



PRESS RELEASE

VISIT SYRACUSE

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Official Press Release

STATE FIRE CHIEFS' CONFERENCE & EXPO COMING TO SYRACUSE

Convention to bring 13,000 + people, utilizing 10 local hotels for three years

Syracuse, NY (November 21, 2017) – Visit Syracuse is officially proud to announce that the largest emergency services convention and exhibition in the Northeast, has committed holding their event in Syracuse for three consecutive years. The New York State Association of Fire Chiefs' (NYSAFC) Annual Conference & FIRE Expo will be held downtown in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

NYSAFC Executive Director Jerry DeLuca noted, "The central location of Onondaga County enables the association to accommodate our members traveling from all regions of New York State. And the revitalized downtown Syracuse area, with so many quality lodging and dining options near the Oncenter, will be appealing to our participants. It will allow us to continue to grow what is already one of the premier emergency services events in the nation."

"This is outstanding news," said Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney, "We know the Visit Syracuse team has worked extremely hard on selling the destination to conference organizers and we couldn't be more pleased to know that our local hotels and economy will benefit tremendously from their hard work."

Visit Syracuse Convention Sales Manager Chad Welch was the major player who helped to sway the unanimous decision to book the event in Central New York. Thanks to his creative sales pitch, dedication and attentiveness to the needs of NYSAFC, more than **13,000 people are anticipated to attend** this event each year, for three years; featuring over 300 exhibitors, workshops, hands-on training, and networking activities for fire service leaders from across New York State.

"Words can't express how excited our Visit Syracuse team is to welcome this prestigious organization," said Welch. "But we couldn't have booked the conference without the collaborative efforts of local hotels, The Oncenter, Downtown Committee, Onondaga Historical Association, and Onondaga County officials."

The **annual Conference & FIRE Expo will be held in the Oncenter**, located in downtown Syracuse. Exhibits, including apparatus displays, will be situated inside the venue and outside along streets adjacent to the state-of-the-art facility. Classroom education programs and other activities will also be held in the Oncenter. The Syracuse Fire Department will be hosting NYSAFC's popular hands-on training program at its nearby, fully equipped training facility.

NYSAFC has reserved room blocks in more **10 hotels**, most within walking distance to the Oncenter. The newly remodeled **Marriott Syracuse Downtown will serve as the host hotel**, housing NYSAFC staff and volunteers. Visit Syracuse is working closely with NYSAFC to secure ample parking, coordinate shuttles to the venue, and designate nearby camping facilities.

NYSAFC's first conference and organizational meeting was held in Syracuse in 1904, where Syracuse Fire Chief John Quigley was elected the first president of the association. More recently, the event was held at the Empire Expo Center – New York State Fairgrounds from 1998-2005.

For more information, contact **NYSAFDC Executive Director Jerry DeLuca**, jdeluca@nysfirechiefs.com, (518) 441-8084 or **Visit Syracuse Communications Director Nikita Jankowski** at 315-706-4443, njankowski@visitsyracuse.com.

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ABOUT NYSAFC

The New York State Association of Fire Chiefs (NYS AFC) is a not-for-profit organization based in New York's Capital District with more than 10,000 members. NYSAFC has served career and volunteer fire chiefs, officers, and emergency services personnel throughout New York state since 1904.

ABOUT VISIT SYRACUSE

Visit Syracuse, Inc. is Onondaga County's official marketing organization for tourism related economic development; leading the production of over \$865 million in direct visitor spending annually. The organization aims to strengthen the positive awareness of the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County as a convention and visitor destination; to increase revenues and stimulate economic development and growth for the community.

