



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

# **Reminder: Your Chance to Be a Hero Is This Weekend**

Patty Ritchie

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ISSUE:

- [Firefighters](#)
- [Paramedics](#)
- [Towns or Counties](#)
- [Villages](#)



**Saturday, April 27th**

**Local Fire Departments to Open their Doors April 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> for “RecruitNY”**

State Senator Patty Ritchie is reminding the public that fire departments across Central and Northern New York will open their doors this weekend for “RecruitNY,” an annual event organized by the Fireman’s Association of the State of New York, or FASNY, to bring in new recruits.

“As last week’s horrific events unfolded in Boston, we saw firsthand how our first responders ran towards danger while many others were running away,” said Senator Ritchie.

“We also saw ordinary people stepping up and doing extraordinary things to help their neighbors. It’s something we have seen right here at home too. This weekend, people across the state will be given the same opportunity to get involved and make a difference in our communities.”

As part of this weekend’s statewide initiative, open houses will provide information about free training programs, responsibilities and what a typical day-in-the-life of a volunteer firefighter involves.

Attendees will also learn about some of the benefits you can receive from volunteering, like tax breaks offered by the state and some local communities.

For a full list of this weekend’s open house events, click [here](#).

For those unable to attend, Senator Ritchie has outlined benefits and services available to volunteer first responders in a new brochure which is available at her Oswego, St. Lawrence and Jefferson County offices or by clicking [here](#).

In recent years, the number of volunteers for fire, ambulance and other first responder companies has decreased from more than 200,000 volunteers in 1990 to about 125,000 today.

Senator Ritchie is answering the call to find new ways to recruit and retain volunteers, whose service is invaluable, especially in the rural communities she represents. To help attract volunteers, Senator Ritchie is working to provide more college tuition assistance to those who serve. In addition, she has proposed several measures to help lower costs and cut red tape for volunteer companies, including a bill that allows them to purchase electricity at lower rates that are reserved for non-profits and repeal of costly, one-size-

fits-all training mandates.

Previously, Senator Ritchie sponsored “Mark’s Law,” in response to the tragic death of Cape Vincent EMT Mark Davis, who was shot and killed while responding to an urgent call for medical assistance. The law provides a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for the murder of an emergency responder.

Most recently, St. Lawrence County officials received word that a \$100,000 grant Senator Ritchie secured for a new fire training facility has been approved.