

# AFDRA Retiree News

**Published by the Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees' Association**

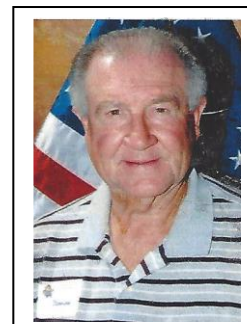
**March 1, 2023**

**# 1-2023**

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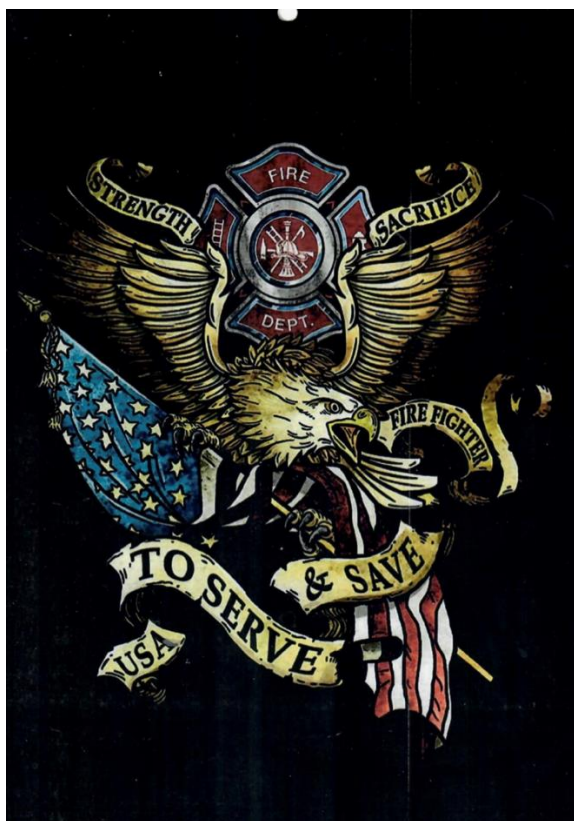
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**HERMAN R. BISHOP,  
EDITOR**

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## "The Fire Fighter"

I have no ambition in this world, but one, and that is to be a fire fighter. The position may, in the eyes of some appear to be a lonely one, but we who know the work, which endeavors to save the lives of our fellow citizens, under the impulse of such thoughts, the nobility of the occupation, thrills us, and stimulates us to dates of daring, even at the supreme sacrifice. I am proud to be a fire fighter.  
Chief Joe Crocker, FDNY



**Mike Fox, Assistant Editor**

**Annual Fund Drive:** during March, we are conducting our annual fund drive. We depend on donations from our members to finance activities of the organization. Your generosity is appreciated. Please send donations to AFD Retiree's Association care of Mike Fox, Treasurer, 3508 32nd Circle SE., Rio Rancho, NM 87124. **Thank you for your continued support, without which we would not be a strong organization.**



## Minutes, December 2023 12/14/2023

AFDRA 268<sup>th</sup> meeting called to order @ 1900 hrs. by Kerry Horton President. The president called for the retiree body to stand and recite the “pledge of allegiance”.

Louie Trujillo provided the opening prayer. The president called for “notice of last alarm” and a moment of silence, for our loss brothers Fred Casias, Tomas Placencia, JD Chavez, and Dennis Lawhorn.

Roll Call of Officers, President Kerry Horton present, Vice President Pablo Garcia present, Treasure Mike Fox present, Historian Herman Bishop present, Emeritus President Sam Trujillo.

President Kerry Horton called to the body for appointment of the secretary’s position which was vacated by the loss of brother Fred Casias. AFDRA By-Laws Article 5 Section 2. Sam Trujillo nominated Eddie Abeita to the interim position of secretary. Vote was taken and was unanimous to fill the position, by the retirees in attendance. Eddie Abeita accepted the position.

**President’s Report**, Kerry Horton gave an update on the request to refurbish the Last Alarm Truck. The initial internal cost estimate was approximately 200K. Solicitation for bids were made, with low bid of \$ 150,668.19 received. The next step will be presentation to AFR Chief, next AFR Chief to present to mayors’ office. Mayor’s office to present to NM Governor’s office for funding request. The estimated time for the refurbishment is six months.

Mike Kavanaugh, retired United States Air Force firefighter and CNM Fire Science Instructor died this past month. His widow Rita contacted AFDRA president and requested some type of fire presence at her husband’s funeral. AFDRA read a modified version of “condolence “the retiree honor guard and last alarm truck were not used. AFR Chief Gallegos did provide fire equipment to stage at the service.

Local AFR 244 *partnered* with Chisolm Legacy RV to assist in a raffle of a recreational vehicle this September. Chisolm will give local 244, approximate twenty-five thousand dollars (25K) for the AFR Survivors Fund. Our retire association will receive 10% of the amount given to local 244 for our participation. Ticket sales will start in February, at various events, cost will be \$25 per ticket or 5 tickets for \$100.

**Secretary’s Report from November**, by Herman Bishop for Fred Casias who was ill, an abridged report was given. OJ Lucero announced the new additions of Honor Guard members, Anthony Nunez and James Parra who are currently being fitted for uniforms.

**Treasure’s Report**, Mike Fox provided an overview with supportive document on the financial status of the retirees association. This included monies taken in, deposited, and paid out, from our current financial institution Rio Grande Credit Union. Mike announced to the members in attendance the *treasure’s books are available for members to review*. Mike also mentioned that Mick Mendez will re fabricate all tags on our deceased firefighter pole at no cost to our association. In appreciation for all his work a collection was taken to provide Mick and family a weekend getaway. Motion to accept report by Louie Trujillo second by Noel Baca.

**Historian Report**, by Herman Bishop, On December 9, Herman and Mike Fox gave talk to the fire cadets at the AFR Academy. Herman’s talk was about the history of AFD going back to the days of horses being used to pull the fire apparatus. Mike Fox has developed and presented to the cadets a talk of “professionalism”. Herman was approached by a lieutenant who thanked him for a CD Herman provided his cadet class 10 years ago. Herman recognized Eddie Abeita for all his years of providing stories in the fire service including while in active duty with AFD providing articles called “Faces from the past” which was about retired firefighters.

**Emeritus Sam Trujillo.** Sam will start once again visiting funeral homes to request donations to support our Honor Guard and funeral functions. Garcia's Restaurant has donated \$250.00 to support our honor guard. Sam asked the membership; "who uses our web site to view the obituary section"? There have been concerns of limited use by retirees. Sam recognized Pablo Garcia for his dedication in visiting our ill brothers that were in the hospital, rehabilitation or at home. Sam along with Herman Bishop gave an in-house eulogy of our departed brother Fred Casias

**Committee Report** Vince Holcomb Moose Lodge liaison reported, 126 meals would be needed for Christmas Dinner. Approximately 120 tickets have been the average amount sold the past years. Chairperson Eddie Abeita requested help from the membership to decorate the hall for the dinner.

**Open Discussion,** it appears that a lot of retirees have not made the transition of using AFDRA website to view retiree information which is pertinent. The change from hard copy to an electronic version was **strictly based on cost and labor involvement.**

Board members are looking and soliciting for ideas into the possibility of minimal amount of newsletter printing for some retirees. However, this could cause the association volunteers to inherit the burden of *a lot more work!*

Closing prayer by Louie Trujillo, Meeting adjourned AMEN **Meeting End**

### Death, D Lawhorn

We were recently informed that our **Brother AFD Retiree Dennis Lawhorn** passed away on 11/26/22. Dennis Lawhorn joined AFD on 7/11/1966 (13th AFD Cadet Class) and retired on 6/28/1988 after a successful 22 year career ... Please keep the Lawhorn family in thought and prayers.

A **Celebration of Life Memorial Service** was held on **12/16/22 @ 1300...** The Memorial Service was held at French Funeral Home located at 10500 Lomas Blvd. NE (Lomas & Eubank) ... The family requested that our AFDRA Honor Guard participate in the Memorial Service ...



### Death, JD Chavez

We have also been informed that our **Brother AFD Retiree Juan "JD" Chavez** passed away on 12-2-22. JD Chavez joined AFD on 3/22/76 as a member of the 28th Cadet Class, and retired on 12/28/1990.

**Funeral Services for our Brother AFD Retiree Juan D. Chavez** were held as follows: The family requested a Fire Fighter Funeral.

**Rosary...**Tuesday 12/20/22 @ 1800 at French Funeral Home located at 9300 Golf Course Rd. NW ...

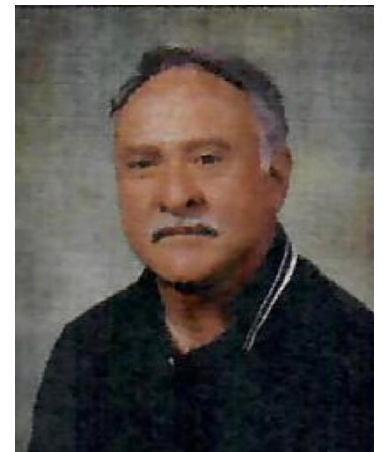
**Funeral Mass...**Wednesday 12/21/22 @ 0900at St. Joseph on the Rio Grande located at 5901 St. Joseph Dr. NW ...

**Internment** followed the mass at Mt. Calvary Cemetery ...

**AFD Honor Guard "Stood Vigil"** at the Rosary and **"Struck The Four Fives"** at the Internment site ...

**AFD Retirees Read "The Resolution of Condolence"** following the Rosary ...

The **Last Alarm** "Funeral Truck transported our brother from the Church to Mt. Calvary Cemetery ...



## 2022 Christmas Dinner Story

By Eddie Abeita

### *“Christmas Dinner It Was a Shot in the Arm”*

Our 2022 Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association (AFDRA) Christmas Dinner was a huge success. Words from retirees attending their first Christmas Dinner, “it was Great”!

In the beginning, fire station life was the initial start of brother/sisterhood, jumping forward a bunch of years to retirement we still maintain a strong camaraderie. An old fire chief Ray Kuhn told me when he hired me, “we are one big family”. However just like your own family some brother or sister firefighters could be tuff to work or deal with. But at the end of each shift or work cycle our camaraderie was intact.

When retirement hit for some it was like a void no fire family around. We spent so much time with our fire family that any celebration we have now or any get together it renews our memories and hearts. So, our *Christmas Dinner*, was a shot in the arm.

**Background** In the incipient years of the retiree’s association the thought of gathering for the Christmas season with other retirees was a must. The first Christmas Parties were potluck held at the Fire Academy on Wednesday’s meeting night. As it grew Eddie Torres was



able to reserve the Town of Bernalillo Community Center in which the association was able to provide some funds toward the party but still a potluck. But with the party’s growth physical demand and diminishing help, a need for a second look was in the make. Sam Trujillo appointed Eddie Abeita to chair a Christmas Committee.

A Christmas Committee was organized, and the committee brainstormed different ideas, with Louie Trujillo’s stating we need a “*Christmas Dinner*” not party. The initial planning by the Christmas Committee was, to find an entity that would fit our needs. Restaurants, Casinos, Fraternal Orders and Kirtland Air Force Base were contacted about providing our dinner. They all welcomed our association but the money (\$\$\$\$) was always the main issue, which we did not have. To negotiate or plan with these entities you have to support it all with money .

Vince Holcomb mentioned a function that he and wife Linda attended at the Moose Lodge which he thought was good. A meeting with Moose Lodge was held and all the particulars were discussed. The cost per dinner plate (full course meal), no down payment, no contact to sign and facility in a centralized location were the deciding factors.

At the start of the 2022 calendar year the Moose Lodge penciled in our annual Christmas Dinner date, to insure we had our wanted date reserved. The Christmas Dinner was held on *December 15<sup>th</sup> the 3<sup>rd</sup>, week of the month.*

Roberta Abeita constructed center pieces for all the tables, the center pieces were given away as door prizes. Lucy Sedillo oversaw lighting the center piece candles. Lyndia Holcomb took charge of the tablecloths. Theresa Barboa and Debbie Barnum insured the center pieces were delivered and in place. Merry Flores and Roberta Abeita took charge of gifts for the giveaways. Kerry Horton, Roberta, and Eddie Abeita set up the Christmas tree and disassembled it.

The day of the dinner, Vince Holcomb, Mike Fox, Kerry Horton, Leroy Barboa, John Barnum, Fred Teupell and Dennis Lowder arranged the table seating. Through their artistic skills also arranged the Christmas blowups next to the Christmas tree. Emiliano Chavez and Patricia disassembled and repacked the blow ups.

Merry Flores donated dessert plates, chips and queso, John and Debbie Barnum donated punch and tea. Roberta Abeita donated water, cups, peanuts, sopa, sweetener, cream, salsa, and chips. Retirees' association provided coffee.

The dinner activities started with a social hour which has become popular part of the dinner. There were a lot of hand shaking, fist bumping, hugging, chit chat, reminiscing and just visiting with one another. Snacks were enormous Moose had cocktail service available.



Mike Fox coordinated ticket sales, payments and provided gratuity to the young volunteer food servers. *Fred Casias* developed and printed tickets, John Barnum handled telephone reservations, Vince Holcomb was communication liaison with Moose.

Vince Holcomb gave the Moose Lodge a final ticket count of 123 for dinner meals to be prepared. AFDRA paid for all meals requested however some dinner tickets that were reserved by retirees, were not paid for, they did not attend. So, the association absorb the loss. *Hopefully the ghost ticket requestors will remit payment to the association.* Moose charged the association \$17.00 per each dinner ticket. The association sold tickets to its retirees at a reduced cost of \$10.00 as a token of our brotherhood and "Thank You" for supporting the AFDRA.



AFDRA President Kerry Horton extended invitations to Albuquerque Fire Rescue Chief Gene Gallegos and Albuquerque Fire Rescue Local 244 Union President Miguel Tittmann who attended with family members. Committee Chair Eddie Abeita also provided written invitation to the retiree's perpetual supporters, Rio Grande Credit Union and TLC Inc. Mike Athens, President CEO RGCU attended and donated 20 Lobo basketball tickets that were given as door prizes. Lucy Sedillo was also recognized for her continued part of a liaison between RGCU and our

Retirees Association. Retirees also brought family members as guest and new retiree faces in attendance. There were more than 60 gifts given as door prizes to attendees. Kerry, John, Ralph, Leroy, Mike, Eddie, and Bob Hartley administered the drawing giveaway. The *Fred Casias* family helped in the cleanup. The Christmas committee would also like to thank Local 244 Sergeant at Arms, Aaron Flores for providing the union hall for committee planning meetings.



## Minutes, January 2023 1/11/2023

**AFDRA 269<sup>th</sup> Meeting** called to order @1903hrs. by Emeritus President Sam Trujillo. Pledge Allegiance recited. Opening pray by Louie Trujillo.

**Notice of Last Alarm**, Bobbie Halton and Mark Dillard.

**Roll Call of Officers** present, Emeritus President Sam Trujillo, Vice president Pablo Garcia, Secretary Eddie Abeita, Treasure Mike Fox. Advisory Board members; Bill Raupher, Fred Teupell, O.G. Lucero, Anthony Nunez and Louie Trujillo. First AFDRA meeting attendees, Eddie “Gonzo” Gonzales and Greg Gonzales. Guest BCFD Retiree Paul Strittmatter.

**Presidents Report** by Sam Trujillo, No information from Local 244, however their continued message “mi casa su-casa”. Letter received from Retired Public Employees of New Mexico (RPENM), they are soliciting for retirees to apply for board position(s) with the RPENM. Sam thought if one of our fire retirees would apply and serve on this board it would support our interest. Motion to accept presidents report.

**Secretary’s Report** by Eddie Abeita, Minutes from previous December meeting read to membership. Motion to accept, 1<sup>st</sup> by Ralph Sedillo second by James Parra. Motion passed.

**Treasures Report** by Mike Fox, the original cost to refurbish the Last Alarm truck was \$165K new figure is 200K total. The association was told the vehicle is the property of the city of Albuquerque which means the refurbishment “will” fall under the city’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Hopefully there could be two different avenues for funding the refurbishment. The State of New Mexico and the City of Albuquerque. Mike reported a check for 25K has been received from Chisolm Legacy RV via Local 244 for the previous year RV raffle. Money will go to support the AFR Survivors Fund. AFDRA will receive 10% of the funds received from Local 244. Mike also reported cost from the Christmas Dinner totaled approximately \$3,064. With ticket sales and donations received the net cost to the association was \$1,789, an excellent party for the cost. Mike also thanked Roberta Abeita for all her work in coordinating the preparation of the Moose Hall. Ninety dollars in co-payments made to the Retiree Assistance Program. This is to aid in counseling sessions, all information is kept confidential. Mike has prepared tax information for the year 2022, where last year’s expenses were approximately \$23,067.83. Mike *reiterated* all fiscal documents (checking/savings) bank account are open to any retiree for review. Motion made to accept 1<sup>st</sup> Michael Murphy 2<sup>nd</sup> by Joe Costales.

**Historian Report**, Herman Bishop was not available, Herman and wife Carmen were on vacation celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

**Retiree Raffle** \$112.00 in tickets were purchased. 1<sup>st</sup> prize winner was James Parra 2<sup>nd</sup> was Fred Tuepell, 3<sup>rd</sup> unknown.

**Committee Report**, Funerals, by Sam Trujillo This past year 2022 we lost 16 brothers which was a record. Over the past years it was an average of 10-12 retirees lost. Sam said I want to thank our “honor guard” they did great at the funeral for Paul Gonzales. Louie did a wonderful job of reciting the Resolution of Condolence and in a short time Pablo Garcia transformed a fire alarm box used as an urn for our brother Paul Gonzales. Sam said NO two funerals have been the same, we even had AFR Union President Miguel Tittmann fill in as an honor guard.

**Committee Report** Christmas Dinner by Eddie Abeita the 2022 Christmas dinner was a big success we received a lot of thanks and compliments from all who attended. Eddie said, ticket sales were good and in keeping attendance manageable, in the future when ticket sales are announced, purchase ASAP.

**Committee Report** Museum by Mike Fox, some pictures of the past AFD mounted patrol were donated to the museum. So it is a new endeavor to find more pictures of AFD's mounted horse patrol. Anyone with any knowledge of any artifacts please contact the board. Mike also reminded retirees, "any item donated to the museum can be returned to the owner on request. This is by written agreement, between AFDRA and the person donating.

**Matters Good for the Association**, Sam reported Brother Eddie Brito (aka Brutis) is at home and would appreciate a visit. Bob Martinez (aka Father Bob) is still ill and at home. Sam said it's nice to visit them or give them a call.

**New Business** Mike Fox is looking to update the computer program Microsoft Word, it cost a few hundred dollars. Bill Raupher made a motion to purchase the updated program and seconded by Louie Trujillo. Membership approved by vote.

Closing prayer by Louie Trujillo, meeting adjourned

## Death, Fred Casias

It was a very sad day for our AFD Retiree's Association when our Brother Fred Casias passed away. (12/1/2022) ... Fred passed peacefully at home following a brief illness ... Fred was 71 years old ...

Fred Casias joined AFD on 3/22/1976 as a member of the 28th Cadet Class and he retired on 12/31/2006 after 30 years of faithful service. Fred was a proud member of our association and he also served as Secretary for many years. Friday December 9<sup>th</sup>, a Rosary was held at Alameda Funeral Home. Our AFDRA Honor Guard "Stood Vigil" prior to the Rosary Service. On Tuesday December 27<sup>th</sup>, a Funeral Mass was celebrated at Holy Rosary Catholic Church. Internment Services followed at Mt. Calvary Cemetery. Our AFDRA Honor Guard "Struck the Four Fives" at graveside.



Please keep Fred and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

## Search On Horseback-You Can Cover a Lot of Ground

Kenny Sewell Story

By Eddie Abeita

Kenny began his career with Albuquerque Fire Department (AFD) December 1973 and Retired 1998.

Kenny said, when I think about the fire academy Paul Garcia JR seems to always be an old icon of prankster. A bunch of years later while attending a retiree monthly meeting I saw Pablo and he is still a prankster; he honks his air horns on his truck to show he has arrived and gets a kick of watching retirees jump. I worked at different fire stations in my career, I guess some are more memorable than others. Working at station four around the Christmas season it was a tamale tradition making so many dozens of tamales it was remarkable.

I piped (FF 1<sup>st</sup> class) at station two we rode the tailboard to all calls and in the winter, it was miserable Keny said. Sometimes you would hope it would be a good working fire so we could have a little warmth but the fire that was keeping you warm you were dumping water on it to put out. At the time engine two had the most working fire calls in the city, so AFD had purchased some new pumpers with jump seats one was to be placed at station two. Station two was old, and the new fire truck would not fit in the station. Later AFD ordered a smaller pumper that did fit, but the pumper's front bumper had only 6 inches of clearance when the overhead door was down.



*Kenny and Pinto*

I remember our camaraderie from day one of the fire service when we were together especially in close quarters, he said. As I mentioned I piped at station two with Herb Edmon, one afternoon we were in the vicinity of the new station two on Gibson SE. Remembering the old days we thought we would visit. One young firefighter in a professional way invited us to look around the station. The station was nice but no other firefighters visible. In our day firefighters would be gathered, in some part of the station always talking to one another. I learned that new station designs give firefighters their own private area like a secluded bunk area. Well, I guess it's just like everything else, things change. One thing I will say never changes, "when called upon, "AFD still does one hell of a job at emergencies"!

One of Kenny's most memorable times was when he was part of AFD Mounted Horse Patrol. Kenny said I have always been around animals and owned a horse most of my life. The one I currently have his name is Pinto and his breed is a paint. Kenny said American Paint Horse is a breed of horse that combines both the conformational characteristics of a western stock horse with a pinto spotting pattern of white and dark coat colors. I like to show and talk about my horse. I was a member of the AFD Mounted Horse Patrol for about 8-9 years there was no special qualification to join just have a horse. Albuquerque Fire Administration did let us participate in certain activities like parades and when called upon to search for missing persons. Most of our



training received was from APD's Mounted Horse Patrol. Because we were not an actual program there were no funds earmarked for our operation. So, anything we did was mostly out of pocket, maybe the reason why there is no more Mounted Horse Patrol

When called to assist in a search on horseback- you can cover a lot of ground compared to searchers on foot. One occasion we were asked to assist in the search for a missing person on the Navajo Reservation. We were briefed that a man went into the wilderness to end his life. The search area was charted out with designated areas for each search group, so we started the search. Just like any fire incident you gather information and of course converse. Among our group we noticed family members were concerned but not in a lot of anguish as we have seen at our emergency responses with AFD. After two days the search was called off. Days later it was reported the lost person was found in Las Vegas Nevada in the company of lady friends.



During my time I rode with, Brett McWilliams, Pat Mulligan, Joe Tapia, Anthony Nuanez, Mardo Martinez, Eugene Mcpeek and Robbie Sanchez. There were others but as I get older, I forget names. It's quite expensive having a horse I've been lucky to have a good neighbor, I keep one of his horses and he provides feed for his and mine. When I retired, I thought just kick back and enjoy life, but we all know that is short lived, I worked with a landscaping company and they had some large commercial properties to take care of, like hospitals and offices. Our retired brother Jessie Waddles (RIP) went into the car business and wanted me to sell cars with him but even after his hard tactics for me to work with him, I said NO, not for me. Jessie said "come-on Kenny" people come to us to buy we don't have to go to them to sell.

My wife Danna, retired from the Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital where she was a nurse. My sister Adlene Robinson also retired from the VA where she was also a nurse. One thing if needed, I have my own nurses to take care of me if/when I get sick. I have a son who works here in Albuquerque and a daughter who lives in Savannah GA and together seven grandsons. I wish some were *granddaughters*, with a smile Kenny said, however I still love them all dearly.

**Annual Fund Drive Please don't forget the annual fund drive for the Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association. We rely entirely on contributions for our efforts. We have made great headway with the amount of work we've been able to do with your donations in the past. Thank you very much and we look forward to your continued support!**

# 2022, A Pictorial Review

## Summer Picnic (Photos courtesy of Mike Padilla)



## Christmas dinner (Photos courtesy of Mike Padilla)



### Christmas Dinner (cont)



### Honor guard





## AFDRA Honor Guard Bios

The Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association Honor Guard has been expanding over the years, with founding members retiring from this role. The AFDRA Board would like to thank all the previous members for their dedicated service, with the special thanks to Bill Raupfer for all his hard work and leadership, and Sam Trujillo for his continuing support and dedication to this cause. Through Sam's efforts we have secured substantial

funding for the honor guard uniforms and he continues to assure that the members of the Honor Guard have everything they need to perform their role.



*Thank you Sam and Bill!!*

**Let's introduce you to the current Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association Honor Guard**



**Eulogio Lucero (aka "OGEE")**

"OGEE" was hired in August of 1988 as part of the 46th cadet class, and after over 22 years of dedicated service retired in September of 2010. He is currently married (for 36 years), has two kids and four grandsons and enjoys fishing and hunting.



**Tom Romero (aka "Chino")**

"Chino" was hired in June of 1978 as part of the 30th cadet class, and after 23 years of dedicated service retired in December of 2000. He is married with three kids, two of which are AFR officers, and four grandchildren. He enjoys camping hunting and bicycling.



**Donnie Sanchez (aka "Dagger" "Boulder")**

"Boulder" was hired in May of 1987 as part of the 43rd cadet class, and after 22 years of dedicated service retired in December of 2009. His father is retired from the city water department and his mother is a retired hairdresser. His brother Richard retired as an Albuquerque Fire Department paramedic. He has two children and one grandchild. He enjoys sports officiating, music, drumming, vocals, percussion, fishing,

and camping.



### Jim Summers

Jim was hired in March of 1993 as part of the 53rd cadet class, and after 20 years of dedicated service retired in December of 2012. He is currently married and has three sons, one of which is an AFR Lieutenant, one an AFR Driver, and the other is currently in the army. He enjoys real estate, spearfishing, photography and hunting.



### Ralph Sedillo

Ralph was hired in June of 1974 as part of the 26th cadet class, and after 20 years of dedicated service retired in December of 1994. He has been married for 57 years and has one daughter. He enjoys everything about custom cars.



### Emiliano Chavez

“Emo” was hired in August 2019 as part of the 60th cadet class, and after 20 years of dedicated service, retired in 2019. He has five children, an interesting point, two of them were born on February 29, but not the same year. His hobbies include weaving, making moccasins, embroidery and farming.



### Joe Tenorio (aka “Plunkett”)

“Plunkett” was hired in September of 1987 as part of the 44th cadet class, and after 20 years of dedicated service retired in January of 2008. He is currently married and has three kids. He enjoys golf and slinging purified water at his water store.



### James Parra (aka “Parra Beans”)

“Parra Beans” was hired in May of 1987 as part of the 43rd cadet class, and after 23 years of dedicated service retired in April of 2010. He is currently married with three children. He enjoys camping, hiking, and watching his grandkids.



### Anthony Nuanez

Anthony was hired in 1985 as part of the 40th cadet class, and after over 22 years of service retired in 2007. He is currently married and has two boys. He enjoys walking and yoga.



## A Changing of the Guard

By Kerry Horton

Fire Chief Gene Gallegos has announced his retirement from Albuquerque Fire Rescue effective March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. Gene has served AFR for nearly 23 years, starting as a member of the 61<sup>st</sup> Cadet Class in 2000. As Chief Gallegos moved up through the ranks he has served as a paramedic, cadet instructor, dispatcher, Training Division Commander, Fire Marshal, and currently as AFR Fire Chief since late April of 2021 with the retirement of Chief Dow. Mayor Keller originally appointed Gene as interim Fire Chief, stating that “we are grateful Gene Gallegos has stepped up time and time again during the pandemic, and he will provide a smooth transition by taking the role of Interim Fire Chief.” Mayor Keller soon realized that Gene was the right man for the job, and on November 20, 2021, Gene was officially appointed AFR Fire Chief.

AFDRA has enjoyed a great and supportive relationship with Chief Gallegos and his administration, and he has led AFR through some tough times with dedication and respect from AFR personnel and Mayor Keller’s administration. “There is no greater honor than to serve next to and with the members of Albuquerque Fire Rescue, it has been an absolute privilege to have the opportunity to be Fire Chief of firefighters that never say we can’t, never stop working hard, and never quit,” said Fire Chief Gene Gallegos. “These men and women dedicate one-third of their lives to protecting the community they love, and regardless of what is asked of them, they do it with pride and respect. I could not be prouder, I have the privilege of saying I was a firefighter with Albuquerque Fire Rescue.” Mayor Keller said of Gene’s service “I am grateful for Chief Gallegos’ service to our entire community to help save lives, make important innovations to grow the department, and to equip our first responders with the resources they need.”

I asked Chief Gallegos what he was most proud of in his career, and he told me “Going on 23 years as a firefighter and my proudest moments were every time I was able to walk on 9/11 the 110 floors with so many amazing members of AFR. And to do it as Fire Chief, made me so proud of our members. I know they will always do what is necessary to protect our community because that is who they are.” When I asked him about his retirement plans, he said “I plan on spending some amazing time with my fiancé, Melanie Baca, and helping her plan our wedding, as well as some quality time with my son. They are both the center of my life and I want them to know that.” We wish Gene all the best in this new chapter of his life, and we hope he is a frequent visitor at our meetings and functions.

With Gene’s retirement announcement, Mayor Keller has appointed Deputy Chief Emily Jaramillo as the next Albuquerque Fire Rescue Fire Chief. Emily Jaramillo will be the first woman to lead AFR in it’s 123 year history, and she is well-deserving of the position. Mayor Keller stated, “Emily Jaramillo is a tried and true leader within the department who will continue to guide AFR with her deep knowledge and skill.”

“I am humbled by the opportunity to serve as the next Fire Chief at Albuquerque Fire Rescue,” said Emily Jaramillo. “The women and men in our department provide compassionate, quality fire and EMS services ensuring the health and safety of our citizens. I am excited to lead our department into the future through innovative practices while not losing sight of the fundamentals of public safety.” Emily grew up in rural New Mexico. She achieved a BA in English and Secondary Education at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa in 1999. After returning home to New Mexico, Emily taught and coached for four years at Albuquerque Public Schools before joining the department in 2005. During her time with AFR, Fire Chief Jaramillo has served as an officer in both the Paramedic and Fire Suppression Divisions, represented the department at regional and local STEMI meetings, served on the AFR Safety Committee, taught in the EMS Training Division, coordinated both the Professional Development and Firefighter Health and Wellness programs. For six years, Emily managed the

department Peer Fitness Training Program. She also taught fire officer development classes as an adjunct instructor for the New Mexico Firefighter Training Academy and taught Paramedicine in the USAF Pararescue training program for the University of New Mexico. In 2015 she was the recipient of the IAFF 244 Outstanding Leadership Award and has served as the Deputy Chief of Emergency Services since 2018.

All of us with AFDRA are confident that Emily will do a great job leading the department into the future, and we look forward to working with her and her administration over the next many years.



**Retiring AFR Chief Gene Gallegos**

**Newly appointed AFR Chief Emily Jaramillo**

Please don't forget the **Annual Fund Drive** for the Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association. We rely entirely on contributions for our efforts. We have made great headway with the amount of work we've been able to do with your donations in the past. Thank you very much and we look forward to your continued support!

## President's Message

By Kerry Horton



As I've mentioned many times since September, I have been working on securing a grant from the state to refurbish our Last Alarm truck, and with the help of a lot of people, it has happened. With the City of Albuquerque acting as the fiscal agent, and in conjunction with the Governor's Office and the State of New Mexico, a grant has been secured for a complete refurbishment of the Last Alarm Truck. AFDRA and the department have done a great job keeping the truck in service as our funeral truck since 2005, but remember it was a front-line unit for ten years before that, and it is in dire need of some major refurbishment to keep it in service for another 30 years. I want to give a huge thank you to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and Diego Arencon for all their hard work and understanding the importance of this truck, and to AFR Fleet Service personnel Randy Bloom and Max Mayer for their support and hard work documenting and securing bids for all the work that's needed. I also want to say thank you to Deputy Chief Nathaniel Meisner for graciously answering all my calls as I tried to figure out how to navigate the path in securing the funds. We hit a few roadblocks, but everyone worked together to get it done, so THANK YOU to everyone that made it possible. We anticipate that the work will start in the next 60 days, and it will certainly take many months to complete all the work. What this means to our members is that the truck may not be available for funeral services over the next six months or so, so we are making the request that none of our members pass away for the rest of the year.



**RIO GRANDE**  
- CREDIT UNION -