

ICYMI: Secretary Mayorkas and U.S. Fire Administrator Honored Fallen Firefighters and Discussed National Fire Strategy to Prevent Firefighter Deaths

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42nd National Fallen Fire Fighters Memorial Weekend took place at National Emergency Management Center on May 7

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas and U.S. Fire Administrator Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell delivered remarks during the 42nd National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) Memorial Weekend on May 7 in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The Secretary and the Fire Administrator paid tribute to the 79 firefighters who died in the line of duty in 2022 and 65 firefighters who died in previous years.



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Page 1 of 6



EMMITSBURG, Md. -- Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas delivers remarks during the 42nd National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend. (DHS photo)

“The emergencies to which a fire fighter responds are varied as a life can be. One thing is constant throughout it all: the qualities of courage, devotion to duty, service and sacrifice that define the character of a fire fighter,” Secretary Mayorkas stated during his remarks. “Rare is the individual who runs toward danger and rarer still, is the individual who does so only to help others. That is the fire fighter. That is the 144 fallen heroes we honor this weekend. Heroes who gave their lives to save others.”

Mayorkas also stated that fires are increasingly a threat to our homeland security, and firefighters need the personnel, tools, training and resources to be prepared to face these challenges. “Our Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) and Assistance to Firefighter Grants programs provide funds directly to



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Page 2 of 6

fire departments to hire, maintain, equip and train frontline personnel. This year we will award \$684 million through these two grant programs, helping fire departments like the College Park Volunteer Fire Department here in Maryland, which is using grant funding to grow its program to attract and retain firefighters.”

U.S. Fire Administrator Dr. Moore-Merrell remarked on the bravery and service of firefighters and paramedics and encouraged all those who had lost loved ones in the line of duty to never forget their impact.

“Firefighter and paramedics are a special breed -- you know that. Many times, I have asked them, ‘Why do you do this? Why did you become a firefighter?’ Their response far and above is ‘To serve others,’” remarked Administrator Moore-Merrell. “Today, I encourage you to remember the good in your firefighter. Remember the laughs, a meal that you had with them, perhaps a gift they gave you. Remember the influence and impact they had on your life, whether you were family, a close friend, or even an acquaintance. Remember how they made you feel when they spoke or laughed. Remember their service and the hope they gave to others.”

The Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend is partly supported by a grant from the Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance and in partnership with the U.S. Fire Administration, a component of the Department of Homeland Security.





EMMITSBURG, Md. -- Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas and U.S. Fire Administrator Dr. Moore-Merrell address members of the National Fire Service. (DHS photo)

Before delivering his remarks, Secretary Mayorkas met and led a discussion with the fire service leaders on the U.S. Fire Strategy and its goals, including preparing firefighters for climate driven changes, establishing a cancer strategy, investing in a national recruitment and retention program, providing behavioral wellness resources, implementing and enforcing codes and standards and elevating the fire service to a national level of visibility.

Fire service leaders in the meeting included: Ron Siarnicki; NFFF Executive Director, Troy Markel; NFFF Board Chair, Bill Webb; NFFF Board Vice-Chair and CFSI Executive Director, Donna Black; President, International Association of Fire Chiefs, John Butler; Vice-President, International Association of Fire Chiefs, Pat Morrison; International Association of Fire Fighters, Kevin Quinn; Vice-Chair,



National Volunteer Fire Council , Jim Pauley; President & CEO, National Fire Protection Association , Victor Stagnaro; NFFF Managing Director.



EMMITSBURG, Md. -- Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas and Dr. Moore-Merrell stand with members of the National Fire Service. (DHS photo)



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EMMITSBURG, Md. -- Secretary Mayorkas and U.S. Fire Administrator Dr. Moore-Merrell honor fallen firefighters at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial. (DHS photo)

After the meeting, U.S. Fire Administrator Dr. Moore-Merrell accompanied Secretary Mayorkas to the September 11th memorial on campus through the brick Walk of Honor and to the National Fallen Firefighters Monument.

The U.S. Congress created the federation to lead a nationwide effort to honor America's fallen firefighters. The mission is to honor America's fallen fire heroes, support their families, colleagues and organizations and reduce preventable firefighter death and injury.

