museum, the NFHC dedicated, on April 8, 2017 the fire sprinkler system donated by the Capitol Regional Fire Sprinkler Association and sponsored by the National Fire Sprinkler Association, in collaboration with donated time, labor, and skills of local sprinkler contractors. The dedication ceremony was accomplished with 200 visitors on hand. NFHC leadership attending included President Ronny Coleman, who served as emcee, leaders of national associations, plus several officers, directors, key personnel and staff. The dedication included a live-burn sprinkler demonstration. The system provides the dual purpose of protecting our historic materials and provides an educational display regarding the installation of fire sprinkler systems.

Hall of Legends, Legacies, and Leaders (HLLL)

The HLLL started in 2010 with ten inductees, and has grown to include 51 names of fire service leaders who have made significant career contributions the American Fire Profession. In 2017, three new names have been added which include: Steven T. Edwards (MD), Harold R. Mace (OK), and Jack McElfish (GA). They join a respected lineage that traces its roots all the way back to Benjamin Franklin- the first inductee to the Hall of Legends, Legacies and Leaders.



Fire sprinkler system provides an educational opportunity for all who visit the NFHC.

Franklin Writers Award

On July 6, 2017, the National Fire Heritage Center (NFHC) announced the winner of the Benjamin Franklin Fire Writers' Award at the annual National Safe Kids conference in Baltimore, Maryland. The 2017 recipient went to Fireproof Children/Prevention1st of Rochester, New York. The training program entitled, "Juvenile Firesetting: A Community Guide to Prevention and Intervention," will be a positive step in the resolution of the juvenile fire problem.

The NFHC cataloged 1 326 objects in 2017

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Archive Operations

The Frederick County Fire Museum and National Fire Heritage Center are co-located in the former ambulance building located at 300B South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727, which is catty-corner to the USFA/NETC and National Fire Academy. The property is owned by the County of Frederick. The fire museum and NFHC is open by appointment and designated hours that change throughout the year. Other historical archives, and materials which are waiting to be cataloged, including lifelong libraries, are also stored at Emmitsburg Community Center, 300A South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727, and at the activities building of the Vigilant Hose Company of Emmitsburg at 17701 Creamery Road, Emmitsburg, MD 21727.

There are 805 cartons of material still waiting to be cataloged!

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still waiting to be cataloged!**

Fourteen book cases were added to the archives in 2017. The strategic initiative in 2018 is in the acquisition of a total of 83 archival shelving units, each with six, 18-inch deep shelves per unit. The 4-foot-wide units will increase storage capacity of cataloged material by 1,992 linear feet. For insurance purposes, the archivist is determining the value of the collection.

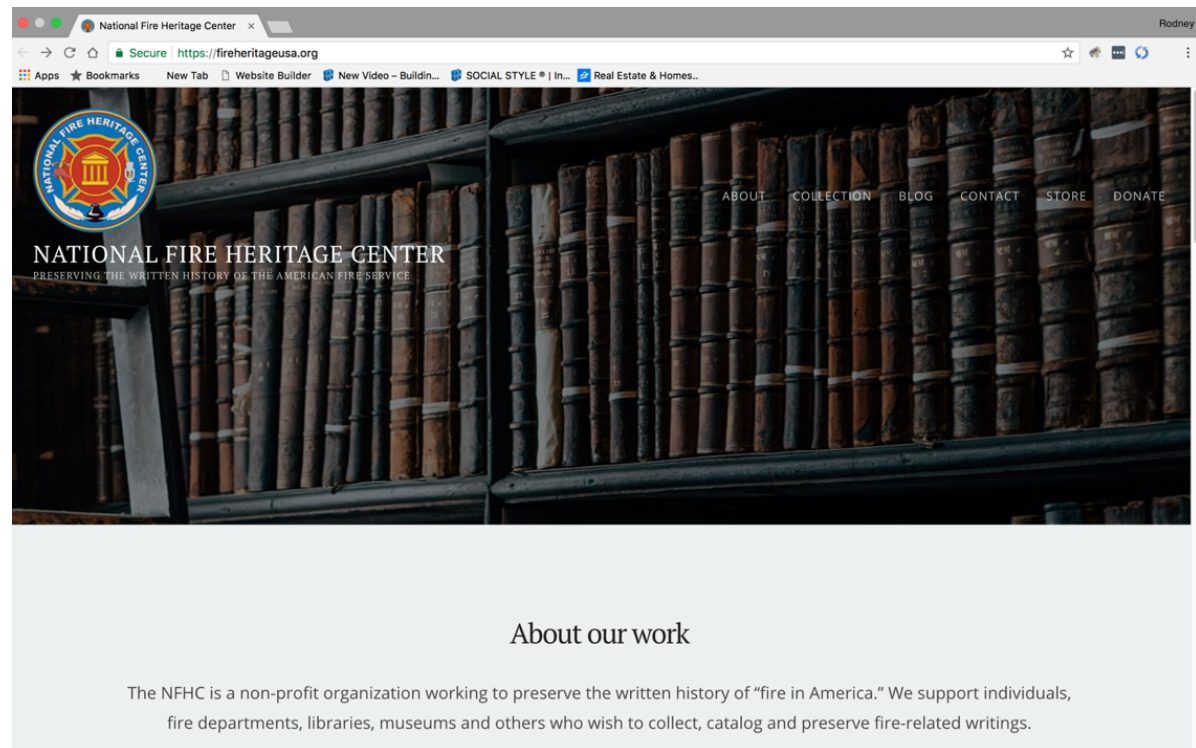


Awareness & Outreach

The NFHC recognizes that it needs to renew efforts to provide awareness and outreach of our mission to sustain our organization. The NFHC Communications Plan was updated in 2017 which will allow for a coordinated delivery of our message across several media outlets. The updated website went live in 2017. The NFHC produces a free quarterly newsletter. Subscription for the newsletter can be accomplished from the website, fireheritageusa.org. The most recent issue is available at the link on the bottom lower right corner of the home page. The NFHC maintains several mailing lists that combined include over 1,500 supporters, many of whom receive the newsletter in their email. The NFHC also pushes information out to subscribed members using social media channels Facebook and Twitter. National Fire Heritage Center Board Members and staff welcome invitations to deliver a one hour presentation about the NFHC to interested groups and organizations.

Memorandum of Agreement

Outreach is extended to other agencies with like, or complimentary, mission and purpose. When mutually beneficial, the NFHC has several memorandums of agreement (MoA's) with national fire associations, fire museums and key allies and supporters across the country to include the United States Fire Administration-NETC/FEMA/DHS, the Frederick County Government, etc., to help further the missions of the parties. Additional MoA's will develop over time.



Collections

The following is a partial list of fire industry leaders who have donated a part, or all, of their personal libraries to the National Fire Heritage Center for safe keeping in perpetuity. The significance of these collection, per Frank Schmersal Chief Archivist at the NFHC, "is that within each collection you can see what literature influenced the thought process for each of these industry leaders." Future students and researchers will be able to trace the development of change and innovation within the fire service community, and fire industry, by reviewing and linking these collections together to form a variety of new narratives.



Collections Donated to NFHC By:	
Lou Amabili - DE	Harold Hickey - MD
Bob Barraclough - TX	John Hoyle - SD
Ed Bosanko - MD	IFSTA - OK
Robert "Windy" Brieze - GA	Warren Isman - MD
Fred Brower - VA	William "Bill" Killen - TN
Hal Bruno - MD	John Kimball - MD
John Bryan - MD	Eric Lamar - DC
Gene Carlson - PA	Lancaster County VFA - PA
Ronny J. Coleman - CA	Mike Legeros - NC
John Lee Cook, Jr. -TX	Gary Long - DE
DePere Fire Dept. - WI	John McNeece - MD
Nelson Dionne - MA	Richard Nagle - NY
Joe Donovan - FL	Denis Onieal - PA
Harvey Eisner - NJ	Don Ringer - PA
Daniel B.C. Gardiner - CT	James C. "Robbie" Robertson - WV
Ronald Graf - MD	Dennis Rubin - VA
Jan Gratton - CA	Bernard Schwartz - MD
Ken Henry - MS	John Senft - PA

R

esearch

The archives at the National Fire Heritage Center are a valuable resource for researchers. Dan Madrzykowski, of the UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute, used the archives of the NFHC in conducting research on the history of firefighter training to gain an understanding of the evolution of post-World War II firefighting tactics and equipment. The goal was to gain insight on how these changes impact today's firefighters. He used some of the NFHC resources to develop the NFPA Fire Protection Research Foundation Report, Fire Fighter Equipment Operational Environment: Evaluation of Thermal Conditions (2017). <https://ulfirefightersafety.org/posts/fprf-report-ff-operation-equip-environment.html>.

In another example, references like "America Burning (1973)" and the "Trade Analysis of Fire Engineering (1932)" published by the Los Angeles Fire Department, are of two of several documents instrumental in describing fire service culture and occupational values of yesteryear in the completion of NFHC Director Rodney Slaughter's Master's Thesis entitled "Tradition and Progress: California Fire Technology Directors Beliefs and Values (2017)."

The value of historic documents for research can also be seen in two of the oldest artifacts in the NFHC archives. The first, a newspaper story in a Dutch newspaper published in 1684, shows the state of building technology in contrast to the evolution of fire protection technology. The illustrated picture of a 4-story townhouse shows the upper windows broken-out and soot smudging the outside structure. Charred contents removed from the house are piled at the foot of the stairs. The firefighting technology can be seen with a ladder, a length of rope and fire buckets in the foreground. Building technology had advanced in 1683, but it becomes obvious that firefighting technology had not kept pace at this point.

The second oldest document in the NFHC archives is a certificate of appointment to firefighter for Henry Fredricks in the town of Patterson, New Jersey (1832). Does the practice of self-certifying for positions such as this become the harbinger of today's drive for professional certification? These documents provide a window to fire protection and fire engineering of the times. When the technologies evolved, can we look back and find new directions or considerations that were not considered at the time? The value of holding onto and preserving historic documents is then important to these types of questions.



Leadership

The existence of the National Fire Heritage Center is accomplished with the dedication and involvement of many fire service leaders, educators, innovators, and history buffs. The NFHC represents all aspects of the American Fire Service including fire protection, fire engineering and manufacturing, along with fire prevention, education and publications. We are fortunate for the dedication of all the following people:

Executive Officers

Ronny J. Coleman, President
William D. Killen, Vice President -Finance
Willie G. Shelton, Vice President-Operations
Paul D. Brooks, Treasurer
Stuart M. Nathan, Secretary

Staff

R. Wayne Powell – Executive Director
Frank Schmiersal – Chief Archivist



President Ronny J. Coleman

Board of Directors

Stephen P. Austin
Donald N. Briggs
Frederick E. Brower
W. Parker Browne
Ty Dickerson
Steve Hansen
George Morgan
Ronald J. Siarnicki
Rodney A. Slaughter
Lynn White

Volunteers

Susie Nicol – Media Affairs and PIO
Maury Grundy – Webmaster and Social Media Lead
Ricky Brockman – Newsletter Editor
Randy Parr – Bookkeeper
Johanna Schmiersal – Facebook Contributor
Gary Frederick – Historical and Technical Advisor
Timothy Odbert – Information Technology Lead

Annual Board Meeting in
Emmitsburg, MD each October.

Visitors Welcome!
The National Fire Heritage Center
300B South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Contact Information

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Website: fireheritageusa.org

