



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

'RecruitNY' campaign scheduled for the weekend of April 25-26 ~  
Many local volunteer fire departments will be hosting events ~ Find  
out more (UPDATED)

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 15, 2015

| ISSUE: [EMERGENCY SERVICES OR FEMA](#)



**Elmira, N.Y., April 15**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) reminded area residents today that a number of the region's volunteer fire departments will hold an Open House during the weekend of April 25-26, 2015 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 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."

[UPDATE: Read more in the April 23rd Corning Leader, "[Firefighters hope to bolster ranks this weekend](#)"]

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 \$7 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,C,I-Big Flats) continues to [sponsor legislation](#) to address the challenge, praised the RecruitNY effort.

For a county-by-county list of fire departments locally and statewide scheduled to hold a RecruitNY Open House, visit <http://www.recruitny.org/participation-area/>.