



# The Rumor Mill

LOCAL 493'S PHOENIX CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

## CORRELATING

Union President & Fire Chief

I am excited to reintroduce our printed newsletter which we have titled "The Rumor Mill". This print is a decision that is a result of feedback we have received from the members. This effort reflects our commitment to enhance direct communication and keep you thoroughly informed. We plan to issue this newsletter quarterly, and I encourage you all to share your ideas with any member of our Executive Board to enrich future editions.

In this inaugural issue, I want to highlight the hard work of our Directors and Representatives (Reps) who are integral to our operations at the membership level. Recent structural changes aim to better serve you and ensure that decisions reflect broad input through our committees and subcommittees. Your participation and feedback are vital in shaping our stance on various issues. While the outcomes from these committees may not always align with the Fire Department's decisions, I am committed to advocating for the labor recommendations they generate. The RBO Process might not bring unanimous agreements, but I trust our Union Co-Chairs to represent all our members collective voices to the best of their ability.

### Key Updates from Your President:

- **April Contract Ratification:** We ratified a new contract. Although the financial aspects fell short of our hopes, our aim is to enhance not just wages, but also hours and working conditions. Plans are underway to secure funding for additional firefighters, fire trucks, and stations. These resources are crucial for reducing mandatory staffing (ERP), managing call volumes, and improving overall community service.
- **"Class and Comp" adjustments** (to be completed within the next month) that we have been working diligently to improve since last Augusts roll out.
- **Political Stance:** Local 493 will focus its endorsements exclusively on municipal races. This strategic choice is due to our strong relationships and influence within local politics, as opposed to the national level where our impact is less direct. For a detailed explanation, I invite you to view a video on our member resource page.
- **FUCancer and FORE93** - Within the last 7 months, the 493 Firefighter Foundation raised close to \$400k that goes directly to support our members.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication. Together, we will keep striving to represent your interests and improve our working conditions.

Bryan Willingham, President

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## XO/VP

Phoenix Chapter President & Executive Assistant Fire Chief

I want to start with thanking the members for their hard work in giving this Fire Department and the Union the good name that it has. It is my honor to serve the members. I truly love being a Phoenix Firefighter and beyond blessed for what it has provided myself and my family. That said, our mission isn't to convince members how to feel, it's to fight to make things better, regardless of our current circumstances. This mission extends beyond today—it's about respecting our past, improving our present, and paving a brighter future.

I can speak for everyone on the Executive Board when saying; we want our members participation to drive our priorities. If past decisions or the RBO Process have left you feeling disheartened, I urge you to engage again. There's no room for ego in our positions in the Local; my sole purpose is to support the members interests and aid in trying to make this department better than we left it. We need your direct input in committee meetings to truly grasp your needs and desires. Social media and station conversations do not always reach your union representative; without your voice in these formal settings, we risk missing your input on what is important and not getting a good gauge on "what the members want".

### Organizational Updates

With the growing demands of HR we've adapted our structure to better support members. The changes outlined below ensure clarity in roles and provide members with dedicated contacts for any issues requiring union representation. Effective April 1, 2024 the following changes will take place:

- **Tim West** joins me in the XO/VP lane to add his extensive experience in HR, focusing on hiring and promotions.
- **Josh Hart** will serve as the HR Director, with Chris Murphy and Matt Shields as HR Reps under his guidance.

We want to remind you that you have the freedom to choose any representative you prefer. For any questions regarding representation, we recommend reaching out to any of our Directors or Representatives who are well-equipped to assist you. Josh Hart is our lead on discipline-related issues, but for concerns specific to a division of the department, we encourage you to connect with the Director or Representative assigned to that area. They possess the best insight into the ongoing activities and historical context within their respective divisions and can offer the most accurate and effective guidance. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your division representatives whenever you need support or have questions. We are here to assist and ensure your concerns are addressed professionally and promptly.

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## Fire Crisis and Expansion Needs

Our advocacy efforts through Fire Crisis highlight the urgent need for over 400 new firefighters. This staffing will support the operation of additional trucks and the functioning of new fire stations throughout Phoenix. Despite approval to build six new stations—two of which are currently underway—these efforts are not sufficient to keep pace with the rapid population of Phoenix growth. Over the past decade, despite the city's population increasing by hundreds of thousands, only one station and two engines have been added. Our commitment to securing the necessary resources continues, as we cannot expect our firefighters to manage call volumes that were considered extreme ten years ago. This is unfair to our members and detrimental to the community, affecting response times and readiness of our firefighters.

As progress is made in adding facilities and equipment coupled with DROP retirement end dates and increase wave of members reaching eligibility for retirement in January 2025, we anticipate significant opportunities for hiring and promotions. If you are interested in participating in our hiring and promotional processes, I strongly encourage you to connect with Tim West. Tim has been instrumental in these areas, helping to shape how we select our new recruits and future leaders. His efforts ensure that our members have a voice in these decisions. Below, Tim has also provided the latest numbers on hiring and promotions.

## Nature Code RBO

Our dedicated group continues to make significant strides in enhancing our dispatch protocols. Thanks to adjustments last year in handling calls such as Assault, Check Welfare, 961, and others, we've seen a significant reduction in call volume. However, our efforts aren't over; we are actively working to improve responses to scenarios where the Fire Department may not be the most appropriate resource for 911 calls. We encourage more members to join this group, we will next begin evaluation of Rescue and Special Ops dispatches. If you are facing challenges with dispatch procedures, this group can provide the support and solutions you need. Representatives from alarm room are also in attendance at these meetings and want to help those in the field running the calls.

A special shout out to Steve Wagner, who has not only been an active participant in this group but has also contributed to legislative efforts at the state level to support our members and enhance community service. Thank you, Steve!

## Summer Classes

This summer, we will offer classes tailored to the topics we get the most questions about. We aim to provide valuable learning opportunities that address the most common questions we receive from our members. To ensure these classes meet your needs, we will be sending out a survey via our text messaging system. This survey will gather your feedback on what topics you would like us to cover. Based on preliminary input, potential topics include:

- Retirement planning for different tiers
- Understanding our compensation structure
- The negotiation process
- Insights into how the union operates

## In Closing

Your involvement and feedback are essential to our success. Please join us at the RBO meetings to ensure your voice is heard so we can have priorities and recommendations that are reflective of the opinions of our members.

Ben Lindquist, Executive VP

Tim West, Executive Director

### CHIEFS PROMOTIONS & FORECAST

- Current list is at #9
- 2024 Test
  - Tactical Oct. 28 - Nov. 1
  - Interview Nov. 4 - Nov. 8
- Retirements
  - 1 Retirement 10/24
  - 21 of 60 in DROP
  - 34 eligible for DROP

### CAPTAINS PROMOTIONS & FORECAST

- Current list is at #22
- 2025 Test expected in Spring 2025
  - No decision on extension
- Retirements
  - April has had 2 retirements
  - Next retirement is slated for June

### ENGINEERS PROMOTIONS & FORECAST

- Current list is at #51
- 2025 Test expected in 2025
- Retirements
  - April has had 2 retirements
  - May has 3 and June 4 projected retirement

**RECRUIT CLASS 24-1** (current): 43 recruits graduate 5/10/24 ~ **RECRUIT CLASS 24-2**: 57 recruits start 6/3/24

**RECRUIT CLASS 24-3**: 43 spots, 1<sup>st</sup> Rd. interviews: May 6-10, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rd. interviews June 10-14, start 9/23/24

**RECRUIT CLASS 25-1**: 31-50 spots, 1<sup>st</sup> Rd. interviews: October 7-11, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rd. interviews November 18-22, start 2/10/25

**RECRUIT CLASS 25-2**: estimated 45 spots, 1<sup>st</sup> Rd. interviews: June 9-13, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rd. interviews June 23-27, start 9/8/25



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## DIVISIONS

Directors & Reps in Divisions

## OPERATIONS

We are committed to addressing members needs within the Operations Division. Your participation in RBO committees directly influences the working conditions at your fire stations, and we urge you to remain actively involved. These committees play a huge role in shaping our strategies and improving our service delivery.

**Engine 62 Deployment:** Following the recommendations from the Apparatus Placement Subcommittee, Engine 62 will be put in service at Station 10 starting Wednesday, April 24th. Initially, it will be staffed by rovers, with plans to fill positions through ERSO on a long-term temporary basis. These positions are currently open for application. Once Station 62 is completed, Engine 62 will move there, and we will re-advertise these roles as permanent positions. A big thank you to all members who contributed their insights, helping us finalize the decisions regarding the placement and staffing of Engine 62.

### Recent Accomplishments:

- R942 has been successfully put into service.
- To assist with call volumes, R930 has been relocated to Fire Station 60 during the day, supporting R33 and R7.
- Rescue Conversion initiatives have been completed.
- We have secured additional Peak-Time Overtime Opportunities.
- R62 and E62 were launched prior to the completion of their respective stations.
- Update to Policy 104.02 has been implemented, reflecting our ongoing commitment to operational excellence.

### Goals Moving Forward:

- Get E74 and R74 into service (recruits currently in academy).
- Continue to push for the conversion of additional resources to better serve our community.
- Establish R942 as a permanent peak-time rescue unit.
- Implement Digital Vacancy Filings to streamline our internal processes.

Tim Gammage Jr., Operations Director

Matt Shaughnessy, Operations Rep

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## TRAINING

The department-wide search and rescue training data has been collected and is currently being analyzed. Key findings and areas for improvement will be summarized in a report that will be distributed to all members in an easily readable format. Deputy Chief Maki Lloyd and 493 Training Rep Elliott Simmons are collaborating with the Labor and Management teams, along with Public Affairs, to produce a video for PHXYou and FirePoint. This video will highlight important insights from the recent department-wide training and will provide updates on upcoming training opportunities.

The Advanced Firefighter Program (AFF) workgroup, established from the Engine Company Functions initiative, has been actively meeting to develop the curriculum for the program's training segments. The workgroup is expected to complete its efforts by the end of the summer, aiming for a fall launch of the new Advanced Firefighter program. Once the curriculum is finalized and approved by both labor and management, the application process for the program will be communicated to all members via a department-wide email.

Additionally, the training academy is introducing a new role: Recruit Training Instructor (RTI). This position is open to Firefighters and Engineers who are interested in serving full-time at the Phoenix Fire Department Training Academy as recruit trainers. Five positions will be available for Recruit Class 24-2, running from June 3, 2024, to September 13, 2024. Eligible members must have at least five years of service and have completed 200 rescue shifts. Recruitment for these positions will be advertised to the membership through a department-wide email from Wednesday, April 24, to Tuesday, May 8, 2024, at 10:00 AM.

Scott Crowley, Director of Training

Elliott Simmons, Training Rep



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## EMS

There are several important EMS updates that reflect our commitment to supporting our members in the EMS division.

- **New Assistant Medical Director:** Will assist with the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process and department-wide training initiatives.
- **Policy Updates:** We have updated multiple policies in Volume 12 to align more closely with current Phoenix Fire Department practices.
- **Behavioral Health and CR Units:** New Behavioral Health Units and CR units have been added to the field to enhance our response capabilities.
- **Telehealth Program:** A new Telehealth program has been implemented for Alarm Room and Operations, enhancing medical consultation availability.
- **UCapt Vending Machines:** 10+ Ucapt vending machines have been installed in stations, increasing the total to 41 machines across the department.
- **Partnerships for Ride Along Programs:**
  - **Valley Wise Hospital:** We have revamped our partnership to implement a Physician Ride Along program.
  - **U.S. Government:** Our partnership has also been revamped to allow Military Personnel to participate in Ride Along programs.
- **Fentanyl in Drug Boxes:** Fentanyl has been added to our drug boxes due to its improved outcomes and quality as a medication.
- **Handtevy Application:** The Handtevy application, a Pediatric/Adult dose calculator, has been implemented on EPCR tablets to aid in medical responses.
- **Continued Education:** We have hosted four large Continued Education lectures and seminars to further enhance our team's knowledge and skills.
- **Addition of Paramedics:** Approximately 100 new paramedics have been added to our system, significantly boosting our operational capabilities.

Additionally, we will continue to work on the following to help our members.

- **Tox Responder 2 Program:** Includes specialized Toxicology drugs for our Hazmat personnel.
- **Updated Clinical Guidelines:** New and updated Adult and Pediatric clinical guidelines have been implemented.
- **New Equipment:** We have acquired new equipment tailored to our specific needs including Cold Immersion Bags, better protective gloves, and new IV catheters, all selected through the RBO processes at EMS.
- **Year-Round Paramedic Training:** We continue process of year-round training for our paramedics to keep up with growth and retirements.

Gabe Orosco, Directors of EMS

Marshal Zeable, EMS Rep

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## HUMAN RESOURCE

We are pleased to report significant improvements in our payroll processes over the past year, thanks to dedicated efforts by Local 493 in collaboration with Fire administration and City HR. Thank you all for your patience working through all the issues we saw. Below are some Payroll updates.

- The Fire Department have made changes in the payroll department that have greatly enhanced the accuracy of fire payroll since December.
- Jessica Ehnbon has returned to the payroll team and has been instrumental in improving performance and adjusting differential pay.
- Payroll has corrected numerous incorrect phone numbers and contacts, and implemented HR aide assignments to districts to improve communication.
- New contact details have been distributed department-wide, and Firepoint has been updated with current contact information.
- 493 participated in an audit of the FLSA adjustments made in September to ensure all one-time payments were calculated correctly.
- Over the past year, more than 100 members have had their compensation rates corrected.
- Following the city's approval, 646 members will benefit from either step increases or merit date adjustments, enabling merit raises to be implemented sooner than originally planned.

### Discipline and Personnel Challenges

The world of HR and discipline in the PFD has been changing significantly, with DHS becoming more involved in due to numerous complaints that have been received directly by them without the complainant ever contacting the city or the Fire Department. This has significantly increased the workload for our Personnel department.

- **Investigations:** Currently, over 45 members are involved in various types of investigations.
- **Public Information Requests:** Personnel is currently handling requests from multiple agencies and entities while managing a backlog of past issues.
- **Local 493's Role:** We are actively working to minimize the impact of these challenges on our members.

We are committed to maintaining transparency and efficiency in our operations. Thank you for your continued dedication and professionalism. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us with your HR questions.

Josh Hart, HR Director

Chris Murphy, HR Rep

Matt Shields, HR Rep

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## MEMBER BENEFITS

Serve all Chapters of Local 493

**Last Check Meetings:** We held two 3-hour "Last Check" meetings for members scheduled to exit the DROP within the next 12 months. Additional classes will be scheduled and posted soon for those interested.

**Education Class:** A 3-hour PSPRS Tier 3 education class was conducted for Recruit Class 24-1. Additional classes will be offered over the summer.

**RFP Review:** Along with PPSLA, we reviewed extensive submissions from major health providers for the City of Phoenix Health Care plan. The Health Care Trust Fund Board has decided to continue with the current providers: Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Arizona for the PPO and High Deductible Plan, Banner/Aetna for the HMO plan, and CIGNA for the PPO and HMO Dental plans. This will be presented for approval in coming weeks at city council

### Concerning Health Plan Developments:

- The Trust Reserve Fund for our Health Plan is declining, notably after a \$28 million expenditure for COVID-related expenses. Although \$21 million was reimbursed through ARPA funds, the City opted not to return the remaining \$7 million.

### Proposed Changes to Benefits (vigorously opposed by Local 493):

- Reduction in payments for chiropractic care, potentially increasing out-of-pocket costs for members.
- Modification of HSA payments from a lump sum in January to a biweekly basis, affecting members who meet their high deductible early in the year.
- Projected health insurance premium increases of up to 15%, coupled with no salary raises in the current contract.
- Possible increases in deductibles, copays, and coinsurance.
- Removal of adult orthodontia treatment from the lower premium PPO dental plan.
- Discontinuation of the policy allowing deductibles met in the final quarter to carry over to the next year.
- Consideration of eliminating the City of Phoenix Non-Medicare Health Care Plan.

We understand these changes may impact you and are committed to keeping you informed and advocating on your behalf. Please feel free to reach out to us with any concerns or questions.

Brian Moore, VP of Member Benefits

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### The 493 Firefighter Foundation (formerly just "Charities")

Our commitment to both our community and our members continues to thrive through the impactful work of the 493 Firefighter Foundation. As we refine the branding and functionality of our organization, our primary goal remains to support our firefighters' community efforts and assist our members in need, such as through the Cancer Fund. Here are some highlights of recent efforts:

- **Fill the Boot Campaign:** Led by Matt Lawson, this effort raised six figures for the MDA of Arizona over three weekends. A heartfelt thank you to all members who participated, both on duty and during their days off.
- **Pykare Bass Tournament:** Coordinated by Troy Crawford and team members Larry Kindred, Sam Taylor, Jimmy Barker, Robbie Barker and Chad Masciotra, along with the Emerald Society, this event successfully raised funds for our Cancer Fund, directly aiding members battling cancer. Special thanks to Lon Leonelli and Board Up as the title sponsor.
- **Fore93 Golf Tournament:** In its inaugural year the golf tournament was a huge success bringing in over \$80k and a blast for attendees. Thank you to Scott Crowley for helping the charity team make this thing a win!
- **Dropkick Coffee Partnership:** Sales continue to grow, with \$5 from every bag or case sold being donated directly to our foundation.
- **Branded Beer Release:** May 5 we will launch a branded beer, with a portion of each sale benefiting the foundation.
- **Scholarship Ceremony:** This year, we will award \$70,000 in scholarships to children of our members graduating from high school, supporting their college education. Notably, five scholarships will provide funding throughout all four years of college. Crystal McCracken does an incredible job on this year after year, if you get a chance please say thank you to her!

A common question concerns the source of the foundation's funding. We assure you that no funds are derived from member dues. All resources are generated through fundraising activities and donations to our 501c3 entity. This approach enhances our ability to support our members and extend services without increasing dues. We look forward to providing more updates as we transition fully to the Foundation model. We are currently working on FU Cancer and other fall events if you would like to help do not hesitate to reach out.

Cody Brooks, Executive Director

David Ramirez, Director of Community Programs & Partnerships

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**Signup for Local 493 Text Message Updates**

To further enhance our communication efforts, we are implementing additional methods to ensure you receive timely updates effectively.

**Text Message Updates:** We believe that sending updates via text message is the most convenient method for everyone. To receive these updates, you need to **opt-in** to promotional communications on website at QR code. This is a requirement from our text message software provider to ensure messages are not blocked or marked as spam. Please note, despite the "promotional" label, we will only send relevant department updates.

**Access Online Updates:** You can also visit the Phoenix Chapter Update page to view past updates and frequently requested policy documents.

**Common Questions Addressed:**

- **Opting In:** You must opt in to receive text messages. This step is crucial to prevent our updates from being filtered as spam.
- **Stopped Receiving Texts?:** If you previously received texts but they stopped, you might have inadvertently replied "STOP" or blocked our number. To resume receiving messages, please sign up again and ensure you opt in.
- **Switch from Emails to Texts:** If you previously received updates via email, you must actively sign up for text updates and opt in. You will not be automatically added to the text updates.

We are committed to keeping you informed and connected. Your feedback and participation in these new communication methods are invaluable.

LINK TO QR CODE ADDRESS: <https://mailchi.mp/local493.org/pfd493members>

## LOCAL493.ORG



Marco Martinez continues to bring great designs for our 493 swag. You can purchase online and have shipped directly to your house! 100% of proceeds go to the 493 Firefighter Foundation!



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## LOCAL 493 - PHOENIX CHAPTER

### THE MEMBERS

(T) = Elected Trustee

Serves Phoenix Chapter (elected or appointed)

Serves all 493 (Appointed by 493 President)

493 Firefighter Foundation Positions

#### TRUSTEES & EBOARD

Trustee Richie Robnett	Trustee Scott Durfee	Trustee Cody Brooks	Trustee Marshall Zeable	Trustee Joe Moreno	Trustee Matt Shields
Trustee Mike Brannan	Trustee Tom Carreto	Trustee TJ Gemmaro	Trustee Keith Rogers	Trustee <b>VACANT</b>	Trustee David Ramirez
Trustee Elliott Simmons	Trustee Matt Shaughnessy	Trustee Brenda Johnson	Trustee Mike Dufry	Trustee Al Quintana	Trustee Chris Murphy

VP of Government Affairs (PFA) Tom Carreto
Phoenix Political Liaison <b>VACANT</b>
Central Political Director Mike Brannan
VP Political Affairs Tim Knobbe

#### SECTION RBO's

<b>TRAINING</b> Director of Training Scott Crowley Training Rep (T) Elliott Simmons	<b>OPERATIONS</b> Operations Director Tim Gammage Jr. Operations Rep (T) Matt Shaughnessy	<b>HUMAN RESOURCE</b> Director of HR Josh Hart HR Rep (T) Chris Murphy HR Rep (T) Matt Shields Payroll Specialist Scott Porter	<b>EMS</b> EMS Director Gabe Oroscio EMS Rep (T) Marshall Zeable	<b>COMMUNITY + COMMUNICATIONS</b> Director (T) Cody Brooks Charity Rep (T) Dave Ramirez
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Firestrong Staff Kerry Rameila Brian French Retiree Intern David Fisher	Member Services Interns Charles Cicconi Marcus Steele	VP Member Services Ray Malone	Director of Member Benefits Jan Rogers
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#### Meet Monthly XOMP

Executive Director Tim West	Phoenix Chapter President (VP) Ben Lindquist	XO
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#### Meet Quarterly CORRELATING

493 President Bryan Willingham	Fire Chief
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**Phoenix Fire Department "Big Eight"**  
Labor Co-Chairs

- Deployment  
Ben Lindquist
- Training & Special Ops  
Scott Crowley
- Human Resource  
Josh Hart
- Physical Resource  
Mike Brannan
- EMS & Community Health  
Gabe Oroscio
- Community Risk Reduction  
PJ Dean
- Technology & Innovation  
Cody Brooks
- Health & Safety  
Ben Lindquist

Sgt. at Arms Brandon Leon	Treasurer Ed Beuchien	Secretary PJ Dean
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