



# AFDRA Retiree News



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

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**# 1-2026**



**HERMAN R. BISHOP,  
ASSISTANT EDITOR**

## **Inspirational Quote**

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”

Benjamin Franklin



## **CONTENTS**

- P-1** Headlines
- P-2** Meeting Report, December
- P-3** Newsletter administration change
- P-4** Special awards
- P-5** Future new name for fire station one
- P-6** special award
- P-6** Editors Note
- P-7** Deaths of Art Cowen, Tony Anaya and John Serino
- P-8** Meeting Report, January
- P-9** “After the call” by Patrick McKinney
- P-12** Meeting Report, February
- P-13** AFR Fire Station 23
- P-15** Thank you Donors!
- P-16** President’s Message by

## **Special awards**

The Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association has given special awards to three deserving individuals. Please see Pages 4 and 6 for details.

## **Newsletter administration change**

The Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association newsletter has a new editor!. Please see Page 3 for details.

## **First in a new series on trauma**

The Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association is dedicated to the well-being of retired firefighters. With this in mind, our retire assistance program has gained much ground. Our kitchen table meetings have become a great success due to the

hard work of our the volunteer peer counselors. Please see Page 9 for the first in a series of articles written by Patrick McKinney.

## **AFR open a new fire station**

Albuquerque fire rescue has opened it’s 23rd fire station. Currently it houses one engine company and has future plans for a rescue unit. It is a multi use facility that includes a police substation and room for the future home of Albuquerque Community Services (ACS).

## **Retiree Deaths**

Sadly, we lost Art Cowen, Tony Anaya and John Serino since our last publication, see page 7 for details. We will miss them dearly.

# Meeting Report, December 2025

(by Kerry Horton)

December 10<sup>th</sup> 2025

The 304<sup>th</sup> AFDRA meeting was called to order at 1900. Attendance was good for our December meeting, and after the Pledge of Allegiance, Morris Gutierrez gave the opening prayer. We had a moment of silence for all those that have passed this year. Roll call of Officers and Advisory Board members. All Executive Board members present.

**President's Report;** - By Kerry Horton We held a pre-plan funeral arrangement seminar at the union hall on Monday December 8<sup>th</sup> with representatives from Noblin Funeral Homes. Attendance was very good and our members heard about some very affordable funeral packages. We will hold another seminar in January. I will inform you of the details as they are given. This year's Christmas Dinner is the first year that we sold out of available tickets, thank you Eddie Abeita, Vince Holcomb, and all those that are helping to make this year's event a success. The Local 244 Christmas Party is next Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, at the Sandia Resort. Any member that would like to attend should call Local 244 assistant Kelly at the union hall.

**Vice President's Report;** By Donny Sanchez - Donny said that he and Sam Trujillo assisted Local 244's officer elections by working the polling sites. The race for City Vice President is headed to a run-off.

**Secretary's Report;** By Eddie Abeita - Eddie read the October minutes, and a motion was made and passed to accept the report.

**Treasurer's Report;** By Mike Fox - Mike read the financial report, and a motion was made and passed to accept the October financial report. As always, the financial books are open for everybody to review.

**Historian's Report;** - Herman shared a story about a friend of his, Los Alamos Fire Chief James Everett Trehern, who recently passed. Herman gave a report about the grand opening of AFR's new station 12. Herman was asked to speak at the event in front of a large neighborhood crowd who showed up to celebrate the opening. Herman said that along with AFR Fire Chief Emily Jaramillo and her Deputy Chiefs, the event was attended by the Mayor, City Councilors, and Representative Stansbury.

**Committee Reports;** Funeral Committee, Christmas Committee, The Christmas Dinner is ready to go, and I hope that you have already ordered your tickets because as I said, they are sold out. See you at the dinner. Museum Committee, Election Committee,

**Matters Good for the Association.** Sam Trujillo shared some good seasonal news by saying that nobody in attendance at tonight's meeting had to worry about dying young. Thank you, Sam, for your wisdom. Dennis Lowder made a motion to amend a motion already on the books. The motion says that expenses to attend the State Legislative sessions by the AFDRA President, " **or attendees appointed by the President**" shall be covered by the association. The amended motion was seconded by Chris Sanchez, the motion passed. Keep up with events and dates by checking out our website or Facebook page. Visit our website at [afdretirees.com](http://afdretirees.com) The meeting was adjourned at 2020.

# NEWSLETTER, ADMINISTRATION CHANGE

(By: Herman R. Bishop, Historian)

On March 1, 2026 Mike Fox will accept the job as Editor in Chief of the Retiree's Quarterly newsletter. Herman Bishop has been the Editor in Chief for the past twenty Five years and he will become the Assistant Editor. Herman said, "Although we have had a good 25 years run, it is time for me to take a break and turn the Editor's job over to Mike." He has done an outstanding job contributing stories and photos, for the current newsletter. With Mike's skills and abilities he is up to performing the new job successfully." Herman will continue performing his job as Historian.

## NEWSLETTER BACKGROUND

When the AFD Retiree's Association was formed on June 9, 2000 we started with a one page newsletter to notify our members of meetings. First we did not realize that there was enough information to publish a newsletter on a regular basis. After A few months we began to realize that we had enough information to publish a periodic newsletter, perhaps one or two pages at most. As our meetings unfolded we began to photograph our retirees and exchange "War Stories." After the first year information began trickling in. As Historian the photos and information were channeled to me. We began publishing our quarterly newsletter on March 1<sup>st</sup>, June 1<sup>st</sup>, September 1<sup>st</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>. As we operate on donations only, we weren't sure if we could support a newsletter financially. Now several years later since we formed the association we are proud to report that we have published our newsletter on a regular basis without fail, funded by donations only. Currently our distribution numbers over 600 newsletters to our retirees, families, friends of the association, and to all Albuquerque fire stations and divisions of the fire department. The feedback and comments we get from our readers is refreshing and makes our efforts to publish a newsletter worthwhile. Many have asked why we do not have a name for our publication. When we started, we titled it "Newsletter" This title seems to have served us well during the past few years. For the present we will simply stick with the title, "NEWSLETTER." We have had fun and much positive feedback over the years from our readers, retirees, families, active duty firefighters, and friends of the Retiree's Association. Hopefully we will continue to publish our retiree newsletter for many years into the future. Because of the rich history of the Albuquerque Fire Department dating back to the volunteer firefighters in 1882 our historical archives contain enough information to continue the stories and photographs to preserve the history of the department and our association for many, many years into the future. A heartfelt and sincere thanks goes to our retirees, families, and friends of the association for the news, photographs, and stories they have provided to us to make our quarterly publication possible. I have



enjoyed my role as editor and publisher of this fine document and look forward to contributing stories and photos for each of our newsletters in the future. A word about our web site: [afdretirees.com](http://afdretirees.com) Please note: we have 25 years of newsletters on our web site, and you can look up any newsletter from the year 2000 to present date. Also check our QR code, there is a movie set to music of fire drills by members of the Albuquerque Fire Department several years ago.

## **KERRY HORTON RECOGNIZED**

(By: Herman R. Bishop)



At the December 10, 2025 monthly meeting of the AFD Retiree's Association The executive board presented Kerry Horton with the Life Time Achievement Fire Service Award. The plaque reads as follows: Kerry Horton has served the Past few years as president of the Albuquerque Fire Department Retiree's Association. His many years of faithful dedication to the fire service, his Leadership, commitment, performance, and devotion to duty is worthy of Special recognition. Presented this 11th day of December, 2025. Signed, Donny Sanchez, Vice President, Eddie Abeita, Secretary, Mike Fox, Treasurer, Herman R. Bishop, Historian, Sam Trujillo, President Emeritus.

Kerry was taken by surprise as he did not expect to receive this honor by His fellows. He said, "I am deeply honored to have this recognition bestowed On me. I am a dedicated firefighter and am proud to have served many years In the fire service. Working with my fellow firefighters and serving these years as president of the AFD Retiree's Association has been truly a great lifetime experience.

## **GIL GARCIA, HONORARY MEMBER**

(By: Herman R. Bishop)



At the January 14, monthly meeting of the AFD Retiree's Association, Gil Garcia, owner of Allstar Trophies and Plaques was presented an Honorary Membership to the AFD Retiree's Association. Gil was Recognized as an avid supporter and friend of the Retired Firefighter's Association members. During the past several years he has assisted in The recognition and preservation of retired firefighter members. Because of his diligent efforts, creating plaques, awards, and Accolades during the past few years, he was given this prestigious award. Gil was deeply moved by this unexpected honor. He said, "for many years I have been friends with many of our

firefighters. Since the Retiree's association was formed 25 years ago it has been fun designing Plaques and recognition trophies for my firefighter friends. The service That Albuquerque Fire Rescue provides to our community is outstanding" Gil would love to hear from you, call him at at **1 (505) 220-0015**

# Project To Rename Fire Station One After Former Fire Chief Art Westerfeld

Our historian, Herman Bishop, is currently working on a project with President Kerry Horton and mayor Tim Keller to rename fire station one after Fire Chief Art Westerfeld:

Here is a portion of the article that Herman wrote about chief Westerfeld

Albuquerque's population was 15,000 on January 20, 1919, when Art Westerfeld was hired as an assistant driver with the Albuquerque Fire Department. The department was making the transition from horse drawn fire apparatus to motorized fire trucks. In those days, not too many people knew how to drive an automobile. Young Westerfeld was hired primarily because he could drive a vehicle. At that time there were two fire stations in town and eleven firemen. There were two motorized fire trucks and one horse drawn fire wagon. By then the horse drawn equipment was used as backup or as a spare when the fire trucks were out of service.

When Art Westerfeld served in the U.S. Navy during World War I, in 1918, he was an auto mechanic by trade. In early 1919 after his U.S. Navy service, he was hired by the Fire Department as an assistant driver. Initially he was just planning to fill in for only two weeks because the regular driver was sick. He liked the fire department and decided to stay on as a fireman. His salary was \$79.80 per month. The Fire Chief liked him and as he was doing a good job, he was given a permanent drivers position four months later in May 1919.

During his 40th year anniversary in 1959 the Fire Department had grown to Eleven fire stations, and 181 personnel. He recalled some of his most unforgettable fires during his career. At 2:00 A.M. on April 25, 1933, a bad fire broke out at the old Fourth Ward School, (Lew Wallace School) at 513 6th Street N.W. While this fire was gutting the building another major fire broke out at the Occidental building at 3rd Street and Gold Avenue S.W. He said the firemen really had their hands full that night and that they certainly earned their pay. Once while fighting a barn fire in 1934 in Alameda an adobe wall fell on him. Finally, after fighting and struggling under the rubble he was able to free himself. After getting from under the debris a short time later he drove himself to the hospital. The doctors found he had a fractured spine.

The hottest and most dangerous fire he ever remembered fighting was on February 4, 1939. It was at the Breece Lumber Company at 401 1st N.W. It was all destroyed. The famous and spectacular Sears Roebuck Company fire on May 18, 1953, at 5th Street and Central Avenue N.W. was noted by the Chief as one of his most memorable fires during his career. It was hot and smoky and difficult to fight and to bring under control. The firemen took lots of punishment at that fire.

Although credited with many accomplishments during his tenure as Chief, Art Westerfeld is recognized for bringing the fire insurance rating from a high class 8 to a respectable class 4 rating. He improved the fire service by improving the fire hydrant water supply and distribution system, installing a modern fire alarm system, hiring more men for a shorter workweek, building new fire stations, and purchasing modern fire apparatus, and fire equipment.

Under his leadership ten new fire stations were built. Several years before his death he recommended that fire stations #13, and #14 be built and that fire station # 4 be relocated from 5th and Mountain Road N.W. to 4th and Bellamah N.W. Unfortunately, he didn't live to see these stations become a reality.

During 1957 he established the Fire Prevention Bureau and a new Training Division. He also started the first Rescue Company, Rescue #1 at Station #1. It was a 1956 Ford Panel Wagon with all the modern Rescue and First Aid Equipment. Shortly thereafter he formed the second Rescue Unit, Rescue #2, located at fire station #8, Graceland & Menaul N.E.



## Lifetime Achievement Award

(By Herman Bishop)



The executive board of the Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association awarded a Lifetime Achievement Fire Service Award to Mike Fox at the January 14th, 2026 monthly meeting. The plaque reads as follows; During the past few years Mike Fox has served as treasurer of the AFD Retirees Association. His many years of faithful dedication to the fire service, his leadership, commitment, performance and devotion to duty is worthy of special recognition. Presented this 14th day of January 2026 signed Kerry Horton President, Donny Sanchez Vice President, Eddie Abeita Secretary, Herman Bishop Historian , Sam Trujillo President Emeritus. Mike was taken by surprise by this presentation he said what a wonderful honor, my fellows have truly recognized me with this beautiful plaque, this is a special award.

## Editors Note

(By Mike Fox)

With humble gratitude, I have agreed to accept the position of editor for our quarterly newsletter. Herman has done an outstanding job for 25 years with this newsletter and I'm a little nervous about maintaining his high caliber standards. I will do my best.

With that being said, Herman is going to continue to provide me with guidance and information to assure that the newsletter can continue to be an interesting document. With Herman's incredible library of information I do not have any resource problems.

I do have to say my first newsletter as full editor will be published a couple of days late. Life happens.

All right, we retire brother Morris Gutierrez is currently working on a new project. He is developing a memorial book for David Marquez, who passed away way before his time. He originally wanted me to put the information in a newsletter. As the information started pouring in, we realized we had enough input from fellow firefighters to create its own document. It will probably dwarf for our newsletter.. We are currently working on that and will keep you posted on availability. Have a wonderful spring Everyone.



Artwork by David Marquez

## Death of Art Cowen



We were informed that **Our brother AFD Retiree Arthur “Art” Cowen** passed away (9/15/25) after a long illness. Art joined AFD on 3/28/1967 and he retired as a Paramedic Driver on 3/27/1987. Art and his wife (Sandra) resided in Moriarty NM. Arthur was a US Army Veteran. Art will be fondly remembered and will forever be missed. On behalf of our members we extend our sincere condolences and sympathies to the Cowen family

## Death of Tony Anaya



We were informed that **Our AFD Retiree Brother Fire Fighter Tony Anaya** passed away on 11/10/2025. Tony joined AFD on 7/11/1966 (13th AFD Cadet Class) and he retired on 9/24/1987. Tony worked in the Fire Marshal’s Office from 1974 as a Arson Investigator until his retirement. On behalf of our members we extend our sincere condolences and sympathies to the Anaya family

## Death of John Serino



We are sorry to announce the death of our brother retired firefighter John Serino, age 84, who passed away on Friday January 17th 2026, after a long-term illness. He served our association for over 25 years and was an original honor guard member. John served as treasurer for the retiree’s association for over 20 years. He was a native of Albuquerque and served as a proud member of the United States Coast Guard. John joined the Albuquerque Fire Department on June 24th, 1974, and after serving over 20 years with the department he retired on June 27th, 1991. He was a member of the 26th fire cadet class. After his retirement from the fire service he served several years as a security officer at the loveless Medical Center. He was an avid softball player and in 2010 he and his wife Marcella traveled to Havana Cuba to participate in a softball tournament with the Cubans. He was a skilled leather Craftsman and a silversmith. During June 2010, John was a key member who led efforts to raise \$20,000 to erect an 8 by 4 foot black marble monument with gold letters to honor over 400 AFD retired firefighters. Currently the monument is displayed at the Albuquerque Fire Academy. John is fondly remembered as a skilled and well-respected firefighter and we we'll miss him and his service to the Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees Association. On behalf of our members we extend our sincere condolences and sympathies to the John Serino family.

# Meeting Report, January 2026

(by Kerry Horton)  
January 14<sup>th</sup> 2026

The 305<sup>th</sup> AFDRA meeting was called to order at 1900. Attendance was good and we had two first time attendees. After the Pledge of Allegiance, Tommy Romeo gave the opening prayer. Sam read the names of those we lost in 2025 and gave a brief reflection of each one. Roll call of Officers and Advisory Board members. All Executive Board members present. Herman presented two awards to two very deserving people. First, we gave a certificate of Honorary membership into the AFDRA to Gil Garcia. Gil is a retired city employee who started All Star Trophies upon his retirement and has made every plaque and retiree tag since our founding. Many of you may not know him, but he has been a friend of our association for 25 years. Secondly, we presented Mike Fox with a beautiful Lifetime Achievement Fire Service Award, made by Gil Garcia, for Mike's years of dedication and service to the AFDRA.

**President's Report;** - By Kerry Horton It's New Mexico Legislative session time again, starting Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, and that means that there may be some PERA bills floating around. Nothing has been filed yet but I am hearing rumors that there may be a bill to issue two more years of 13<sup>th</sup> checks to all retirees in addition to the .5% COLA's that are expected over the next two years. The other bill is rumored to give retirees over 65 a COLA increase of 1.68% over the next two years in addition to the regular COLA issued by PERA. I will track activities in Santa Fe and keep you informed. We are issuing new ID Badges so if you want a new badge, come to the next meeting so that we can take your photo, or email me a headshot. I am trusting you not to be rude! We are sponsoring another Funeral Pre-Plan seminar on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm at the union hall. Dinner will be served so please RSVP to me by email or call Russell Perea at [505-546-6641](tel:505-546-6641).

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

**Secretary's Report;** - By Eddie Abeita Eddie read the December minutes, and a motion was made and passed to accept the report.

**Treasurer's Report;** - By Mike Fox Mike read the financial report, and a motion was made and passed to accept the December financial report. As always, the financial books are open for everybody to review.

**Historian's Report;** - Herman gave a report on the efforts to name station one after Fire Chief Art Westerfeld, our longest tenured Chief and one that turned AFD into a modern fire department. The naming of city buildings and offices is a project started by Mayor Keller with the ABQ is Us initiative. We feel it will take some time to get this done, but Mayor Keller is already on board with the project.

**Committee Reports;** Funeral Committee, Christmas Committee, The Christmas dinner was a big success and a big thank you goes out to everyone that helped. Eddie Abeita gave thanks to James Parra, Emiliano Chavez, and Skip Navarrette for donating door prizes and decorations. Museum Committee, Election Committee.

**Matters Good for the Association.** Pablo Garcia gave a report on the progress of Chris Chavez's Ghost bike refurb and said that since Rio Bravo is undergoing a major renovation, we may keep the bike at the museum until the road work is completed. Greg Gonzales spoke about the upcoming Kitchen Table meeting on January 22 at 6:30 pm at the union hall and said that he will be providing dinner on that night. So, plan on joining the meeting and enjoy a great home cooked meal. No RSVP needed, and don't forget about Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup>'s Kitchen Table meeting at 6:30 pm at 4004 Carlisle NE. Keep up with events and dates by checking out our website or Facebook page.

Visit our website at [afdretirees.com](http://afdretirees.com) The meeting was adjourned at 2020.

# Before the Call, During the Call, After the Call:

(Why This Series Matters)

First in a series by Patrick McKinney

Firefighters and EMTs are trained to move toward what others run from. Over a career, that means stepping into danger, chaos, grief, and uncertainty—again and again. We often talk about the calls, the pace, the stress, and the toll the job can take. But far less often do we talk about how those experiences actually get inside us—and why they sometimes show up later in ways we do not expect.

***Trauma does not enter us as a story. It enters us through the senses.***

This series begins with a simple but important idea:

- ⇒ What we see.
- ⇒ What we hear.
- ⇒ What we smell.
- ⇒ What we touch.
- ⇒ What we feel inside our own bodies.

Long before the brain has time to analyze or make meaning, the nervous system is already taking in information. A sound. A look on someone's face. The pitch of a voice. The feel of heat, weight, resistance, or stillness. A sudden surge of adrenaline or a hollow drop in the chest. These signals are physical, immediate, and deeply human.

The brain's job in those moments is not reflection. ***It is survival.***

When the nervous system detects threat, urgency, or responsibility, it shifts into high-speed mode. It records sensory information quickly and efficiently so it can recognize similar situations in the future. That process is what makes firefighters and EMTs effective at what they do. It is also what explains why some experiences do not stay neatly in the past.

Trauma is not just about what happened. It is about how the nervous system absorbed it.

Two responders can work the same call and walk away affected differently. Not because one handled it better or worse, but because each person brings a different history, set of values, relationships, and vulnerabilities into the scene. One may be impacted by a sound. Another by an image. Another by helplessness when outcomes were out of anyone's control. The nervous system responds to meaning, not performance.

When you step back and look at the scope of the job, the impact becomes easier to understand. Over the course of a career in a major metropolitan fire department like Albuquerque Fire Rescue, different estimates suggest a firefighter may respond to 18,000 to 30,000 calls...maybe more, depending on assignment, station, and years of service. A firefighter assigned to a busy paramedic unit will experience a very different call volume than someone assigned to the Fire Marshal's Office or a specialty role, but across a career, nearly everyone is exposed—directly or indirectly—to tens of thousands of emergencies.

Those calls do not begin on the street. The AFR Alarm Room alone receives more than 100,000 calls a year, with Alarm Room Operators serving as the first point of contact for nearly every crisis. Before units are dispatched, they are already listening to fear, panic, confusion, grief, and urgency—often in real time—as events unfold. Whether responding on scene, working in communications, or supporting operations elsewhere in the department, AFR members are repeatedly exposed to moments involving injury, illness, loss, responsibility, and intense human emotion. Each role carries a different vantage point, but the cumulative exposure across a career adds up to the same reality: thousands upon thousands of moments where the nervous system is asked to absorb human crisis.

After retirement, firefighters do not walk away unmarked. They carry thousands of experiences and countless memories held within their bodies—more accurately, within their nervous systems. The accumulation of that many calls comes with a cost—not because of error or failure, but because repeated exposure to intense human situations leaves a lasting imprint.

***“After retirement, firefighters do not walk away unmarked.”***

For some retirees, the cost of carrying thousands of intense experiences shows up quietly. For others, it becomes more noticeable...more intrusive. That cost may include a nervous system that stays on edge, difficulty fully resting, or a body that reacts more strongly to stress than it once did. It can affect sleep, mood, relationships, physical health, or a sense of purpose. It can shape how stress is handled, how relaxation feels, and how the body responds once the structure and pace of the job are gone.

Every retired firefighter finds ways—consciously or unconsciously—to manage what they carry. Many find healthy and sustaining paths. Some invest in community service or mentoring. Others turn to physical outlets like working out at the gym, hiking, organized sports, hunting, or fishing. Some deepen relationships, rediscover old interests, or build new routines that restore structure and meaning. These activities help the nervous system release stress and reestablish balance.

Others, however, find less helpful ways to cope. Alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling, and other compulsive behaviors can become ways to quiet internal noise, numb uncomfortable sensations, or create moments of escape or control. These patterns are rarely about weakness or poor character. More often, they are attempts to manage internal signals that were never fully understood.

This is where understanding trauma becomes essential.

Another way to think about this is pressure. Years of exposure build internal pressure in the nervous system—urgency, vigilance, responsibility—often without an obvious or reliable way to release it. Some coping behaviors act like temporary relief valves. They let off pressure for a moment, which can feel necessary at the time, especially when the system has been running hot for years.

The problem isn't that pressure relief was sought. The problem is that when pressure is only released briefly and the underlying system is never understood or recalibrated, stress continues to build on the mechanisms themselves. Over time, even a system with relief valves begins to wear down. Seals weaken. Components fatigue. What once worked occasionally starts to fail more often. The pressure returns faster and feels harder to manage—not because the person is doing something wrong, but because the system was never designed to operate indefinitely at that level without proper recovery.

Understanding trauma helps identify where that pressure comes from and how it can be regulated more sustainably, rather than relying on relief methods that were never meant to carry the full load.

When we understand how trauma enters through the senses and how the brain stores those signals, many post-career reactions begin to make sense. Understanding does not erase experience—but it does expand choice. It opens the door to healthier ways of coping and reduces confusion about why certain habits help while others create problems.

This series is not about diagnosing, reliving calls, or labeling anyone as damaged. It is about education—learning how repeated exposure through the senses affects the brain and body over time, and why many post-retirement reactions are understandable given the work that was done.

The goal is not to change the past. It is to make sense of the present—and widen the range of choices moving forward.

If you've ever wondered why certain reactions linger, why retirement feels different than expected, or why some coping strategies help while others don't, this series is for you. Not to tell you what to

feel or what to do—but to help you understand what's happening and why it makes sense.

In the next article, we'll begin by clarifying what trauma actually is—shifting the focus away from "*the call*" itself and toward how individual experience shapes impact. This distinction lays the foundation for everything that follows.



## Meeting Report, February 2026

(by Kerry Horton)

February 11<sup>th</sup> 2026

The 306<sup>th</sup> AFDRA meeting was called to order at 1900. Attendance was great with maybe 40 retirees attending. Louis Trujillo led the opening prayer, and we had a moment of silence for John Serino and his family.

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

**President's Report;** By Kerry Horton - The 2026 NM legislative session is more than halfway over and none of the three bills that would have put money in retiree pockets appear to be doing well. I am not saying there's zero chance but it's looking very doubtful that any will find any funding from the state this year.

29 AFR members retired in 2025, and their brass tags are on the Honor Roll board at the museum. A handful more retirees have worked their last days on the job but are on early out status and will be 2026 retirees. Welcome to the retired side of life to all the retiree probies. Cake and ice cream!

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

**Secretary's Report;** By Eddie Abeita - Eddie read the January minutes, and a motion was made and passed to accept the report.

Treasurer's Report; By Mike Fox - Mike read the financial report, and a motion was made and passed to accept the January financial report. Mike also reported that our 2025 taxes are almost ready to go to the tax guy for final review and filling. As always, the financial books are open for everybody to review.

**Historian's Report;** - Herman gave a brief history of our newsletter and the transition of Mike Fox taking over as Chief Editor while Herman takes a well-deserved break. Herman will remain AFDRA Historian and still be part of the editing crew when needed and will also contribute stories for our reading pleasure. Herman also gave a tribute to John Serino and told of his contributions to AFDRA as treasurer for many years.

**Committee Reports;** Funeral Committee, Sam spoke of the latest plans for John Serino's services. A Mass will take place on February 20<sup>th</sup> at St. Charles Borromeo Church, 1818 Coal Place SE at 9:30 am. We will present the Resolution of Condolence and a eulogy.

Christmas Committee, Museum Committee, Election Committee, - Next month I will appoint an Election Committee Chair to oversee this year's election. This year the positions of President and Secretary are up for reelection.

**Matters Good for the Association.** Zach Romero addressed the membership and Sam reminded everyone about our Kitchen Table meeting on February 19 at 6:30 pm at the Union Hall. Keep up with events and dates by checking out our website or Facebook page.

Visit our website at [afdretirees.com](http://afdretirees.com)

The meeting was adjourned at 2030.



## Albuquerque Fire Rescue (AFR) Station 23

Albuquerque Fire Rescue (AFR) Station 23 is located at 9631 Amole Mesa Ave SW, Albuquerque, NM 87121. It is part of the new Southwest Public Safety Center.

### Station Details:

- Location: 9631 Amole Mesa Ave SW, Albuquerque, NM 87121. • Response Area: It covers a primary response area of almost 5 square miles in Southwest Albuquerque.
- Purpose: The station was added to help reduce emergency response times in the growing West Side of the city.
- Facilities: It is part of a public safety complex that also houses the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) Southwest Substation and will eventually include Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) services.
- Equipment: Albuquerque Fire Rescue (AFR Station 23 primarily houses one piece of apparatus: Engine 23, which is a Type 1 pumper with a 500-gallon water tank.



### Engine 23 Details

- Type: Engine 23 is a Type 1 structure engine (pumper), which is the largest size engine used by the department.
- Capacity: Engine 23 carries 500 gallons of water and has a 2000-gallon-per-minute pump.
- Function: The Type 1 engine is designed and equipped to handle various emergencies, including house fires, wildland fires (while crews await a dedicated wildland truck), medical emergencies (it is an Advanced Life Support engine staffed with paramedics and EMTs), vehicle accidents, and hazardous material

The station's opening has also led to the creation of Battalion 5, an operational supervision zone. Budget documents indicate that a second apparatus, Rescue 23, is planned for the station, but currently only the engine is operational.

Albuquerque Fire Rescue Station 23 AFR Station 23 is part of the larger Southwest Public Safety Center housing an Albuquerque Police substation and community safety center, the facility cost approximately \$23.9 million for the first phase, combining city, state funds, bonds,

and taxes. It opened in late 2025 to serve the growing west side and improve response times, bringing together APD, AFR, and ACS.

#### Key Cost & Funding Details:

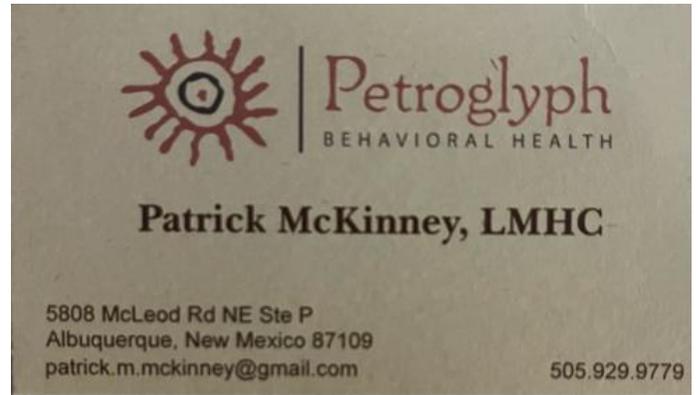
- Total Project Cost: ~\$23.9 million for the combined facility.
- Funding Sources: A mix of Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) revenue, general obligation bonds, city capital outlay, and state funds.
- Components: It houses AFR Station 23, an APD Substation, and eventually Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS).
- Context & Purpose: Fire station 23 is the first new fire station for AFR in over 20 years, designed to significantly cut emergency response times in the west side. The center is located at 98th Street and Amole Mesa.



## Historical photos



# A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS!!



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## President's Message

By Kerry Horton



Hello fellow retiree's, the 2026 legislative session is over, and it was not favorable to retirees. One Bill, introduced by PERA Executive Greg Trujillo and sponsored by Cynthia Borrego and Liz Stefanics, tried to give us a thirteenth check for two years and was passed in its first committee and forwarded to the finance committee, but was never heard or acted on. Two other bills seeking to reestablish a 2% COLA for retirees never made it to committee. One bright spot in the whole legislative session was the passing of Senate Memorial 31, introduced by Liz Stefanic, Linda Trujillo, Natalie Figueroa, Michael Padilla, and Peter Wirth, that creates a work group to study

the PERA fund, policies impacting benefits, and the solvency of the fund. The work group will also study the impact of changes made to the retiree cost-of-living adjustments and make recommendations to improve solvency and explore the possibility of providing COLAs tied to inflation.

The work group will be comprised of nine members with demonstrated experience in finance. The members will be one PERA recipient chosen by the speaker of the house, one PERA recipient chosen by the president pro tempore of the senate, one PERA recipient appointed by the governor, both the chair and vice chair of the appropriate interim legislative committee that oversees investments and pensions, the chair of the PERA board, the PERA executive director, an analyst from the department of finance and administration, and an analyst of the legislative finance committee.

The work group will be requested to make its recommendations to the appropriate interim legislative committee that oversees investments and pensions and to the legislative finance committee no later than December 31, 2026. To read the whole memorial, go to [nmlegis.gov](http://nmlegis.gov) and look up SM31.

