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Cover photo courtesy of Dominic Colletti. See his article on page 18, followed by other informative Freeze Protection articles. The Independent Designers article on page 14 shares some helpful pointers! Don't miss the Apprenticeship article on page 12 or the Other Voices Survey on page 28!

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We all must continue to promote fire sprinkler installations, be advocates for fire sprinkler installations, and be educators about the benefits of fire sprinkler systems.

Every structure built should have a fire sprinkler system installed. And existing buildings, almost without exception, should be retrofitted with a fire sprinkler system.

It is good business and sound economic policy.

Protect Life and Property with Fire Sprinklers!

Fond Memories

It's good to see so many Fire Sprinkler Industry Benefit Golf Tournaments. It's great to see so many worthy charities benefit from a round of golf. We really appreciate all of the Associations and Chapters that get together to help make a difference.

Not only do these events raise money for good causes, they also promote the fire sprinkler industry – and that results in saving lives!

We also appreciate that many of these events are memorializing some of the great fire sprinkler industry people that served and helped build up the industry and make it better. We are grateful to all those that came before us – the leaders, the educators, the promoters, et. al. We stand on the shoulders of great people who made it possible for us to work in a great industry – and that results in saving lives!

Always yours, for a better fire sprinkler industry!

— *Brant R. Brumbeloe*
Son of a Sprinkler Man

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Survey Says!

Please see the attached article I have written regarding a recent survey I have released to the fire protection industry [article on pg. 28].

A quick synopsis below:

This survey is meant to get a pulse of how our industry compares to construction in general when looking at annual NIOSH statistics, and to start the conversation around how we can create a better culture and support system for not only our current workforce, but the next generation of tradespeople and fire protection professionals.

I've been running my own online nutrition coaching business for about two years now and found a way to combine my two passions. This project has been funded by a grant from NFSA SAM Council, and I am the only one that sees the data.

Data collection and analysis will be done at the completion of the survey, with the intent to present the findings at the NFSA leadership event in May next year. It's truly just a think tank experiment to get the conversation started because we're expecting a mass retirement in our trade over the next 5-10 years. Unfortunately we're very much a "this is how things have always been" type of trade, and the next generation of

tradespeople are 1) very hard to find and 2) interested in more work life balance and support regarding mental and physical health.

It's a way to try to encourage more thought of how to be proactive and think outside the box to sustain the fire protection trade for the long run. And make sure we protect the most valuable asset to the company – the employee.

Thank you,

— *Kacee L. Paige, CFPS, CWBSP, WBITM*
JCI Territory Manager, Water Products – New England
www.YourNutritionPaige.com

Another Success!

Huge thanks to our friend and fellow fire sprinkler advocate Ed Rush for this information concerning a sprinkler save in Lewes [see Success Stories]. Once again, fire sprinklers protect lives and property.

Thanks,

— *Paul Eichler*
Delaware Fire Sprinkler Coalition

AN OPEN FORUM: *Fire Protection Contractor* magazine is an open forum serving the fire sprinkler industry — an arena for ideas to be aired and reflected upon. Together, we can seek better ways and act to improve the industry for the benefit of all. Please send us your thoughts, ideas, opinions, **Reactions, Letters;** perhaps write a **Guest Editorial** on issues, problems, and concerns facing the industry. Send items to: info@fpcmag.com.

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Success Stories

Saved: Apartment

On Friday, July 25, at 2138 hours, the Lewes Fire Department was dispatched to the Woods Edge Apartments on Woods Edge Drive in Lewes for an automatic fire alarm, reported to be a sprinkler activation alarm. Car 82-8, the duty officer, arrived on scene first and observed that the building was being evacuated and the audible fire alarm was sounding.

The building is an approximately 200' x 50' three story wood frame multiple dwelling. One of the evacuating residents approached car 82-8 and stated that she had observed a "large plume of smoke coming from a balcony in the rear of the building."

A second resident approached and stated that she had observed "fire and smoke on the balcony of her apartment, which was apartment 202 on the second floor." Car 82-8 relocated to the Bravo side to continue his 360-degree size up and observed a volume of water spray coming off a balcony, apparently from an activated sprinkler head.

Engine 82-1 and ambulance A-82 arrived at this time and the crew of 82-1 was assigned to interior fire attack. Upon investigation it was determined that there had been a fire on the balcony of the apartment and **the fire was completely extinguished by the activated sprinkler head.** Overhaul was completed and it was determined that the fire damage was contained to a light fixture, the vinyl siding, and a plastic storage box on the floor. The scene was turned over to the Fire Marshal for cause and origin investigation.

If this building was not protected by a fire sprinkler system, this incident had the potential to become a major fire with much property damage, residents being displaced, and possible serious injury or loss of life. But due to the presence of fire sprinklers, damage was minimal, and the resident was able to stay in her apartment that night.

Fire Sprinklers Save Lives.

— Ed Rush
Lewes Fire Department Safety Officer
7/29/2025

Saved: Nursing Home

An item by Charlie McKenna posted August 8, 2025, on www.masslive.com, said Somerset Fire Chief Jamison T. J. Barros praised the work by nursing home employees in keeping residents safe during an overnight fire that was kept in check by **sprinklers.**

No one was hurt after a fire erupted in a Somerset nursing home, according to the town's Fire Department.

The building's **sprinkler system** worked properly and a staff member used a fire extinguisher, with firefighters applying additional water to ensure the fire was fully extinguished.

"Many things can go wrong in an event like this, often with tragic results," Barros wrote.

Send your stories to: info@fpcmag.com

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National

NFSA: Big Beautiful Bill

There is good news to report regarding fire sprinkler incentives in the legislation that was signed into law on Friday (July 4, 2025). A big thank you goes to NFSA Vice President of Advocacy and Outreach Vickie Pritchett and her team, along with Andy Quinn and his team at McAlister & Quinn in Washington, D.C. Vickie and Andy have been in daily contact this past month, and our work paid off with these key provisions.

I've asked Vickie and Andy to prepare a summary of what the legislation means for the fire sprinkler industry and I'm happy to share it below:

Tax Preferences for Fire Sprinklers

Background: One of the challenges for state and local governments in mandat-

ing fire sprinkler retrofits has been cost and the inability of property owners to recover those costs over a reasonable amount of time. Historically, fire sprinklers in commercial structures have been depreciated over 39 years, the same as plumbing, and 27.5 years in residential settings.

As part of the 2017 *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA)* NFSA had two major victories:

1. Fire sprinklers were made eligible as a 179 property. This change allowed small businesses to fully expense up to \$1.3 million for the installation of fire sprinklers. This allowed any small business such as a bar, restaurant, or other property to immediately expense the full cost of a fire sprinkler retrofit. This change was made permanent by Congress and did not sunset unlike other tax provisions.

2. Fire sprinklers were made eligible as a Qualified Improvement Property (QIP). QIP is essentially any retrofit item on the interior of a nonresidential building with the exclusion of structural enhancements. This includes fire sprinklers as well as other interior upgrades such as HVAC, drywall, electrical, and lighting. QIP reduced the depreciation schedule in commercial structures from 39 years to 15 years. In addition, QIP was also eligible for bonus depreciation, which allowed property owners to depreciate the investment in fire sprinklers even more quickly. Congress allowed property owners to depreciate fire sprinkler retrofits 100% for the tax years 2018-2022. Starting in 2023, the schedule decreases to 80% and goes down 20% every tax year until there is no bonus depreciation in 2027. After that, fire sprinklers would be depreciated over a 15-year time horizon. There is no cap on the amount a property owner can depreciate using QIP and bonus depreciation.

Big Beautiful Bill (BBB)

Congress passed this legislation last week and President Trump signed it on July 4. There are two important changes in the House and Senate versions of the BBB that will greatly benefit the fire

sprinkler industry:

1. They more than doubled the size of the 179 deductions. Small and now medium-sized businesses will be able to fully expense up to \$2.5 million instead of the current maximum of \$1.3 million. This could allow a property owner to retrofit almost 500,000 sq. ft. property and fully deduct the cost.

2. The bill reinstates 100% bonus depreciation for QIP properties for the tax years 2025-2030. The bill also reinstates bonus depreciation but does not sunset the provision, so this change is now permanent. As before, there is no limit on the amount a property owner can now fully expense.

As always, NFSA recommends all business owners consult with a tax professional to better understand all of the implications and how they can best take advantage of these tax incentives. This is an example of Team NFSA making a difference with our steadfast engagement in Washington, D.C.

Vickie and her team are already working on ways to create new resources that promote the new incentives, and we will need everyone's help sharing the good news with business owners across America.

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out! We love hearing from you.

A grateful,

— Shane Ray
President, NFSA

National

Guardians of Life Safety

Exploring the critical role of water-based fire protection system inspectors and inspections in the United States.

So says an August 4, 2025, article by Jack Coffelt, Vice President of Inspections for VSC Fire & Security, on www.phcpropros.com, under their *FPE Corner* heading. Coffelt brings more than 35 years of experience in fire and life safety, in a multitude of capacities. A U.S. Navy veteran, he has worked with

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systems ranging from fire sprinkler, fire alarm, and suppression to access controls and CCTV. His career spans roles at Honeywell, Simplex-Grinnell, Siemens, and others, covering design, installation, inspection, sales, software, and management.

The article says: In 2023, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reported that fires caused more than \$18 billion in property damage and claimed more than 3,500 lives across the United States. Many of these losses could have been mitigated by one vital measure: rigorous inspections of water-based fire protection systems, such as sprinklers, standpipes, and fire pumps.

These systems are the first line of defense in countless buildings, and fire protection inspectors – with their specialized skills in fire life safety codes, attention to detail, and technical proficiency – ensure they function when lives are on the line. From a different perspective than the fire sprinkler system installers, who focus on building these systems, inspectors bring a unique analytical expertise to identify deficiencies that could spell disaster.

The vital role of water-based fire protection systems and their inspections: Water-based fire protection systems are the backbone of fire suppression in the United States, installed in commercial buildings, residential high-rises, schools, hospitals and industrial facilities. Sprinkler systems, which douse fires with pressurized water, are the most common, controlling 96% of fires where they operate correctly, according to NFPA data. Standpipes provide water for firefighters in high-rise buildings, while fire pumps ensure adequate water pressure.

These systems must comply with standards such as NFPA 13, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems*; NFPA 20, *Standard for Installation of Stationary Pumps for Fire Pumps*; and NFPA 25, *Standard for the Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*.

Inspections ensure these systems are ready to perform. Fire protection inspectors check sprinkler heads for obstructions, verify valve accessibility, test fire pump performance, and confirm water supply reliability. They also assess maintenance records to ensure systems are inspected, tested and maintained regularly.

<<<This article was edited for space. Visit the referenced website for the complete article.

Maryland

Removal of High-Rise Fire Sprinkler Retrofits

According to a July 16, 2025, item on www.phcpropros.com, recent amendments to the *Maryland State Fire Prevention Code* have eliminated the requirement to retrofit existing high-rise residential buildings with automatic fire sprinkler systems, a deeply concerning reversal of nationally recognized life safety *Standards*.

“This decision puts lives at risk – both occupants of the buildings and firefighters,” says National Fire Sprinkler Association President Shane Ray. “We cannot afford to wait for another tragedy. Fire does not discriminate, but fire sprinkler systems save lives, every single time. Maryland must prioritize people over policy and reinstate this critical requirement before more lives are lost.”

These amendments, which incorporate the 2024 editions of NFPA 1 and NFPA 101, stand in direct opposition to the findings of the *Final Report of the Workgroup to Develop Fire Safety Best Practices for Pre-1974 High-Rise Apartment Buildings*, released on June 30, 2025. This Workgroup, established under HB823/CH0744, conducted a thorough assessment of fire risks in Maryland’s older high-rise buildings, many of which still lack modern fire protection systems.

Key Findings from the *Workgroup Report*: Between 2001 and 2022, Maryland reported 248 high-rise fires – 87% occurred in residential occupancies.

Automatic fire sprinklers were found to reduce injury risk by 60% and property loss by 55%.

Older buildings often have chronic deficiencies in fire protection systems due to lax enforcement of inspection, testing, and maintenance standards.

Human factors, such as delayed evacuation and mobility challenges, further elevate fire risk, especially among elderly and vulnerable residents.

The Workgroup’s top recommendation was unambiguous: retrofit all existing high-rise residential buildings with automatic fire sprinkler systems by 2033,

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in alignment with NFPA 101.

Acknowledging the complexities of full retrofitting, the report also emphasized interim fire safety upgrades, including: Modernizing fire alarm and detection systems; Enhancing compartmentation of exit routes; Strengthening inspection and maintenance protocols; Delivering multilingual fire safety education to residents; High-profile tragedies – including those at Twin Parks (Bronx, NY), Marco Polo (Honolulu, HI), and Midtown Towers (Pittsburgh, PA) – have shown the fatal consequences of lacking sprinkler systems and compromised compartmentation. These incidents underscore the urgent need for robust fire protection in high-rise dwellings.

Despite national code mandates, Maryland's updated *Code* exempts buildings from sprinkler retrofits unless formally designated as an "inimical hazard," leaving thousands of residents without the life-saving benefits of automatic fire sprinklers.

A Call to Action: The Workgroup emphasized that while a layered fire safety approach is essential, automatic fire sprinklers are the single most effective life safety technology available. Their omission from Maryland's *Code* requirements marks a significant regression in public safety policy.

The full Workgroup report may be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/HiRizReport>.

NFSA wants to create a more fire-safe world and works to heighten the aware-

ness of the importance of fire sprinkler systems from homes to high-rises and all occupancies in between. The Association is an inclusive organization made up of dedicated and committed members of a progressive lifesaving industry. This industry manufactures, designs, supplies, installs, inspects, and services the world's most effective system in saving lives and property from uncontrolled structural fires.

South Africa

Sprinkler Systems: Reducing Fire Fatalities and Property Damage By 87%

An article posted August 7, 2025, on www.bizcommunity.com, south Africa, said sprinkler systems are a proactive measure to mitigate the risk of fire-related incidents, providing early detection and suppression, reducing the spread of flames and smoke. Unfortunately, sometimes unscrupulous installers cut corners.

This is why peer reviews by independent certified engineers are so valuable, as they ensure that the fire-protection system meets all necessary regulations.

This is according to ASP Fire Chief Executive Officer Michael van Niekerk.

"Often, a developer installs the bare

minimum sprinkler system, which is fine for certain uses. But if a tenant starts using the building for something more combustible, like storing plastic instead of steel, the system may no longer be adequate," notes van Niekerk.

This underscores the need for involving certified fire engineers in the design process to ensure the system is tailored to a building's specific use.

While there are requirements for certified engineers to sign off on fire-protection systems, van Niekerk warns about the risk of sub-standard installations in commercial buildings, which increase fire-risk potential and raise personal safety concerns.

"Sprinkler systems significantly reduce the risk of injury and death during a fire. They can control or extinguish a fire before it spreads, giving occupants more time to evacuate safely.

"Buildings with sprinkler systems have an 87% lower death rate due to fire, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)," says van Niekerk.

These systems also minimize property damage by controlling the fire early, not only protecting the building structure but its contents, such as equipment, inventory, and sensitive data.

Many building codes and regulations, such as the *National Building Regulations Act*, require the installation of sprinkler systems in commercial buildings. Compliance with these regulations is not only a legal obligation but also a moral responsibility to ensure the safety of occupants.

Buildings with properly installed and maintained sprinkler systems are less likely to have insurance cover withdrawn due to the risk of extensive fire damage being significantly reduced.

"By controlling fires quickly, sprinkler systems minimize downtime and allow businesses to resume operations faster, which is crucial for maintaining revenue and reputation," concludes van Niekerk. □

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ITM Apprenticeship:

Seriously, It's Time!

By Bob Caputo

For a few years now, I've been banging the drum, trying to convince others that we need to recognize an occupation for inspection and testing, separating it from installation as a matter of training and practice. What do I mean by that? It's long been the practice of fire sprinkler contractors, whether signatory or open shop, to assign fitters to perform inspection and testing activities. I believe this is wrong and opens contractors up to serious liabilities.

Let's compare this to automobile manufacturing and maintenance work. If I work on the assembly line at Ford or General Motors, building cars and trucks, does this qualify me as a service mechanic for those vehicles? Obviously no, because there is much more to ensure the safe functionality of the car than just knowing my part of the assembly process. The same is true for fire sprinkler systems.

Let's consider experience and regional knowledge. Fitters in southern California, southern Florida, and other warm-weather states install many wet pipe systems. Still, aside from coolers or freezers, they do not install many dry-pipe, pre-action, or deluge systems. I didn't say they don't see any of them, but surely not as many or as often as sprinkler fitters in Minnesota or Iowa. How about fire pumps? When I was a fire sprinkler contractor in San Diego, we installed systems in six-story buildings downtown without needing a fire pump. The water pressure in parts of San Diego County needs pressure-reducing valves because the pressure is very high. Fitters in this region have installed very few fire pumps, unlike their counterparts in many other parts of the nation. Of course, the same can be said of inspection and testing opportunities, but in the course of a year's worth of work, a dedicated inspector will see many more sites and conditions than would a fitter on construction sites.

Inspection and testing of fire sprinkler systems should be a separate, stand-alone job because they require a distinct knowledge base and utilize a different set of rules. Specifically, NFPA 13 provides rules for designing and installing fire sprinkler systems. In contrast, NFPA 25 provides the requirements for inspection, testing, and maintenance of those and other water-based systems. NFPA 25 explicitly states that it is not the *Standard's* intent to have the inspector verify the adequacy of the installed system. The *Standard* is based on a wear and tear approach to inspection and testing. It does not intend for the

technician to have the knowledge base to determine if a system is installed correctly, designed for the current building use, or adequate for the current storage use or products. Nothing in the sprinkler fitter apprenticeship program prepares or trains fitters to perform inspection and testing activities. However, the knowledge of the equipment and system components can provide a great foundation.

Even if the training was modified to train sprinkler fitters to perform required inspections, few fitters spend enough time away from contract work to be knowledgeable or practiced enough to

be effective and limit their employers' liability. Moreover, let's talk about the lack of manpower in our trade, as it has been in all construction trades.

We all know our industry needs to attract more people at every level. This is especially true for qualified layout technicians, fitters, and inspectors. Many contractors tell us they could book more work if they could find more skilled people. Identifying inspectors in their own role will aid our industry and relieve some pressure on the need for more fitters. Inspection and testing do not require a four-year apprenticeship program to create qualified or certified workers. For starters, more wet pipe systems are installed than any other system type, and it doesn't take more than six months to a year to train on these requirements. The National Institute for the Certification of Engineering Technologies (NICET) water-based ITM Level II certification requires a candidate to have only two years of practical experience to sit for that test. The Level III certification requires five years of experience, which allows newly minted inspectors to work toward performing necessary inspections and testing on more complex systems, including dry-pipe, deluge, pre-action, fire pumps, and special hazard systems.

This role will attract more females, who currently only represent 3.1% of sprinkler fitters¹, and others to the workforce, who may not be interested in pulling wrenches 30' in the air on a hot summer or cold winter day. Since most inspection and testing roles involve a lot of customer service interaction and are performed in existing, occupied buildings, the role will appeal to people who may be aging out of traditional installation roles, along with people from other service trades.

Unless you have been wearing blinders these past few years, many of the industry's largest contractors have been focused on recurring revenue streams. Building their business book on in-

"We all know our industry needs to attract more people at every level. This is especially true for qualified layout technicians, fitters, and inspectors. Many contractors tell us they could book more work if they could find more skilled people."

spection and testing while steering away from new construction projects. The consolidation, mergers, and acquisitions activities pervasive over the past few years have offered much greater multipliers on recurring revenue streams than on the limited value of non-recurring revenue realized by a limited backlog of new construction work. It makes sense to the investment market, and our industry should read the tea leaves and respond to the trends by providing the workforce needed to meet the demand.

So, seriously... Our industry must create a new occupation category with well-trained, certified inspection and testing technicians. AFSA has been working toward getting the U.S. Department of Labor to recognize this as its own occupation and create a DOL-approved apprenticeship program. Surprisingly, our application was rejected the first time we submitted it. The process took over a year, and we are resubmitting the application with more support for the concept from the contracting community. If you agree with the need to recognize inspectors in our industry as a specific occupation, here is how you can help us. Write a letter in support addressed to:

U.S. Department of Labor
c/o AFSA
1410 E Renner Rd., Suite 150
Richardson, TX 75082

Letters in PDF form can also be e-mailed to Victoria Valentine, P.E., FSFPE, AFSA's Director of Program Development and Special Projects at: valentine@firesprinkler.org.

About The Author:

Bob Caputo, President of the American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA), is the Chair of the NFPA 24 and NFPA 291 technical committees and a member of multiple NFPA technical committees, including NFPA 13 and NFPA 25, and has also contributed to the NFPA 13 and NFPA 25 *Handbooks*, the NFPA *Inspection Manual*, and the 21st edition of the *Fire Protection Handbook*. Bob has written and presented seminars worldwide on fire protection and life safety systems and is a regular speaker at AFSA and NFPA conventions. He is an instructor at the National Fire Academy and is a member of the Oklahoma State University School of Fire Protection Engineering & Safety Industry Advisory Board. His industry distinctions include "Fire Prevention Officer of the Year" from San Diego County in 1994, "Person of the Year" from *Fire Protection Contractor* magazine in 1997, and the Henry S. Parmelee award from AFSA in 2017. Caputo attended the University of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and is a U.S. Navy veteran and former volunteer firefighter.

¹ "Sprinkler Fitter Demographics and Statistics in the US", *Zippia. The Career Experts*, www.zippia.com/sprinkler-fitter-jobs/demographics/, January 8, 2025

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The Independent Fire Sprinkler Designer

By Adam Tuomala

Samuel Clemens once said, “The definition of a gold mine is a big hole in the ground with a liar at the bottom of it!” My advice is, before you hire any independent fire sprinkler designer, ask for their credentials, experience, and, of course, references.

When performing any design work, your first responsibility is to ensure the project is designed and calculated correctly. A proper design should always be your number one priority. Unfortunately, I have seen some characters whose priorities seem to be financially motivated. This business approach is sure to eventually fail.

The true goal is to develop and maintain working relationships that are mutually beneficial for all parties. Building trust is one key component for long-lasting business relationships, and not in trying to convince someone that you have the latest, greatest, and the very best design software ever created, and everything is going to be just awesome! The real problem is that the software is only as smart as the person inputting and manipulating the data. A little knowledge can indeed be a very dangerous thing.

Another concern is whether the system fits. The goal is to have as few field modifications as possible. I have seen far too many times when people simply draw lines on paper where they want them. This works great on paper and makes for a quick design. But by the time the installers are done cutting,

chopping, and making changes to the system to get it to fit, it may not even work hydraulically anymore. And when you consider the additional labor and material costs, this will probably be the last design you ever do for that customer.

Unfortunately (especially in these times), there are a lot of people who profess to be talented and diligent sprinkler designers, many of whom are not even on this continent. They possess no credentials or licenses and have little or nothing at stake. So, beware of the goats in sheep’s clothing. Someone is inevitably going to pay for their ineptness.

The good news is that there are some very talented designers out there! You can usually discern the good ones just by talking with them a bit. Sprinkler people generally speak the same language, and it becomes apparent pretty quickly if you’re talking with someone who knows the trade, or someone who is just parroting a bunch of stuff that sounds super technical and important.

About the Author:

Adam Tuomala, NICET IV WBSL, RME-G, SCR-G, ECR, FEL-K, is Owner of Phoenix Fire Protection, 3955 Outpost Trace, Lago Vista, TX 78645. He may be reached at: (512) 470-5585, phoenixfirepros@gmail.com.

For more information visit: www.phoenixfirepros.com.

“The good news is that there are some very talented designers out there! You can usually discern the good ones just by talking with them a bit. Sprinkler people generally speak the same language...”

Pointers:

- » Ask for their credentials, experience, and, of course, references.
- » Ensure the project is designed and calculated correctly.
- » The true goal is to develop and maintain working relationships that are mutually beneficial for all parties.

» Building trust is one key component for long-lasting business relationships...

» Software is only as smart as the person inputting and manipulating the data.

» The goal is to have as few field modifications as possible.

What do you think?

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Wave of Projects Lifts Construction Planning to Record High

Notable strength in data center and warehouse activity accounted for the growth as developers absorb tariff-related cost increases, according to Dodge Construction Network.

An article by Sebastian Obando posted August 11, 2025, on www.constructiondive.com, said another month of construction planning growth indicates a wave of projects is breaking loose, according to Dodge Construction Network.

The Dodge Momentum Index (DMI), which tracks nonresidential projects entering the planning stage and leads actual construction spending by a full year, soared 20.8% in July. Commercial and institutional planning spiked 14.2% and 35.1%, respectively, during the month. The rise follows a 6.8% gain in June.

“Planning data skyrocketed in the month of July on the back of several large projects entering the planning queue for data centers, research and development labs, hospitals, and service stations,” said Sarah Martin, Associate Director of Forecasting at Dodge Construction Network. “After months of wait-and-see due to tariff uncertainty, owners and developers have begun to move forward with projects and assumed higher costs for them.”


Recruiting, retention, and training in construction: Tariffs on materials such as steel and aluminum have added pressure to construction budgets, causing delays or outright cancellations on a number of jobsites. Though some developers are still moving forward, Martin cautions others will remain hesitant. That dynamic will likely keep planning activity uneven in the months ahead, she said.

“Combined with more organic momentum in planning for hotels, warehouses, and recreational projects, cumulative activity drove record highs in the DMI,” said Martin. “As economic and fiscal uncertainty remains prevalent, volatility in planning activity will remain elevated”

Momentum expanded across all commercial subsectors, with notable strength in data center and warehouse planning. Massachusetts’ DOT also contributed more than \$700 million in planning for the construction of several service plaza projects across the state.

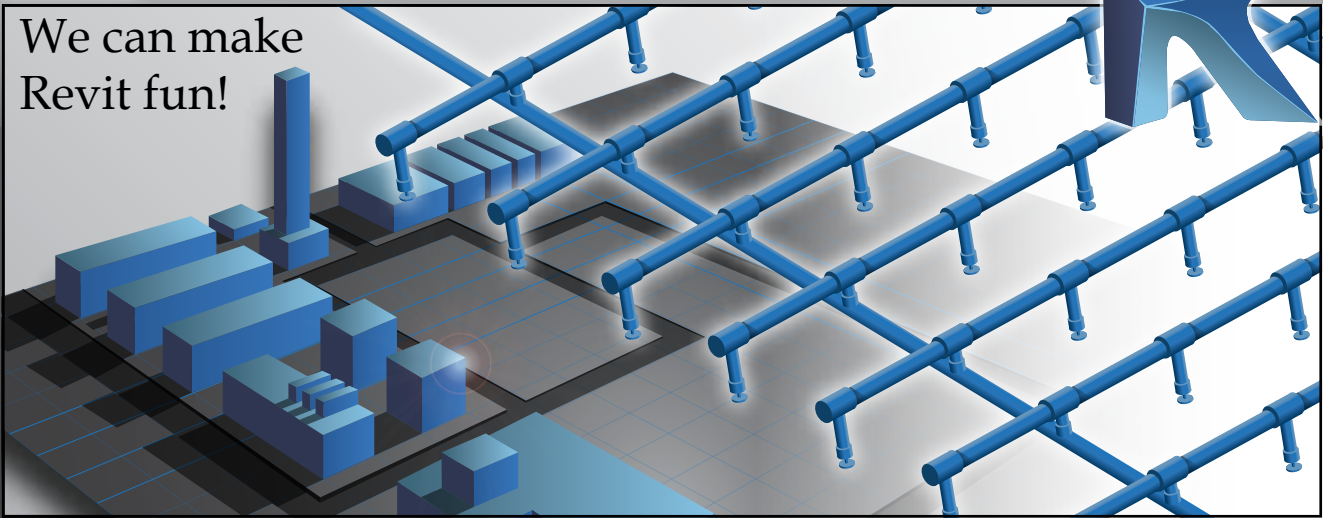
Institutional activity accounted for the bulk of July’s gains. Education, healthcare, and public projects all posted substantial increases in planning, according to Dodge. For example, the Hospital Corp. of America submitted plans for several new facilities in July, helping push institutional growth to an 85% year-over-year increase.

Overall, the DMI jumped 41% compared to July 2024. Com-



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mercial planning rose 24% over that period, and institutional planning nearly doubled.

Even excluding data center projects from 2023 through 2025, commercial planning would still be up 26% from a year ago, fueled in part by warehouse development, according to Dodge.

A total of 47 projects valued at \$100 million or more entered planning in July, according to Dodge.

Construction Backlogs Up, Contractor Optimism Slips

Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) reported that its Construction Backlog Indicator rose to 8.8 months in July, according to an ABC member survey conducted July 24 to August 4. The reading is up 0.4 months since July 2024.

Backlog is up on a year-over-year basis in every region except for the South. Despite the lack of growth, backlog in the South remains significantly longer than in any other region.

ABC's Construction Confidence Index reading for sales and profit margins declined in July, while the reading for staffing levels rose to the highest level since April. The readings for all three components remain above the threshold of 50, indicating expectations for growth over the next six months.

"Backlog continued to rise in July despite the ongoing decline in construction spending," said ABC Chief Economist Anirban Basu. "Some of that strength can be attributed to the fact that one in every eight ABC members is currently under contract to perform work on a data center project. Backlog in the infrastructure category has also increased considerably over the past year, and public construction activity has outperformed

the private sector over the past several months.

"While backlog rose, contractor confidence slipped in July, especially with regards to profit margins. Fewer than 2% of ABC members expect their profit margins to increase significantly over the next six months, the fewest since October 2024. This is likely due to trade policy and the recent acceleration in materials price escalation; more than 80% of ABC members have been notified of tariff-related price increases."

Real average hourly earnings for all employees increased 0.1% in July, seasonally adjusted. Average hourly earnings increased 0.3%, and CPI-U increased 0.2%. Real average weekly earnings increased 0.4%.

CPI for all items rises 0.2% in July: the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers rose 0.2%, and rose 2.7% over the last 12 months. The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.3% in July; up 3.1% over the year.

Productivity: Nonfarm business sector labor productivity increased 2.4% in the second quarter of 2025, as output increased 3.7% and hours worked increased 1.3%. From the same quarter a year ago, nonfarm business sector labor productivity increased 1.3%.

Employment Cost Index: Compensation costs increased 0.9% for civilian workers, seasonally adjusted, from March 2025 to June 2025. Over the year, total compensation rose 3.6%, wages and salaries rose 3.6%, and benefit costs rose 3.5%.

Consumer sentiment improved for the second straight month, inching up a scant single index point from June. Current conditions rose about 5% to its highest reading since February 2025, while the expectations index fell slightly. A rise in sentiment among stockholders was partially offset by a decline among consumers who do not own stocks.

Perceptions of this month's economic developments were similar across the political spectrum; Republicans, Independents, and Democrats all saw some minor increases in sentiment this month. Although recent trends show sentiment moving in a favorable direction, sentiment remains broadly negative. Consumers are hardly optimistic about the trajectory of the economy, even as their worries have softened since April 2025 (www.sca.isr.umich.edu).

The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index[®] improved by 2.0 points in July to 97.2 (1985=100), from 95.2 in June (revised up by 2.2 points). The Present Situation Index, based on consumers' assessment of current business and labor market conditions, fell 1.5 points to 131.5. The Expectations Index, based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business, and labor market conditions, rose 4.5 points to 74.4. But expectations remained below the threshold of 80 that typically signals a recession ahead for the sixth consecutive month. □

Let us not become weary in doing good,
for at the proper time we will reap a
harvest if we do not give up.

— Galatians 6:9



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Proper Winterization for Fire Sprinkler Systems

By Dominic Colletti

Each autumn, a significant concern for local fire protection contractors is reaching all clients before the first freeze. Checking antifreeze sections is an integral part of winterizing a wet fire sprinkler system. The damage that can occur with a hard freeze and thaw of a piping system not only compromises life safety but can also cause business interruption.

Now that factory-premixed antifreeze is required for use in antifreeze segments of wet sprinkler systems, contractors must change how they perform installation, inspection, testing, and maintenance.

Here are three important considerations for winterizing a wet fire sprinkler system with listed antifreeze.

Don't Blame the Antifreeze Loop – Set It Up For Success

Many times, the bias against installing antifreeze systems has an underlying cause: incorrectly sized systems. Some “problematic” antifreeze systems are simply oversized, whereby the antifreeze section is much larger than needed to successfully protect the limited portions of the building expected to experience below-freezing temperatures. And the larger the antifreeze system, the greater the need to account for expansion and contraction. Like any fluid, antifreeze expands and contracts when exposed to temperature changes. Unaccounted for, the expanded volume of system fluids can stress piping and can cause valves or sprinkler heads to leak or fail due to over-pressurization.

Most building owners aren't going to pay to reconfigure the entire system. The more affordable and very effective option is to set the system up for success through simple retrofits. Existing systems, even oversized ones, should have expansion/contraction measures in place, such as an appropriately sized expansion tank and appropriate check valve assembly, as well as listed antifreeze.

Follow the Code and the Listed Antifreeze Manual to the Letter

Before changes to NFPA *Standards* requiring UL-Listed antifreeze, systems could be filled with site-mixed fluids. Today, if out-of-spec antifreeze is found during inspection, the system will require a complete drain and replacement with factory-premixed listed antifreeze fluid.

Listed antifreeze has different rules from site-mixed fluids. Following the listed antifreeze product's user manual closely can help ensure successful use. The manual gives explicit instructions for installation as well as additional considerations specific to factory-premixed antifreeze. For example, the user manual will detail how to implement good practices such as:

- Retrofitting a properly sized expansion tank.
- Removing the system check valve, if it has a drilled hole for expansion, and installing a new check valve without a drilled hole.

These practices, detailed in user manuals, help keep the UL-Listed antifreeze in specification for longer by avoiding intrusion from fresh water into the antifreeze, which enhances

system reliability, simplifies inspections, and reduces time and cost. And these alterations can be made at any time during the year, minimizing strain on winterization timelines.

Winterize Early

As part of the winterization process, contractors must ensure that a system's factory-premixed, UL-Listed antifreeze is up to specification. If it isn't, additional time is needed to fully drain and refill the system. This can strain already tight schedules as temperatures drop.

Adhering to a regular, thorough maintenance schedule is important. While it may not seem connected to winterization, regular maintenance during warm weather can catch and remediate the expensive, time-consuming problems that may emerge if maintenance is only done immediately before winter.

By building time buffers into annual maintenance calendars, ITM contractors can anticipate and better manage

longer processes, such as contaminated, out-of-spec antifreeze, which will require a full system drain and replacement. Time buffers can account for unexpected early cold and scheduling conflicts without forcing contractors to race against the cold weather. A good rule is to begin winterizing clients at least four to five weeks ahead of the first expected freeze.



Conclusion

Watch out for and prevent “benign neglect.” Keep your antifreeze systems up to *Code*, perform ITM, winterize early, and follow all directions on the UL-Listed antifreeze product you choose. These straightforward tips can help minimize risk and create a strong liability shield for properties.

About the Author:

Dominic Colletti, CFPS, CFPE, CFI-III, is Fire Protection Market Specialist for The Lubrizol Corporation.

For more information visit: www.lubrizol.com.

Inspecting antifreeze components is important when winterizing a wet fire sprinkler system. Cycles of freezing and thawing throughout the year can damage piping, compromise life safety, and disrupt business operations.

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Antifreeze Testing – Listed and Legacy Solutions

By Alyssa Dunn

The most current edition of NFPA 25 *Standard for Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems* 2023 Edition recommends antifreeze solutions be tested annually toward the beginning of heating season prior to the onset of freezing conditions. This annual testing is recommended for both listed antifreeze solutions and legacy solutions such as propylene glycol and glycerine.

There is some confusion regarding the use of listed antifreeze solutions vs the use of legacy solutions. Previous editions of NFPA 25 required legacy solutions to be replaced with a listed alternative by September 30, 2022. However, the 2023 Edition of NFPA 25 now allows legacy solutions to remain in service if those solutions meet certain concentration limits. For propylene glycol solutions the concentration cannot exceed 30% by volume, and for glycerine solutions the concentration cannot exceed 38% by volume. There is one exception to these limits – premixed propylene glycol solutions exceeding 30% by volume are permitted for use with ESFR sprinklers if the ESFR sprinklers are listed for such use. Outside of this exception, if antifreeze systems are drained for any reason or if the concentration of the solution exceeds the allowed concentration percent by volume, the system shall be drained and refilled with a listed solution.

If the antifreeze solution is not required to be replaced, test samples shall be taken at the top and bottom of each system. In addition, if not already accounted for in the top and bottom test points, samples shall be taken at the most remote portion of the system and at the connection to the water supply. If the antifreeze system has a capacity larger than 150 gallons, additional test points are recommended for every 100 gallons.

For each sample, the specific gravity or refractive index shall be checked. This test can be completed in the field provided the appropriate calibrated equipment, such as a hydrometer with a suitable scale or a refractometer, is available. In the event this equipment is not available or if you would prefer an independent laboratory conduct the analysis, Dyne Fire Protection Labs, an NFPA Global Solutions Company, can test your antifreeze solution.

For legacy solutions, the concentration by volume can be determined by measuring the refractive index or density. Some equipment available for use in the field are calibrated to convert the specific gravity or refractive index into a percent concen-

tration. If your equipment does not convert to concentration, a conversion chart such as the one found in Table A.5.3.4.4.2 of NFPA 25 2023 Edition can be used. If your solution falls outside of the allowed concentration limits (30% by volume propylene glycol or 38% by volume glycerine), the antifreeze solution must be replaced by a listed solution. It is important to note that whether you are using a calibrated meter or a conversion chart to test your samples, the type of legacy solution must be known to get accurate results.

When testing listed antifreeze solutions, the specific gravity or refractive index shall be within the range listed as acceptable by the manufacturer, usually found on the product's technical datasheet. Listed antifreeze testing is slightly different as there is no need to determine the percent concentration of the solution. If the specific gravity or refractive index falls outside the acceptable range for the listed product, further investigation or replacement may be necessary.

Whether you are testing your legacy antifreeze or listed antifreeze solution, it is important to know the type of solution you have. If you are unsure of the type of solution in your system, Dyne Fire Protection Labs can help differentiate between both legacy and listed solutions. Legacy solutions can be differentiated using refractive index and density whereas listed antifreeze requires testing for concentrations of additives in the sample and matching to known compositions of listed antifreeze products. If the type of antifreeze cannot be determined or if the type is no longer permitted, the system would need to be drained and refilled with an acceptable solution.

About the Author:

Alyssa Dunn is General Manager at Dyne Fire Protection Labs, an NFPA Global Solutions Company, which is an ISO 9001 certified and ISO 17025 accredited laboratory that specializes in the periodic analysis of fire sprinklers, firefighting foams, and a variety of other fire protection products to help building owners and/or their designated representatives fulfill various inspection, testing, and maintenance (ITM) standard requirements. Alyssa has a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from UW-Stevens Point and previously served as a lab technician and lab manager at Dyne before becoming the General Manager in 2025. Alyssa can be reached at: 800-632-2304, alyssa.dunn@nfpaglobal.com.





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Dry Air for Cold Storage and Freezer Room Sprinkler Systems

By Ray Fremont Jr.

At General Air Products, we get asked a lot: “Should I use nitrogen or dry air in my freezer room or cold storage dry system?”

Our answer, every single time, is dry air.

We don't say that lightly. We manufacture nitrogen generators, dry air generators, and air compressors. That puts us in a unique position to speak plainly and honestly about where each one fits best. When it comes to cold storage or freezer room fire protection, dry air is the right answer. Not sometimes. Always.

The Easy One: Never Use Standard Compressed Air in a Freezer

Let's knock this out right away: never use a standard air compressor alone in a freezer room application. It's asking for ice plugs.



When you compress air, you pull in water vapor. Even with after coolers and drains, some of that moisture heads downstream. In a freezer system, that moisture freezes where ambient meets subzero, forming ice plugs that block pipe and cripple system performance. It doesn't take long. And pulling air from inside the freezer doesn't solve this – air gets heated

during compression, which condenses vapor and makes the problem worse.

So that leaves you with two real choices: dry air or nitrogen.

Corrosion Isn't the Problem Here

The main reason people choose nitrogen or other products like vapor corrosion inhibitors over air is corrosion mitigation. And it makes sense in typical dry pipe systems, especially ones with poor pitch, frequent hydro testing, or standing water.

But that's not what's going on in cold storage. In fact, these systems rarely see water inside the pipe once commissioned. Why? Because once installed, the system is rarely flow-tested again. Turning off a freezer to run water through the system is a logistical nightmare, so most owners avoid it entirely.

And if there's no water, there's no corrosion.

Dry air and nitrogen are both dry gas sources. If corrosion isn't a concern, which it largely isn't in cold storage, then you shouldn't be choosing your air supply based on corrosion. You should be choosing it based on reliability, leak tolerance, cost, and ease of maintenance.

Dry air wins on every one of those fronts.

Dry Air is Less Expensive – Especially at Scale

When your system hits 1,000 gallons or more (which is often the case in cold storage), nitrogen generator costs skyrocket. Dry air systems, like our Dry Air Pac®, scale far more affordably. So if corrosion isn't your concern, why would you pay significantly more for nitrogen?

Even in edge cases where a nitrogen generator comes in cheaper on the front end (usually only in very small systems), dry air is still the better long-term play. And if someone tries to pitch you on a single nitrogen generator for over 10 dry systems, we've got a bridge to sell you – because...

Most Importantly, Nitrogen Generators Can't Keep Up with Leaks

This is the deal breaker, and if you take nothing else away from this article, take this: Nitrogen generators are fundamentally limited in how much air they can push into a system. And in cold storage, where leaks are inevitable, that limitation causes real problems. Let's break it down.

At their core, nitrogen generators and dry air generators are both air compressors with fancy filters, but what those filters do, and how much they restrict airflow, is the key difference.

- In a dry air generator like our Dry Air Pac®, the compressor pushes air through a desiccant dryer system, which removes moisture while preserving a relatively high air flow (CFM).
- In a nitrogen generator, that air gets pushed through a membrane or PSA filter, which is designed to strip out oxygen and concentrate nitrogen. But if you want high-purity nitrogen (like 98%, which is standard in fire protec-

	Air Compressor	Air Compressor Through Dry Air Generator	Air Compressor Through Nitrogen Generator @98%
CFM For Correctly Sized Unit	24 CFM	20 CFM	0.6 CFM

tion applications), you're going to severely throttle your airflow.

Just how severe is that restriction? Let's look at an example:

- For a 2,000 gallon dry system, a correctly sized fire protection air compressor gives you 24 CFM.
- A correctly sized dry air generator gives you about 20 CFM.
- A correctly sized nitrogen generator set at 98% purity? You'll get about 0.6 CFM.

That's less than 3% of the original flow from the compressor. And that's not just a little drop, it's a complete chokehold on your system's ability to respond to leaks.

So why does this restricted air flow from nitrogen generators matter so much in cold storage? Because leaks happen. Especially in cold storage systems. Think about what these systems go through:

- Constant vibration from forklifts and pallet movement.
- Expansion and contraction from extreme temperature differentials.
- Aging gaskets, shifting racks, valve wear.
- Condensation and freezing cycles in poorly maintained or aging systems.

Leaks form. And they get worse for a variety of reasons in the field.

When you have a nitrogen generator that can only push a trickle of gas into the system (because it's filtering 98% pure nitrogen), it doesn't take much for that flow to get outpaced by even a modest leak.

Once that happens, you're on a slippery slope:

1. System pressure starts dropping.
2. Nitrogen generator runs continuously trying to keep up.
3. Run-time or low-pressure alarms trip.
4. System may accidentally trip, dumping water into a freezer space.

You're now facing a costly emergency, product loss, and possible system shutdown. And when that generator can't keep up anymore, your only option is to flip it into air mode and start leak hunting. In a freezer. That means:

- Spraying soapy water on overhead pipes 30' up.
- Using ultrasonic sensors with compromised sensitivity due to low temps.
- Introducing scents into the piping network and trying to sniff the leaks out.

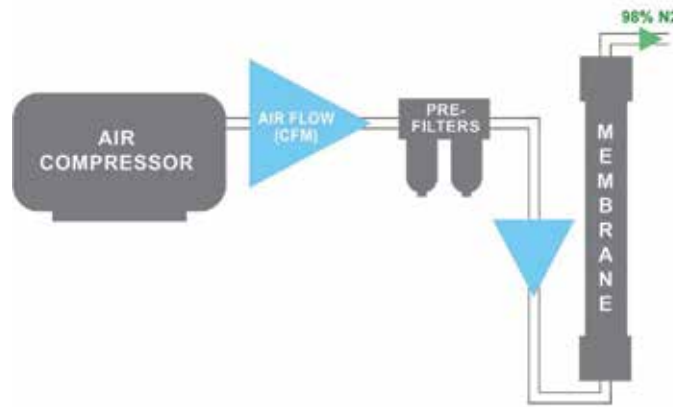
Meanwhile, a dry air generator, delivering 30x the flow, absorbs those minor and moderate leaks without skipping a beat.

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About the Author:

As President of General Air Products, Ray Fremont Jr. represents the fourth generation of his family's air compressor and industrial equipment manufacturing company. For 60 years, General Air Products has offered the fire sprinkler industry all variety of air supply equipment for dry and pre-action systems. This includes air compressors, dry air and nitrogen generators, and now Vapor Pipe Shield.

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In this article...

The Easy One: Never Use Standard Compressed Air in a Freezer

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Most Importantly, Nitrogen Generators Can't Keep Up with Leaks



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For more information contact: (800) 632-2304, dropmaster.sales@nfpaglobal.com, dropmaster.dyneusa.com.

About Dyne Fire Protection Labs: Dyne Fire Protection Labs is an ISO-9001 certified and ISO-17025 accredited testing laboratory as well as the manufacturer and distributor of the Dropmaster™ product line. Dyne's testing laboratory provides quick, reliable, and independent analysis of fire sprinklers, firefighting foams, antifreeze solutions, and dry chemical agents to help building owners and/or their designated representatives fulfill various laboratory requirements in inspection, testing, and maintenance Standards. Visit: www.dyneusa.com.



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For more information contact: Potter Electric Signal Company, LLC, Potter Electric Signal Company, LLC, 13723 Riverport Drive, St. Louis, MO 63043; (314) 595-6900, 800-325-3936, 866-956-1211 (support), www.pottersignal.com/sprinkler/automated-system-pressure-testing.





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Mac Beaton, Director of Career and Technical Education (CTE) for Henrico County, Virginia, Public Schools (HCPS), is the American Fire Sprinkler Association's (AFSA) **2025 Fire Sprinkler Advocate of the Year Award** winner. Beaton has put programs in place that educate students about the trades and CTE, share the message that *sprinklers*

save lives, and **show the next generations that a career in the sprinkler industry can be rewarding.** Beaton will receive the award during the General Session at AFSA44: Convention, Exhibition, and National Apprentice Competition in Washington, D.C.

Beaton earned his Bachelor of Science in Education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and his master's degree in supervision and administration from Virginia Commonwealth University. Beaton has spent the last 40 years in Henrico County schools as a teacher, education specialist, and, for the last 25 years, has served as director of its CTE.

Beaton produces several opportunities for students to network. The HCPS CTE program includes a Business Advisory Committee that involves bringing business partners to teach and interact with the CTE students. Events throughout

the year showcase CTE and the trades to students in the district: Life Ready Expo: Companies showcase their industries and careers; Career Rodeo: Students demonstrate their skills and knowledge to solve work-based challenges for potential employers; Career Mega Sale: Students and their parents "shop" from 50 businesses to find a career with the perfect fit; Letter of Intent Signing Day: The entire community comes together to celebrate CTE students entering the workforce after high school graduation.

"Mac is an amazing and dedicated educator whose commitment to his students is unsurpassed and reaches beyond the borders of his community," comments **AFSA President Bob Caputo, CFPS**. "The options provided to students and the encouragement they receive are a benefit to construction trades, but, more importantly, are a benefit to the students and their families. This pro-

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gram is so impressive that it's been imitated by others outside of Virginia. It is a tribute to the vision Mac and his team have introduced to ensure the success of their students and their community."

Beaton is heavily involved with AFSA's Virginia Chapter and aims to increase local students' exposure to the industry: One project entailed industry partners, CTE students, and CTE instructors working together to renovate a local mall, transforming it into an HCPS Adult Education Center. Students helped update the fire protection system, and the industry is one of the many trades now showcased in that complex. Through the Henrico County VoTech Education Foundation's House Building Project, sprinkler fitting and other CTE students took what they learned in the classroom to build a real-life home protected by residential sprinklers. Beaton worked with the Chapter to bring and assemble a working wet sprinkler lab at HCPS' new Advanced Career Education Center at Hermitage, where students from the CTE programs work side-by-side with local skilled trades professionals. The Henrico County Fire Department will be able to utilize the lab to train its firefighters on the different types of sprinkler systems. HCPS has approved and implemented a sprinkler curriculum for its CTE students.

"Mac is a unique individual with whom the Virginia Chapter has developed an ongoing private-public partnership and lifelong friendships. The experience working with him and Henrico County Public Schools on the podcast, career fairs, Regency Mall tenant fit-up, fire sprinkler lab, fire sprinkler curriculum, and installation of fire sprinklers in a single-family home has been inspiring," says **Bob Beckwith**, who currently serves as President of the Virginia Chapter.

For more information visit: www.firesprinkler.org.

Will Hummel is now Director of Sales Enablement at NIBCO INC.

In this newly created role, Hummel will lead the development and implementation of a strategic sales enablement program designed to equip the sales team with the tools, training, and insights they need to succeed. He will collaborate with cross-functional teams to ensure alignment between sales strat-

egy and broader business goals, with a focus on delivering greater value to customers and enhancing the overall customer experience.

Hummel joined NIBCO in March 2023 as Commercial Sales Manager and brings more than 25 years of industry experience, including leadership roles such as Director of Marketing and Director of Wholesale Sales.

"Will's industry background plays a vital role in ensuring the success of this strategic new position," said Joe Chofflet, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, NIBCO. "His guidance will enable our sales team to elevate customer service, deepen partnerships, and contribute to

NIBCO's sustained growth."

Hummel holds a bachelor's degree in history and economics from the University of Virginia and an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh.

NIBCO INC. manufactures and distributes a full line of flow-control products and systems for applications in the residential, commercial, industrial, marine, irrigation, and waterworks markets. NIBCO, a fifth-generation business with its headquarters in Elkhart, Indiana, operates 15 manufacturing plants across the United States and around the world.

NIBCO's Fire Protection Systems

PEOPLE continued on page 30

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Tools Down, Wellness Up: *A Closer Look at Health in Fire Protection*

By Kacee L. Paige

The fire protection industry is built on grit, long days, grueling schedules, and a strong work ethic. It's a trade that spans generations. Many of us grew up knowing we'd get into this field, and once you're in, it's hard to imagine doing anything else. But over the last few years, I've started asking the question – *What's the long-term cost of that hustle?*

I've worked in this industry for 13 years, serving in roles from engineer to technical trainer and adjunct college professor, to sales rep. For the past three years, I've also run an online nutrition coaching business, Changes Made Simple, Wellness + Nutrition, helping people to improve their health and lifestyle through small, sustainable changes. From that dual perspective (fire protection professional and nutrition coach), I started to notice a trend. Our industry is steeped in a culture of overindulgence and convenience. Whether it's calling late-night drinks at industry events "networking" or surviving the workday on coffee and gas station snacks, we've normalized habits that actively work against our health.

We skip meals, we run on little sleep (normalizing the "grind"), grab another energy drink or coffee instead of lunch, carry high stress with no healthy outlets, and often rely on alcohol or other substances as a coping mechanism. The gym gets skipped, fast food or "convenience" meals becomes the fallback, and chronic health conditions creep in quietly. This is how many people in the field are getting through the day. The truth is, we know this. We recognize the patterns. But we rarely talk about it, and most people have no idea where to start making a change.

Now add in the looming workforce shift. A large percentage of our professionals are set to retire in the next five to 10 years, and we are already struggling to recruit the next generation. Younger workers are more health-conscious and looking for careers that have a work-life balance. The writing is on the wall. If we don't evolve to meet that shift, we'll fall behind. Until now, this hasn't been measured in a way that reflects the reality of the job.

Health + Wellness in Fire Protection Survey

In mid-2024, I set out to change that. I began researching and developing the framework for a short, completely anonymous survey designed specifically for our industry that would give us an honest picture of where we really stand.

While the CDC/NIOSH BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System) survey collects data on chronic health

issues in construction, fire protection in my opinion, has unique demands. We needed something more specific. After speaking with dozens of people across the industry, I quickly realized this topic would gain traction quickly and pique the interest of many.

In early 2025, I applied for a SAM Grant through NFSA to support and promote the survey. Once that grant was awarded, we were off and running.

The *Health + Wellness in Fire Protection* survey went live in July 2025, and is running through October 18, 2025. It's open to anyone in the industry – Union or non-Union, field or office. It's

designed to get a candid look at what health really looks like behind the scenes.

What the Survey Covers

This isn't just a generic questionnaire. It asks things like: what and how people are eating; hydration and caffeine intake; sleep patterns and stress levels; substance use; mental health and burnout; whether workers believe they can sustain their current role long-term, and if not, how much longer they think they can go before their mental, emotional, or physical health takes a hit.

This isn't just about data points – it's about the people and understanding where our biggest opportunities are to do better.

This survey takes around 10 minutes to complete and is completely anonymous. To help boost participation, The Dope and Tape Show generously provided a Milwaukee Tool giveaway, and I am offering a free month of nutrition coaching as an additional incentive. Winners will be chosen after the survey closes in October.

How the Results Will Be Used

My goal is to present the survey findings at the NFSA Business and Leadership Conference in May 2026, where I'll lead a discussion on what these results really mean and how we can use them to better support our workforce. (There is a "Phase 2" that's already being brainstormed, but that is going to be a MUCH larger project, so stay tuned!)

We'll also compare this data to the CDC/NIOSH BRFSS construction data to highlight where fire protection professional face similar or unique challenges. But this isn't just about charts and numbers, it's about sparking the much-needed conversation that's been the elephant in the room for years. What's the current culture around health in our trade? Where

*"This isn't just about data points
– it's about the people and
understanding where our biggest
opportunities are to do better."*

are the gaps? What role can leaders, employers, and Unions play in providing and improving support without adding unnecessary complexity?

Why It Matters

A large portion of our workforce is heading toward retirement, and there are already recruitment efforts in place to bring in the next generation of workers. The future of our industry depends on attracting and retaining new talent and that's going to take more than competitive wages. It requires a proactive, multi-layered approach: promoting the trade, offering diverse training and career paths, and supporting workers' physical and mental well-being long term.

Younger generations are walking in with a different set of expectations, and we need to be prepared for that. In an industry that tends to be reactive, it's time we're proactive and anticipate future changes. We need to encourage and support work-life balance, mental health, and long-term well-being (outside of traditional health insurance sponsored incentive programs), and this needs to show up in everyday work culture.

We can't afford to ignore this shift. Employees are the backbone of this industry. Health and wellness aren't fringe, or "trendy" topics anymore – they're directly tied to retention, performance, and how attractive our trade is to the people we're trying to bring in. If we want to protect our people, the way they protect lives and buildings every day, this conversation must happen.

Here's How You Can Help

1. Take the survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HealthInFireProtection>).
2. Forward it to your teams, company, or local Chapter.
3. Start the conversation in the field, in the office, in leadership meetings.

We can't change what we don't understand. This survey is the first step in building something that reflects the state of health, wellness, and culture in our trade, and shaping what that looks like moving forward.

This project doesn't work without you – the thousands of people who show up every day to keep our industry moving. Make this bigger than one response.

Let's dig in.

About the Author:

Kacee L. Paige, CFPS, CWBSP, WBITM, is JCI Territory Manager, Water Products – New England. She is also a Pn1 Nutrition Coach and Founder, Changes Made Simple, Wellness + Nutrition.

Learn more at: <https://www.YourNutritionPaige.com>.



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Paul Michaels is the new Group Product Manager for AXCS Equipment, an industry leader in aerial lift equipment. One of Michaels' primary responsibilities will be to work on the development and deployment of the company's new and expanding product portfolio. He will be responsible for overall customer experience and product strategy by translating market needs and determining how both legacy and AXCS Equipment products ideally exceed market expectations in each segment to fulfill customer requirements.

"AXCS Equipment has an amazing growth outlook, with plans to add a significant number of new aerial products in the coming years," Michaels said. "Safety and quality are two of our core principles and that will be a primary focus as we roll out these new products. We want to ensure that not only can customers safely use our products, but that they're also benefiting from equipment that provides world-class quality."

As Group Product Manager, Michaels will deploy the AXCS Equipment product portfolio strategy, which entails the existing portfolio and new product categories including larger-capacity scissor lifts, vertical mast lifts, articulated booms, telehandlers, and other products.

Michaels brings 25-plus years of product management experience to his new role. He most recently worked with Briggs & Stratton in its commercial lawn mower equipment product line division. Previously, he spent 12 years with Rexnord, a heavy power transmission company, in various global and senior product manager positions. In each role, Michaels developed product strategies

and solutions to make equipment more innovative, safer, and more efficient — a mindset he carries with him as AXCS Equipment's group product manager.

"Paul's established record of enhancing brands will be a great asset to the AXCS Equipment team and will directly benefit our customers," said Eric Liner, CEO of AXCS Equipment. "His strategic approach to product management will be valuable in growing our new brand identity and our expanding product offering. There are big happenings on the horizon for AXCS Equipment and Paul's role will be largely connected to helping shape our future."

For more information contact: AXCS Equipment, 2647 Highway 175, Richfield, WI 53076; (262) 644-1300, sales@axcs.com, www.axcs.com.

Russ Slaby, Manager - Engineering Services with Ferguson Fire & Fabrication, will be one of the speakers at the AFSA Convention, Exhibition & Apprentice Competition, October 15- 18, 2025, in the Washington, D.C. area.

He will co-present *7 Habits of a Highly Effective Fire Sprinkler Designer*.

Russ heads the North West 01 design team at Ferguson Fire Design. In this role, he provides technical expertise and support for a staff of six to 10 designers. For 37 years, he has provided fire protection design services for locations worldwide.

Prior to joining Ferguson, he served as Owner and President of Fire-Ex Systems Engineering, Inc. At FSEI, he managed day to day operations, and trained and supervised a staff of designers while providing full shop design services. Russ is accomplished in many facets of fire sprinkler system design, specializing in industrial facilities. Complex system design examples include large deluge water spray applications including high- and low-expansion foam applications for high hazard industrial facilities served by private underground fire main systems supplied by multiple fire pump/reservoir locations.

Russ is a licensed Designer of Engineering Systems in Wisconsin and was NICET IV fire sprinkler designer certified in 1998. In his spare time, Russ enjoys golfing, fishing, hunting, and competitive trapshooting.

For more information visit: www.firesprinkler.org.

Micah Davis, Senior Manager - Engineering Services with Ferguson Fire & Fabrication, will co-present *7 Habits of a Highly Effective Fire Sprinkler Designer*, at the AFSA Convention, Exhibition & Apprentice Competition, October 15-18, 2025, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Davis is a professional with over 20 years of experience in fire sprinkler design. Currently, he serves as the Senior Manager of Operations at Ferguson Fire Design and the National Sales Manager for MicroBIM Fire.

He is NICET IV-certified in Water-Based Systems Layout. Throughout his career, Davis has designed and managed complex fire sprinkler systems. He tackles challenging projects and develops more efficient workflows. Davis' leadership has resulted in improved operational efficiency and project success.

He is proactive in his approach to problem-solving and manages teams effectively. Davis' contributions have advanced the capabilities of the organizations he's been part of and set new standards in fire sprinkler design and implementation.

The *7 Habits of a Highly Effective Fire Sprinkler Designer* course will explore seven essential practices that every fire sprinkler designer should adopt to develop highly effective fire sprinkler system designs. It will focus on all phases of the design process from initial discovery and project setup to stocklisting and close-out documentation.

The best practices discussed are compiled from the experience of a team of fire sprinkler design and engineering professionals with many decades of experience in the industry. Both time-tested practices that designers have relied on for generations and innovative ideas based on the latest technology and modern techniques will be covered.

Upon completion of this seminar, attendees will be able to: explain best practices for initial project discovery and setup; identify key concepts to employ during the design phase that significantly impact the success of the project; and, describe what internal quality assurance practices are most effective.

For more information visit: www.firesprinkler.org.



A Little Humility Goes a Long Ways

By Russ Leavitt

I cannot help but feel at times that humility is becoming a lost art. It does not involve downplaying your achievements. It does not mean that you will not be recognized for your contributions. It does mean that you realize that others have been involved in your success, and you are prepared to be involved in theirs. I recently read a blog on humility by business guru Harvey MacKay. He provided insights that resonate with me.

He wrote that we demonstrate humility by giving credit where credit is due. For example, those in our companies who work behind the scenes such as performing administrative tasks, preparing and collecting receivables, or taking care of our physical facilities, deserve recognition. When we stop and think about it, we realize that our success really is dependent on the entire team.

I am one of those who watches the lengthy list of credits at the end of a movie. I find it fascinating to see just how many individuals it takes to create a film. The credits list not just the stars, directors, and producers but everyone – e.g., truck drivers, caterers, accountants, and hairdressers. A successful film cannot be completed without them. Successful companies or projects are no different.

Speaking of movies, MacKay tells the story of a well-known celebrity who was vacationing in a small town in Maine. One rainy day he decided to go to a movie. When he entered the theater, there was a huge round of applause. The celebrity turned to the person next to him and said, “For gosh sakes, I never thought anyone here in Maine would recognize me.” The man smiled in a friendly way and said, “They do not. The only reason they are cheering is that the owner said he was not going to show us a movie unless 10 people showed up, and you are the tenth.” Lesson learned.

Humility in business is incredibly important, serving as a foundation for effective leadership and fostering a positive organizational culture.

Humility builds trust and respect. Humble leaders and associates are genuine and approachable, which builds trust among our team, our customers, and vendors. When we acknowledge our own limitations while placing value on others’ contributions, we earn the respect and loyalty of those with whom we lead and work.

Humility fosters collaboration and innovation. It allows us to be open to new ideas and feedback. When we recognize and appreciate the skills and input of our teammates, it empowers everyone to contribute more effectively.

Humility facilitates learning and growth. Humble individuals are willing to learn from their mistakes and seek personal and professional growth. Humility enables us to mentor others, sharing knowledge and fostering a learning environment.

To keep himself grounded and humble, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had a ritual. After completing his work for the day, he would often go outside and look into the night sky. Gazing at the stars, he would find the lower left-hand corner of the big square of Pegasus. He would then recite these words: “That is the spiral galaxy of Andromeda. It is as large as our Milky Way. It is one of a hundred million galaxies. It is 750,000 light years away. It consists of one hundred billion suns, each larger than our sun.” He would then pause and say, “Now I feel small enough to go to bed.”

MacKay shares the following lesson he learned from his wife. He invited her to join him at a speaking engagement. He prepared well, gave the speech, and was thrilled to receive a standing ovation from the audience. Feeling smug in the car on the way home, he turned to her and asked, “Sweetheart, how many great speakers do you think there are in the world today?”

She smiled and said, “One fewer than you think, dear.”

Again – lesson learned.

About the Author:

Russ Leavitt is the Executive Chairman of Telgian Holdings. With over 40 years of experience, he holds a Level IV certification from NICET in Fire Sprinkler Layout and Certified Fire Protection Specialist (CFPS) designation. He is a Board Member and Chair of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and the Chair of the NFPA 13 Sprinkler System Discharge Criteria technical committee. He also serves on the NFPA 13 Installation committee, as well as the NFPA 3, NFPA 4, and NFPA 25 technical committees. Russ conducts seminars internationally on a variety of fire and life safety related subjects and has authored a number of articles and training materials.

For more information visit: www.telgian.com.

“Humility builds trust and respect. Humble leaders and associates are genuine and approachable...”

OTHER VOICES is FPC’s opinion piece section; FPC welcomes all voices, viewpoints, and opinions on matters concerning fire sprinkler contracting and the fire sprinkler industry!

Seminars & Events

2025 Rocky Mountain Fire Sprinkler Golf Tournament

September 5, 2025 – Littleton, CO

The 2025 Rocky Mountain Fire Sprinkler Golf Tournament will be held Friday, September 5, 2025, from 6:15 a.m.-4:00 p.m. local time at the Arrowhead Golf Course, Littleton, Colorado.

Please join your friends from CFPA at the Arrowhead Golf Course! Arrowhead is one of the top 10 most-photographed golf courses in the world, has been voted the #1 public golf course in the Denver area, as well as one of America's "Top 75 Public Courses" by *Golf Digest*. If you have not played there, Arrowhead will truly be a golf experience you will remember forever.

Proceeds from the event will be donated to the Children's Hospital Burn Camps.

For more information contact: Patrick Haney, Regional Coordinator, haney@nfsa.org.

Burn Aid Charity Golf Classic

September 8, 2025 – St. Paul, MN

The Burn Aid Charity Golf Classic will be held Monday, September 8, 2025, from 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. local time, at the Mendakota Country Club, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Since 1997, a group of volunteers from the MN Chapter of the National Fire Sprinkler Association has been working hand-in-hand with the MN State Fire Marshal's office and Regions Hospital to host a golf event to raise money to benefit the Regions Hospital Burn Center.

In 2018, the Burn Aid Foundation officially became a 501(c)(3) charity and they continue to operate solely as volunteers from these same three great organizations. The annual Golf Outing is a great opportunity to enjoy a fun-filled day of golf, networking, and friendly competition.

For more information contact: Tim Butler, Regional Manager - North Central, butler@nfsa.org; or: Burn Aid Foundation, 301 York Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55130; <https://burnaidfoundation.org/golf-outing>.

Beginning Design School

September 9-October 3, 2025 – Webinars and In-Person

AFSA's Beginning Design School is September 9-October 3, 2025. The training has been redesigned for a hybrid approach, with six live webinars offered first, followed by a week of in-person instruction. The workshop presents a comprehensive approach to preparing fire sprinkler system drawings. Students will review installation and design approach requirements of NFPA 13 (2022) while completing self-paced exercises and module assessments. Participants will also experience in-person training, preparing fire sprinkler system layouts, shop drawings, and hydraulic calculations by hand.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact: training@firesprinkler.org.

NICET Updated: AFSA's Beginning Design Schools are updated to NICET's new exams for Water-Based Systems Layout (WBSL) certifications.

For more information contact: American Fire Sprinkler Association, 1410 East Renner Rd., Suite 150, Richardson, TX 75082; www.firesprinkler.org.

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SFPE25 Annual Conference & Expo

October 21-23, 2025 – Vancouver, Canada

The Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) Annual Conference & Expo, is being held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada from October 21-23, 2025.

The Optional Pre-Conference Seminar on *Sprinkler Design for Engineers* will be October 20-21, from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Instructors: Scott A. Futrell, P.E., FSFPE, Kevin Hall, M.Eng., P.E.

This two-day course is based on NFPA 13 and 20 *Standards*. The course is designed to provide participants with the tools needed to design and install fire sprinkler systems in accordance with building and fire codes. (15 PDHs.)

The Opening Keynote speaker is Karen Fry, Fire Chief/General Manager, City of Vancouver, covering *The Future of Firefighting in Vancouver – Challenges and Innovations*. The City of Vancouver is situated on the Burrard Peninsula and is bounded by water to the north, south, and west sides of the City. It is in a high seismic/earthquake zone with no major freeway infrastructure through the City. **Mandatory sprinklers in all buildings** have been implemented in the City since 1990.

Other seminars include *Results of Long-Term Fire Sprinkler Corrosion Testing* by Caleb Pierce, Nicholas Schopfer, and Virginia Charter, PhD, P.E., FSFPE, Oklahoma State University: Interim; *Algorithms for SMART Sprinkler Systems* by Yogish Gopala, Lead Research Scientist, FM, and Johannes Falk, Fire Protection Solutions.

There will be a Networking Lunch with a presentation on *The Women in Fire Protection Engineering*.

For more information contact: SFPE, 9711 Washingtonian Blvd., Suite 380, Gaithersburg, MD 20878; (301) 718-2910, info@sfpe.org.

IT&M of Auto. Sprinkler Sys.

November 3-4, 2025 – Stillwater, OK

How well does your company comply with NFPA 25 *Standards* for inspecting, testing, and maintaining water-based fire protection systems? OSU's two-day workshop features hands-on laboratory training with automatic sprinkler systems and expert instruction to bring you up to speed on the latest *Standards*. The workshop agenda covers acceptance rates, visual inspections, functional tests, impairments and system restoration, component and assembly maintenance, procedures, and practices.

For more information contact: Oklahoma State University, 201 Advanced Technology Research Center, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; (405) 744-5140, <https://ceat.okstate.edu/extension/professional-development/courses/fire-protection-and-loss-control.html>.

Fire Pump Applications, Inspection, & Testing (2.5 Day)

November 5-7, 2025 – Stillwater, OK

Oklahoma State University's 2½ day fire pump course addresses: NFPA 20 provisions, a thorough review of instal-

lations; applications; and standard inspection, testing, and maintenance procedures. The course provides a solid knowledge of common pump types, various pump drivers, controllers, installation components, and accessories.

Practical exercises and a live hands-on demonstration improve your ability to conduct field acceptance tests.

Other topics include routine installation testing, determining proper pump sizing, graphically analyzing pump performance, and implementing the correct inspection and maintenance procedures. *Light refreshments included.

For more information contact: Oklahoma State University, 201 Advanced Technology Research Center, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; (405) 744-5140, <https://ceat.okstate.edu/extension/professional-development/courses/fire-protection-and-loss-control.html>.

Call for Seminar Presentations: Due 9/25/25

2026 NFSA Annual Business & Leadership Conference

April 28 - May 1, 2026 – Seattle, WA

Are you interested in presenting at NFSA's 2026 Business and Leadership Conference? The NFSA has one annual conference and several regional conferences a year. This call for presentations will serve as a one-stop shop to fill these conferences. They are looking for speakers who are passionate and knowledgeable about fire sprinklers! The NFSA is seeking individual and panel presentations for fire sprinkler contractors, designers, inspectors, and AHJs on:

1. Advocacy and successful solutions for local adoption.
2. Solutions for protecting new technologies.
3. Research and testing reports.
4. Updates on *Codes* and *Standards*.

For more information visit: www.nfsa.org.

Call For Abstracts: Due 10/27/25

SFPE Fire Safety Conference on Performance-Based Design

April 15-17, 2026 – Singapore

SFPE invites you to submit an Abstract for Presentation for the 2026 SFPE Performance-Based Design Conference. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase your innovative projects, cutting-edge research, and valuable insights in the fire protection and safety engineering field.

Showcase your work: Gain visibility and recognition for your work in front of a global audience.

All topics relevant to performance-based design solutions and the supporting analysis, performance-based codes, and associated regulatory frameworks will be considered, including: Application of AI/Digitalization; Battery Fires/Storage; **Effective Performance of Fire Protection Systems**; Engineering Judgement; Codes of Practice and Competency Assessment; and much more.

For more information visit: www.sfpe.org/pbd2026/cfa, or e-mail: education@sfpe.org.

□



September 5, 2025

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FIRE SPRINKLER GOLF TOURNAMENT
For Children's Hospital Burn Camps
Arrowhead Golf Course, Denver area
Patrick Haney, haney@nfsa.org

September 8, 2025

29TH NFSA MN BURNAID CLASSIC
For Burn Aid Foundation & More
Dellwood C.C., Dellwood, MN
Matt Gallagher, (651) 755-3906
info@burnaidfoundation.org

September 9-October 3, 2025

AFSA BEGINNING DESIGN SCHOOL
Richardson, TX
training@firesprinkler.org

September 11, 2025

ANNUAL GOLF OUTING
AFSA Chesapeake Chapter
The Links at Challedon, Mt. Airy, MD
Danielle Fowler, (410) 972-1122
daniellef@pottersignal.com
www.afsacheseapeakechapter.org

September 11, 2025

FERGUSON TRADE PRO TOUR
11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
Ferguson Fire & Fabrication
Groveport, OH
www.ferguson.com

September 16, 2025

IFPA GOLF OUTING
For Association Programs
Poplar Creek Golf Course
Hoffman Estates, IL
ifpachicago@gmail.com
www.ifpanet.org

September 16-18, 2025

SUBEXCEL
Oklahoma City, OK
American Subcontractors
Association, Inc.
ASAtoday@asa-hq.com
www.asaonline.com

September 22, 2025

36TH ANNUAL BURN OUTING
For State Burn Center & More
The Medallion Club, Westerville, OH
Bob Dawson, bdd4@yahoo.com
(614) 561-8145, www.sfpecoc.com

September 24, 2025

CASA ONTARIO REGIONAL GOLF
For Camp BUCKO/SickKids Found.
Redcrest G.C., King City, Ontario
Daniel Beck, (905) 477-2270
dbeck@casa-firesprinkler.org
www.casa-firesprinkler.org

September 24, 2025

32ND AFSA-VA BURN SURV. GOLF
For Burn Survivors Foundation
Williamsburg N.G.C., VA
Bob Beckwith
bbeckwith@cavalierfire.com
Hooper Loscomb
timothy.loscomb@eaglefire.com

September 24-25, 2025

24TH INT'L WATER MIST CONFERENCE
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Manchester, UK
www.iwma.net

October 5-11, 2025
FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

October 9, 2025

FIRE SPRINKLER CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION CHARITY GOLF
For Burn Centers
Strawberry Farms G.C., Irvine, CA
Larry Seligman
(626) 673-5345, larry@apfs.com

October 10, 2025

GBA BOWLING TOURNAMENT
For Association Programs
Dublin, CA, AFSA - Greater Bay Area
Chapter, www.afsa-gba.org

October 13, 2025

KFSCAF ANNUAL GOLF OUTING
Frankfort Country Club, Frankfort, KY
Michelle Jacobi, KY Fire Sprinkler
Contractor Assoc. Foundation
michelle@ksae.com, (502) 223-5322

October 13, 2025

35TH SCOTTISH RITE CHARITY CLASSIC
For Scottish Rite Hosp. for Children
Trophy Club C.C., Trophy Club, TX
Sarah Kiefer, (512) 844-6632
sarah@fscatx.org, www.fscatx.org

October 14-19, 2025*

AFSA44 CONVENTION, EXHIBITION, & APPRENTICE COMPETITION
Wash. D.C., www.firesprinkler.org

October 21-23, 2025

SFPE ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO
Vancouver, BC, SFPE, www.sfpe.org

October 24, 2025

25TH BOB McCULLOUGH MEMORIAL
For Fire Safety Educational Projects
Chateau Elan, Braselton, GA
Mindy McCullough Buckley
mindy@allsouthsprinkler.com
www.georgiafiresprinkler.org

October 28, 2025

17TH LFSA GOLF TOURNAMENT
For Camp I'm Still Me
Santa Maria G.C., Baton Rouge, LA
Ellen Ballard, (318) 841-1494
Louisiana Fire Sprinkler Association
eballard@firetechsystems.com
www.lafiresprinkler.org

October 30, 2025

WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION
19TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Renaissance Arlington Capital View
Arlington, VA
www.womeninconstructionconference.com

November 3-4, 2025

INSPECTION, TESTING, & MAINTENANCE OF AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEMS
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK
https://ceat.okstate.edu/fcem/fpset/

November 5-7, 2025

FIRE PUMP APPLICATIONS, INSPECTION, & TESTING (2.5 DAY)
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK
https://ceat.okstate.edu/fcem/fpset/

November 5-7, 2025

DESIGN-BUILD CONFERENCE & EXPO
MGM Grand, Las Vegas, NV
www.dbia.org/design-build-conference-expo

November 11-13, 2025

SFPE ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS SYMPOSIUM: ADDRESSING EUROPEAN LITHIUM-ION BATTERY FIRE SAFETY CHALLENGES
Lisbon, Portugal
www.sfpe.org

November 14, 2025

NORCAL-NV SFPE GOLF EVENT
For Scholarships
Tilden Park G.C., Berkeley, CA
(925) 997-3247, patrick.kogoma@ffic.com, www.ncnsfpe.org

November 21, 2025

GARY WENNES MEMORIAL GOLF
For Arizona Burn Foundation
Biltmore Golf Club, Phoenix, AZ
Matthew Virtue, Cell (602) 376-4818
matthew.virtue@victaulic.com
Danny Garcia, dgarcia1@winsupply.com
www.AZfiresprinkler.org

December 9, 2025

GFSA CHRISTMAS GATHERING
For Toys for Tots
Punchbowl Social, Atlanta, GA
mindy@allsouthsprinkler.com
www.georgiafiresprinkler.org

Also Visit:

Check online for current Dates and Courses:

Academy of Fire Sprinkler Technology

www.firesprinkleracademy.com

American Fire Sprinkler Association

www.firesprinkler.org

American Subcontractors Association

www.asaonline.com

BlazeMaster®, www.blazemastertraining.com

Canadian Automatic Sprinkler Association

www.casa-firesprinkler.org

Fire Smarts, www.firesmarts.com

Sep. 3: NFPA 20 – Fire Pumps

Sep. 10: Fire Pump Testing and Analysis

Sep. 10: NFPA 14 Standpipe Systems

Sep. 24: Understanding and Applying NFPA 25

Oct. 1: Water-Based FP Sys. Freeze Protection

Oct. 8: Seismic Protection for FS Systems

Oct. 22: Fire Alarm Interconnectivity to FSS

Nov. 12: Res. Fire Spklers: Homes to High-Rise

Nov. 19: Intro to Spec. Haz. Fire Suppression

Dec. 10: FP Auto. Storage and Retrieval Systems

Dec. 10: Equivalent Means and Methods with an Emphasis on Full-Scale Fire Tests

Fire Tech Productions, www.firetech.com

Sep. 16: Insp./Test. of Fire Pumps, Indianapolis, IN

Oct. 7: Insp./Test. FSS, San Antonio, TX

Oct. 14: Fire Pump Maint. Master, Atlanta, GA

Nov. 11: Fire Pump Maintenance, Atlanta, GA

Dec. 1: Insp./Test. Fire Spk. Systems, Atlanta, GA

Dec. 3: Insp./Test. of Fire Pumps, Atlanta, GA

Fire Pump Academy, www.firepumpacademy.net

Florida Fire Sprinkler Assoc., www.ffa.nfsa.org

FMI, www.fminet.com

National Fire Protection Assoc., www.nfpa.org

National Fire Sprinkler Assoc., www.nfsa.org

Oklahoma Fire Sprinkler Assoc., www.ofsa.info

Seneca Polytechnic, www.senecapolytechnic.ca

Other Future Meeting Dates:

AFAA, www.firesprinkler.org

September 25-29, 2026

San Antonio, TX

NFPA, www.nfpa.org

June 22-26, 2026

Mandalay Bay Convention Center
Las Vegas, NV

NFSA, www.nfsa.org

Annual Seminars, Business, & Leadership Conference

April 28-May 1, 2026

The Westin, Seattle, WA

SFPE, www.sfpe.org

Fire Safety Conference on Performance-Based Design

April 15-17, 2026

Singapore

□

*FPC plans to attend

OCT 15-18
2025
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NFPA GLOBAL SOLUTIONS, an independently operated, wholly owned subsidiary of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), has announced its acquisition of **PFS TECO**, an independent third-party testing, inspection, and certification (TIC) company specializing in the built environment.

According to NFPA Global Solutions, the acquisition is a key part of its plan to provide compliance solutions, digital products, and advisory services to assist businesses and governments in managing risks, enhancing safety, and improving operational efficiency.

Based in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin, PFS TECO expands NFPA Global Solutions' portfolio of services in the areas of modular construction, hearth products, and building products, helping clients demonstrate compliance with regulatory *Standards*, mitigate risk, and gain acceptance in the marketplace.

Carlos Correia, President of NFPA Global Solutions, commented, "This acquisition represents a significant leap forward for both companies..."

PFS TECO is the second acquisition for NFPA Global Solutions. In June 2024, the company acquired **Dyne Fire Protection Labs**, an independent testing laboratory that provides quick, reliable analysis of fire sprinklers, firefighting foams, antifreeze solutions, and dry chemical agents to help building owners maintain compliance with critical fire protection codes and *Standards*.

Scott Drake, President and CEO of PFS TECO shared, "The public safety mission of our companies aligns with our shared vision to offer our clients leading third party programs and expand into new areas making this acquisition an excellent fit. Joining NFPA Global Solutions allows us at PFS TECO to take our business to the next level. By combining our teams' technical knowledge, we gain greater access to industry expertise and can develop new services that will truly benefit our customers. We're excited about the value this partnership will bring."

THE RIVERSIDE COMPANY (Riverside), a global investment firm focused on the smaller end of the middle market, has signed a definitive agreement to sell **Performance Systems Integration (PSI)**, the leading regional provider of fire and life safety services in the Pacific Northwest, to **Summit Fire & Security LLC** (Summit). The transaction is expected to close pending customary regulatory approvals.

Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, PSI delivers comprehensive fire and life safety solutions... across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Northern California, and Hawaii.

During Riverside's ownership, PSI underwent a significant transformation: Completed 16 strategic add-on investments, growing from four locations to 14 and expanding across five states; Increased employee count from 108 to more than 450, including growing its technician team from 64 to 279...

"From day one, our partnership with Riverside helped accelerate PSI's vision and scale," said PSI CEO Jodi Kohler. "We're excited to join Summit, bringing together a shared passion for safety, reliability, and service, while continuing to protect what matters most."

Summit Fire & Security, a national fire protection and life safety leader, brings deep expertise and expanded resources to support PSI's next chapter. The combination will create a more robust platform for innovation, customer responsiveness, and technician development.

"We are excited to see the business continue to grow under Summit's ownership," said Riverside Partner John McKernan. "It has been a privilege to work alongside PSI's leadership team given its integrity, strategic insight and focus, all of which we see as important long-term assets for the business."

The transaction marks a major milestone in Riverside's Business Services and Fire & Life Safety (FLS) specialization, underscoring the firm's commitment to building essential, high-quality service platforms. PSI is one of three regionally focused FLS investments managed by Riverside. □

Classified Advertising

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING INSTRUCTIONS:

◆ Basic rate is \$35.00 for 50 words or less • \$70.00 for 51-100 words • \$105 for 101-150 ◆ E-mail us the text of your ad (no PDFs, please) and send your payment, or mail your text with your payment. (We accept checks, or to pay with a credit card using PayPal, contact us at (530) 823-0706 or e-mail: info@fpcmag.com for details.) ◆ Classified ad deadline is the 5th of each month for insertion in the following month's edition. ◆ Mailing date for *FPC* is the fourth Friday of each month (i.e. September is mailed by August 22). ◆ For any advertiser wishing to remain anonymous, we can assign a box number to your ad for an additional \$5.00 per month, and replies will be forwarded upon receipt by fax, e-mail, and/or mail. (You will likely get a better response by opening a generic e-mail account, i.e., gmail.com or yahoo.com for direct reply.) ◆ Classified ads are text only. If you would like to add special formatting, color, or a logo, you must run a display ad. (Ad Design Services are available for an additional charge.) *Classified Ad Special: Run 6 months for the price of 5 — \$175 for ads of 50 words or less.*

HELP WANTED

Designer/PM – Blue Mountain Fire Protection (Kennewick, WA) is seeking an experienced fire sprinkler designer/PM. NICET Level III or higher required. AutoCAD and SprinkCAD experience preferred but not mandatory. Relocation assistance negotiable. Salary dependent on experience. Medical benefits, bonuses included. Qualified candidates contact: Zene 'Pepper' Stillar, (509) 987-1700, pepper@bluemountainfire.com.

Wanted – Fire Sprinkler Designers. 5 plus years of experience. Hydratec or similar experience required. Remote work available. Excellent pay, benefits, paid holidays, vacation, etc. Send inquiries to: info@fpcmag.com, or *FPC*, PO Box 370, Auburn, CA 95604, and include **Attn: Box#Des02.22**.

Plan Reviewer Needed – Since 1980, Kelly P. Reynolds & Associates has been providing plan review, code consulting, technical seminars for government, business, and industry. We are in need of part-time certified plan examiners. Pay is based on a percentage of the plan review fee. All reviews are to be completed within 10 working days. Plans are sent PDF format. Send qualifications and certification to: codexperts@aol.com.

DESIGN SERVICES

Need Drawings? – Submittal drawings, working drawings, surveys, calculations, cut sheets, and material lists. We can do it all! NICET Certified. Great prices. Excellent work. Nationwide services. Millennium Fire Protection Design, (616) 844-1401, www.MFPCAD.com.

STEWART FIRE DESIGN – Over 30 years of design experience and has been in operation since 1988. We offer design, survey, and stocklist of any type of sprinkler system. We design for sprinkler contractors all across the country, location is not an issue. Our design staff of five offers: AutoSPRINK design, 3D BIM Modeling, as well as MicroStation. We are NICET Level IV certified. For a design quote contact: Kent Stewart, Kent@stewartfpc.com, (501) 794-6950.

FIRE SPRINKLER DESIGN SERVICES: • 3D design • Submittals/working plans • Product data • Fabrication reports • Consulting/Coordination • Pre-planning design • Commercial • Residential • Assisted living facilities • Storage/Racking • Military • Underground • Tenant improvement • Wet systems • Dry systems • Pre-action • Nitrogen • Standpipes • Fire pumps. Contact: Adam Tuomala NICET-IV (W.B.S.L.), Phoenix Fire Protection, Lago Vista, TX, Owner and Licensed Contractor; phoenixfirepros@gmail.com.

SALES

DES ASSOCIATES offers UL FM Fire Sprinkler Products - Flexible Drops; Fire Pumps; Jockey Pumps; Fire Sprinklers; Butterfly Valves; Commercial and Residential Riser Check Valves; Shotgun Riser Valves; Water & Hose Valves; Adapters & Fittings; Hydrant Accessories; Foam Tanks; Water Storage Tanks - Above Ground Bolted & Welded Steel; and Underground Fiberglass Tanks. DVBE Certificate #2026104 may help you get new business! Please call for pricing!!! Contact: Dennis Sekermestrovich, oldseker@yahoo.com, (951) 541-4045.

Distributors Wanted – DUYAR Valve is looking for Distributors to sell Commercial and Residential Fire Sprinkler Products in the US and Canada. UL FM Riser Manifolds; Waterflow Detectors; OS&Y and PIV Supervisory Switches; Pressure Switches; etc. Contact: Dennis Sekermestrovich, DES Associates, (951) 541-4045, oldseker@yahoo.com, DVBE Certificate# 2026104

Find Classifieds and Calendar items on our website at:
www.fpcmag.com

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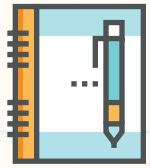
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Cheers to Ed Rush, Lewes Fire Department Safety Officer, who said, “If this building was not protected by a fire sprinkler system, this incident had the potential to become a major fire with much property damage, residents being displaced, and possible serious injury or loss of life. But due to the presence of fire sprinklers, damage was minimal, and the resident was able to stay in her apartment that night.” (See page 7.)

Fire Sprinklers Save Lives.

The National Fire Sprinkler Association hosted a live webinar on July 17, 2025, that showcased top inspection software platforms in the fire protection industry.

Through live demonstrations from members that included BuildOps, Ember, Inspect Point, Service-Trade, and Uptick, participants learned how these tools support code-compliant inspections, streamline workflows, and improve communication with AHJs – all in line with NFPA Standards and the International Fire Code. This free session qualified for 2 CEUs (ICC PPP).

For more information visit: www.nfsa.org.

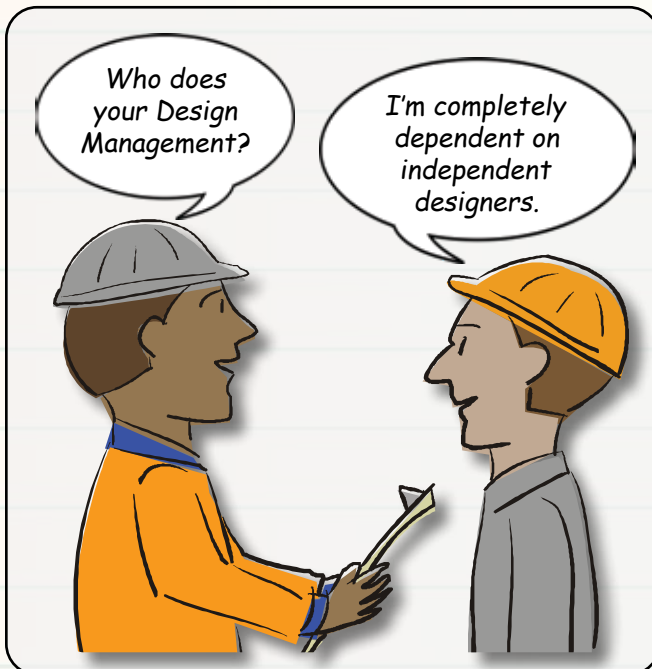


We fondly remember Marty Giles, shown in this photo with the Giles Cup from the 31ST Annual-VA Chapter Burn Survivor’s Golf Tournament, at the Williamsburg National Golf Club, October 9, 2024.

This year’s event, the 32ND Annual Golf Tournament, will be held Wednesday, September 24, 2025, at the Williamsburg National Golf Club.

For more information visit: <https://virginiaafsa.org> and <https://burnsurvivorsfoundation.org>.

The fire sprinkler industry lost a long-time leader and visionary with the passing of Martin L. “Marty” Giles, Chairman of VSC Fire & Security, Ashland, Virginia, on May 5, 2015.



LABOR DAY/WORK

For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

— Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

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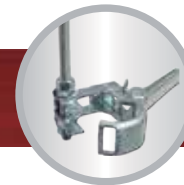
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