



AFDRA Retiree News

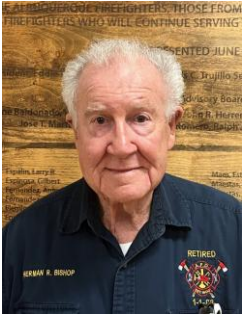


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**HERMAN R. BISHOP,
EDITOR IN CHIEF**

"If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal. Not to people or things." - Albert Einstein.



**Mike Fox,
Assistant Editor**

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AFDRA Honor Guard

The Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association (AFDRA) has paid homage to our fallen retiree brothers since the start of our association in 2000. Shortly, after the development of the AFDRA, a profound need to honor our fallen brothers and sisters was determined to be of the upmost importance. The Honor Guard was formed and has gone through an impressive evolution to where it stands in its glory today. **(See page 2 for full story.)**



AFDRA Turns 25!

On June 9th, 2025, the Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees' Association celebrated its 25th anniversary.

(See page 8 for full story.)

Happy Birthday AFDRA!

Picnic a Huge Success

(See page 13 for full story)



Families May Miss Out on Help or Benefits

by Eddie Abeita

Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association (AFDRA) has played homage to our fallen retiree brothers since the start of our association in 2000. In the beginning of the association there were instances when a retiree died and only a few or sometimes none knew of the retiree death. The need for better communication was discussed. The association came up with the idea of a phone tree to enable a retiree to call many others and pass on the notice of death and their services. At funeral services retirees would sit together to show unity and wore black arm bands. The association was never a static group and wanted to provide a more uniform appearance at funerals. To provide a compelling send-off to our deceased brother, the **Honor Guard** was formed.

In the early days Albuquerque Fire Department (AFD) did have *color guard(s)* that were limited more for celebration type functions. With the color guard not being identified as a program little financial support was available from the fire department. A few fire chiefs did use funds from their budget as public relations to support the color guard. There were problems having a functional color guard with members having different work schedules and no compensation for attending on their day off.

Our retiree Honor Guard periodically has added new faces over the years. However, the pride and respect the Honor Guard displays has never changed. What is so compelling, some honor guard members may not know the deceased retiree however, as Anthony Nunez said the deceased retiree was an AFD Firefighter and we were all brothers. We have suffered a lot of deaths since 2000 when Sam Trujillo started tracking and documenting deaths of retirees which by June 2025 is at 238.

Upon notification of a retiree death Sam Trujillo or designee will contact the family to offer help that the association is able to provide for the funeral. Sam said the first question that I ask is, and maybe the only one, "did the deceased request a firefighter's funeral"? It happened when the family had no idea of what the deceased wanted or what the AFDRA is all about. Sam has offered advice to families by first asking if the deceased had any last wishes. Louie Trujillo developed a guide for retirees to fill out to provide to their families with their last wishes are. Louie always said sometimes we take for granted that our families will know what to do when the time comes. Some retirees that did some funeral planning helped minimize confusion for their family. There were families that had no idea what the next step would be in funeral planning.

Sam found that some families had no idea of insurance the deceased **may** have had, including a paid-up life insurance policy from the City of Albuquerque. A lot of families are unaware where important documents were kept, especially if the deceased had military service and where their *DD214 is*. DD214 is an important document. There have been a few times when the deceased retiree's last wishes were not to have any involvement by any fire entity. Even with better communication at times the association has found out about a retiree death, weeks after their funeral. Sometimes deaths of retirees are found in the PERA newsletter which mentions the loss of all PERA members.

When a family requests a firefighter funeral, the association starts its preparation for the funeral. If the Last Alarm Fire Truck will be used to transport the deceased, permission for use has to be made. The Last Alarm truck is the property of the City of Albuquerque so requests for use must be made to Albuquerque Fire Rescue (AFR) Fire Chief. Liability is always a concern with date, time and where the services will be held that can be a determining factor for approval. The fire chief must provide an *on duty* AFR driver.

Behind the scenes the honor guard will practice for each funeral. The honor guard members are retired; however, they still have their own personal commitments. Some may be providing health care to a family member, babysitting grandkids, some employed and yes doctor's appointments. Yet they make sacrifices

including monetary loss to attend funerals. The association also prepares a schedule to ensure the eulogy is written, resolution of condolence prepared, plaque(s) made, bunker gear ready for display, and the special transport of the four-five's bell. Another item is coordinating with the church or funeral home about services, where and when the association can conduct the retirees tribute. Sometimes the church will only allow certain functions in the church, and some to be conducted outside or at grave side.

The look of the uniformed Honor Guard members and their deployment is breath taking. The association has and will continue to ensure uniforms are kept in good condition. AFDRA treasure Mike Fox was able to set up dry cleaning service at no cost to the members to give the uniforms professional care. The cost of a new honor guard uniform is approximately \$1,000. The Last Alarm truck was a front-line fire response truck after many calls it was de-commissioned. A fire chief re-commissioned the truck and dedicated it for use at funerals for retirees and active-duty personnel. The truck needed to be customized to transport coffins, some funds were provided by the fire department. However continued work was needed on the truck, the association members led by Pablo Garcia did most of the customizing and at times they paid for items out of their own pocket. Sam Trujillo reached out to funeral homes and asked for donations of any hand-wear that could be used. One funeral home donated a roller track which are used to slide a casket in the hearse. The rollers were modified to allow attachment to the hose bed of the truck. The Last Alarm truck had seen its use responding to many calls since its inception. Over the past years the need for drive-train repair was a must which was at a high cost; the truck not being used as an emergency vehicle was not considered a repair priority. With the help of ex-union president *Diego Arencon*, AFR, Local 244 and AFDRA were able to secure funds from the State of New Mexico for repairs. There are guidelines for use of the truck, which AFR Administration, Local Union 244 and AFDRA have developed. There may be times when the use of the Last Alarm truck may not be granted. The topic of the Last Alarm truck involvement at funerals has been discussed over and over at monthly retiree meetings. Our association is a non-profit organization that relies on donations from its members at meetings. Also, retirees who are unable to attend monthly meetings have mailed checks to the association and now donations can be made online, the first electronic contribution was by Toby Pino. At monthly meetings Treasure Mike Fox provides an overview of all donations received, deposits and expenditures made. As Mike continues to state, "the books are always open for your review!" After funerals most families are so thankful, they give a big thanks to Albuquerque Fire Rescue (AFR), which is a misnomer. One big thing the retirees' association repeats over and over is that we are the Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association (*heavy on department*). As a token of the AFDRA involvement some families have made a generous donation.

Eddie Abeita remembered during the **Decembers 2012** AFDRA monthly meeting the discussion of a previous retiree funeral came about. There was a lot of praise for the Honor Guard. Also mentioned, how retiree's families were so grateful for how the honor guard performed. This was followed by a floor motion "*to provide monetary thank you to each Retiree Honor Guard member and identified participant(s)*". So, after each funeral honor guard members would receive cash, of approximately \$20.00 as a thank you from the association. In the discussion as an example, the member(s) could get some lunch or buy gas for their vehicle. This would be contingent on available retiree funds.

Eddie wanted to help raise money for the cause which he felt was an admirable motion by the association membership. On **January 13, 2013**, Eddie had devised a written plan to raise money for the Honor Guard. Eddie put together a plan for a raffle to be held on meeting nights. Eddie knew this was not the absolute for raising money for the honor guard, only to help support the endeavor. To ensure that the plan was acceptable Eddie discussed it with Louie Trujillo, an executive board member. Louie read the plan and said it is simple and with little or no cost. Louie had Eddie placed on the agenda at the EB meeting, which was all favorable. With the idea of having a raffle Eddie knew he would need help, so Eddie contacted Ralph Sedillo. Ralph said Eddie, it's a great idea, just tell me what you want me to do, and it's done. Ralph and Eddie discussed prizes that would be given, Ralph said not to hurt Pablo Garcia's feelings let's ask him to donate some prizes which was a

no brainer, just knowing Pablo. Eddie and Ralph had their personal fire memorabilia that were used as prizes. Lucy Sedillo donated some purses and cosmetic items.

The first raffle was conducted at **February's 2013** meeting. Ralph said I will sit here by the door and sell tickets, and you give the money to the treasure. Ralph said Eddie, you do the drawing and announce the winning tickets numbers. With the dollars raised Eddie knew the cash would be deposited into the retirees' checking account. However, Eddie asked the treasure to keep a separate listing of the raffle money to see if the raffle is viable. The raffle was starting to become an integral part of the meeting. Prizes were running low so to ensure the raffle would not fizzle out, Eddie and Ralph purchased items on their own. Eddie saw Vince Holcomb at Cottonwood Mall returning a gift, a red Christmas sweater. Eddie asked him to donate it for the raffle. This turned out to be a good move, because at meetings Eddie started to ask the membership for donations. Eddie told them, items you really do not want, donate them, it's for a good cause. Like those gifts you got for Christmas, your birthday from your in-laws, that are hiding in the closet or under the bed, bring them in, even a left-handed Monkey wrench", is welcomed! The membership responded with generous gifts for the raffle. Some of the prizes included ladies' purses, lipsticks and perfume, cowboy hats, bag of beans, and picnic baskets. In addition, ladies' complete cosmetics cases, mop and bucket, popcorn popper, several pieces of glassware and hand tools were donated. One retiree Ray (Sadie) Sedillo brought some beautiful crystal pieces. Eddie got a call from the crystal prize winner, and he said that crystal was some good stuff will you raffle more at the next meeting? The person who won the mop and bucket (JM) took it home on his motorcycle, what a sight!

Ralph Sedillo donated 2 sets of biker leather jackets that were *auctioned* off now that was a big hit that night with the membership. Mark Chavez went toe to toe with Jeff Elks in the auction, all in good spirit and \$\$\$\$. In addition, Ralph said I have an idea for a monthly prize, a gift certificate for a polo type shirt with our retiree's logo. For special functions TLC has donated some nice gifts over the years so, a visit was made to Ben Duran of TLC.

Years back Ben Duran was the manager of GIZMO'S, a uniform store, the store's last location was on the 400 block of Central SW which at one time was JC Penny's. Back in the late 70's early 80's Albuquerque firefighters had a fast pitch softball team in which GIZMO's were happy to support. The owner was Jim Snyder Sr, who said we are in business because of fire fighters so we will always try to help.

Over the years Ben and daughter Debbie of TLC have always supported the fire service with gifts for retiree's association events. Retiree Orlando Duran (RIP) was Ben's husband and Debbie's father. The year before Orlando's passing Debbie brought him to the retiree Christmas dinner, which was a first for Orlando, he told Debbie that he was so happy to see his old friends (for the last time).

With Ralph Sedillo retiring from being the ticket seller, Eddie asked Emiliano Chavez if he would take over and he did. Emiliano said anything to help the association. James Parra said I can be Emiliano's back up.

At any function Sam Trujillo always mentions, when you retire you are automatically a member of AFDRA, so come to our meetings. We still have retirees asking when and where the meetings are and why don't I receive my newsletter by mail anymore? After that question Tom Romero said, "when is Cinco de Mayo"?

Turns out some firefighters felt upon retirement "I put in my time and that's it, why go to retiree meetings?

The counterpoint some retirees say about them not attending retiree's meetings is, "that's the way some were in the field no other interest outside of the working hours. As years move on the younger retirees understand the importance of attending meetings. The meetings are an extension of the camaraderie that was so much an integral part of our brother/sisterhood we shared in our fire service careers. We have lost many retirees who played a role in the development of AFDRA. Some of our deceased retirees were Honor Guard members, who played homage to older deceased retirees and now the cycle continues the younger retirees pay homage to the older deceased.

Over the years President Kerry Horton has provided so much information that impacts retirees. Some information topics provided at meetings followed by healthy discussions were the cancer lawsuit that affected so many firefighters, Governor Michell Lujan Grisham identified cancers that were job related to firefighters. Legislative resolution to protect funds in our health care system. Continued PERA legislation to protect our retirement. The ongoing saga of COLA increases, decreases or none at all, Social Security Windfall Act, Social Security Fairness Act, second-generation firefighters and their 100% retirement, good and welfare report of retirees who are sick or terminally ill. *Donny Sanchez said, after I started attending meetings, I realized how some retiree families could miss out on help or benefits, retirees need to attend a few meetings.*

Some of our first members who were part of the development of the association are no longer with us. Some that are still with us may have physical problems that make them unable to drive to our meetings as they did years back. It is compelling when a retiree or family member drives a retiree to our meeting. Pablo brought one of the oldest retirees to a meeting (Silver) for his first meeting. His expressions, although limited, were so wonderful, he did pass away within a short time later, thank's Pablo.

Herman Bishop noted at our picnics it's been nice to be greeted by younger retirees however, I did not know most of them. Sam and I have talked about most retired people from our era they have passed on or are physically unable to attend. However, we continue to invite the new retirees to attend our meetings even if they attend only a few each year, it's sad that only a few have shown up over the years. It is hard to say but, the people we worked with 20-30 years ago we have not seen until Sam Trujillo gets a call from their family for help with their funeral arrangements.



Meeting Report, June 2025

(by Kerry Horton) JUNE 11th 2025

The 298th AFDRA meeting was called to order at 1900. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Morris Gutierrez gave the opening prayer. A moment of silence was held for all our Brothers we've lost this year. Roll call of Officers and Advisory Board members. All Members present. Our guests tonight were AFD retiree Ahren Griego who is a candidate for District 1 City Council. We also had Robert Gabaldon, retired Gallup FD, Knights of Columbus member, and member of the Blue Mass council at Queen of Heaven Church.

President's Report; By Kerry Horton - Rotary Park has been secured as the site for our annual picnic, but more on that later. The IAFF Fallen Firefighter Memorial ceremony, Colorado Springs on September 20th, will honor David Herrera. Members of AFDRA Honor Guard will join AFR's Color Guard in the ceremonies. It is always a very moving ceremony, and we encourage everybody to try to get up there for the event.

Vice President's Report; By Donny Sanchez - No report

Secretary's Report; By Eddie Abeita - Eddie gave a brief and humorous report on last month's meeting and a motion to accept the minutes as said was passed.

Treasurer's Report; By Mike Fox- Mike gave the financial report for May and all funds are accounted for. As always, the financial books are open for everybody to review. A motion to accept the financial report passed.

Historian's Report; By Herman Bishop- Herman gave a brief historical report on the beginnings of AFD and Albuquerque in general starting in 1706 up to the beginning of the Chief Westerfeld era

Committee Reports; Funeral Committee, Sam encourages every retiree to pre-plan your funeral and financial planning so that your family knows what you want for your services, and so that your family is not scrambling to figure out that half of your financial planning was to stash money inside your mattress. Picnic Committee, the picnic date is set for August 23rd, at Rotary Park in Bernalillo. Festivities start at 11 am and lunch will be served around noonish, but please get there earlier so that you can enjoy the company of retiree's that you haven't seen since the last picnic. Museum Committee, Election Committee,

Matters Good for the Association. Sam spoke about AFDRA's 25th anniversary. Robby Sanchez and Richard Sanchez spoke about the upcoming IAFF Motorcycle Group rally that is taking place in Oregon, and the ride will end up at the Fallen Firefighter Memorial in Colorado Springs. They will be doing some fundraising activities to help with expenses. Pablo and Robby spoke about the refurbing of Chris Chavez's Ghost Bike memorial that was vandalized. After the bike is finished, we will post an article and photos about the project. David Clark presented Herman with a 1981 newspaper article about firehouse cooking. There have been some changes to our webpage, including a new Peer Support Group page, so please check it out! Visit our website at afdretirees.com

The meeting was adjourned at 2035.

Meeting Report, July 2025

(by Kerry Horton) July 9, 2025

The 299th AFDRA meeting was called to order at 1900. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Eddie Abeita gave the opening prayer, and we had a moment of silence for Mario Santiago and family.

Roll call of Officers and Advisory Board members. All Members present.

President's Report: By Kerry Horton We are looking at making the museum open for scheduled tours for classrooms and such, and we will be working out the details with the AFR Fire Chief and staff. We have had some interest in members volunteering as docents, and we will post more information as the details are worked out. If any of our senior members are in need of push and wheeled walkers, please reach out to Sam or me as we have four or five looking for good homes. One more reminder that the IAFF Fallen Firefighter Memorial will be in Colorado Springs on September 20th. We hope that you are making plans on being there to honor Dave Herrera and County FF, Captain Brian Lynch.

Vice President's Report: By Donny Sanchez Donny reported that he and Richard cut a cord of wood and have donated it to the Silent Auction at our picnic. On that note, if anyone has something that they would like to donate for the silent auction, please reach out to me or Mike Fox.

Secretary's Report: By Eddie Abeita Eddie gave a brief and humorous report on last month's meeting and a motion to accept the minutes as said was passed.

Treasurer's Report: By Mike Fox Mike gave the financial report for June, and all funds are accounted for. As always, the financial books are open for everybody to review. A motion to accept the financial report passed.

Historian's Report; By Herman Bishop Herman gave a brief historical report on the unionization of AFD and the turbulent weeks in 1973 when AFD went on strike. A more in-depth report will be in the next newsletter.

Committee Reports: Funeral Committee, Picnic Committee, the picnic date is set for August 23rd, at Rotary Park in Bernalillo. Festivities start at 11 am and lunch will be served around Noonish, but please get there earlier so that you can enjoy the company of retiree's that you haven't seen since the last picnic.

Museum Committee, Election Committee, the 2025 election cycle is closed, and the offices of the VP, Secretary, and Historian were filled by acclamation.

Matters Good for the Association. Sam spoke about the events of the IAFF PAC meeting earlier in the day and reported that Local 244 endorsed Ahren Griego for District 1 City Council. There have been some changes to our webpage, including a new Peer Support Group page, so please check it out!

Visit our website at afdretirees.com

The meeting was adjourned at 2035.

AFDRA Turns 25!

Keeping the Brotherhood Alive Beyond the Badge

(by Kerry Horton)

The Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association was founded on June 9, 2000, during the Albuquerque Fire Department's historic 100-year anniversary celebration. In the spirit of honoring those who built the department's legacy, Fire Chief Morris Huling hosted a centennial banquet at the Albuquerque Convention Center, bringing together active-duty firefighters, community leaders, and—most importantly—retired members of AFD.

That night, something extraordinary happened.

As part of the evening's celebration, Chief Huling surprised the retirees with a proposal: to form an official Retirees Association, a way to preserve camaraderie, honor service, and keep former members within the department's extended family. The response was overwhelming. In a unanimous vote, 100% of the retirees in attendance said "yes." The room erupted with tears, cheers, and heartfelt applause.

That emotional and unforgettable evening marked the beginning of an association that has only grown stronger with time.

On June 9th, 2025, the Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees' Association celebrated its 25th anniversary. Twenty-five years ago, Sam Trujillo, Herman Bishop, Ralph Sedillo and others formally established what has become our association. Their vision to have a way for retirees to stay in touch and continue to care for one another has grown into the association that we have today. In the ensuing years, we have continued our primary objective of being a way for retired firefighters to stay bonded by becoming a non-profit organization dedicated to the well-being of our members. We accomplish this with an annual summer picnic, Christmas dinner, peer support group, Kitchen Table meetings, and our website, afdretires.com, and Facebook page. But our most visible accomplishment is our AFDRA Honor Guard that pays honor and respect to our deceased members. Letting families know that even when we pass, our loved ones are still part of our fire family, always there for them in any way that we can assist.

AFDRA accomplishes this without dues, relying on donations from our members and corporate partners. If you are newly retired, or just haven't bothered to attend a meeting, join us this Wednesday, June 11, at the union hall for our 298th meeting. Doors open at 6pm, and the meetings always start sharply at 7ish.

Meeting Report, August 2025

(by Kerry Horton) August 13th 2025

The 300th AFDRA meeting was called to order at 1855. Attendance was very good, and everybody was in their seat and ready for the meeting to start early, this was very weird. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Morris Gutierrez gave the opening prayer, and we had a moment of silence for Lawrence Sandoval and family. Roll call of Officers and Advisory Board members. All Members present. Zach Romero addressed the membership and shared a brief and interesting retrospective of his career and how much has changed and stayed the same over the years. Tonight's guests were Carmen Martinez-Tittmann and Paul Bearce, representative of Mind.Body.Fire. Please see the flyer that I sent out in an email, posted on our AFDRA Facebook page and on our website. It is a great program, and it might be for you.

President's Report; By Kerry Horton No report tonight

Vice President's Report; By Donny Sanchez Donny reported that the 2025 financial audit was completed and that all funds and receipts are accounted for and that we will keep Mike Fox around for at least another year.

Secretary's Report; By Eddie Abeita Eddie gave a brief and humorous report on last month's meeting and a motion to accept the minutes as read was passed.

Treasurer's Report; By Mike Fox Mike gave the financial report for July, and all funds are accounted for. As always, the financial books are open for everybody to review. A motion to accept the financial report passed.

Historian's Report; By Herman Bishop

Herman shared some memories of working with Zach and the rest of the Romero brothers over the years. He also shared a report of the door prizes that will be available at the picnic and gave a preview of the September Newsletter.

Committee Reports; Funeral Committee, Sam commented on how well the Lawrence Sandoval services were attended, and that the Honor Guard did a wonderful job, as usual. Picnic Committee, the picnic date is set for August 23rd, at Rotary Park in Bernalillo. Festivities start at 11 am and lunch will be served around noonish, but please get there earlier so that you can enjoy the company of retiree's that you haven't seen since the last picnic. As always, we have a great collection of door prizes, including two \$750 gift cards for Ojo Caliente spa. We also have some wonderful items for our silent auction that helps fund our Retiree Assistance Program. I will send out an email with a list of silent auction items in a few days so that someone that cannot attend can make a bid. Museum Committee, Election Committee,

Matters Good for the Association. Eddie Abeita shared some hilarious anecdotes about his misfortune over the past month, maybe it will become a newsletter story at some point. Sam spoke about this being the 300th meeting for AFDRA, and the great attendance shows that AFDRA is still going strong holding together the brother and sister hood that is the Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees' Association. A motion was made and passed to donate up to \$600 to the IAFF New Mexico Motorcycle Group to help with expenses in September while they travel to Oregon for the IAFF Motorcycle Rally and then make their way to Colorado Springs for the IAFF Fallen Firefighter Memorial on September 20th. Keep up with events and dates by checking out our website or Facebook page. Visit our website at afdretirees.com
The meeting was adjourned at 2040.

The Rookie Fireman and Adobe Meat

Reprinted with permission from *The First Ones In*, a book by William Raupfer.

On the second day of my career, I was assigned as a “floater” to Station #1, in District 1, Eighth and Silver in Albuquerque. At that time in 1969, there were 3 Districts in the city of Albuquerque. My shift started at 7:30am and ended at 6:00pm. In those days you would wait for the bell to ring and do what was called “Stand the Wall” where upon you would line up along the rec-room wall in and await the start of our shift. The captain on duty would come out of the office and call out the oncoming shifts personal by their last names. That person would step forward and declare “Here!” then step back. The relief would wait until end of roll call, and the post briefing would be delivered then they could go home. I was assigned to Ladder 1 and after roll call, I started to check over all the compartments and equipment of the fire trucks, when the station cook approached, handed me a grocery list, and informed me that the rookie ladder-man always went for the groceries. I didn’t know the area too well and asked where the market was. The cook gave my directions, and started to walk away when I asked, what about if a fire call comes in, what do I do? The cook told me to take a radio with me. If I was needed, they would call me. So, off to the market I went, wondering if I would get in trouble for taking my own truck, and hoping we would not get a fire call while I was in the middle of shopping. I found the grocery market, went in and started down each aisle picking out the items that were on the list. The last item on the list was meat. Ten pounds of ADOBE MEAT. I went up to the counter and told the butcher that I had needed 10 lbs. of “Adobe Meat, please!” The butcher replied, “What’s that? We don’t carry anything like that!” I explained that the firehouse cook sent me over to get it but wasn’t sure either. I thanked the butcher and went to pay for the rest of the groceries, when I realized; how am I going to pay for all this? I didn’t have much cash on me, but I did have a personal credit card that was only to be used for emergencies. How was I going to explain this to my wife? Well, I would have to deal with that later. After paying with the card, I went back to the station with the groceries, all but the meat. The cook came over and started to unpack the groceries when he noticed that I did not get the meat. He asked where the Adobe meat was, I told him that the butcher said he didn’t carry it, so I left. The cook told me to go back to the market and get 10lbs. of Adobe Meat and do it fast because lunch would be late, and the rest of the crew (26 in all) wouldn’t like that. So I went back to the market, but this time I was not going to let the butcher tell me that there was no such meat. The cook had told me that this is where they get their meat all the time. I arrived at the market and went right up to the butcher and said I needed 10lbs. of Adobe Meat! The butcher reached under the counter and laid 10 lbs. of meat on the counter laughing; “Why didn’t you say it was for the guys at the Fire Station?” The meat is actually called Carne Adovada! But the guys at the station just called Adobe meet. He laughed at me again, “Kinda’ looks like adobe mud with straw!” Not too amused, I replied “And my uniform doesn’t look like a fireman’s?” There was an awkward silence after. But I got it, joke’s on the new guy. Back at the station I handed the cook the meat and said, “Good trick!” the cook looked at me laughing, and said, “I guess you will pass as a rookie firefighter after all, but you are still a rookie!” This brought a smile to my face. When I got home that night, I still had to explain why I had used the card. After telling the story to my wife, she laughed out loud, and said “Ok, so where is the money to pay the card?” I handed over all the cash in my pocket, since the guys paid me back after lunch. It was a good joke on me, I guess.

ALBUQUERQUE FIREFIGHTER'S UNION

(By Herman R. Bishop, Historian, AFDRA) October 17, 2011

According to handwritten ledgers of the Albuquerque Fire Department, as early as 1916 perhaps 1915, there were attempts to organize a firefighter's union. In 1917 the issue surfaced again. This caused considerable turmoil and the changing of several Fire Chiefs which continued through the early 1920's. Numerous firemen were fired for union activity and many resigned because of the issue with the City.

The International Association of Firefighters was established February 28, 1918, in Washington, D.C. Another story is that the Albuquerque firefighters received an official Union Charter from the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) in 1921. No one has been able to find a copy of this Charter including the International Association of Firefighters. Daily fire station logs reference unionization attempts, firing of firemen for union activity, and Changing Fire Chiefs frequently (1916 to early 1920's) because of attempts to unionize. Unfortunately, the annual reports of the fire department are missing from the following years (1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923 and 1924. It is speculated that the missing annual reports have something to do with union activity during those years. Old timers told of attempts to unionize during 1947 and 1948. From all indications these attempts to unionize failed. On October 25, 1955, the International Association of Firefighters issued an official Union Charter to the "Albuquerque Association of Firefighters," Local 244, predecessor to the current Local 244.

ALBUQUERQUE FIREFIGHTERS FORM UNION (October 25, 1955)

(No Contracts were negotiated, Union never recognized By the City)

The names on this charter were: Nick Saavedra, Joe L. Gonzales, S. B. Skidmore, Paul Cooper, Albert R. Mobley, A. B. Martinez, Juan Sanchez, Carmen Padilla Sr. William Devine, Leo J. Renaud, Isidro Garcia, Jimmy Chavez, Phillip B. Smith, Pio Chavez, Daniel N. Tafoya Jr., Joe L. Montoya, Earnest Rael, Rudy Jaramillo, Paul Garcia Sr., Leonard Zamora Jr., Martin Romero, Thomas Krupiak, Filberto Montano, and Benny Chavez. This union was never recognized by the City and no union contracts were negotiated.

NOVEMBER 16, 1962, UNIONIZATION EFFORTS BY FIREFIGHTERS SUCCESSFUL

(Local 1455 Formed, City Signs Contract with Local Firefighters, Union Here to Stay)

In the early 1960's the issue of a firefighter's union was raised again. The city fought hard against unionization of firefighters. On November 16, 1962, a Charter was issued by the International Association of Firefighters to the "Albuquerque Firefighter's Union, local 1455". The names on this Union Charter were: Leonard Ortega, Francisco Quintana, John Sanders, Ernie Archuleta, Juan Sanchez, Raymond Carrillo, Gabe Jaramillo, Eugene N. Griego, Santiago Torres, Jose O. Padilla, Ross Aranda, Santos G. Abeyta, Chris Martinez, Kenneth Adams, B.F. Chenault, Billy Ray Smith, R.A. Cypert, Ed Nichols, Evaristo Marquez, John E. Nash, Ronnie Turrietta, Horace V. Vigil, Raul Vargas, Dale Noblitt, Joe G. Hernandez. (25 members). During the next two years a heated struggle between the City of Albuquerque and the Firefighter's Union ensued. Finally, the City realized that this union was here to stay and would not go away. The union was not broken and finally a contract was signed recognizing the firefighter's union.

PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS OF BERNALILLO COUNTY FORMED APRIL 25, 1979

(CHARTER ISSUED TO LOCAL 2696 BY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF F.F.)

On April 25, 1979, the International Association of Firefighters issued a charter to the "United Professional Firefighters of Bernalillo County. Local 2696. During the next few years both firefighter's unions of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County continued growing with success.

THREE ALBUQUERQUE AREA FIREFIGHTER'S UNIONS MERGE

(JUNE 11, 2002, NEW CHARTER ISSUED TO LOCAL 244 BY IAFF)

During 2002 the three local firefighters' unions of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and Kirtland Air Force Base merged into one union. The firefighters felt it appropriate that they request the original local union number, 244 which had been issued to the Albuquerque Firefighter's Union in 1955.

On June 11, 2002, the International Association of Firefighters issued a new charter, the "Albuquerque Association of Firefighters," local 244. The names on the new union charter were John Garcia, Emily Kane, Simon Baca, Pat Chavez, Chris Carlsen, Art Martinez, Keven Pierce, Cristopher Petroff, Mike Fox, Andrew Casaus, James Dye, Gary DeJong, Gabe Blea, Christopher Fichtner, Dan Bourne, Adriane Moya, Devon Sullivan, Bob Orona, Alfredo Cordova, Pat Goodyear, and Darrell Lindsey.

FIREFIGHTER'S UNION AND CITY WORKERS STRIKE, 1973

By: Herman R. Bishop (June 14, 2025)

In 1962 after the City of Albuquerque and the firefighter's union, Local 1455 signed a contract agreement between the City and the union, their relationship was somewhat rocky. During late July 1973 contract negotiations between the firefighter's union and the City's blue-collar unions representing over 1300 workers broke down causing both unions to jointly go on strike Monday morning July 30, 1973. The five-day old strike was finally settled late Friday evening August 3, 1973. At that time the city had 375 firefighters employed.

For firefighters the strike began on Monday morning July 30, 1973, at 8:00 A.M. At that time when the change of shift bells were struck at station one at 8:00 A.M. all 21 firefighting personnel walked off the job as well as all firefighters at fire stations throughout the city. At station one at 8th Street and Silver Avenue S.W. only one fire engine was left in service. It was manned by Chief Ray Kuhn, officer, Assistant Chief Ralph Ochoa, driver, District Chief, Ernie Gutierrez, pipeman, and District Chief, Owen Metcalf, pipeman.

The other striking city workers set up picket lines at City Hall and at other city facilities throughout the city during the next five days. Numerous fires occurred throughout the city during the five-day strike period. Many fires were deliberately set by vandals. The most damaging fires occurred at the Albuquerque Zoo and several buildings there were destroyed. Through mutual aid agreements the Kirtland Air Force base fire department responded and assisted the Albuquerque Fire Department in firefighting efforts throughout the city. During the strike only small injuries were reported at fires and no fire deaths were reported.

On Wednesday August 1, 1973, a letter was sent to the strikers by members of the City Commission and signed by the City Manager, Herb Smith, advising them that if they did not report to work by Friday August 8, 1973 that they would be fired. City workers were not paid for the five days they were on strike. City bus drivers were put on leave without pay as well because they refused to cross the picket line.

At picket lines throughout the city numerous strike breakers crossed the lines in defiance of the strikers. Strikers were offended and upset at them. Picketers threatened to catch the strike breakers and beat them up. One striker was a giant of a man (name unknown) six feet eight inches tall, and all muscle. He worked for the refuse department. When told that some strikers wanted to beat up picket line crossers he said, "hell no, we do not want to beat them up, we will just kill the sons of bitches."

Since the city workers strike 52 years ago, in 1973, peaceful union contracts have been negotiated throughout the years by city officials and city workers union leaders. Today peace appears to prevail between city workers unions and city officials.

Death of Gilbert Roybal

We lost our **Brother Gilbert "Gibby" Roybal** on August 24th. Gibby joined AFD on 2/26/1968 (AFD's 17th Cadet Class) and he retired 12/22/1987. Gibby was in the first EMT-Paramedic Class in 1974 and he served 13 years as Paramedic Lieutenant ... Many of us had the honor of visiting with Gibby at the AFDRA 25th year summer picnic on August 23rd. Thanks to his family for accompanying us at our annual picnic.



Gibby was a proud US Marine that served in combat during the Vietnam War. Gibby also volunteered at The Veterans Hospital for 20+ years and had received Honorable Recognition for helping countless disabled Veterans that received medical care at the VA Hospital.

AFDRA PICNIC 2025

This year's picnic was a great success. Thank you to all the volunteers that prepared and cooked another wonderful meal, Our volunteers were of course Morris Gutierrez, Todd and Marie Bethke, Rob and Julie Sanchez, Mike and Jude Padilla, Chris Sanchez and his lady friend Cindy, and our wonderful grill master Richard Sanchez A big thank you goes out to Frank Maestas and all the others that donated the great items for our door prizes and silent auction. I would also like to give a big shout out to Robby and Lisa Sanchez for being honored as this year's Man of the Year recipient. Robby's name is on the plaque, but we all know who does the work. On a somber note, you have all heard that we lost Gilbert "Gibby" Roybal the day after the picnic, but I can tell you his smile was huge getting to see all his old friends on Saturday. Bless the Roybal family.

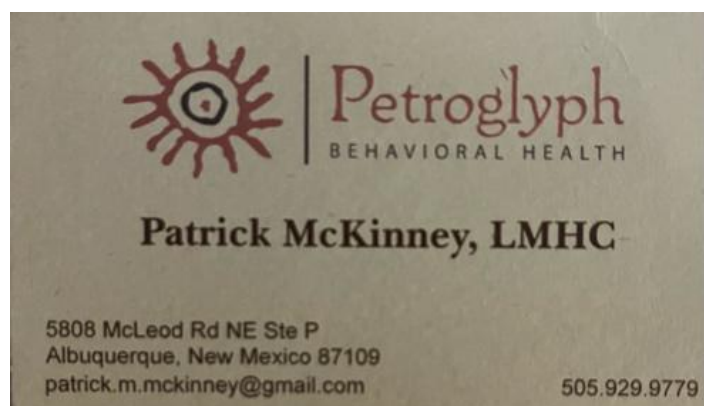


We'll see everybody next year. A special thank you goes out to Mike and Jude Padilla for providing us with these wonderful pictures.





A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS!!



A special thank you to Steve Ortiz at Sharp Industries for all of his assistance to the AFDRA, including his hard work on the pads for the memorial flagpole.





President's Message

By Kerry Horton

Wow, September already. The picnic is over and what a great turnout we had, please see the article on page 13 for pictures of all the fun we had. September is a time for the State Fair, fall festivals, grandkids going back to school, and 9-11 memorials. The city/department 9-11 memorial will be on September 11 at 11 am in Civic Plaza, however the AFDRA Honor Guard will be there before 8 am to

lead the tower walkers in procession as they do their annual stair climb in honor of the 343 firefighters that lost their lives 24 years ago. Then at 11, the memorial ceremonies will start and the AFDRA Honor Guard will ring the 4-5's as Fire Chief Jaramillo reads the 4-5's proclamation.

On September 25 at noon, this year's Blue Mass will begin at Queen of Heaven church at 5300 Claremont Ave NE. Our AFDRA Honor Guard will once again ring the 4-5's in honor of all the public safety and armed forces members that have lost their lives protecting this country and it's cities.



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