



AFDRA Retiree News



Published by the Albuquerque Fire Department Retirees' Association



September 1, 2026

3-2026



**HERMAN R. BISHOP,
ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Inspirational Quote

"People are
just as happy
as they make
up their minds to be."
Abraham Lincoln



MIKE FOX, EDITOR

CONTENTS

- P-1** Headlines
- P-2** 2026 Picnic Success
- P-5** Meeting Report, June
- P-6** Death of Reed Harry and Joe P. Garcia
- P-7** Trauma – part three in a series by Patrick McKinney
- P-9** Meeting Report, July
- P-10** AFD History - part two in a series by Herman Bishop
- P-13** Meeting Report, August
- P-14** Meet our new Assistant Historian
- P-15** Thank you Donors!
- P-16** President's Message by Kerry Horton



Headlines

In this issue, we have several special treats in store for you.

- Our **2026 Picnic** was a huge success. (page 2)
- Part three of Patrick McKinney 's series on **Trauma** is on page 7.
- Part two in a series on the **History of of Albuquerque** by our historian Herman Bishop is on page 10.
- Meet our **new assistant historian** on page 14.
- **Obituaries** Reed Harry and Joe P. Garcia page 6.



2026 PICNIC A HUGE SUCCESS

(by Kerry Horton)

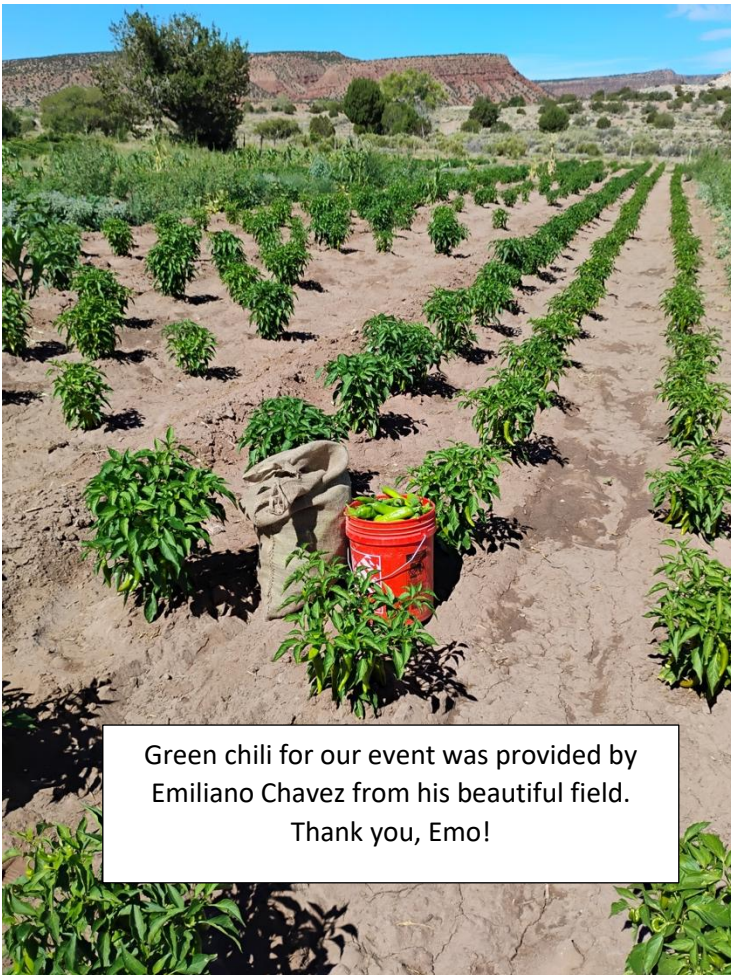


A big thank you to all that attended this year's picnic and a bigger thank you to all the volunteers that helped make the picnic a huge success. I'm confident in saying that everyone had a good time and we were able to honor a few of our retirees. Earl Gleason and our friend Frank Maestas received



Special Recognition plaques for all they've contributed to our association over the years. Bill Raupfer received a much-deserved Lifetime Achievement award for everything he's done for our association since its inception, and our Retiree of the Year award went to Emilliano Chavez and Greg Gonzales. Yes, two earned that distinction this year for their contribution to our association.





Green chili for our event was provided by
Emiliano Chavez from his beautiful field.
Thank you, Emo!



Photos courtesy of Mike and Jude
Padilla, thank you for the wonderful
pictures!



**A special thank you to
Morris and his picnic
committee for another
fine year.**



Meeting Report, June 2026

By Kerry Horton June 10th 2026

The 310th AFDRA meeting was called to order at 1900, it was also the 26th anniversary of AFDRA. Attendance was very good with some old friends showing up, including Florentino Torres, our oldest retiree, and an old friend, Frank Vigil, stopped by to say hello. Louis Trujillo led us in an opening prayer and we had a Moment of Silence for Anastacio "Mike" Padilla. The A/C was not working so the meeting was expedited. Roll call of Officers and Advisory Board members with all Executive Board members present.

President's Report; By Kerry Horton The annual picnic date has been set for August 22 so mark your calendars. The picnic opens at 10 am, our festivities start at 11 with opening remarks, and food serving starts around 11:30. We will have door prizes and a silent auction supporting our Retiree Assistance Program, and the IAFF New Mexico Motorcycle Group will have a raffle to support this year's ride to the IAFF Motorcycle Rally in Pennsylvania. The location is Rotary Park in Bernalillo. As we reported last month, IAFF local 244 is hosting the District 10 conference to be held at the Tamaya Resort starting June 18th. On the morning of June 19th, 244 is hosting a New Mexico style breakfast at the Tamaya and they are looking for volunteers to help. They are looking for cooks and servers; the cooks need to be there by 6 am and servers need to be there by 7 am. The breakfast will be served between 8 and 10. If you can help, please let me know with a text or at [505-934-2969](tel:505-934-2969) or email me. The 105th Cadet Class graduation will be July 10th, at the Kimo on Central at 1 pm. We will also be honoring one of our retirees, so if you are in the area, stop by and join in the ceremony. AFDRA is sponsoring another Funeral pre-planning seminar on Monday, June 15th at the Union Hall at 6 pm. Dinner is provided, so bring your spouse, have dinner and see if this program is right for you. If you are interested in a new retiree ID card, please text me a shoulder up selfie at [505-934-2969](tel:505-934-2969). I'm trusting that you all will behave.

Vice President's Report; By Donny Sanchez VP Donny Sanchez has a friend that is a Denver FD retiree that has a IAFF Retiree program and reached out for a copy of their membership rules. I will get these to Local 244 President for review. Thank you, Donny. If this program is initiated, it would be strictly voluntary.

Secretary's Report; By Eddie Abeita Eddie gave an entertaining and accurate reading of the May meeting minutes. A motion was made and passed to accept the minutes as read.

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

Historian's Report; Herman thanked Mike Fox on his solo efforts getting the newsletter out. The current newsletter is Mike's first solo run. Thank you Mike, great job!

Committee Reports; Funeral Committee, Sam and Eddie reminded everyone of the importance of preplanning your funeral, letting your family know what type of services you want and whether you want a Firefighter service. These things do not happen without planning, and we have provided all the information you need to do the planning with your

family on our website afdretirees.com under Fire Box in the menu. Sam said that the services for Anastacio Padilla are still pending and we will post them as soon as we know anything.

Election Committee, No election, the positions were won by acclamation. As per our By-Laws, the positions of President and Secretary will be sworn in at the July meeting.

Audit Committee, Treasurer Mike Fox turned over the financial books to the Audit Committee Chair, Donny Sanchez, he and his team will give their report at the July meeting.

Matters Good for the Association. Eulogio Lucero gave a welfare report on Morris Gutierrez, who is dealing with a post knee replacement infection and blood clots. Morris puts on a brave face and is in good spirits, but he has a long recovery road ahead of him. Please let Morris know that he is in your thoughts and prayers. Greg Gonzales announced that his book, Internal Search, One Paramedic Firefighters Mental Overhaul, is going to be published and will soon be available from Amazon. I have read a pre-published copy, and I highly recommend it. The book is about Greg's career and the road he followed in dealing with the ups and downs that a firefighting career took all of us on. Through his words, I promise you will find the areas of your career that you have a healthy handle on, and maybe some areas that need a little work. 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 1955 due to the sweltering heat at the union hall.



Death of Reed Harry

It is with great sadness that we have must report that **Reed Harry** has passed away. Reed was residing in Oregon at the time of his passing.

Reed was a member of the 46th cadet class and retired as a Lieutenant in May of 2013 and he was an Air Force Veteran.



Death of Joe P. Garcia

We were notified that Our Brother AFD Retiree **Joe P. Garcia** passed away on 8/21/26 ... Joe Garcia joined AFD on 9/3/1968 (18th AFD Cadet Class) ... In 1970 Joe was injured while on duty and in 1971 was forced into Physical Layoff Status where he was placed into PERA Injury Retirement Joe was also a US Army Veteran ...

Trauma: A Career of Co-Participation:

How Firefighters Absorb Trauma

(Third in a series on Trauma by Patrick McKinney)

Firefighters rarely experience trauma as direct victims. Instead, they serve as co-participants in thousands of other people's worst moments over the course of a career. They are present, engaged, and emotionally invested while witnessing injury, loss, panic, and grief. The nervous system does not distinguish between trauma that happens to us and trauma we absorb while fully present for others.

Firefighters rarely experience trauma as direct victims. Instead, they serve as co-participants in thousands of other people's worst moments over the course of a career. That co-participation often begins before units ever arrive on scene. In the Alarm Room, operators listen to fear, confusion, and desperation as events unfold in real time, while firefighters prepare to respond. On scene, that presence continues—standing at the side of a bed while a family waits for news, managing an airway while loved ones watch, advancing a line while knowing someone may still be inside, or holding a perimeter as a family watches their home burn. In each of these moments, firefighters are not passive observers. They are present, engaged, and emotionally invested, carrying responsibility while outcomes remain uncertain. Even when training guides the actions and procedures are followed, the nervous system absorbs the urgency, intensity, and emotional weight of being fully present for others. It does not distinguish between trauma that

happens to us and trauma we absorb while standing with someone else in their worst moment.

Over time, this repeated exposure accumulates. A single call may be resolved, but the nervous system keeps a record of what it has taken in. Trauma does not enter primarily through words or conscious thought. It enters through the senses before the mind has time to understand what is happening. Firefighters absorb trauma through sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and—the internal sense of what is happening inside the body.

Visual scenes, intense sounds, specific odors, physical sensations, and internal bodily reactions such as heart rate, breath, and muscle tension are rapidly recorded during high-stress moments. During threat, the brain prioritizes survival over meaning. Sensory information is stored quickly and efficiently, but often without context, time, or narrative. This is why trauma memories can feel fragmented or disconnected from a clear story.

Because of this process, trauma may resurface later not as memories, but as sudden emotions, physical reactions, sleep disturbances, irritability, or a sense of being on edge without a clear reason. The body remembers what the mind never fully processed. These reactions are not signs of weakness or failure; they are signs of a

nervous system that adapted to repeated exposure.

Imagine a call where the task is clear, but the environment is full. A crew responds to a report of a woman in her seventies who has collapsed at home. As the engine and rescue arrive, a twelve-year-old meets them at the door, crying and trying to explain that her grandmother is hurt. Inside the living room, an eight-year-old stands off to the side, frozen and crying quietly. Their mother is on her knees next to her own mother, frantic, pleading for help, her voice breaking as she tries to explain what happened. As care begins, the room continues to speak. The smell of green chile stew hangs in the air, still warm, as if dinner was moments away from being served. A cartoon plays loudly on the television—SpongeBob SquarePants filling the room with bright voices and laughter that don't match the scene unfolding on the floor. A broken glass vase lies beside the coffee table, likely shattered when the grandmother fell. The children's crying rises and falls. The mother keeps asking if her mother is going to be okay.

At the same time, firefighters are doing what they are trained to do, assessing, treating, communicating, managing the scene. On the surface, it looks like a medical call involving an older patient. Underneath, the nervous system is absorbing everything at once: the fear in the room, the sound of children crying, the smell of food tied to family and routine, the sense of responsibility while outcomes remain uncertain. None of this is written in the report, but all of it is registered in the body.

“The nervous system does not distinguish between trauma that happens to us and trauma absorbed while standing with others.”

What gets carried forward is not just the memory of a medical emergency. It is the entire moment as it was lived—the sights, sounds, smells, and emotional weight of being fully present in someone else's worst day while still having to function, decide, and act. Understanding how trauma is absorbed and processed matters, especially for firefighters. Experiences like the one just described are not stored as isolated events, but as layered moments made up of sights, sounds, smells, emotions, and responsibility occurring all at once. Without a framework for understanding this process, many firefighters later interpret their reactions as personal shortcomings or signs that something is wrong with them. With education, those same reactions can be recognized for what they are: normal nervous system responses to repeated, intense human exposure. Knowledge does not erase what was experienced, but it does provide language and context. It offers a way to understand how the body held what the mind could not fully sort in the moment—an understanding that becomes especially important in retirement, when the pace slows and the nervous system finally has space to surface what was set aside in order to keep going.

In the next article, we'll slow this process down and focus on one sensory pathway in depth: sight. We'll look at why certain images stay vivid for decades, how visual memory bypasses logic, and why “what we saw” often becomes the doorway through which trauma quietly return

Meeting Report, July 2026

By Kerry Horton June 8th 2026

The 311th AFDRA meeting was called to order at 1900, and after the pledge of allegiance, Morris Gutierrez led us in an opening prayer. We held a Moment of Silence for Erasmo Garza and family and our meeting attendance was one of the best all year. Welcome back Morris. Roll call of Officers and Advisory Board members with all Executive Board members present. Steve Tafoya, candidate for House Representative 12th District, was our guest speaker. Steve is the son of fellow retiree Dave Torres. President Kerry Horton and Secretary Eddie Abeita were sworn into their respective E-Board positions.

President's Report; By Kerry Horton We had two first time attendees at the meeting, first was Augustine "Butch" Torres, who attended his first meeting since retiring in 1985, and the second new attendee was recent AFR retiree Lt. Mike Trujillo. I appointed Greg Aragon to the Advisory Board and Greg has been assisting Herman in AFD history presentations. Greg has accepted the informal position of Assistant Historian. The 105th Cadet Class graduation will be July 10, at the Kimo on Central at 1 pm. We will also be honoring one of our retirees, so if you are in the area, stop by and join in the ceremony. If you are interested in a new retiree ID card, please text me a shoulder up selfie at 505-934-2969. I'm trusting that you all will behave.

Vice President's Report; By Donny Sanchez No report

Secretary's Report; By Eddie Abeita Eddie gave an entertaining and accurate reading of the June meeting minutes. A motion was made and passed to accept the minutes as read.

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

Historian's Report; Herman thanked Greg Aragon for his interest in AFD/AFR history and then turned the floor over to Greg who gave a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation on AFD during the turn of the century.

Committee Reports; Funeral Committee, Sam reminded everyone of the importance of preplanning your funeral, letting your family know what type of services you want and whether you want a Firefighter service. These things do not happen without planning, and we have provided all the information you need to do the planning with your family on our website-afdretirees.com under Fire Box in the menu. **Picnic Committee,** Morris Gutierrez stated that this year's picnic will be bigger and better than ever, so we hope you are planning on attending and joining in on the festivities. The date is August 22nd, starting at 11 am but get there early to get a table. The location is Rotary Park in Bernalillo. Bring your family for a great meal and enjoy the chance at a multitude of door prizes, raffles, and a silent auction. **Audit**

Committee, VP Donny Sanchez read the Audit Committee report on our financial books for the past year. The audit, conducted by Donny Sanchez, Richard Sanchez, and Patrick Goodyear, found the books to be in order and all monies to be accounted for. They recommended that we keep our Treasurer, Mike Fox, around for many years to come.

Matters Good for the Association. Robby Sanchez and Richard Sanchez gave a welfare report on Matt Gutierrez and Robert Otero. Both have had hip replacement surgery and while Robert is healing well, Matt suffered blood clots and an infection, similar to Morris and his knee replacement, and the procedure had to be redone. Matt is resting at home and if you have his number let him know that he is in our thoughts and prayers. 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 2025.



AFD HISTORY (Part 2)

By Herman R. Bishop, Historian (March 1, 2001)

A Brief History of the paid Fire Department beginning in June, 1900

Just prior to the turn of the century, in 1898, records show that Albuquerque's volunteer firemen used leather helmets. An early version of a fire alarm system was installed in 1897. The population of the Town of Albuquerque in 1882 was 3500 people.

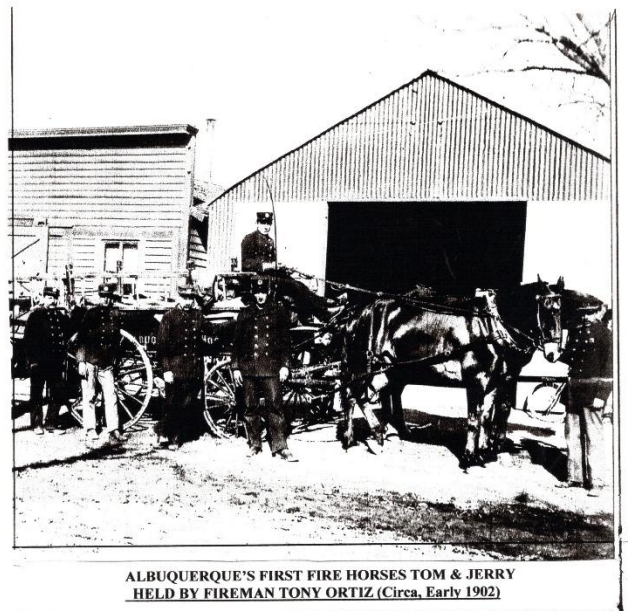
At the turn of the century, in June 1900, the City of Albuquerque was three square miles, boasted a population of 6,238, and records show one fire station in the downtown area. There were three volunteer fire companies including a hook and ladder company.

The requirements for an improved fire service had generated the need for a paid fire department in this growing city. On June 6, 1900, the Fire Committee of the Albuquerque City Council recommended a small paid Fire Department. At this meeting the recommendation was approved by the City Council.

Under City Management the volunteer fire companies were re-organized and re-named the Albuquerque Fire Department. Two men, Eugene Southerland, and Tony Ortiz were hired full-time. Their salaries were \$ 65.00 and \$60.00 respectively. Twenty on-call men were authorized and were paid \$40.00 per year. The agreement allowed four on-call men to live at the fire station. A Fire Chief was included in the new organization, and he was authorized payment of \$100.00 annually.

When the City took over the Fire Department there were three hose companies, one hook and ladder company. There was a four-wheel hose wagon, hand drawn by the firemen. This wagon had a large reel mounted on the back, with 1200 feet of 2 1/2-inch hose, which could be reeled out quickly, attached to a fire hydrant, and stretched to the fire scene for a rapid fire attack.

At this time the City Council approved the purchase of a pair of fire horses and a set of hanging harness. The first fire horses were named Tom and Jerry. It was customary to weigh the horses daily to ensure their health and well-being. The horses were exercised twice a day, once at 7:00 AM and the second at 5:00 PM.



ALBUQUERQUE'S FIRST FIRE HORSES TOM & JERRY
HELD BY FIREMAN TONY ORTIZ (Circa, Early 1902)

Today if a fire apparatus is out of service a spare unit is used as a replacement to keep

the company in service. Entries in the daily logs at the turn of the century show that arrangements were made with the local livery stable owners to furnish spare horses when the fire horses required new shoes, were sick, or were out of service for some reason.

The first paid Fire Chief was Major Bernard B. Ruppe (Ruppe's Drug Store, 807 4th Street SW)

Mr. Ruppe was of German descent and was born in New York in 1863. He was a graduate of the New York College of Pharmacy and graduated in 1880. He served in the Army during the Pershing punitive expedition into Mexico. He served as a Captain in the U.S. Army and later was promoted to Major. He was reported to have spoken Spanish fluently.



Bernard Ruppe, (Circa 1890)
First paid Fire Chief of Albuquerque

Chief Ruppe served several terms as volunteer chief of the Albuquerque Fire Department Prior to 1900. On June 6, 1900 the Mayor and City Council established the first paid fire Department. Chief Ruppe was the first paid Chief (part-time) and his salary was \$100 per Month. After serving 2 years as Fire Chief Mr. Ruppe resigned from the Fire Chief's job.

Major Ruppe's Obituary in 1937 reported that at the time of his death he was the oldest practicing Pharmacist in New Mexico, age, 74. His first Drug Store was in Old Town. In 1882 Ruppe's Cosmopolitan Pharmacy was located on Railroad Avenue (Central Avenue). That same year the Pharmacy was flattened by fire, sparking Mr. Ruppe's interest in firefighting. Later the Pharmacy was moved to 1152nd St. SW. Mr. Alarid bought the store in 1951 from the Ruppe family. In 1964 the Ruppe Drug Store was moved to 4th Street and Hazeldine SW in the Barelvas Community. (Alb. Journal, P, E-10, (5-22-1983). Chief Ruppe was elected to five terms as Chief of the Volunteer Fire Department prior to 1900. When the Fire department came under City management in June 1900 he became the first paid Fire Chief of the Albuquerque Fire Department.

Major Ruppe served as council commander of Woodmen of the World lodge and on the New Mexico State Board of Pharmacy. He also served a term in the New Mexico Territorial Legislature.

(Source: Albuquerque Journal, May 22, 1983, Page E-7)

Photos from the period of 1886 to early 1900 show the "Fergusson Hook and Ladder Company." This hand-drawn fire wagon was led by the Fire Chief, sometimes by the Foreman (Captain), and was accompanied by about twenty volunteer firemen. The Chief and the Foreman are shown holding pewter speaking trumpets (Megaphones) used for barking out orders at fires. The rank insignias used on the badges of today's Fire personnel came from the use of these

early speaking trumpets in use prior to the turn of the century. (1 Trumpet for Lieutenant, 5 Trumpets for Fire Chief).

The daily log on October 1, 1900, showed the crew on duty: Chief B. Ruppe, Firemen, E Southerland, Tony Ortiz, and Ed Hale. The November 4th log showed that fireman Tierney brought one bar of stove polish.

A special meeting was held on November 14, 1900 to organize the firemen's masquerade and dance to be held on Thanksgiving eve. It was decided to ask some of the ex-volunteer firemen to serve on the reception committee. Some names of note were as follows: H.S. Knight, P.F. McCanna, M.S. Tierney, Thomas McMillian, P.J. Murphy, W.H. Erickson, F. Scotti, Dr. McBeth, C.O. Young, and P. Lillie. Later that year the firemen built a bathroom on to the fire station from December 21st to the 30th.

The Harvey House was engulfed in a terrible fire on May 7, 1901, heavy losses were reported. The City Fire Department responded and due to the extent of the fire, assistance was requested from the Railroad fire companies who made a quick response to assist their neighbors.

A new log was begun on May 16, 1901. The crew consisted of Fire Chief, B. Ruppe, Captain, E. Southerland, Lt. Cosgrove, Driver L.H. Hanlin, F. Hungate, sub (volunteer), E. Hale, sub (volunteer)
The horses were exercised at 7:00 AM and at 5:00 PM for one hour each time. Other

log entries showed that Albuquerque Steam Laundry returned the laundry with the following bill:

5- pillow slips, \$.10, 5 Sheets, \$.15, 4- Towels, \$.04, 1- Table Cloth \$.05, 2- Curtains, \$.20. The total bill for the laundry service came to \$.54.

Other log entries during June, July, October, and November of 1901 were: Received one ton of hay from T. Hubbell. Took Horses to Korber's Shop, (Tijeras and 1st Street) to put on new shoes. Chief Ruppe visited at 1:20 PM on October 14, "Gave Lieutenant Cosgrove very indignant orders in regard to the men leaving the fire house without letting the Chief know about it." Later in November the log showed receipt of the following: D.A. Bittner delivered 600 lbs. of oats and one sack of brand. J. Korber brought one hoof brush, M.S. Tierney brought one axe handle, A.J. Maloy brought 5- gallons of Kerosene Oil. Fire Inspections are conducted at a Wool Scouring Mill and at the A.J. Maloy Tenement House. A load of hay and 2,000 lbs. of coal is received on November 4, 1900.

Sources: Information for this article was taken from two research papers. One, written by Dave Wendle (5-30-78) and another by Marilyn Lobdell (12-1-78). Official Albuquerque Fire Department Ledgers 1897 to 1901.

In the next issue we will explore more of Hermans work in AFD History (Part 3) 1902, The early paid years continued.

Meeting Report, August 2026

August 12th, 2026 (by Kerry Horton)

The 312th AFDRA meeting was called to order at 1902, and after the pledge of allegiance, Morris Gutierrez led us in an opening prayer. We held a Moment of Silence for Reed Harry and family and the meeting attendance was great. Roll call of Officers and Advisory Board members. Eddie Abeita was on an excused absence. No guests tonight

President's Report; By Kerry Horton-The AFDRA E-Board decided to form a motorcycle group committee and name Robby Sanchez as the chairman. The motorcycle group has been representing AFDRA at all their functions for years and this way they officially have a voice in AFDRA. The New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee has decided not to enact Senate Memorial 31 and therefore no PERA work group will be put together to try to solve our COLA situation. In its place they held a public forum in Santa Fe last week that I spoke at and let them know that holding open mic sessions to let PERA recipients vent their frustrations would not solve any issues and was an insult to all retirees. I can say that many legislators are hearing our concerns but of course that does not mean anything will get solved. If the current Legislators aren't willing to act, let's let them know our unhappiness in November's election. Joe Tenorio wants to put together a Firefighter based cookbook and is looking for your input. If you have a recipe that you want published, give Joe a call at [505-977-7178](tel:505-977-7178). IAFF is pushing for locals to adopt language in their by-laws to allow retirees to reinstate membership in the locals and participate in union meetings and functions. Local 244 will be addressing this issue soon and we'll see what comes of it. AFR will hold a 25-year anniversary 9-11 memorial on 9-11 at Civic Plaza at 11 am. If you are interested in a new retiree ID card, please text me a shoulder up selfie at [505-934-2969](tel:505-934-2969). I'm trusting that you all will behave.

Vice President's Report; By Donny Sanchez-Donny stated that since he will be running the September meeting in the President's absence, he didn't have a report for tonight, but he would entertain suggestions of whether to hold the September meeting at a bar instead of the union hall.

Secretary's Report; By Eddie Abeita-Eddie had an excused absence and a motion to suspend the secretaries report for August was made and passed.

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

Historian's Report; Greg Aragon filled in for Herman and gave a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation on AFD during the beginning of the 20th century and opened a discussion on the proper pronunciation of Fire Chief Ruppe's name.

Committee Reports; Funeral Committee, Sam reported that Garcia's Kitchen donated \$250 for the use of feeding our Honor Guard after funerals. The Honor Guard is always there representing our association and all they get in return is a good lunch. Thank you Garcia's and members of the AFDRA Honor Guard.

Picnic Committee, Morris Gutierrez stated that this year's picnic will be bigger and better than ever, so we hope you are planning on attending and joining in on the festivities. The date is August 22nd, starting at 11 am but get there early to get a table. The location is Rotary Park in Bernalillo. Bring your family for a great meal and enjoy the chance at a multitude of door prizes, raffles, and a silent auction.

Motorcycle Committee, Robby reported that this year's IAFF Motorcycle Group Rally will be in Shanksville PA in honor of the 25th year anniversary of 9-11. Four riders, a couple of spouses, and a safety vehicle will be making the trip leaving on September 2nd and then working their way to the IAFF Fallen Firefighter Memorial in Colorado Springs on September 19th.

The motorcycle group will be holding raffles at this year's picnic to help with fuel costs on the trip. Matters Good for the Association. Sam thanked all our members that responded to the Pentagon after 9-11 25 years ago and we reminded the members that the city has a 9-11 memorial with all of AFD's responders' names on it. The memorial is located on the eastern side of station 20 and is especially nice at night as it lights up. Robby Sanchez and Richard Sanchez gave an updated welfare report on Matt Gutierrez and Robert Otero. Both are healing up well and we hope that they are back on their bikes soon.

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 2025.

New Assistant Historian

Recently, Herman Bishop, our historian, appointed Gregory Aragon as his assistant. Greg provided the following information (2026).



I was born in Orange, CA (9/4/69), to Richard and Kathy Aragon of Albuquerque, NM; as the family was residing in Southern California in part to Richard being stationed at 29 Palms, Marine Base. After returning to the states from

service in Vietnam, Richard, and the Aragons moved from California to Albuquerque. I grew up mostly in New Mexico, graduated from Del Norte HS, attended and played football for Western New Mexico University, and by December 1988, I enlisted in the US Air Force. After basic training, San Antonio, TX, I relocated to Wichita Falls, TX, to complete my Air Force Technical School for Structures. Later, I moved to Ramstein, Germany, where I had a two-year deployment.

I separated from active duty in March of 1993, moved back home, and joined the New Mexico Air National Guard. In total, I served the military for 11 years.

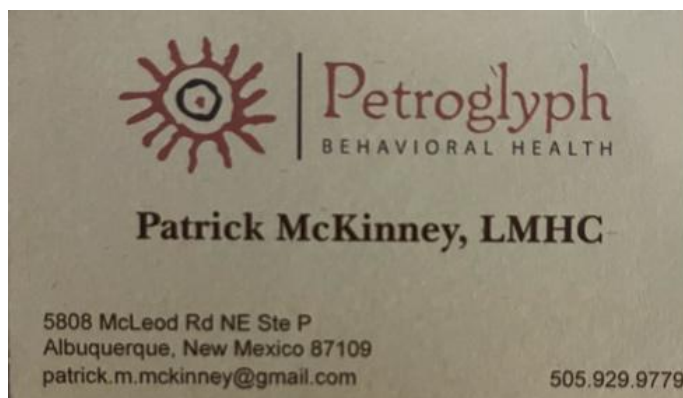
After returning to Albuquerque, I enrolled in the University of New Mexico and attended classes for a short time. At UNM, I met and later married, Judy Ortiz-Aragon (31 years of wonderful times together). I worked for my parent's business, was still a member of the Air Guard, and found time to help Judy with her paper-route each morning. One morning, Judy asked me if I'd ever consider trying out for the fire department. That question was met with a resounding, "Could you back the truck up? I threw that last paper into the bushes." I took up the challenge and signed up for the upcoming 57th cadet class (1996). I tested, passed all the requirements, and was never given a call back. This was not a deterrent for; it was a call to help build my commitment to serve the public. I immediately enrolled in T-VI's EMT-Basic program, completed it in the fall of 1996 and was licensed by February 1997. I applied for a position with the Kirtland AFB Fire Department during the fall of 1996 and was later hired to start in March of 1997. I served with the Kirtland Fire Department for the next 4 ½ years and decided to give Albuquerque Fire one more chance. By the winter of 2000, Albuquerque Fire Department opened up the hiring process for all current firefighters within the state and the surrounding areas. I was hired in the summer of 2001 (during 9/11) and by Christmas 2001, I worked from E15 on Christmas Day. For the next 25 years, I experienced assignments from every station in the Department's inventory. I retired as Captain from Station 9 in August 2025.

An article dated: December 9, 2024, from the University of New Mexico's [news-unm.edu/news-inspiring-graduates webpage](https://news-unm.edu/news-inspiring-graduates) briefly describes my educational journey with UNM.

"A Captain with Albuquerque Fire Rescue (AFR), Aragon spent his 30 years fighting fires and responding to medical emergencies... After more than three decades, Aragon will finally be walking across the stage this December with a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts from The University of New Mexico, all while being a full-time husband, firefighter, and student."

Work Cited: Skonieski, Alexa. "2024 Inspiring Graduate | Gregory Aragon." Inside UNM Latest News

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS!!





President's Message

By Kerry Horton

September is finally here and with it we hope some cooler temperatures and much needed moisture. Oh my gosh, it's true, when you get older all you talk about is the weather. Okay, on to other things, what a great picnic we had and what a great turnout. I'm guessing about 200 retirees and family came out for some great food and wonderful company and conversation. Let's just hope that next years is a little cooler, dang it, again with the weather.

September has become a month of memorials for firefighters ever since 9-11 and this year is the 25th anniversary of that dreadful day. If you are going to be in town, please join our AFDRA Honor Guard at the 9-11 memorial at Civic Plaza at 11 am for the ringing of the Four Fives for the 343 firefighters and the rest of those that lost their lives on that day. The New Mexico Chapter IAFF Motorcycle Group will be making their way to Shanksville PA. for the IAFF Motorcycle Rally at the crash site of United Airlines Flight 93. This is expected to be a very well attended memoria, and on the way back west the Motorcycle Group will make there way to Colorado Springs for the IAFF Fallen Firefighter Memorial on September 19. For those wishing to attend this year's Blue Mass, along with our AFDRA Honor Guard, it will be on Thursday, September 17 at 12:00 pm at Queen of Heaven Catholic Church located at 5300 Claremont Ave NE.

AFDRA Leadership

President, Kerry Horton	(505) 934-2969
Vice President, Donny Sanchez	(505) 228-3286
Secretary, Edward Abeita	(505) 250-7895
Treasurer, Mike Fox	(505) 385-7292
Historian, Herman R. Bishop	(505) 294-7165
President Emeritus, Sam Trujillo	(505) 400-3644

ADVISORY BOARD

Eulogio Lucero, Morris Guterrez, Pablo Garcia Jr. Santos Abeyta, Vince Holcomb, Fred Teupell, Louis C. Trujillo, Tommy Romero, Bill Raupfer, Anthony Nuanez, Jose Salaz, Emiliano Chavez, James Parra, Sam Trujillo