

THE WATCHDESK

ANNUAL REVIEW 2025



COLLECTING • PRESERVING • EDUCATING • INTERPRETING



ENGINE "4" DEPTFORD

Big Class A pumping engine
requiring 3 teams of 24 men.

MISSION STATEMENT

THE MISSION OF THE FIRE MUSEUM OF MARYLAND IS TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION OF THE AMERICAN URBAN FIRE SERVICE THROUGH A UNIQUE COLLECTION OF OPERATING APPARATUS, MEMORABILIA, AND PROGRAMS.

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STAFF ADDITIONS

Jeff Buchheit

Coming to us from the Pride of Baltimore II, Jeff has over thirty years of Museum and heritage area experience, including years spent at the American Alliance of Museums and the Baltimore National Heritage Area. He started in February 2025 and will be with us for the foreseeable future!

Marjorie Hampson

Previously of the National Park Service's Hampton National Historic Site in Towson.

Emma Flanagan, Stuart Harchick

Emma and Stuart join us as tour guides

Bill Lippincott

A 34-year veteran of Montgomery County's fire department, Bill joins us as a driver/safety for our apparatus rides.

Kitri Post

A recent graduate of UMBC, Kitri has been indispensable in our Archives straightening up and cleaning out the physical layout of the area.

The Director's View

October, 2025

As I write this, I have just completed my eighth month here at the Fire Museum of Maryland. Such a short time! And yet it feels like I've been part of the Fire Museum of Maryland family for years. Honestly, that shouldn't be a surprise for two reasons. First, this is a family. The Fire Museum has been nurtured and tended by the Heaver family for over half a century. Secondly, Steve has skillfully spent his time not just focusing on collecting amazing objects for the museum. He has collected a team of paid and unpaid staff who together bring this place to life. And I'm proud to be a part of it!

We have a lot of exciting opportunities ahead of us and we also have some challenges that we will need to meet head-on. We learned just a few short months ago that the Ensign C. Markland Kelly Jr. Memorial Fund is providing \$50,000 in support towards renovations of our Discovery Room over a period of two years. These renovations are long overdue and we're thrilled to partner



with Adler Display to get this important work done. One of my genuine surprises when I started at the museum was learning that we provide a very unique service to our young (and older) visitors to the museum – fire safety and emergency preparedness training. This amazing museum doesn't just focus on the past. It commits to making a better present and future for all of our visitors.

Perhaps the biggest challenge that is in front of us is the fact that we're out of space. Space

for our collection and also space for our people. We could also use more space for visitor amenities like a larger room for birthday parties, a larger Discovery Room, and a larger museum store. Personally I think this is an exciting challenge to be facing. The museum is popular (2024 we experienced the second highest visitation in the museum's history) and we're growing. That's way better than the alternative!

We are currently going through a process of strategic planning where we are identifying our strengths, our challenges, and our opportunities. Board members, staff, and volunteers are all working together on this. With such great minds around the table I know we have a bright future ahead.

If you are reading this, you are a part of the Fire Museum of Maryland family. We need you – your time, your talent, and your financial support. Thank you for all that you have done to support us in the past and for all that you will do to support the third largest fire museum in the United States moving forward. We appreciate you!

With warmest regards,

Jeff Buchheit

Director



Moments like this are possible because of the dedication of our Fire Museum family—and the support of people like you.

MEMBERSHIP

Looking for a holiday gift that will make the whole family happy? Look no further than a gift membership to the Fire Museum of Maryland. You'll be giving the kids a year of interactive, educational, hands-on fun.



You can arrange for a gift membership by calling Amy at 410-321-7500, x103. We take all major cards by phone. We can either send the new member packet to you, so you may give it to your loved ones, or mail the packet directly to the recipient(s).

All levels of membership include one (1) year of free admission, a 10% discount in our Museum store, and reduced birthday party prices, as well as discounted tickets to the Great Baltimore Fire event in February. Memberships also include reciprocal admission for two guests to several Baltimore area museums through our partnership with the Greater Baltimore History Alliance.

For more information, please visit FireMuseumMD.org, call (410) 321-7500, x103, or stop by and chat with our staff.



Museums Participating in Reciprocal Admission through GBHA include:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Baltimore Museum of Industry | Glenn L. Martin Maryland Aviation Museum | Homewood House Museum | St. Mary's Spiritual Center and Historic Site on Paca St. |
| Baltimore Streetcar Museum | Hancock's Resolution | Jewish Museum of Maryland | |
| B&O Railroad Museum | Historic Ships in Baltimore | Mount Clare Museum House | |
| Evergreen Museum & Library | | National Electronics Museum | |



Honoring Steve Heaver's Leadership!

The Fire Museum of Maryland extends its heartfelt thanks to Steve Heaver, who has stepped back after more than 20 years as Director. A founder of the Museum and its Curator since its founding, Steve has been a guiding force in shaping the Museum into one of the nation's leading centers for the preservation of firefighting history.

His vision, expertise, and dedication have inspired growth, community engagement, and a lasting commitment to keeping fire service history alive.

We are pleased to share that Steve will continue in his long-held role as Curator, ensuring his deep knowledge and passion remain at the heart of the Fire Museum of Maryland.

—The Board and Staff of the Fire Museum

CAPITAL PROJECT GRANTS RECEIVED IN 2025

This year has been an especially great year for grants for the Fire Museum. Working on the foundation that curator/director Steve Heaver laid, director Jeff Buchheit has brought in more opportunities than we expected in his first six months.

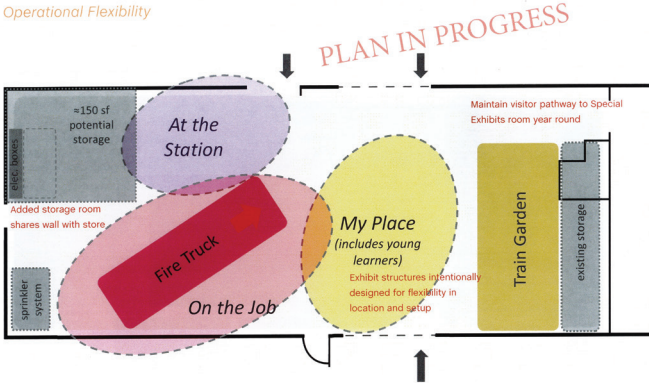


John J. Leidy Foundation



Thanks to grants from the **Ensign C. Markland Kelly, Jr., Memorial Foundation**, the **John J. Leidy Foundation**, and the **Kiwanis Club of Towson-Timonium**, we are on our way to fulfilling the dream our board had envisioned almost a decade ago. For more information on the Discovery Room plans, please visit our website or stop by. If you wish to donate to our Discovery Room fund, please specify on your check, online, or over the phone.

FIRE MUSEUM OF MARYLAND Discovery Room



Plans for new Discovery Room changes, ca. 2018.

MIDDENDORF FOUNDATION

Thanks to a \$20,000 grant from the Middendorf Foundation, we have added much-needed track lighting to the front of the museum! **Clinton Electric Company** in Lutherville (just up York Road from the museum) took the contract to install over 200 feet of additional track lighting on our ceiling. The new lighting highlights the curves and edges of our 1880s firehouse façade, the hand-drawn rigs in front of it, and the motorized rigs at the entrance of the museum. We can't wait to share this new, illuminated perspective with you!



Chase and Quinn with Clinton Electric installing new track lighting.

Restoration of Vintage Motorized Fire Apparatus (as we see it...)

Ed Detwiler

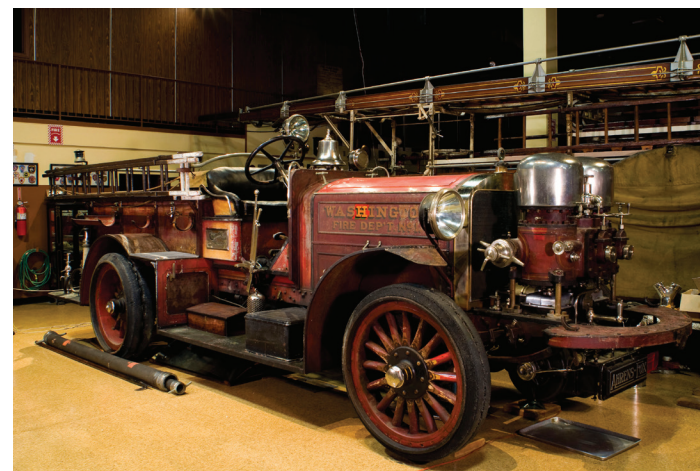
THERE ARE BASICALLY THREE LEVELS of fire apparatus work completed by those who do this type of work:

1. **Resto-Mod:** There are multiple sublevels here too. Some apparatus have some parts that stay all original but may have new drivetrains to include diesel motor, automatic transmission, air brakes and power steering, and even air conditioning. Some are customized for specific purposes like advertising, parades, or other functions.
2. **Original Restoration:** Museum quality, 100% original. This can be broken down as all original to include faded paint, “rotten” pieces which have been “restored” to prevent any further deterioration, to maintain as all original.
 - a. Another original level is a ground up restoration to include all new paint, wiring, refinished everything, rebuilt motor, transmission, axles, brakes... the idea is everything is touched and brought back to how it looked and ran at the time of delivery. This is the most expensive of all levels and of course the older the apparatus the more expensive it becomes. There are companies and individuals that spend months/years completing every miniscule detail of the restoration. These units can compete at musters on a level where each nut, bolt, and rivet must be exact, or you lose points.
3. **Maintain As-is:** As restorers this level is where most of us live and work. There are multiple sublevels which cannot be clearly defined with starting and ending points. Each piece of apparatus is in different stages of repair based on how the owner sees its function. Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder and at this point the owner. Some look at function as more important rather than paint and polish, other owners just want something that looks great, while others toil over a combination of both.

Original Restoration

The museum has apparatus that generally fall into the last two levels. In the Original Restoration category we list four of the Museum’s current pieces:

Our 1913 Ahrens Fox is an example of an all original with a minimal amount of work. This unit is 1-of-33 built and is equipped with all the original tools and equipment. As an “only” survivor it is maintained in original state. Aficionados of these types of apparatus are torn between maintaining an unretouched original and a complete full restoration to running, pumping condition.



1913 Ahrens-Fox Continental Model “A” from Washington Courthouse, OH

Another all-original piece is the 1941 American-LaFrance Foamite Type 500 pumper. This unit has all the original parts, paint, lights, equipment, etc. The restoration process for this unit will be limited to getting the motor, drivetrain, and pump back to working order. The ALF “J” motor does not turn over and will require an out-of-frame overhaul. This overhaul will include: a determination of possible seized parts, the addition of new bearings, belts, seals, carburetor kits, upgrade to wiring where needed, testing of electrical charging system, and paint. There

are also hidden cost considerations for working on an engine like a V12 cylinder engine such as a lift/crane, rotating engine stand that will support the weight and length, and the correct set of tools.



1941 American-LaFrance from Ellicott City, MD

E20 is a 1920 Seagrave Type 6CT pumper. This unit is restored to all original with new paint, lettering, goldleaf, nickel plating, tools, hose, drivetrain gearing, tires, etc. This unit is completely operational. From start to finish this project included a “lifetime” of labor, over about 50+ years. A rough estimate of costs add up to \$200K for parts, paint, tires, nickel plating, etc. There were numerous volunteer hours and donated parts toward the completion of the unit which are not included in the above dollar amount.



1920 Seagrave from Ridgway, PA

RS1 is a 1920 Mack heavy duty wrecker ACCD. This unit was restored in 1996 using new sheet metal to all “original” as a driving, operating unit as it was delivered to the Baltimore Fire Department.



1920 Wrecker from Baltimore, MD

Maintain As-is

In the Maintain As-is category is where most of the Museum apparatus resides. Listed below are a few examples of these:

First is the 1935 Stutz pumper. This unit has been restored to a functional level to be used for displays, patron rides, and other events. Restoration included upgrades to fuel system, drivetrain work, and addition of seating in the hose bed.



1935 Stutz from Havre de Grace, MD



1933 Mack BQ Tractor with 1898 Hale Water Tower, Baltimore, MD

Next is the 1898 Hale/FEM Co. water tower 65' with a 1933 Mack BQ tractor. Originally the water tower was a horsedrawn unit, and the City of Baltimore added the tractor. This unit is mechanically restored and maintained to use at functions in the local area such as parades, photo ops, and other events.

Another unit is the 1949 Mack Type 85 3-door pumper. This unit also has been restored and maintained at a functional level to be used for displays, patron rides, and other events. Future restoration projects include a new water tank, rework of pump and plumbing, and "completion" of electrical wiring.

Resto-Mod

The third restoration category is Resto-Mod. As part of the mission the Museum does not have any units in this category. This is a "fun" area to work in and this is where some aficionados of fire apparatus again are torn between the cool



1949 Mack Type 85 from Ridgeley, WV

and saving the history of the apparatus. From barbeque wagons to hotrod/dragsters, there are all kinds of creative restorations of antique/vintage apparatus. "It may not be right... but it ain't wrong."

With all restorations the focus is to keep the apparatus from sitting and rotting away, preserving the past for the future to enjoy. "Be safe out there and keep the faith."

Ed Detwiler has been in the Fire Service at multiple levels since 1975. Since the 80's Ed and his brother Ray spent years learning and repairing apparatus, equipment, and vehicles out of necessity. Nowhere near an expert in any category, "learning every day is the focus to understanding what makes each piece and type of apparatus work." Today Ed carries on his brother's and his passion to see the apparatus operating as it was designed to function.

Strong Community Connections

By Amy Landsman, Rentals Director

If you've ever been to a fundraiser for your local church, or your kids' school or sports team—and you probably have—you know that a silent auction is often a highlight of the event.

Each year, dozens of community organizations ask us for silent auction donations. And we are happy to help! Generally, we send free admission passes for the Museum.

Responding to silent auction requests is just one way the Fire Museum maintains strong ties to the local community. After all, we live and work here, and most of our visitors do too.

Fellow nonprofits have used our parking lot for a Halloween trunk-or-treat and used our tables for race packet pick-up for



a fundraising 5K. We've provided greatly discounted indoor space for volunteers to pack hundreds of holiday gift bags for the homeless.

In addition, the Museum has joined "Museums for All," which provides reduced price admission for low-income visitors. For several years, we've also proudly taken part in the nationwide "Blue Star" Museum program, which

offers free admission to active-duty military personnel and their families, including National Guard and Reserve.

If your local nonprofit is holding a fundraiser, or needs space, please contact Amy at alandsman@firemuseummd.org and we'll certainly try to help.

EDUCATION

New Event: FMM Book Day

Aaron Lippincott, Education Director

THE FIRE MUSEUM OF MARYLAND is already known for some amazing events such as the Honoring Our Heroes Motor Muster and the Hand and Steam Show. But this past year, the museum decided to turn the page with a new event: the FMM Book Day.

This event all started with a call from a good friend of the museum, Claudia Friddell (author of *Goliath: Hero of the Great Baltimore Fire*). Ms. Friddell was just calling to check in but proposed potentially doing an event together. From there it was formulated that the museum should honor a couple of the authors that we know and promote their books, as well as reading in general. This included two staff members, Nate Davis (co-author of *Hidden History of Howard County*) and John Eddinger (author of *Pete the Fire House Raccoon*). As well as some other authors that the museum is close with, Donna Bertling (author of *Runaway Fire*) and Jack Burkert (author of *Twentieth Century Baltimore*). The last piece of the puzzle was an appearance from the experts on books, the Baltimore County Public Library.

The event occurred on Saturday April 5th, 2025, and a fantastic time was had by all. The museum plans to continue this event next year and beyond, with additional plans to add more authors and literature-focused organizations.



47TH ANNUAL STEAM SHOW

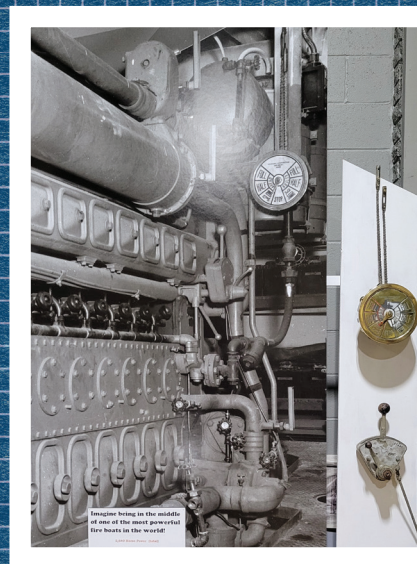
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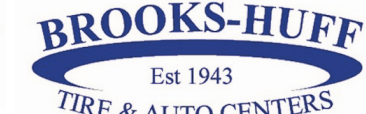
JOIN US
NEXT YEAR!
MAY 9, 2026

TOMMY UPDATE

Since the beginning of the year, our volunteer team has made significant progress inside the fireboat. Much of our attention has been focused on the mess—the space where Tommy's crew once gathered to eat, relax, and swap stories—and on the pilot house, which is slowly being brought back to life through careful restoration.



We've also been developing other interpretive elements aboard the D'Alesandro. One of the most exciting is the new engine room concept, which will feature a sound dome that recreates the distinctive hum of the twin Fairbanks-Morse engines—just like the ones that powered Tommy. This immersive addition will help visitors experience a small piece of what it felt like to serve aboard the vessel.



News from the Curator's Corner

Stephen G. Heaver, Jr.

WRITING ABOUT CURATORIAL PROJECTS

is always a challenge: there are so many! But first, you may ask: “So, what does a ‘curator’ do?” I think that it is the best job in the world because I get to work with the objects, and their history, that make a museum a special place to save and study old objects. I probably said this back in 1971 when I wrote my first Curator's Report. Since you, kind reader, don't have that Report at hand, allow me to say that it was pithy, pertinent, and powerful. I track the incoming gifts and purchases which will enhance your enjoyment of each visit! I get to find tidbits of historical news which will delight and shed some light on why our lives are safer today than they were in 1776. So, please come for a visit!

One of the best things in life is operating antique fire apparatus (you have to try it to believe it). In 2025 a great deal of time was spent on getting our 1935 Stutz back on the road for party rides and other displays; and much of that time was spent trolling through the list of mechanics, machine shops, foundries, plating companies, cabinet wood suppliers, and finishing experts to find the most accurate, period-correct way to repair or replace something. These parts are usually hidden from the public's eye, but once in a while, you get to observe a magnificently completed paneled wall this detail makes the FMM a better museum!

On the list of fire apparatus to be adjusted was tuning the 1933 Mack (which pulls the 1898 Hale water tower) and adjusting its carburetor, and same for the 1922 Ahrens-Fox; Some wiring on the 1949 Mack pumping engine; and installing a newly rebuilt magneto on our tow truck (1941 Mack early “Thermodyne”). This now needs new wiring and timing. The Ahrens-Fox had its oil changed in the pump and for the first time we dropped four extra pan covers, made new gaskets and added quarter inch drain cocks; its felt seals were replaced last year. The 1949 Mack needs modern sized tail lights. As my father would say ‘you have to get a candle to see if its tail light is actually on.’ We now have large flashing red lights attached with magnets to a rear bar when we are out and about.



Our 1935 Stutz

The 1899 American F. E. Co. steam engine needs some minor tri-cock valve grinding; the hand-hole gaskets and sight glass were replaced this year. The 1898 horse-drawn combination wagon had its brass and copper chemical system polished and lacquered prior to the May show. This was very expensive (\$4,000) to do and had been waiting for fifty years!



Jay and Quig working on the combination wagon



The Water Tower in years past



The 1898/1933 Water Tower

We've been hanging hand lanterns, a few bells and three 19th century Axes on the wall. Colonial Williamsburg smiths made the axe brackets. The axes themselves are from the Dionisio Collection purchased back in 1970. I mentioned the 1898 Hale tower (this is the one that Goliath saved during the Great Fire of 1904) heretofore; we finally got the water manifold valve working by replacing a portion of it. The test proved positive but it also showed that the raising cylinders had bad piston cups. These 8” cups had been replaced in 1999 with neoprene which proved to

be a mistake so we are reverting to leather cups made for us by a company that has been in business since 1883. The cast iron pistons were fine but the mild steel rods have to be replaced. We are waiting for the machine shop.

I hope that you will notice some of these changes as you walk through, or if you live too far away to do that and you have a special interest in a device in the collection, contact me or one of our ‘curatorial types’ and we'll send you pictures!

It takes an army of people to maintain the historic fleet and everything else in the collection. We can always use more help if you are interested in volunteering or having a part-time job.

I'd like to mention, to start, just the ones who help with the collections, and there is no order to my list. I will start with my wife, Melissa Heaver, who is our Registrar; Gary Hartner is the Ass't Registrar. Ed Burgee has been detailed to the archives this year but he also is our researcher and chief polisher. Ed Detwiler is the chief Mechanic who keeps us running. Kyle Barrow is the genius who tweaks the carburetors and other mechanical items. Tom Miller is the Ass't Curator who holds many jobs including keeping me in line. Lee Smith, who has seniority amongst the volunteers and Board members, also handles a slew of machinery and collections/building challenges. Mark



Nate, Ed, and Tom

Schield who recently started in the archives and is in charge of the Christmas Garden; John LaCosta, our Sup't of Fire Alarm and scale train operation and signaling. Jim Morrissey is the captain of the fireboat. The list of workers in the collections includes another 15 or so. Come help, or send a gift and mention collections on the memo line.

There is another team of workers who drive a working pair of vehicles. Some overlap with those mentioned above. We try to put either the '49 Mack or the Stutz on the road depending upon the weather, to provide rides for birthday parties. My hat is off to Lee Smith, Tom Miller, Jay Iacone, and more recently, Dean Denning, Phil Clinard and Bill Lippincott. Drivers and safeties (the ones who assist) are always needed. Tom, Lee and I do this training. Requirements include being over 21 years of age and experience driving a manual clutch vehicle. If you are interested, sent me an email or phone call or stop by during one of our events and inquire.



Smaller collections' care include replacing damaged photographs and text panels, designing new ones, and of course, designing new exhibits. America's 250th anniversary has been on our minds and we have put up bunting on the facade of the 1871 fire house as the fellows might have done it for the Centennial Celebration on July 4, 1876. Another exhibit will consist of rosters of hand-drawn company members, 1830-59, in Baltimore, placed in the Rare Prints Gallery

For three years I've been working on a major exhibit on insurance companies and their ever-so-handsome 'fire marks'. It is good that this plan has taken so long because the exhibit,



AMERICA 250

which opened on Lantern Night, 2025, is now six times the size of the original concept and deals with the importance of community insurance: it is in banding together that we protect ourselves against catastrophic losses. Recent disasters from weather surprises, especially water, have driven this point home again. A short video narrated by Benjamin Franklin is planned and that will cost approximately \$13,000.

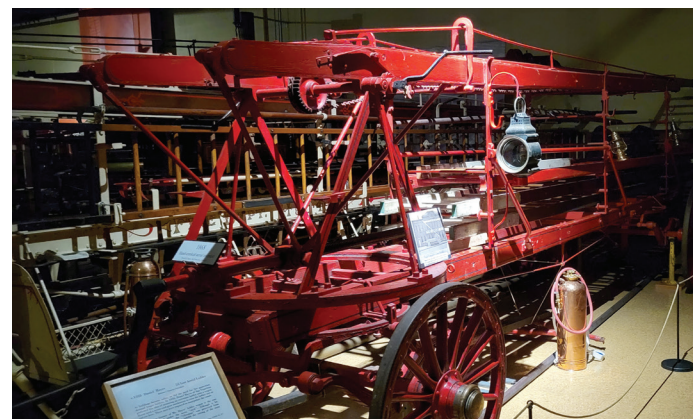
That aspect will be coming as soon as a donor(s) can be found!

Lighting the exhibits is critically important for your enjoyment of these amazing designs and colors, and at the same time, must not cause undue fading or other failure of these elements. I am thrilled to say that the two-step plan first initiated by David Steinitz some 20 years ago is coming to completion this month thanks to grants procured by Jeff Buchheit. One of the reasons that visitors are so impressed with the collections is that the lighting has been getting better and better. Lighting technology has improved by leaps and bounds and helps us do a better job.

I am proud to announce that David L. Brown, of Vermont, long-time friend of the Museum, is donating his immaculately restored 1926 Maxim Motor Pumping Car to the FMM. He and his family restored this rig from the ground up, 1998-2005, followed by gold striping and decorating by Peter Acorn. This 750 g.p.m. machine was delivered to Marion, Mass., where David rode to his first fire when he was 18. Truly a life-long involvement.



David Brown's 1926 Maxim pumper. Look for a detailed article on this piece in next year's Watchdesk!



Our Hayes aerial ladder, in need of running boards

Let's close this year's collection story with a few more points: the current apparatus project is to reconstruct the undercarriage and tool display of the c.1885 Hayes 55' aerial made by LaFrance. Iron strapping, Porter lanterns, and white oak are in the process of being gathered for a really early look at aerial ladders in the U.S.; this vehicle was the first aerial in the State of Maryland. A more sublime aspect of our work here is the accumulation and care of 2D things in the Archives. Andy Swift donated an original photo of a Hayes aerial in front of the LaFrance factory which the Museum has had restored and details enhanced for the restoration effort. Most of the archival work in 2025 has been to re-organize fire department files and objects on shelves.



An original image of a LaFrance aerial ladder

No doubt you have been holding your breath for a report on the 1956 fireboat "Mayor Thomas d'Alesandro, Jr.". A crew of three has been reconstructing the insulation and walls of the crew mess and I'm pleased to say, it looks good. The pilot house will be next. We have 'invented' the engine room with a 10' image of one of the four Fairbanks-Morse 8 cylinder engines. There are many plans afoot, so stay with us. I thank Nancy Pelosi for making much of this possible. The boat was named after her father.



DRIVING REPORT



From last October through the end of this past September, our rigs amassed 329 miles on the road. That would be equal to driving between Cleveland and Chicago! Engine 49, the Pride of the Shore, logged the most miles with 217, followed way behind by the Stutz with 51 miles and Water Tower 1 with 29 miles.

At our Motor Muster in September, we sold 223 engine rides!

Here's how we logged mileage by category:

- ▶ 140 miles for events like Motor Muster, Touch-a-Truck events, and BCFD Medals Day
- ▶ 77 miles for birthdays
- ▶ 43 miles for parades, like the July 4 Parade in Towson and the Mayor's Christmas Parade in Hampden
- ▶ 38 miles for holiday runs in the Towson area (Christmas and Easter)
- ▶ 31 miles for other, including training, school visits

Catch us at these and similar events next year!

If you are interested in having one of our rigs come by, please contact Amy, alandsmann@FireMuseumMD.org.

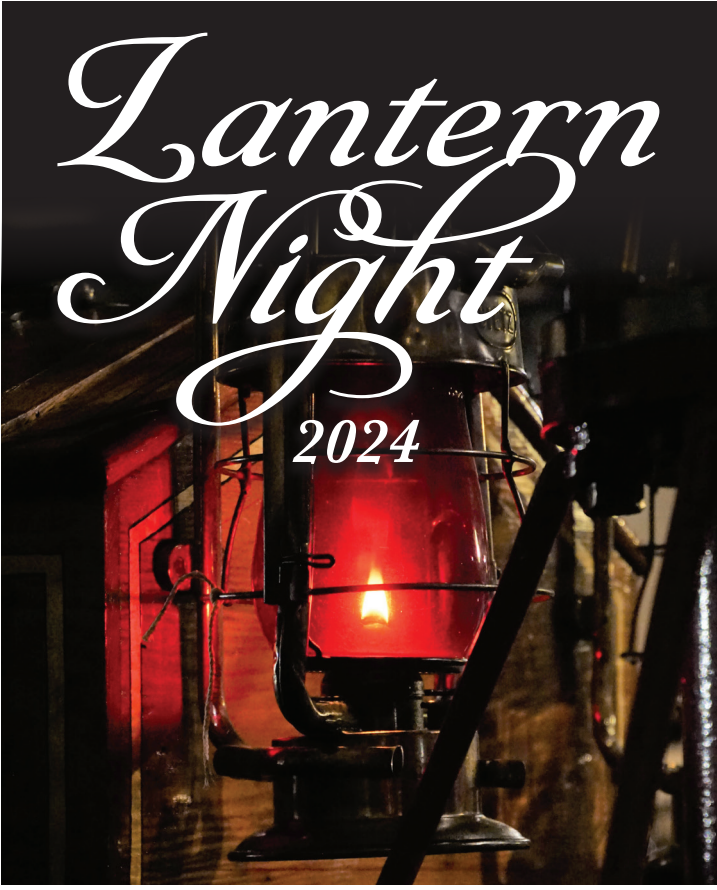


SEPTEMBER 13, 2025

HONORING OUR HEROES MOTOR MUSTER



JOIN US NEXT YEAR!
MAY 9, 2026



JOIN US
NEXT YEAR!
OCT. 24, 2026

Starcom Construction LLC



Nancy Pelosi Visits the Fire Museum of Maryland



The Fire Museum of Maryland was pleased to host Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi along with special guests and members of her family on Friday, September 12th. She was welcomed by the museum's staff and board and given a tour of the Mayor Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. fireboat—originally named in honor of her father—by founder and curator Steve Heaver.

Acquired in 2020 by the museum, the fireboat was built in 1956 and patrolled Baltimore's waterways for 51 years. The "Tommy" was Baltimore's first fire diesel boat. Extremely powerful, the boat could pump 12,000 gallons per minute.

To-date the Paul and Nancy Pelosi Charitable Foundation has provided \$125,000 in support for the "Tommy." As the museum's skilled team, led by board member Jim Morrissey, works to renovate the boat and prepare it to be fully open to the public, the museum continues to seek support for the project.

Current initiatives include the design and fabrication of an outdoor "wayside" panel that will provide interpretation of the fireboat and a documentary-style film that will tell the story of the "Tommy" as well as the fascinating history and technology of fighting fires from the water.

Longer-term projects for the "Tommy" will include an HVAC system for heating and cooling the boat, pilot house interior renovations which will include mahogany and upholstery, and a fresh coat of paint.



JOIN US AT OUR
**CHRISTMAS
TRAIN GARDEN!**
OPEN NOVEMBER 29
THRU DECEMBER 30

New Partnership

This year the Fire Museum and Guilford Hall Brewery have partnered to have their Fire House Series beer at our events, starting with the Motor Muster in September. Guilford also made an appearance at our Lantern Night in October.

The series' first two beers, Harbor Hero and Hook & Ladder, were produced in conjunction with the Baltimore Fire Officers Charitable Fund, which was founded in 2022 by IAFF Local 964's Executive Board. Please donate to the cause if you can.



For more information, visit guilfordhall.com/beer.



Fire Engine or Fire Truck?

Jay Iacone, Fire Museum of Maryland

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN a fire engine and a fire truck? Technically, all of today's modern fire apparatus is built on a vehicle chassis consisting of heavy-duty frame rails, a driveline, and axles. Hence, the big-picture answer is a fire truck. However, drilling down further reveals functional differences between a fire engine and a fire truck, as well as their distinct roles at the scene of a building fire.

Fire Engine

Whether powered by hand, steam, or an internal combustion engine, a fire engine's principal function is to move water from a source to the fire. In the early 18th century, English inventor Richard Newsham received multiple patents for designing the first wheeled pumping engine, which consisted of two pistons operated by men pumping up and down on mechanical arms referred to as brakes. Depending on size, it is estimated that Newsham's engines could achieve a flow of approximately 100 to 170 gallons per minute (gpm).

As early as 1731, several of Newsham's pumping engines were imported into colonial cities such as New York and Philadelphia with great fanfare.¹ After the American Revolution, builders such as Pat Lyon, John Agnew and Baltimore's own John Rogers would start building hand-drawn and hand-operated pumping engines

to protect homes and businesses in the fledgling nation. These American fire engines were equipped with larger pistons making them capable of pumping a larger volume of water, thus requiring more manpower to operate the brakes to sustain the increased flow. The progression in size of these hand-operated engines can be found in the museum's hand-drawn exhibit area.

In 1852, Abel Shawk and Alexander Latta of Cincinnati, Ohio, partnered to build the first successful steam-powered fire engine.² Instead of dozens of men required to pump the brakes of the hand-powered engines, steam pressure was used to operate the pistons that pumped the water. Although met with considerable resistance from firefighters in many communities, the introduction of horse-drawn steam-powered pumping engines enabled many municipalities to establish paid fire departments.

By the time the Roaring Twenties hit, most municipal fire departments had transitioned from horse-drawn to motorized fire apparatus. The increased power available from an internal combustion engine allowed fire apparatus builders to combine three key firefighting essentials—pump, water tank, and fire hose—onto a single chassis. This apparatus became known as the triple combination and would serve as the basic template for the next 100 years of fire engines.

Local ordinances in America's colonial cities, towns, and villages often mandated that every household possess at least one leather bucket for fire protection. These ordinances also specified where ladders, pike poles or hooks should be stored to assist in firefighting operations within the community. It was often the responsibility of nearby homeowners to bring these tools to a fire when summoned by the local watchmen.

Fire Trucks

While fire engines required a modicum of engineering to properly design and build the pistons that would move the water, locally built ladder wagons became a source of great civic pride.³ These endeavors engaged local tradesmen such as carpenters to build the



Our early hand-drawn fire engines

Host Your Event at the Fire Museum of Maryland!

The Fire Museum really went to the dogs this past year.

A canine search and scenting organization has rented the Museum no fewer than 6 times from 2024 through late 2025. The activity, called "Nose Work," involves the dog seeking out and finding different scents hidden throughout the Museum. Participants come from throughout the mid-Atlantic to put their pups to the test. Best of all, these canines have perfect manners and are so focused on tracking the scents, that our historic hydrants and apparatus were safe and sound.



In the past year, the Historical Society of Baltimore County and the Irish Railroad Workers Museum hosted their galas at the Fire Museum. A non-profit hosted a 'packing party' to assemble gift bags for those in need over the holidays. And a real estate group brought their clients in to see our train garden.

Our rentals category also includes kids' birthday parties every weekend, both Saturdays and Sundays. The Fire Museum hosted nearly 90 birthday parties in 2024, almost the entirety of our available time slots.

The thing that connects these various groups is their appreciation of history and/or firefighting, and their enthusiasm for holding their event in such a unique venue. Members and active firefighters receive discounts.

The Museum is looking forward to hosting a similar number of rental events and kids' parties in 2026.

For information on birthday parties or rentals, please contact Amy at alandman@firemuseummd.org.



ladders, blacksmiths to forge the chassis rails and wheelwrights to construct the wooden wheels that would take the ladder wagon to the fire.

After the Civil War, skylines in American cities began to rise above the reach of typical fire department ladders of that era. Several builders attempted various aerial ladder designs, but it was Daniel D. Hayes, a machinist with the San Francisco Fire Department, who received the first patent for a functional aerial ladder.⁴ Its 85’ wooden ladder was elevated by six men turning a worm-gear crank before the ladder was rotated on its turntable and extended into position for use. Today, one of the few remaining Hayes aerial ladders originally from the Baltimore (Maryland) Fire Department is on display in the museum’s northwest corner. As part of an ongoing restoration project at the museum, work continues on fabricating running boards and toolboxes that reflect the period when the Baltimore Hayes ladder was in service.

Mr. Hayes would eventually sell his aerial ladder patent to brothers Asa and Truckson LaFrance who would go on to form one of the greatest names in American fire apparatus. In 1908, the Seagrave Corporation demonstrated its first tractor-drawn 75’ aerial ladder truck at the convention of the International Association of Fire Engineers in Columbus, Ohio.⁵ Beginning in 1935, Peter Pirsch and Sons constructed the nation’s first 100’ all-metal tractor-drawn aerial ladder truck, the first going to the Melrose Fire Department (Massachusetts) one year later, where it remained in service until 1971.⁶

Today’s modern fire engines are powered by diesel engines, which are driven through automatic transmissions. Typical specifications for heavy urban use include a 1500–2000 gpm pump, a 500-gallon water tank, approximately 1000’ of hose with varying diameters for fire attack, and approximately 1000’ of large diameter (4”– 6”) supply hose. Ultimately, the purchaser specifies the features desired for their engine based on local needs, building inventory, and operating procedures.

Personnel

The crew riding on a fire engine is referred to as an engine company whose primary mission is to get water on a fire. Typically, an engine company is staffed with a captain or lieutenant in charge, a driver-operator, and a pair of firefighters. When responding to a building fire, it is crucial to initiate a water supply in accordance with established operational policies. Upon arrival, the officer-in-charge will evaluate and report by radio building and fire conditions, the need for rescue, and where the initial hose line will be deployed. The driver-operator will engage the pump and send water through the hose line at the proper pressure and volume to where the firefighters have advanced it for fire attack.

Ladder trucks are easily identified by their massive hydraulically powered aerial ladders or platforms, usually ranging from 95’ to 105’. They also carry a complement of ground ladders and a large



Our 1885 Hayes aerial ladder, possibly the first aerial ladder in Maryland



Tom and Steve handling our 1922 Ahrens-Fox pumper

assortment of hand and power tools. Some of these trucks may be tractor-drawn and require a second driver (the tiller) in the rear to assist with maneuvering the trailer portion of the apparatus through traffic and into tight spaces such as alleys for access to the fire building. The front of the building must be accessible by the ladder truck. An engine company’s fire hose can always be extended, but the aerial ladder will not be any longer than the day it was welded together at the factory.

Together, the personnel on a ladder truck form a truck or ladder company and are typically supervised by a lieutenant or captain. There is also a driver-operator and two to three additional firefighters, one of whom may be assigned to the tiller position. Typically, the officer-in-charge will have one or two firefighters to form an inside team and coordinate truck company duties with the engine company. These tasks usually include forcing entry into the fire building, locating the main body of fire, searching for and removing occupants, and performing horizontal ventilation.

The driver-operator and a second firefighter will work on the exterior of the fire building, performing tasks such as setting stabilizers and raising the aerial ladder or platform to where it is needed most, placing ground ladders, and performing vertical ventilation duties on the roof if necessary. In the event of a large-scale fire, a heavy-duty nozzle can be deployed from the tip of the aerial ladder or platform to produce an impressive 1000 gpm stream of water from an elevated position, either to extinguish the main body of the fire or to protect adjacent structures.

Fire engines and fire trucks are different in form and function. An engine company’s job is to get water on the fire through any means necessary. The ladder or truck company’s primary mission is to assist the engine company to advance as close to the fire as possible for extinguishment. These are very distinct divisions of labor and all well-organized fire departments will have effective deployment procedures for their engine and truck companies based on the needs of their community.

END NOTES

1. Paul C. Ditzel, *Fire Engines, Firefighters*, (New York, NY: Crown Publishing, 1976), 27.
2. Ibid., 106.
3. Peter M. Molloy, PhD, Discussion with Jay Iacone, 2017, Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting, Phoenix, Arizona.
4. Ditzel, *Fire Engines, Firefighters*, 158.
5. Walter M. P. McCall, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of American Fire Engine Manufacturers* (Hudson WI: Iconografix), 225.
6. Ibid., 209.



A Tradition of Protection Needs You

For over 50 years, the Fire Museum of Maryland has provided families a way to learn about the history, technology, and innovation of the fire service in America. We are one of the top fire museums in the United States with a unique collection of operating firefighting equipment, historical documents for research and educational programs for both adults and children.

There are many ways to show your support, for now and later:

NOW

- ▶ Every year, we rely on the generosity of individuals and corporations to provide for our annual operating needs.
- ▶ Mail a check or use a credit card over the phone or on our website
- ▶ Give appreciated securities in your investment account

LATER

- After providing for your family, there are effective ways to help with our longer-term vision:
- ▶ Add the fire museum as a beneficiary in a retirement account or life insurance policy
 - ▶ Use your will or trust to make a gift of cash, real estate, or other assets

Your support, now and later, helps us with our mission to preserve a unique aspect of American history and provide fire safety education programs to families in the region.

410-321-7500 | FireMuseumMD.org



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Fire Museum of Maryland Completes Sprinkler Installation

In December 2024, the Fire Museum of Maryland reached an important milestone – the completion and final inspection of its long-awaited fire suppression system. This years-long project represents a major step in safeguarding the museum's unique collection for generations to come.

The Fire Museum extends its sincere gratitude to the many companies and professionals whose expertise and generosity made this possible. Thanks to their support, the museum was able to complete this vital project with minimal cost.

The Fire Museum of Maryland would like to thank:

PLATINUM SPONSORS:
INSTALLATION LABOR & MATERIALS

- Marty Smith, ATS
- Tim Parham, Everon (formerly ADT Commercial)
- Kevin Galligan, Johnson Controls Fire Protection

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Jason Martin, Castle Sprinkler & Alarm

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- John August Denhardt, AFSA
- Chuck Fusco, BFPE
- Anna Gavin, Fireline
- Frank Hauf
- Mission BBQ

2026 Special Events at the Fire Museum of Maryland

Please visit FireMuseumMD.org or call 410-321-7500 to check for updates or schedule changes.

Monday, January 5: Cabin Fever Monday

10am-Noon. The Discovery Room is open Mondays from January 5–February 23 for caregiver/child playtime in our Discovery room. Tickets at the door.

Sunday, February 8: Great Baltimore Fire Event

1pm–4pm. Learn all about the 1904 blaze that destroyed more than 1,500 downtown buildings. Tickets available online at FireMuseumMD.org or by calling 410-321-7500.

Saturday, March 7: Family Safety Day. Free Admission!

10am–4pm. Join our community partners & learn about disaster preparedness.

Saturday, May 9: Steam Day. Free Admission!

10am–2pm. See working steam & hand drawn engines. Wagon rides. Kids games & activities.

Saturday, May 16: Antique Car Show

10am–2pm. Chesapeake Region, Antique Automobile Club of America. Our front lot is filled with cool cars!

Wednesday, June 3: Summer Hours Start

10am–4pm. The Museum is open Wednesdays through Saturdays through the end of August.

Friday, July 3: 250th Anniversary Celebration

10am–3pm. Meet Ben Franklin, family friendly activities included with your paid admission to the Museum.

Friday, August 28: Living History Day

10am–1pm. Living history activities are included with your paid admission to the Museum.

Saturday, September 12: Honoring our Heroes Motor Muster. Free Admission!

10am–3pm. Antique & modern fire engines. Thrill as we shoot water high in the sky. Kids activities too.

Saturday, October 24: Lantern Night

6pm–8pm. See the Fire Museum by lantern light. Snacks, re-enactors. Family friendly. Tickets at the door.

Saturday, November 28: Holiday Train Garden Opening Day

10am–4pm. Opening Day only: Take a free photo with Santa. 11am–2pm. Visit FireMuseumMD.org for our extended holiday hours.

Holiday Hours:

Saturdays: Dec. 5, 12, 19. 10am–4pm.

Sundays: Nov. 29, Dec. 6, 13, 20, 27. Noon–4pm.

Holiday Week:

Saturday, Dec. 26–Wednesday, Dec. 30.

Weekday/Saturday hours: 10am–4pm.

Sunday: Noon–4pm.



The Fire Museum is open Saturdays, 11am–4pm, all year long.

Birthday Parties, Meeting Space, & Tours for all ages.

1301-R York Road, Lutherville, MD 21093.

410-321-7500 | FireMuseumMD.org

