

Recruit NY 2012:

Recruiting and retaining manpower is one of the greatest challenges, if not the greatest challenge, we face in the volunteer fire service.

To help address this issue, FASNY created and launched the Recruit NY campaign last April in 2011. Hopefully this rings a bell for you and your department was able to draw in some great new recruits from the event. If your department did not participate last year, this is your year to get involved.

As you may or may not remember, the campaign's objective was primarily to implement a statewide recruitment initiative during National Volunteer Week in April 2011. This new approach saw FASNY, the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs, Association of Fire Districts of New York State, Volunteer Fire Police Association of the State of New York and County Fire Coordinators Association of the State of New York all join forces to assist fire departments in expanding their recruitment efforts. This was a first-of-its-kind type of effort and a very successful one, at that.

It took a strong effort by FASNY to get the word out about the campaign, but fortunately, for the most part, it caught on like wild fire. In the months leading up to Recruit NY weekend, April 9th and 10th, hundreds of fire departments from all areas of the state accessed recruitment resources, signage, communication tools, and tips via FASNY's special recruitment-gear website, www.recruitny.org, to help them conduct their open house.

Besides e-communications, informative postcards, online banner ads and targeted use of social media, another critical component of

FASNY's community outreach was establishing a partnership with Nice N Easy Grocery Shoppes and Stewart's Shops across the state. As part of this partnership, Nice N Easy and Stewart's printed out and hung up banners in their store windows to spread the message and encourage people to attend the event and volunteer at their local department. This certainly boosted public awareness as Nice N Easy has 80 stores in upstate New York and Stewart's Shops has over 300 locations in 30 counties across New York. We plan to capitalize on this partnership again this year, if possible, and perhaps expand to even more local shops.

The first Recruit NY event was very effective in most parts of the state. 53 out of the 62 counties in New York State participated, more than 150 media outlets were reached, and stories of this event infiltrated the web and news stations.

RECRUIT NY

This year, we want every fire department in New York State to open their doors to the public on April 21st and 22nd, 2012.

This year's Recruit NY event is scheduled for April 21st and 22nd as part of National Volunteer Week, April 15th - 21st, and you better believe FASNY is back at it, ramping up efforts to make this second annual event even bigger and more successful. We've heard what everyone has said regarding the strengths and weaknesses of last year's event and we've taken that feedback to

adjust and modify the campaign as needed to be more efficient this year. Preparations for Recruit NY 2012 are in full swing.

We're unveiling a new look for the downloadable "Volunteer NY" signage available to departments through www.recruitny.org, we've created our custom landing page on FASNY's Facebook page and



Photo by Robert Leonard



Photo by Michael Tamborrino

Is Your Department Ready for Round 2?



Photo by Chan Rivera

have devised other social media plans, and our e-communications strategy is set in place. We are again offering promotional items on the site such as helpful checklists of items to consider when planning for and hosting your open house. We want to remind departments that all of the materials and signage are customizable – you just need to take the files to your local print shop to have your individual event details added. It's that easy.

FASNY is hoping through the revamped communications and promotions that are part of our plan of attack for 2012 that this year's event will reach even more corners of the state, netting an even larger group of new recruits for departments everywhere. We ask that you share this event information with members of your department and community and encourage their participation. **We have to work together toward the common goal of recruiting and retaining manpower for the volunteer fire service of New York State. Your department's participation is vital.**

Here are some recruitment open house ideas to get your department started. Time is of the essence – begin planning and advertising now. Don't wait until it's too late. This event is to benefit your department.

Start Advertising Your Event:

- ▶ Consider reaching out to your local press for public service announcements – think: TV, radio, daily and weekly newspapers
- ▶ Hang up signs around your community, stick signs in your department's yard, and hang a banner on the front of your department
- ▶ Hang up posters and make announcements at high schools, churches and other important locations within your community
- ▶ Upload event information to the homepage of your department's website, Facebook page, etc. (Visit www.recruitny.org for a graphic to upload)

- ▶ Reach out to commercial and mercantile establishments in your community

Promote the Services Your Department Provides:

- ▶ During your open house, promote the services that your department provides to the community by having activities for the recruits to participate in and informative stations set up.
- ▶ Offer tours of the station and equipment
- ▶ Encourage recruits to try on turnout gear and an air pack
- ▶ Prepare a small tutorial on fire extinguisher use
- ▶ If feasible, offer fire truck rides
- ▶ Create specialized equipment displays (jaws of life, diving/water rescue)
- ▶ Set up a fire police and Fire Corps table for recruits with non-interior desires
- ▶ Play slideshow or video presentations of events, activities or training at your department



Photo by Robert Faugh

Let's combine forces to make Recruit NY 2012 an even bigger statewide success than last year by educating and drawing in more members, and showing the public just what it means to volunteer.

Here's to National Volunteer Week and Recruit NY 2012!

Visit www.recruitny.org for all your Recruit NY resources.

Let us know if your department is participating and find out what other ones are in your area on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/fasnyvf.