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## More than 1,000 People Expected to Gather for Minnesota Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service on State Capitol Grounds Sept. 30

ST. PAUL, MINN. (September 2018) — Minnesotans – including families of firefighters who died in the line of duty, firefighters from around the state, community leaders and the public – will gather at the Minnesota Fallen Firefighter Memorial Sept. 30 to remember those who paid the ultimate price and honor the families that survive them.



The **2018 Minnesota Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service** is a solemn ceremony that will take place on the grounds of the State Capitol starting at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 30. This year's memorial service will honor two firefighters who died within the past year, and seven families and fire departments of firefighters who died between 1934 and 1989. Governor Mark Dayton, Assistant Commissioner Robert Hawkins and National Fire Academy Superintendent Tonya Hoover are all scheduled to attend.

Since 1881, 227 Minnesota firefighters have died in the line of duty. Their names have been inscribed on columns throughout the nationally recognized memorial, located on the south side of the Capitol grounds.

The memorial service is held each year on the last Sunday in September, which has been designated as the state's official day to honor Minnesota's fallen firefighters. This year's memorial service will honor firefighter Timothy Royce and Fire Captain Jeffrey Vollmer, who died in line of duty in 2017 – 2018, two fallen firefighters' families the Minnesota Fire Service Foundation was able to track down since last year's memorial service, as well as four Minnesota fire departments who lost firefighters in the 1950s, 1960s and 1980s. The foundation coordinates the effort to recognize the state's firefighters who died in the line of duty and provides support and resources to fire departments, firefighters and their families throughout Minnesota.

Fallen firefighters who will be recognized at the 2018 service include:

**Timothy Royce (Mapleton):** On March 30, 2018, Royce suffered a heart attack after answering to a traffic crash and then a medical call the previous evening.

**Fire Captain Jeffrey Vollmer (Mayer):** On Dec. 19, 2017, Capt. Vollmer suffered a heart attack after a training exercise.

**Harlow J. Tischer (Minneapolis):** On Jan. 23, 1947, Tischer was killed along with three other firefighters during a fire rescue after the Hull-Dobbs Auto Sales garage floor collapsed into the basement.

**Albert Roos (Mankato):** On March 11, 1934, after helping three other firefighters to the roof of a building during a fire, Roos was adjusting their hose line when he suffered a fatal heart attack.

Flag boxes will be also presented to the Rochester Fire, Winona Fire, Lyle Fire and Ostrander Fire Departments, recognizing their line-of-duty deaths and families:

**Stanley O'Brien (Rochester):** On Dec. 24, 1953, O'Brien and a fellow firefighter died while trying to rescue a young child that fell through the ice on Silver Lake in Rochester.

**Alvin Pagel (Winona):** On Oct. 16, 1963, Pagel suffered a fatal heart attack while on duty at the station.

**Daniel Wroblewski (Winona):** On Sept. 30, 1989, Wroblewski suffered a heart attack after leaving the scene of fire.

**Chief Charles L. Drenth (Lyle):** On Dec 23, 1983, Drenth and his son were putting out a fire in their own chimney, while waiting for the fire truck to arrive. Shortly after the fire was extinguished, he collapsed from an apparent heart attack.

**John Schwenn (Ostrander):** On April 24, 1986, Schwenn suffered a fatal heart attack after leaving the scene of a fire.

An inter-denominational prayer service will take place prior to the memorial service on Sunday at 10:45 a.m. At 11:30 a.m., fire service personnel from the Minnesota Fire Service Foundation's founding organizations will read the Honor Roll – all 227 names of fallen firefighters.

Starting at 12:45 p.m., families will enter the Capitol grounds through a sea of uniforms, and be escorted to their seats. The service begins at 1 p.m., and is scheduled to conclude at approximately 3:20 p.m., when family members and the public are welcome to spend time within the Fallen Firefighter Memorial and make etchings of their loved-one's name. During the service, families of fallen firefighters who haven't yet been honored in a public ceremony will receive a Minnesota State flag that has been flown over the State Capitol.

Firefighters from across the state are expected to attend in order to show support for their fallen colleagues and the families they left behind.

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#### **ABOUT THE MINNESOTA FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL**

In 2011, the Minnesota Fire Service Foundation launched an initiative to move the Minnesota Fallen Firefighter Memorial from the baggage claim area at Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and create a larger, more accessible and interactive memorial on the grounds of the State Capitol. The new memorial gives families, friends, co-workers and community members a permanent location to pay tribute to these men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The Fire Service successfully raised \$720,000 to fund the memorial through donations from the public, Minnesota businesses and, primarily, from the state's firefighting community. Financial contributions to fund educational scholarships for children of active, retired or deceased firefighters, and for spouses of deceased firefighters and support for firefighters and their families in times of need can be sent to: Minnesota Fire Service Foundation c/o Beacon Bank, 7890 Mitchell Road, Eden Prairie, MN 55344. Online contributions can be made at [www.MNFireServiceFoundation.org](http://www.MNFireServiceFoundation.org). All contributions are tax deductible.