

Winter
2026
EDITION

HALL OF FLAME NEWSLETTER



Highlights

[Flooded With Love](#)

[Acker Night Music Showcase](#)

[Volunteer Spotlight](#)

[Gettin' Our Kicks on Route 66](#)

[Au Revoir To Our Autocar](#)

[Museum Staff & NHFF Board of Directors](#)



Hall of Flame
Website



@HallofFlameFireMuseum



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Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting



Hall of Flame
YouTube

The Great Floods

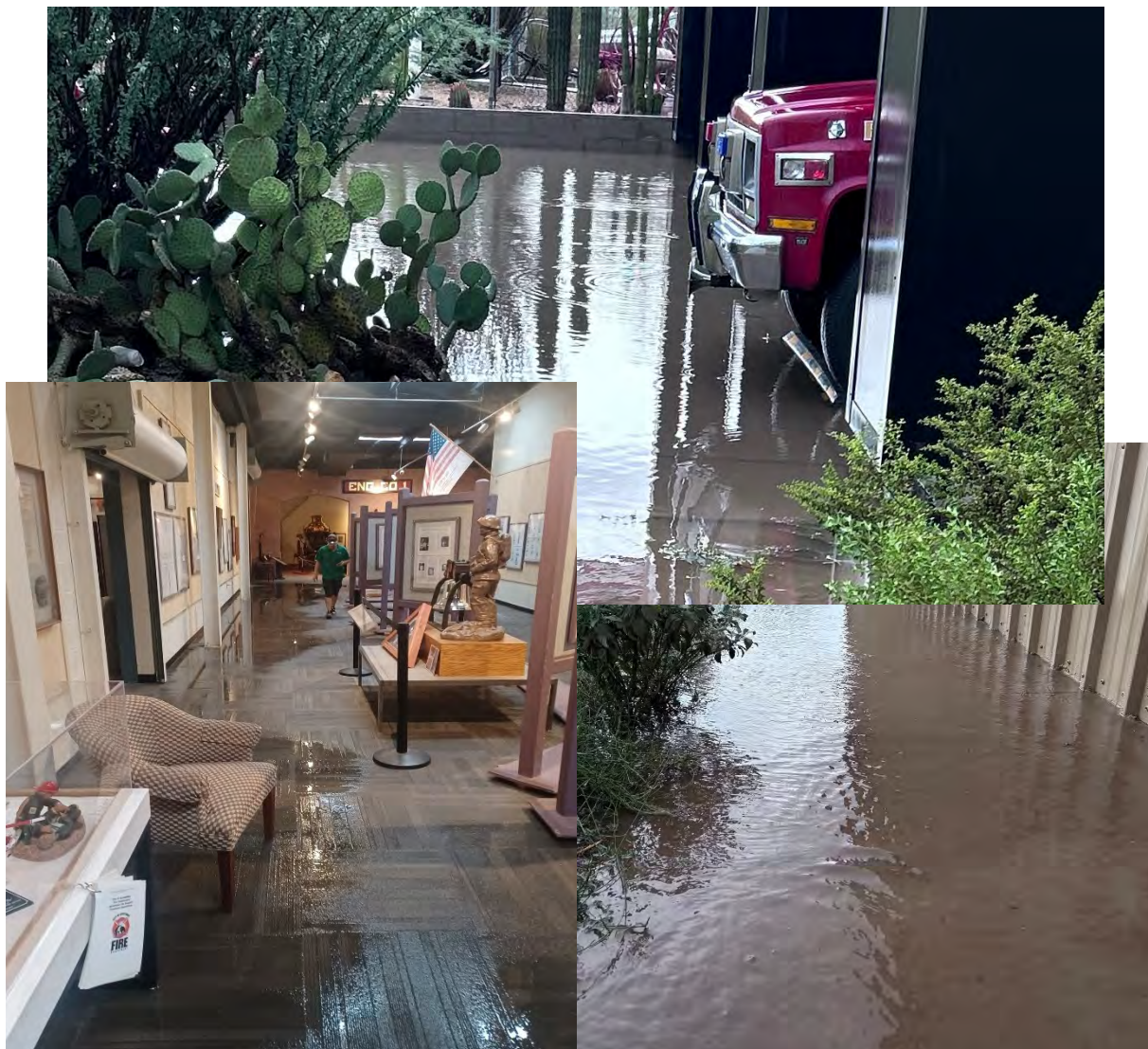
Remember how back at school, you'd be told if you didn't pay attention and study, you might end up being a ditch digger? Well, this past year the Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting learned first-hand what a noble and useful professional a good ditch digger is.

This past fall Mother Nature showed us all that she's the boss, and sometimes a mean and unpredictable boss. First on Friday, September 26, strong rains hit the museum and water rose into the Hall of Heroes, along the east side of the building. The carpet was soaked, requiring crews of volunteers to elevate the display panels in the hall up onto wooden blocks to keep them from water damage. The following day the water was extracted, fans were set out, and carpets were thoroughly cleaned by Martin's All Floor Service. The respite would be short lived.



On Monday, October 13, a second, even stronger microburst struck the east Valley. Tempe and East Phoenix were hit hard; roofs were torn off buildings and hundreds of trees were knocked down. Many people were displaced.

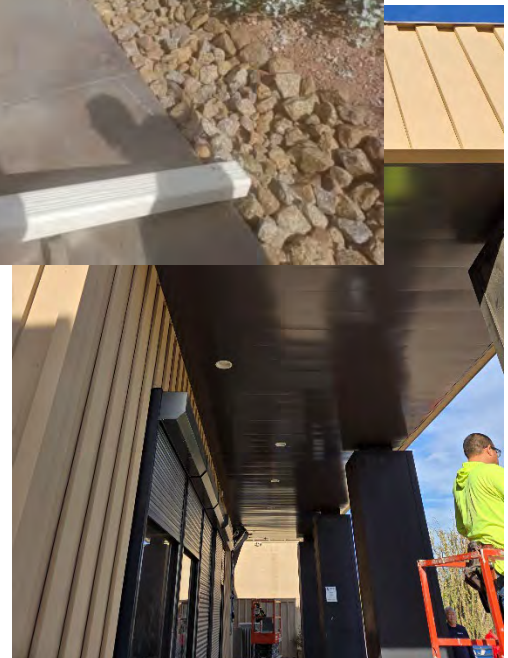
By comparison, The Hall of Flame was fortunate; still, we sustained thousands of dollars' worth of damage. Water again rose into the Hall of Heroes, and to a lesser extent into Gallery One and our library. Technician Alex of Brimley's White Glove Chem-Dry came to our rescue again that very day—continuing the job even after he received word that his own wife's car was damaged by a falling tree—clearing most of the water out of the hall. But the carpets there were still damp, and smelled like it, so a couple of days later the company returned to give the carpet a thorough shampooing.



After being hit in just over two weeks by two storms of the sort that would normally occur in Arizona once or twice in a decade, it was clear that provision for this sort of weather would have to be made to our facility. And it was here that the public showed us, heartwarmingly, how much the Hall of Flame means to them. Friend of the museum Christopher Weed organized a GoFundMe page to raise money for our recovery efforts, and virtually every media outlet in the local market did some sort of coverage of situation. Indeed, the coverage was so generous that it had an unexpected result: many people got the impression that we were closed because of the damage, which may have had an adverse effect on our attendance during the holiday season! In actuality, the Hall of Flame never closed, although we had to close the Hall of Heroes for a few days just after the events. We are open and fully functional now.

We quickly raised the funds we needed to launch our recovery efforts, with a beautiful new “French drain” style drainage ditch that runs north along the east side of the building and steers water toward the gulley to the west of the Hall of Flame. A few lighter rainfalls since the microburst have shown the ditch, built by Genesis Landscape Solutions under the direction of Brad Gunder, Tim Patrick, Jayson Gonzales and their team to be effective so far.

Donations also funded the repair of the ceiling under our front entryway. Goro and his team from Kovach Enclosure Systems in Chandler. We have other projects in mind for 2026, but thanks to our many kind supporters in the media and the public, we're off to a great start!



Acker Night

Downtown Prescott, Arizona, was a tuneful place this past December 12, as musicians and listeners gathered for the annual Acker Night Music Showcase, or “Acker Night” for short. The Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting was among the many businesses who had fun at the event.

Since 1988, Acker Night has enlivened Prescott’s downtown with a fun and festive evening. It’s named after James Samuel Acker (1865-1955), an Alabama native who settled in Prescott around 1902, and eventually operated a general store there. Acker willed several parcels of land to the city with the intent that they be used as parks and facilities to promote a love of music in young people. This year’s roster of talent featured well over a hundred solo acts and ensembles, both instrumental and choral, in genres ranging from devotional to classical to jazz to blues to funk, and instrumentation ranging from accordion to tubulum to ukelele.

It isn’t just performers who add to Acker Night’s appeal, however. Every year the downtown Prescott restaurants, bars and shops participate in the fun, as do other vendors set up in the street.



For the second year in a row, staff and volunteers from The Hall of Flame made the trip north from the Valley to represent the museum to passing revelers. Our friend Conrad Jackson supplied his yellowish-lime-greenish '50s-era Seagrave "Anniversary" pumper, covered from end to end with lavish holiday decorations, as a hub for the Hall of Flame folks to meet, greet and educate the Acker Night Crowd about the world's largest museum of firefighting history. The Hall of Flame's presence was supported not only by Conrad and his family but by the board of the (still in development) Granite Mountain Hotshots Museum, as well as Prescott Fire Chief Holger Durre. We had a primo location, too; right by the entrance to the historic Hotel St. Michael.

A great time was had by all; we look forward to returning in 2026



Volunteer Spotlight: Craig Chrisman



Our dedicated volunteers here at the Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting come from all over America, from New York and New England to the Midwest to Idaho to Colorado to California; a couple have even come from Canada. The first-hand national perspective this gives us on firefighting is a wonderful resource, but we're sometimes surprised at how few native Arizonans we have among our volunteer ranks.

We do have a few, however. Our current Volunteer Captain, Santos "Tim" Leija, is a native "Zonie. So is our volunteer of ten years Craig Christman.

Craig comes from Williams, Arizona, the famous "Gateway to the Grand Canyon" along old Route 66. He's a veteran of both wildland and structure firefighting.

“I started with the Forest Service after high school,” he recalls. “I went to lightning fires around northern Arizona.” His wildland career took him not only all over Arizona but to California, Oregon, Washington, Minnesota and New Mexico.

Eventually he was drawn out of the forest, however.

“Several friends of mine were on the Williams department,” he says. After a brief and homesick couple of years with Rural Metro, he returned to Williams. “I didn’t like Phoenix at first, so I moved back. I was on with Williams for a total of sixteen years.”

Eventually, however, he gave the Valley another chance, brought back by the strong pull of grandkids. Craig and his wife relocated here in 2013, and in 2016 he began his career as a Hall of Flame volunteer. As with so many of our volunteers, it was a post-retirement command from his wife.

“I had to do it for my mental health,” Craig admits. “I came to the museum for a visit, and I ran into [senior docent] Gary [Bohling] in the parking lot. He told me to go in and talk to [then-Volunteer Captain] Ron [Deutsch].”

Craig has been with us ever since, lending his skills as a handyman to many of our projects and his friendly personality to many of our events.

Asked for a memorable moment from his long career in firefighting, Craig recalls “When I worked for Rural Metro there was a big fire at a multi-story housing development.” It turned out to be an arson fire. “Somebody didn’t like the development because it blocked their view.”

Route 66 Road Trip

This past May, for the second year in a row, representatives of The Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting got their kicks on Route 66. The 2025 Route 66 Fun RunCQ, which traces 78 miles of the historic highway from Seligman to Kingman, Arizona, included classic vehicles from all over the U.S., and was watched by spectators from all over the world. Yet one of the eldest and most venerable participants was surely our 1918 American La France Triple T pumper from Mamaroneck, New York.

Mamaroneck named this Type 10 La France engine “Betsy.” She retains her original Champion chemical tank, but her original hard rubber tires have been replaced by modern pneumatics. The rig was refurbished by a collector and restorer named Russell who used her in parades; hence the name “Russell” on the hood. During the 1970s he donated the engine to the Hall of Flame. She was called a “triple combination” because she has a pump, a chemical tank, and carried over 800 feet of 2 ½ inch hose.





The rig's engine hadn't run in around 40 years, but Hall of Flame mechanics Paul Klusman, Jim Stigleman and Dan Kuefner spent about a year getting her up and running again. They got the spark plugs in order, put gas in the cylinders, and attached a small tank so they could feed the leaky carburetor a little gas at a time. At first, Betsy was backfiring but after Paul unclogged the valves she was soon purring away. By May, she was ready to be transported to Kingman to represent the Hall of Flame as a static display at the Fun Run. Jim, Dan and Paul, as well as Paul's intrepid spaniel Adelaide, made the trip with her.

A great time was had by all, but the event was really just a warm-up for this coming year's Fun Run, which celebrates the centennial of Route 66. The Hall of Flame Museum hopes to be there in May to wish the Great American Highway Happy Birthday! Relationships developed during our visits has led to an upcoming donation to the Hall of Flame; with the support of Kingman IAFF local # 4191 President Donnie Gilbert, Kingman Battalion Chief Tanner Miller, and Kingman Chief Jack Yeager, the Museum is set to receive a Seagrave rig that survived the BLEVE (Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion) disaster of July 5, 1973.

Au Revoir Autocar



2025 saw some new exhibits at the Hall of Flame Museum of Firefighting. But we also said a fond farewell to several trucks, sending them to new homes where they could be properly showcased, often the region from which they originated.

One of the most interesting of these pieces was our 1950 Autocar high pressure fog fire engine, which served the Merion Fire Company in Autocar's hometown of Ardmore, Pennsylvania. In June the rig was transported back east to join the collection a new museum. After some months in temporary storage in the town of Haverford Township, Pennsylvania, she's now in her permanent home, at the Battalion Chief John Magrann Fire Museum in Norristown. The Museum is named after the famed Philadelphia B.C. Magrann (1893-1954) who died in the line of duty, along with nine other Philadelphia firefighters and chiefs, in an industrial explosion in October of 1954.

Our Autocar unit has a 500 gallon tank with compartments for both water and Class B foam. She uses technology introduced by the John Bean Company in the 1930s to spray fruit orchards with insecticides. Bean adapted its high pressure piston pumps to fire apparatus around 1938, and the U.S. Navy employed these pumps for fire protection during World War II. Pumped at pressures of over 700 psi, the tiny fog particles lower the temperature of a fire scene, thus extinguishing the fire with a minimal amount of water, an ideal solution to the threat of fires in the compartments of Navy ships.

This rig is the result of this wartime experience. She has a 500 gallon water tank that supplies a 70 gpm pump with water at up to 700 pounds per square inch, and can be parked as close to a burning structure as possible, with no need to connect to a hydrant. The two high pressure hose lines can be used at once. Fires in rooms or attics of homes can be extinguished rapidly with little water damage; the high pressure fog also worked very well on small brush fires and car fires. During her 27 years in the Philadelphia suburb of Ardmore, the truck made over 8000 runs. Despite this heavy use, she was well maintained by the Ardmore Volunteers. She still has her original coat of paint and has been modified very little from her 1950 appearance.

From 1977 to 1981, the rig was owned by Jerry Ebling of Elmhurst, Illinois, after which she was displayed for many years at the Hall of Flame Museum. She had been in storage, out of the public eye for some years, however, when the decision was made to return her to her Commonwealth of origin. Matthew Hand, who supervised the transport from Arizona, also worked extensively on the truck to prepare for the final leg of her journey to Norristown.

“We’re very close to being able to run her on her own system, but we’re not there yet,” explains Hand, who has refurbished the spark plugs and the carburetor, and added new tires.



“A buddy of mine, very generous, put up the money for the tires,” Hand notes. “And Merion Fire Department donated the bell on the side.”

Thanks to this work, the Ardmore was able to make the last 18 miles of her odyssey, from Haverford to Norristown, on her own wheels.

“We were able to drive her over with a portable tank,” Hand says proudly.

The Merion Autocar’s progress can be followed on the Facebook pages “Siren of History: The 1950 Autocar Fog Unit” and “Battalion Chief John Magrann Fire Museum.”

Museum Staff

Executive Director: Chuck Montgomery

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Curator of Education: Mark Moorhead

Programs Manager: Dan Baker

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Vice President – Bert A. Getz, Jr.

Secretary/Treasurer – Michael J. Olsen

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Steve Meyer

Tim Wright

Volunteer Leadership

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1st Lieutenant: Mike Rains

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Treasurer: Jim Joy

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HALL OF FLAME



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