

County's Emergency Services to kick off recruitment campaign with gala

RAMAPO — The Committee to Promote Volunteerism in Rockland County Emergency Services will debut three videos Thursday in the Rockland Community College auditorium.

The gala event begins the committee's new recruitment and retention campaign.

The videos, produced by volunteers, depict just a small bit of the work done by the county's firefighters in recent years and are geared toward several different audiences — one toward teens and 20-somethings, a second toward people in their 30s and 40s, and another toward [local businesses](#).

"Having someone stand up in front of a group and talk about what they do is hard," said Frank Hutton, chairman of the committee and volunteer firefighter with the South Spring Valley and Nanuet fire departments. "What we're going to do is air these videos and then let our volunteers answer questions."

The videos will likely be aired when volunteers attend church groups, schools and other gathering during which volunteers are sought. Hutton said that during the first stage of the recruitment campaign, such meetings will occur often.

Gordon Wren Jr., [director](#) of Rockland's Fire and Emergency Services, said the cost for the campaign will be covered by a SAFER grant, or Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response, that was awarded to the committee by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The grant has provided the county with just over \$1 million to spend on recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters for the next four years.

Hutton said that some of the money had been spent to professionally produce the three videos and that other [funds](#) are on reserve for tuition reimbursement for volunteers who attend Rockland Community College. Still other funds will be spent on newspaper, radio and television advertisements in the coming months and years.

Thursday's gala will [feature](#) live music from local

bands, dancing, games and prize giveaways.

Wren said the event is open to the public and also urged volunteers and their families to attend.

He said that all residents should consider joining the county's 2,800 or so volunteers.

"A lot of people have careers that they like," Wren said, "but if you're an action-oriented person, responding to emergencies like our volunteers do gets in your blood. It's addictive and can fill a need in a lot of people."

Hutton said the gala is designed to say thank you to the residents, volunteers, politicians and local [businesses](#) that have kept Rockland's emergency services steady over the years.

"The event itself is really a celebration for all of our volunteers — our firemen and our [ambulance corps](#)," he said.



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If you go

What: The Committee to Promote Volunteerism in Rockland County Emergency Services' Recruitment and Retention Gala

Where: The Rockland Community College auditorium, 145 College Road, Suffern

When: 7 to 9:30 p.m. Thursday.

Cost: \$5, tickets sold at the door.

For more information see: rocklandsbravest.org



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