

**BY:** Senator O'MARA

**HONORING** William "Bill" Fries upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition after 40 years of distinguished service as Chief of the Hammondsport Fire Department

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those distinguished citizens whose professional lives and civic endeavors have been characterized by an unwavering commitment to excellence, leadership, and service to their communities; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor William "Bill" Fries upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition after 40 years of distinguished service as Chief of the Hammondsport Fire Department, celebrated at its Annual Gala on May 9, 2026; and

**WHEREAS,** William "Bill" Fries has dedicated nearly five decades of exemplary service to the Hammondsport Fire Department and to the residents of the Village of Hammondsport and surrounding communities; and

**WHEREAS,** Chief Fries joined the Hammondsport Fire Department on May 1, 1977, embarking upon a remarkable career of volunteer service that has spanned 49 years and continues to inspire generations of firefighters and community members alike; and

**WHEREAS,** Following distinguished service as Assistant Chief from 1981 through 1985, William Fries was elected Chief of the Hammondsport Fire Department in 1986; this year marks the milestone of 40 years as the department's chief officer, a tenure defined by steadfast leadership, professionalism, and devotion to public safety; and

**WHEREAS,** Throughout his extraordinary career, Chief Fries has served the Hammondsport Fire Department in numerous capacities, including Assistant Chief and Secretary, and has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication to the welfare of both his department and the community it serves; and

**WHEREAS,** In recognition of his outstanding service, Chief Fries was named Fireman of the Year by the Hammondsport Fire Department in 1989 and, in 2023, was honored as Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year by the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs during its 117th Annual Conference and FIRE 2023 Expo in Syracuse, New York; and

**WHEREAS,** Under Chief Fries' leadership, the Hammondsport Fire Department has committed itself to training and preparedness at the highest level, resulting in one of the few volunteer fire departments in New York State achieving an ISO rating of 3, a reflection of the department's operational excellence and commitment to community safety;

and

**WHEREAS,** Chief Fries has completed extensive professional training and earned numerous New York State certifications in disciplines including fire suppression, incident command, hazardous materials response, rescue operations, emergency vehicle operation, wildfire tactics, water rescue awareness, public safety leadership, terrorism awareness, fire investigation, and emergency medical response, among many others; and

**WHEREAS,** His commitment to education and professional development has extended far beyond his own department, as he has consistently sought innovative training opportunities for firefighters throughout the region and has welcomed neighboring departments to participate in drills, hands-on exercises, and classroom instruction hosted by the Hammondsport Fire Department; and

**WHEREAS,** Chief Fries has further distinguished himself through decades of service to regional fire service organizations, including service as a member of the Steuben County Fire Advisory Board, a longtime member and Treasurer of the Steuben County Fire Chiefs Association, a Past President of the Steuben County Fire Chiefs Association, and since 2012, as a Steuben County Deputy Fire Coordinator, known throughout the region as Car 93; and

**WHEREAS,** His leadership has been characterized by an unwavering commitment to interagency cooperation and collaboration, fostering strong working relationships among neighboring fire departments, county agencies, state agencies, and emergency service organizations for the betterment of public safety throughout the Finger Lakes region; and

**WHEREAS,** Beyond his extensive fire service accomplishments, Chief Fries has devoted countless hours to the betterment of his community through service on the Hammondsport Community Services Board, employment with the Taylor Wine Company, service as a certified water operator for the Village of Hammondsport Department of Public Works, and a distinguished career as a bus driver and Transportation Supervisor for the Hammondsport Central School District; and

**WHEREAS,** For more than 20 years, Chief Fries served as Transportation Superintendent for the Hammondsport Central School District, where he played a vital role in advancing student safety initiatives, fire and life safety education, and fire prevention programs; and

**WHEREAS,** Through his active participation in school career day programs and youth outreach initiatives, Chief Fries has inspired many students to join the fire service as junior firefighters, thereby helping to secure the future of volunteer firefighting in his community; and

**WHEREAS,** Volunteerism has long been a family tradition for the Fries family, with multiple generations actively serving in the Hammondsport Fire Department, reflecting Chief Fries' enduring commitment to public service and community involvement; and

**WHEREAS,** Widely respected as a mentor, educator, ambassador for fire safety, and champion of volunteerism, Chief Fries is known throughout the region for his integrity, compassion, and tireless dedication to firefighters and their families; and

**WHEREAS,** Colleagues and community members alike regard Chief Fries as the "heart and soul" of the Hammondsport Fire Department, a role model whose leadership, humility, and service have earned the admiration and gratitude of all who have had the privilege to serve alongside him; and

**WHEREAS,** The residents of Hammondsport, Steuben County, and New York State have been the beneficiaries of William Fries' extraordinary commitment to public safety, civic engagement, and community service; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor William "Bill" Fries upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition after 40 years of distinguished service as Chief of the Hammondsport Fire Department, and to commend him for his exceptional leadership, unwavering dedication, and enduring contributions to the fire service and the citizens of New York State; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to William "Bill" Fries.