



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara praises this weekend's RecruitNY campaign to boost local volunteer firefighter, EMT ranks ~ find out if a department near you is holding an Open House

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 22, 2014

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**Elmira, N.Y., April 22**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) reminded area residents today that a number of the region's volunteer fire departments will hold open houses this weekend as part of "RecruitNY," a statewide public awareness initiative sponsored by the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY) and others to encourage the recruitment of local volunteer firefighters and EMTs.

The annual event, which takes place this year on April 26-27, is coordinated by FASNY in partnership with the state Association of Fire Districts, Association of Fire Chiefs, Volunteer

Fire Police Association and the County Fire Coordinators' Association.

"The challenge of recruiting volunteer firefighters and EMTs, especially in our rural, upstate communities, deserves all of the attention it gets. Keeping our corps of emergency services volunteers strong has to be a statewide priority. Our volunteer fire departments have long been the foundation of public safety and security, and the center of community service and civic pride, and we can't risk their decline," said O'Mara. "It's a challenge that we need to keep working on and raising awareness about. RecruitNY sounds the alarm and accomplishes these goals very effectively."

[Read more about local open houses in the April 22nd *Corning Leader* article attached below, the *Elmira Star-Gazette* [here](#), the *Chronicle-Express* [here](#) and the *observer-review.com* [here](#)]

According to FASNY, the number of volunteer firefighters statewide has declined from 140,000 in the early 1990s to less than 90,000 today. Volunteer emergency medical technicians (EMTs) experienced a decline from more than 50,000 to 35,000 during the same period, with some rural counties experiencing as much as a 50-percent depletion of their EMT ranks.

FASNY has also estimated that it would cost local taxpayers more than \$5 billion annually to replace volunteers with paid fire and ambulance services.

O'Mara, who together with local state Assemblymen Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) and Chris Friend (R-Big Flats) continues to sponsor legislation to address the challenge, praised the RecruitNY effort.

For a full list of fire departments locally and statewide scheduled to hold a RecruitNY Open House this weekend, visit [www.recruitny.org](http://www.recruitny.org).

Anyone interested in finding out if a RecruitNY Open House is being held in their community should contact their local department using the department's non-emergency contact number.