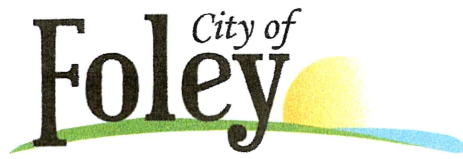


Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs

Section 4: Committee Reports



**Mid-Summer
2026**



120 West Verbena Avenue
Foley, Alabama 36535
(251) 943-1266
Fax (251) 943-7432
www.cityoffoley.org

July 24, 2026

Tracy Thornton, President

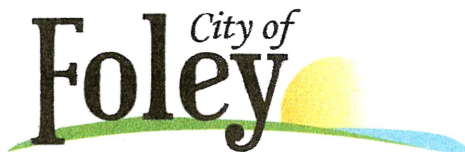
Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs

Re: Report to AAFC E-Board from SEAFRC representative

Chief Thornton,

I am writing to report on activities of the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs Board of Directors since the AAFC mid-winter conference in February. The SEAFRC Board meets monthly via Zoom to discuss board business, initiatives, and plans for the annual summer conferences. We have worked to develop several new initiatives and promote the mission through conference planning and strategic discussions over the past year. Our President during the past year, Jay Cullinan, has continued the work on our strategic plan and committees that were started in the previous year.

Our annual conference in Savannah, GA in June was a huge success, and several of our AAFC members were able to attend. I involved Chief Buddy Wilks at the state forum luncheon in order to get additional input from AAFC. We met with the new IAFC CEO/Executive Director Donna Black and heard her plans for growth and improvement of the IAFC. At the end of the SEAFRC annual conference, all new officers and directors were sworn in at the annual banquet, and I began my new 2-year term as the AL Director. Our new President is Chief Allen Baldwin from VA, 1st VP is Chief Jennifer Smith from NC, and 2nd VP and Chief Steve Kyle from KY. New committee chairs were assigned, and I was reappointed to chair the nominations and elections committee. This keeps me on the IAFC nominations and elections committee representing the Southeast Division. We are now preparing for the FRI conference in August in Kansas City. I hope that some of our AAFC members will be able to attend, and I encourage everyone to attend the SEAFRC breakfast on 8/14. The breakfast was chosen by the IAFC Board as a replacement for the division



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luncheons.

I encourage all of our AAFC members to get involved with the activities of the IAFC and SEAFC. I am honored to serve and represent the AAFC in this capacity as your AL State Director. I am always open to questions and comments from our members and will continue to work with the SEAFC Board for the benefit of the AAFC.

Sincerely,

Joseph W. Darby



**MADISON FIRE & RESCUE
FIRE CHIEF BRANDY WILLIAMS**

**101 MILL ROAD MADISON, AL 35758
OFFICE 256-464-8421**



July 16, 2026

Re: AAFC Commissioner Report from AFC

President Thornton and AAFC Members:

This report provides details of activity with the Alabama Fire College and Personnel Standards Commission.

We had a Commission Meeting on April 15th. We approved a new Physical Statement form for Recruit School. It is a more comprehensive form much like the one used for AFC EMS classes.

We continue to have clean audits from Jackson Thornton, this is a testament to everyone's hard work and commitment to AFC and the Fire Service.

We had a Commission Meeting on July 15th. We have had lengthy discussions regarding the Pre-Consumption Conditioning Program and received some valuable input from many. Chairman Scott Pilgreen and myself will be making selections to form a Task Force to look at the best approach to this issue that aligns with the job tasks of a Firefighter.

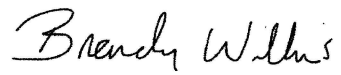
Update from the Task Force regarding firefighter training for Cadets and Explorers. We received a letter of support and affirmation from Alabama Department of Workforce. The Task Force should come back to the Commission at the October meeting with a recommendation to move forward.

An ESRG representative gave a presentation about their request and proposed plans to build a lab and testing facilities on AFC property. We are working on the land use agreement with them currently.

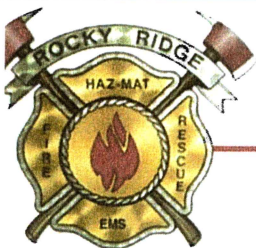
The new E-One Aerial that we purchased last year should be delivered on July 23rd. This purchase places us in much better shape with apparatus.

I am proud to represent the AAFC as a Commissioner. I would also like to thank all employees at the Alabama Fire College for the amazing job each person does daily. Everyone is engaged and truly cares about the Fire Service. Thank you again and your hard work is appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brandy Williams". The ink is black and the signature is fluid and legible.

Brandy Williams, Commissioner



Rocky Ridge Fire District

2911 Metropolitan Way
Birmingham, AL 35243
Main: 205.822.0532
Fax: 205.978.9876

SO CLASS 1

Joint Fire Council Report

Memorial and Peer Support Total Balances

This is through July 18th, 2026 so it will have another check in it versus the PL statement in the other document posted.

Total Tax Income	\$	86,471.20
Donations	\$	3,300.00
Total Income	\$	89,771.20
Expenses	\$	59,935.54
Half of Bank Fees	\$	76.50
Total Expenses	\$	60,012.04
Remaining Funds	\$	29,759.16

This leaves \$80,194.20 in the Memorial Account. (Total Balance as of today is \$109,953.36)

Sincerely,

Jon A. Lord – President



Rocky Ridge Fire District

2911 Metropolitan Way
Birmingham, AL 35243
Main: 205.822.0532
Fax: 205.978.9876

ISO CLASS 1

First Responders Wireless Commission Report Semi-Annual Report July 2026

July 18, 2026

Committee Members,

In 2026, Jon Lord was voted in as Vice Chairman to the Commission.

Last year we voted for the Chairman's position on the board and Brad Rich was voted Chairman for the next 2 years of First Responders Wireless Commission Report.

The Commission has approved the expenditure of \$320K to survey the entire State of Alabama 700-800 radio system currently in service. The report has been completed and was not exactly all the data needed to make our report to the legislators.

Please be advised we have met quarterly over the last year. The main topic of discussions are the new antenna locations for the Alabama FirstNet system then we had discussed State wide coverage for the 700, 800 system. We are continuing to work on Statewide coverage for WIFI and Two-Way radios. We have met and talked with the Chief of Staff for the Governor to fund these projects with ARPA monies. We will keep you updated on this project.

SCIP Goals and Objective update – Jeb Hargrove

Formalize Communications Unit: we have completed an SOP for this Unit

EFOG (Electronic Field Operations Guide) for Alabama is still in draft phase at this time

County TICIP (Tactical Interoperability Plan) Draft Template sent to Counties

Statewide Notification System update: legislation passed, a technical committee will be created for lessons learned, standard operating protocols, etc. 20 committee members with room for three AFRWC Commissioners. I have let Jeb Hargrove know that I am interested in serving on this committee.

FirstNet (AT&T) Update No change since January – Michelle Norton, Ronny Caluda. An update as presented on goals meet by FirstNet AT&T along with new capabilities. Band 14 deployments are more than 92% complete. The AFRWC Executive Committee met with AT&T to discuss tweaking two FirstNet/AT&T cell sites in Alabama. Several options were discussed and two were chosen. A discussion was held on service during recent hurricanes and other events.

FirstNet Authority – Chuck Murph and Gerald Risner. Chuck Murph will be moving to another position with FirstNet. Gerald Risner will take his place at the FirstNet representative to Alabama. Commissioners are encouraged to visit [Firstnet.gov/network/roadmap](https://firstnet.gov/network/roadmap) to download the latest FirstNet Roadmap and sign up for updates. Chuck is now Senior Manager, Response & Event Operations Unit, still a great resource for us in Alabama.

FirstNet Authority Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) member update – Chief Reid Vaughn The PSAC wants to hear your concerns and compliments for the FirstNet Authority and AT&T.

SWIC Jeb Hargrove introduced the new CISA Coordinator for Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee, Derek Nesselrode. He is the former SWIC for Kentucky and will be taking Pam Montanari's position over Alabama. Pam Montanari's will continue as CISA FEMA Region IV Coordinator for Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

Chair Jeb Hargrove held a discussion on possible reallocation of CARES Act funding for first responder communication.

Sincerely,
Jon A. Lord-Vice Chair

Professionally and Compassionately Helping People



Rocky Ridge Fire District

2911 Metropolitan Way
Birmingham, AL 35243
Main: 205.822.0532
Fax: 205.978.9876

ISO CLASS 1

17 July 2026

President Tracy Thornton
Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs
Via Email: tthornton23@gmail.com

Re: Summer 2026 EMS Committee SEMCC, Legislative and Regulatory Update
(Michael A. Bartlett, AAFC Representative to the Alabama State Emergency Medical Control Committee)

Dear Chief Thornton,

As the Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs' representative to the Alabama State Emergency Medical Control Committee (SEMCC), I respectfully submit the following summary of significant EMS developments and other statewide issues of interest since my last report:

1. SEMCC Meeting – 12 November 2025

The SEMCC meeting was held in conjunction with the Alabama EMS Conference. Several significant actions were taken, including:

- Authorization of finger thoracostomies
- Recognition of age of consent as 16 years old

2. Rural Health Transformation Program Funding

Under Year One of Alabama's \$203 million Rural Health Transformation Program, more than \$5 million has been allocated specifically for prehospital EMS initiatives. The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) has been designated to administer these grant funds through eleven funding categories, with individual Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) being released on a rolling basis.

Visit Alabamarhtp.com for additional information.

3. Alabama Medicaid UPL Program and CMS NPRM 2449-P

Alabama House Bill 231 and Senate Bill 144 were enacted, making Alabama's Medicaid Provider Assessment Program permanent. Of greater concern, CMS has published Proposed Rule CMS-2449-P, which would cap Upper Payment Limit (UPL) supplemental payments at the Medicare reimbursement level rather than Alabama's currently approved Average Commercial Rate methodology.

To assist Alabama's fire service in responding to this proposal, the below template was created for the Joint Fire Council as a recommendation to submit as our public comment.

*The Honorable Mehmet Oz, M.D.
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21244*

Re: CMS-2449-P—Medicaid Managed Care State Directed Payments and Medicaid Fee-for-Service Targeted Medicaid Practitioner Payments

Dear Administrator Oz:

On behalf of the Alabama Joint Fire Council, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on CMS Proposed Rule CMS-2449-P concerning Medicaid managed care state-directed payments and Medicaid fee-for-service targeted practitioner payments.

The Alabama Joint Fire Council respectfully requests that CMS exclude ground emergency medical transportation services from the proposed Medicare-based payment limits and preserve Alabama's existing authority to reimburse eligible ambulance providers through its CMS-approved Average Commercial Rate methodology. At a minimum, CMS should provide ground ambulance services the same grandfathering and gradual transition afforded to the provider classes expressly addressed by Congress, rather than imposing an abrupt Medicare-based ceiling beginning in 2029.

The Alabama Joint Fire Council supports appropriate oversight, transparency, program integrity, and responsible stewardship of Medicaid funds. However, the proposed application of a Medicare-based payment ceiling to ground ambulance services would not merely eliminate excessive reimbursement. In Alabama, it would reduce funding for an essential public-safety and healthcare service that already operates under severe financial, geographic, and workforce pressures.

Alabama's Program Was Deliberately Created to Stabilize EMS

In 2021, the Alabama Legislature enacted Act No. 2021-419, now codified at Alabama Code § 40-26B-1 et seq., establishing an ambulance service provider assessment. Participating ambulance providers agreed to pay an assessment equal to 5.3% of applicable revenues to help finance enhanced Medicaid ambulance reimbursement.

CMS subsequently approved Alabama State Plan Amendment AL-22-0003, effective January 1, 2023. Under that approved plan, Alabama provides quarterly add-on payments for eligible emergency ground ambulance transports. Those payments are limited to the difference between Alabama Medicaid's base reimbursement and the statewide average amount providers would have received from commercial insurers.

This structure is important. Alabama's enhanced payments are not unlimited, arbitrary, or calculated to produce windfall profits. They are:

- Supported by an assessment paid by ambulance providers themselves;*
- Limited by available program funding;*
- Based on actual commercial reimbursement data;*
- Calculated only for eligible emergency transports;*

- Unavailable for treatment without transport or Medicare crossover claims; and
- Available to eligible licensed governmental and private ambulance providers.

Alabama created this program because its prior Medicaid ambulance reimbursement was plainly inadequate to sustain 24-hour emergency ambulance readiness. The commercial-rate methodology was intended to narrow that longstanding reimbursement gap and stabilize a statewide EMS system that includes fire-based, governmental, nonprofit, hospital-based, and private ambulance providers.

Medicare Is Not an Adequate Measure of Ambulance Cost

The proposed rule assumes that Medicare reimbursement is an appropriate benchmark for determining adequate Medicaid payment. For ambulance services, that premise is fundamentally flawed.

An ambulance service is not paid merely to move a patient from one location to another. It must maintain personnel, vehicles, controlled medications, cardiac monitors, ventilators, communications systems, insurance, medical oversight, training, regulatory compliance, and reserve capacity around the clock—before the emergency call ever occurs.

Those readiness costs exist regardless of call volume or payer mix. They are particularly difficult to sustain in rural communities where transport distances are longer, hospitals are farther apart, call density is lower, and there are fewer billable transports over which to spread fixed costs. Volunteer and combination fire departments face the added challenge of maintaining ambulance operations with limited local tax revenue and a shrinking volunteer workforce.

Medicare rates have long been recognized within the ambulance community as insufficient to cover the full cost of maintaining emergency readiness. Capping Alabama's enhanced Medicaid payments at or near Medicare levels would substitute one inadequate governmental rate for another and would undo the very purpose for which Alabama's program was created.

Alabama's EMS System Is Already Demonstrating Its Fragility

This is not a theoretical concern.

In 2022, the Livingston Fire Department ended approximately 40 years of ambulance transportation service because the program had become too expensive for the city to continue. The reported loss to the city was approximately \$500,000 over the preceding five years. Although Livingston firefighters could continue responding and stabilizing patients, another ambulance provider became responsible for transporting those patients to the hospital.

More recently, Greene County EMS was forced to suspend ambulance transport operations because it lacked the funding necessary to maintain its ambulances and equipment in compliance with Alabama safety requirements. During the suspension, local personnel could respond and stabilize patients, but an ambulance from another jurisdiction had to travel into the county to complete the transport. That circumstance predictably creates longer response and transport intervals while also removing neighboring ambulances from their own service areas.

These events demonstrate the consequences of inadequate EMS funding: local ambulance capacity disappears, response times lengthen, mutual-aid systems become overextended, and residents must wait longer for definitive care. The communities most affected are generally rural, medically underserved, older, poorer, and more heavily dependent upon Medicaid.

The proposed rule would increase, rather than reduce, the likelihood of additional service reductions and closures.

The Proposal Extends Beyond the Provider Classes Addressed by Congress

Congress established new state-directed payment limits for specified provider classes. Ground ambulance services were not among the four classes expressly identified: inpatient hospital services, outpatient hospital services, nursing facility services, and qualified practitioner services at academic medical centers.

CMS-2449-P would nevertheless extend similar Medicare-based limits to other provider classes, including ambulance services. It would also subject ambulance programs to a more immediate compliance requirement without the same gradual transition available to certain grandfathered arrangements.

We respectfully submit that this extension is neither required by the statutory language nor consistent with congressional intent. Ground ambulance services should not be subjected through regulation to reductions that Congress did not expressly impose.

Alabama's Public and Private Providers Must Remain United

Alabama's CMS-approved program applies to eligible licensed governmental and private ambulance providers. This distinguishes Alabama from states whose supplemental payment programs are limited to governmental entities.

That inclusive structure is vital to Alabama. Many communities rely upon combinations of municipal fire departments, public authorities, volunteer fire departments, nonprofit organizations, hospitals, and private ambulance companies. When one provider closes or reduces service, another provider must absorb the calls—often without additional personnel, ambulances, or funding.

A rule that destabilizes one provider category ultimately harms the entire EMS response system. Alabama cannot preserve patient access by protecting only public agencies or only private providers. All eligible providers must remain financially capable of responding.

The Proposed Provider-Specific Methodology Adds Burden Without Improving Patient Care

The proposed rule would also require payment limits to be calculated and monitored at the individual provider and service level. For Alabama and its ambulance providers, this would add significant administrative complexity without creating any corresponding improvement in clinical care, response time, or patient access.

Many rural and volunteer-based services have little or no dedicated administrative staff. Every additional reporting, actuarial, reconciliation, and compliance requirement diverts limited resources away from recruitment, training, equipment, maintenance, and patient care.

Program-integrity requirements should be proportionate to the risk being addressed. Alabama's program is already limited by actual provider volume, available funding, state licensure, eligible IICPCS codes, and statewide commercial payment data. CMS has not demonstrated that imposing a rigid Medicare ceiling on these payments is necessary to prevent fraud, waste, or abuse within Alabama's GEMT program.

Requested Action

The Alabama Joint Fire Council respectfully requests that CMS:

- 1. Exclude ground emergency medical transportation services from the payment limits proposed in CMS-2449-P;*
- 2. Preserve the ability of Alabama to use its existing CMS-approved Average Commercial Rate methodology for eligible GEMT providers;*
- 3. Recognize that Medicare is not an adequate proxy for the cost of maintaining 24-hour emergency ambulance readiness;*
- 4. Preserve Alabama's inclusive program structure for eligible public and private licensed ambulance providers;*
- 5. Refrain from imposing provider- and service-specific administrative requirements that exceed what is necessary to ensure program integrity; and*
- 6. If CMS declines to exempt ground ambulance services, provide a meaningful grandfathering and phased transition period comparable to that afforded other provider classes and permit states to demonstrate payment adequacy through documented cost and access data rather than an inflexible Medicare ceiling.*

Conclusion

Alabama's ambulance provider assessment and enhanced reimbursement program represents a cooperative effort among the Legislature, the Alabama Medicaid Agency, CMS, and the ambulance providers that voluntarily finance the non-federal share. The program was created to address a genuine public-safety problem: Medicaid reimbursement that was insufficient to maintain reliable emergency ambulance access.

Reducing the program to a Medicare-based ceiling would not reward efficiency or improve patient care. It would remove resources from frontline EMS agencies, weaken rural and volunteer-based transport systems, increase reliance on distant mutual-aid providers, and place Medicaid beneficiaries at greater risk of delayed emergency care.

We respectfully urge CMS not to dismantle a program that is working as intended. Alabama should be permitted to continue using its approved commercial-rate methodology to support a stable, accountable, and integrated emergency medical services system.

4. BC/BS Legislation HB400/SB269

House Bill 400 / Senate Bill 269 were enacted as Alabama Act 2026-349 and becomes effective 1 October 2026. The legislation establishes minimum commercial reimbursement for participating ambulance providers at 200% of the applicable CMS Super Rural (SR) rate, which equates to approximately 247% of current CMS reimbursement levels for in-network providers. Beginning January 1, 2027, commercial insurance carriers will also be required to reimburse eligible Treat-in-Place (TIP) encounters. A table summarizing the estimated reimbursement increases is provided below.

Commercial Insurance Rate Changes

HCSPCS	Current CMS	Current BC /BS AL	New Commercial Rate
Mileage			
A0425	\$9.15	\$13.41	\$28.26
ALS-E			
A0427	\$503.22	\$719.36	\$1,246.00
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A0433	\$728.35	\$1,041.18	\$1,803.42
BLS-E			
A0429	\$423.77	\$605.78	\$1,049.26
BLS-NE			
TIP			
A0428	\$264.85	\$378.62	\$655.78

5. OEMS

The Alabama Office of EMS (OEMS) has begun stakeholder meetings to develop the administrative rules, clinical protocols, and operational framework necessary to implement Treat-in-Place (TIP) services and future telehealth integration.

As the Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs' representative to the SEMCC, I continue to actively participate in these discussions to ensure the interests and operational realities of Alabama's fire-based EMS agencies are represented throughout the rulemaking and protocol development process. My goal is to help develop a program that is both clinically appropriate and operationally practical for agencies across the state.

Should any member desire additional information regarding these initiatives or wish to discuss any of the legislative or regulatory matters outlined above, I would be pleased to provide additional information.

Kindest regards,

Michael A. Bartlett
Assistant Fire Chief

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Kindest regards,

Michael A. Bartlett
Assistant Fire Chief



**Alabama Firefighters Annuity and Benefit
Fund**

**Report to the Alabama Association of Fire
Chiefs**

August 2026

The Alabama Firefighters Annuity and Benefit Fund originated from the Alabama Code 36-21-185 passed in 2010. This fund will provide retirement, disability, and death benefits to its members.

Currently there are 105 members participating in the fund.

- 4-Retired and drawing benefits.
- 20-Vested but awaiting 62.
- 81-Contributing members

The current retirement benefit is \$100 per month after the member has completed 25 years of service and has reached the age of 62. A member is also eligible for a disability benefit for up to 24 months for a member suffering a heart attack, who becomes injured or permanently disabled received in the line of duty as a firefighter (barring member misconduct). In addition to these benefits the Fund also provides a \$2,500 death benefit. Any member withdrawing from the Fund, may receive 90% of their contribution back.

The Fund receives funding from 5-sources.

- State Fire Marshal's Funding
- Retirement Systems of Alabama investments
- Voluntary state income tax contributions
- \$1/Distinctive Plate sold in the state (Act 2026-243)
- Member contributions (\$20/month)

The balance of the Fund increased by \$59,601.15 over the last quarter (4/1-6/30/2026) to bring the total value to \$1,145,041.16. Of this balance, the Fund has \$51,502.73 on hand in the Transfer Operations Account.

At the meeting held July 15, 2026, the Commission discussed the Actuarial Valuation Report which was completed in 2025. The report noted that maintaining the current \$100 monthly benefit level allows the Fund to function with a surplus, necessitating no further annual appropriations. Financial forecasts suggest the Fund can securely accommodate raising the monthly retirement benefit to \$175, preserving a surplus under multiple membership growth scenarios as well. The Commission voted to increase the retirement benefit to \$175 beginning October 1, 2026.

The Report did not take into account the funding from the Distinctive Plate Bill (Act 2026-243) which is expected to bring in an additional \$102,000 per year. Once funding has begun to be received from this bill, the Commission has discussed having another Actuarial Valuation Report completed

and it is expected that within text 2-3 years, the retirement benefit can be increased to \$200-225/month without the need to increase member contributions.

The AFABF Commission meets quarterly at the conclusion of the Alabama Firefighter Personnel Training and Standards Commission Meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner Wade Buckner
Alabama Firefighter Annuity and Benefit Fund



July 10, 2026

Alabama Fire College and Personnel Standards Commission
2501 Phoenix Drive
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35405

The Alabama Legislature has passed Act 2026-243, authorizing an increase in the fee charged for distinctive firefighter license plates issued in the State of Alabama. Under the previous law, the additional fee was \$1.00 per plate, with the proceeds divided equally between the Alabama Fallen Firefighters Memorial and the Alabama Peer Support Fund. Effective under Act 2026-243, the additional fee increases to \$10.00 per plate. The revenue generated will be divided equally among the Alabama Fallen Firefighters Memorial, the Alabama Peer Support Fund, the Alabama Firefighters Annuity and Benefit Fund, and the SAFER Fund.

Based on current registration projections, and after the allowable 2.5% collection fee retained by county Probate Offices, each of the four funds is expected to receive approximately \$102,000 annually.

The legislation also requires an annual independent audit of the program in addition to the audit conducted by the Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts. As a result, it may be necessary for the Alabama Joint Fire Council to retain a small portion of the revenues each year to cover the cost of this required audit. Even with that expense, each participating organization should receive approximately \$100,000 annually to support its respective mission.

This legislation represents a significant investment in Alabama's fire service and is the result of the Alabama Joint Fire Council's continued advocacy on behalf of firefighters across our state. It provides long-term, sustainable funding for programs that honor our fallen firefighters, strengthen firefighter behavioral health and peer support services, protect retirement security through the Alabama Firefighters Annuity and Benefit Fund, and provide emergency assistance through the SAFER Fund.

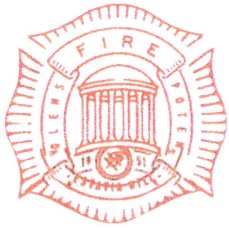
As members of the Alabama Firefighters Annuity and Benefit Fund Board of Commissioners, you play a vital role in safeguarding the financial future of Alabama's firefighters and their families. The additional revenue provided through Act 2026-243 will strengthen the Fund's ability to fulfill that mission while ensuring that firefighters continue to benefit from a stable and dependable source of support.

Most importantly, this legislation demonstrates what can be accomplished when Alabama's fire service works together toward a common goal. The Alabama Joint Fire Council appreciates the continued leadership and partnership of the Board of Commissioners and looks forward to working together to ensure these resources are managed responsibly and continue to benefit Alabama firefighters for generations to come.

Thanks,



Reid Vaughan, Sec/Tres
Alabama Joint Fire Council



VESTAVIA HILLS

FIRE DEPARTMENT

ASHLEY C. CURRY
Mayor

MARVIN D. GREEN
Fire Chief

August 2, 2026

Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs
151 Hutcheson Drive
Phil Campbell, AL 35581

Fellow Chiefs,

I am honored to represent the Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs as the Mutual Aid Coordinator. The current committee consists of NAFCFA representatives Brandy Williams and Brian Walls; CAFCA representatives Justin McKenzie, Josh McDaniel, and Jon Lord; SEAFCA representatives Michael Stephens and Cory Spurlin; and SWAFCA representatives Joey Darby, Mark Sealy, and Jeff Smith. We are also assisted by Battalion Chief Scott Hunter, who serves as the Chair of the Alabama Mutual Aid System (AMAS) and maintains the consortium database.

Our team remains committed to enhancing the Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs Mutual Aid Consortium (AAFCMAC). Notable progress includes improvements to the enrollment and data registration process within ArcGIS. At this conference, we are updating agency contact information as positions change across the state. Additionally, the AAFCMAC now has push-notification capability through the new phone application, allowing for timely updates to our members. We have also started a Slack page to enhance information sharing.

We continue to actively promote the AAFCMAC across all regions of the state to encourage broader participation in the consortium. To date, 72 agencies have uploaded their available resources into the portal.

Recent AAFCMAC / EMAC Activities:

- **Severe Weather (2025):** Formed Task Forces for standby operations in December
- **Winter Weather (2025):** Formed Strike Teams for standby operations in January
- **Camp Mystic Flood (2025):** Resource deployment to Texas in July

We continue to maintain an excellent working relationship with EMA Director Jeff Smitherman and Operations Director Eric Jones, along with David Ingram, AMAS Coordinator; Robert Bayliss, Operations Section Chief; Chris Butler, Operations Support Branch Director; and Ricky Adams, Director of Field Operations. Their collaboration remains invaluable to our ongoing efforts.

Sincerely,

Marvin D. Green
Fire Chief

VESTAVIA HILLS CITY HALL
1032 Montgomery Highway / Vestavia Hills, AL 35216
P. O. Box 660854 / Vestavia Hills, AL 35266-0854
205-978.0225 | VHAL.ORG

ALABAMA FIRE COLLEGE

AND PERSONNEL STANDARDS & EDUCATION COMMISSION



7/28/26

To: Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs

- **2026 fire fatalities:** 29
- **Smoke alarms distributed in 2026:** 3,143
- **Smoke alarms installed in 2026:** 2,947
- **Participating fire departments:** 554
- **Participating counties:** 67 of 67
- **Counties reporting zero installations:** 0
- **Total alarms distributed since program tracking began:** 75,920
- **Total alarms installed:** 68,944

We continue to have participation in **all 67 Alabama counties**, with every county reporting installations. The program has now distributed more than **75,000 smoke alarms** and documented nearly **69,000 installations** across the state.

Unfortunately, Alabama has now recorded **29 fire fatalities in 2026**. This continues to reinforce the importance of getting working smoke alarms into homes and maintaining strong participation from our local fire departments.

I am asking all Fire Chiefs to please ensure that your department is reporting every smoke alarm installation through our online reporting system. Accurate installation numbers are extremely important. They allow us to document the impact of the program, identify areas where additional resources are needed, and demonstrate the continued need for smoke alarm funding across Alabama.

Departments can access the Get Alarmed, Alabama hub here:

Get Alarmed, Alabama Online Hub

<https://www.flowcode.com/page/getalarmed>

From the hub, select the appropriate reporting option to submit your department's installations. If your department has installed alarms that have not yet been reported, please take the time to get those installations entered.

Thank you to the **American Red Cross**, Alabama Fire College, and each of our participating fire departments for your continued work and support. The success of Get Alarmed, Alabama depends heavily on our local departments—not only getting alarms into homes, but making sure those installations are documented.

ALABAMA FIRE COLLEGE

AND PERSONNEL STANDARDS & EDUCATION COMMISSION



Our goal remains simple: **get working smoke alarms into Alabama homes and reduce preventable fire deaths.**

Thank you for your continued support

Jonathan Ledbetter, BS, AAS

Program Director – Get Alarmed Alabama
Alabama Fire College

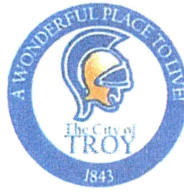
MICHAEL STEPHENS
Chief

CURTISS SHAVER
Deputy Chief

BRANDY COX
Fire Marshal

DARREN JORDAN
EMS/Training Officer

CITY OF TROY



FIRE DEPARTMENT

DANIEL S. HUSSEY
Battalion Chief

JOSH HAMM
Battalion Chief

CLAY McDOUGALD
Battalion Chief

23 July 2026

President Tracey Thornton

AAFC

Chief Thornton:

The nomination Committee prepared a slate of officer's that were elected at our Mid-Winter conference. The following incoming officers are to be sworn in at our summer conference in Orange Beach.

Chief Josh McDaniel President, Chief Cory Spurlin Vice President, Chief Brandy Williams Second Vice President, Chief Jonathan Adams Third Vice President, Chief Jon Lord Treasurer.

As per the Fire Chief of the Year Policy, the nominating committee presented the name of Chief Tim Love for the 2026 Career Fire Chief of the year and Chief Jonathan Adams for the 2026 Volunteer Chief of the Year. Both were confirmed at the Mid-Winter conference and are due to be awarded at the summer conference in Orange Beach.

Sincerely,

Michael Stephens

ADVOCATING FOR ALABAMA'S
FIRE SERVICE AND COMMUNITIES



2026 LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING REPORT



ALABAMA LEGISLATIVE SESSION
MARCH – MAY 2026

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY • FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMBER SUPPORT



*Strengthening the Fire Service.
Protecting Alabama's Communities.*

Prepared by Chief Jon Lord

2026 Legislative Briefing Report

Final Outcomes of Legislation Supported by the AJFC

Prepared from the final AJFC legislative tracker

22

Supported measures tracked

18

Enacted into law

81.8%

Enactment rate

Executive Summary

The final AJFC legislative tracker identifies 22 measures supported by the Council. Of those, 18 became law and 4 did not receive final passage, producing an enactment rate of 81.8%. This corrected report distinguishes enacted measures from supported proposals that remained pending or were placed on hold.

The enacted package included significant firefighter and EMS benefits, public-safety funding, ambulance reimbursement protections, 911 and emergency-management provisions, forestry modernization, rural-health investments, and local-government measures. The four supported measures that did not pass addressed line-of-duty disability retirement benefits, a firefighter and rescue squad training tax credit, return-to-work authority for retired state employees, and banking authority for volunteer fire departments.

Priority Legislative Outcomes

Firefighter benefits and survivor protection

Act 2026-243 (HB253 / SB249) increased firefighter distinctive license plate funding; Act 2026-353 (HB466 / SB332) added Parkinson's disease to covered firefighter occupational diseases; Act 2026-556 (HB247) created a cancer-related death benefit for survivors of volunteer firefighters; and Act 2026-557 (HB317) extended firefighter plate eligibility to fire chaplains.

Emergency medical services

Act 2026-349 (HB400 / SB269) established minimum reimbursement and balance-billing protections for ground ambulance services. Act 2026-390 (HB231 / SB144) removed the sunset from the emergency medical transport provider assessment. Acts 2026-186 (HB182) and 2026-520 (HB116) expanded EMS licensure and education pathways.

Fire service and public-safety funding

Act 2026-380 (HB238) enacted the FY 2027 Education Trust Fund budget, including the Alabama Fire College line item. Act 2026-383 (HB218 / SB146) preserved DERF funding, provided Forestry funding, and included Fire College peer-support funding.

911, forestry, and emergency preparedness

The enacted measures continued the State 911 Board, expanded oversight of local 911 responsiveness, modernized Forestry and burn-permit law, strengthened camp emergency preparedness, and authorized EMA public-education expenditures.

Enacted Supported Legislation

The Act number is shown first, followed by the House or Senate bill number from which the Act originated.

Act 2026-156 (SB77)	Continuation of State 911 Board	Continued the State 911 Board, with modifications, through October 1, 2028.
Act 2026-186 (HB182)	Military training credit for EMS licensure	Required the health department to accept qualifying military education or training as credit toward EMS licensure.
Act 2026-243 (HB253 / SB249)	Firefighter license plate funding	Increased the firefighter distinctive license plate fee and established distribution of the proceeds among designated firefighter support funds.
Act 2026-349 (HB400 / SB269)	Ground ambulance reimbursement	Prohibited balance billing for covered ground ambulance services and established minimum insurer reimbursement requirements for EMS providers.
Act 2026-353 (HB466 / SB332)	Firefighter Parkinson's coverage	Added Parkinson's disease to the occupational diseases eligible for firefighter death and disability compensation.
Act 2026-380 (HB238)	FY 2027 ETF budget	Enacted the Education Trust Fund budget with an Alabama Fire College line item of \$7,209,588.
Act 2026-383 (HB218 / SB146)	FY 2027 General Fund Budget	Enacted the General Fund budget with \$14,964,485 for Forestry, preserved \$500,000 in DERF funding, and included \$95,000 in the Forestry budget for Fire College peer support.
Act 2026-390 (HB231 / SB144)	EMS provider assessment	Removed the sunset clause from the emergency medical transport provider assessment program, helping preserve continuity of the existing program.
Act 2026-398 (SB197)	Statewide mobile vendor inspections	Allowed one health inspection and one fire inspection for food trucks and other mobile food vendors to apply statewide.
Act 2026-402 (HB267)	Forestry law modernization	Modernized Alabama Forestry Commission law, revised burn-permit processes and penalties, and supported movement toward an online permit system.
Act 2026-429 (HB591 / SB367)	Rural health supplemental appropriation	Enacted supplemental appropriations for the Rural Health Transformation Program for FY 2026.
Act 2026-520 (HB116)	EMS education access	Expanded the Volunteer Rescue Squad Tuition Reimbursement Program so EMS regional agencies may participate in education and instruction.
Act 2026-525 (SB280)	Purchase of public-service retirement credit	Allowed eligible state employees and teachers to purchase retirement credit for qualifying federal public service.
Act 2026-556 (HB247)	Volunteer firefighter cancer death benefit	Authorized a State Board of Adjustment death benefit for survivors of volunteer firefighters who die from cancer.
Act 2026-557 (HB317)	Fire chaplains and license plates	Added fire chaplains to firefighter distinctive license plate eligibility and provided penalties for violations.
Act 2026-599 (HB235)	FY 2026 ETF supplemental budget	Enacted the supplemental Education Trust Fund budget; the tracker identified no fire-service funding items in the measure.
Act 2026-601 (HB239)	ETF retiree COLA	Enacted the FY 2027 ETF employee/retiree COLA measure, including a 2% retiree COLA in the Senate version tracked by AJFC.
Act 2026-608 (HB223 / SB154)	General Fund retiree COLA	Provided a 2% cost-of-living adjustment for eligible State General Fund retirees.

Supported Legislation Not Enacted

The following measures were coded as supported by the AJFC in the final tracker but did not become law during the 2026 Regular Session.

Originating Bill	Subject	Final Outcome
HB186 / SB68	Line-of-duty disability retirement benefits	The proposal was placed on hold and did not receive final passage. It would have provided full retirement benefits to qualifying first responders permanently and totally disabled in the line of duty, without regard to retirement tier or years of service.
HB278	Firefighter and rescue squad training tax credit	The bill passed the House but did not advance beyond first reading in the Senate before the session ended.
HB344 / SB232	Volunteer fire department banking authority	The proposal remained at first reading and did not receive final passage. It would have expressly authorized volunteer fire departments to deposit funds with financial institutions.
HB470	Return-to-work authority for retired state employees	The measure remained at first reading and did not receive final passage.

Strategic Takeaways

- The AJFC achieved enactment of 30 of the 34 measures it supported, reflecting substantial success across a broad fire-service and public-safety agenda.
- The strongest direct gains involved firefighter survivor and occupational-disease benefits, EMS reimbursement and program stability, and preservation of core fire-service funding.
- The four supported measures that did not pass remain potential candidates for renewed advocacy, amendment, or reintroduction in a future session.
- Implementation monitoring remains important for ambulance reimbursement, firefighter license plate fund distribution, 911 oversight, new firefighter benefits, and appropriated funding.

Recommended Follow-Up

Unfinished priorities: Evaluate whether the four supported but unenacted proposals should be revised or reintroduced in the next legislative session.

Source and scope note: This report is based solely on the final AJFC legislative tracker supplied for review. It includes only measures identified by the tracker's green coding as supported by the AJFC and reports the final status shown in that spreadsheet.