

Assembly Resolution No. 1208

**BY:** M. of A. Barclay

**COMMEMORATING** the 150th Anniversary of the Oswego  
Fire Department

**WHEREAS,** It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and honor those distinguished public institutions which have faithfully served their communities and have contributed significantly to the safety, welfare, and heritage of the citizens of the State of New York; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Oswego Fire Department, to be celebrated in 2026; and

**WHEREAS,** The origins of organized fire protection in the City of Oswego date back nearly two centuries to May 13, 1828, when the newly elected Board of the Village of Oswego appointed its first four Fire Wardens, who served as the community's earliest firemen; and

**WHEREAS,** On April 18, 1829, the Board appointed 25 men as the first official volunteer firemen of the Village, establishing a tradition of courage and civic duty which would define the department for generations; and

**WHEREAS,** With the delivery of its first hand-operated fire engine on February 1, 1830, and the construction of its first fire station in 1834, the Oswego Fire Department began to formalize and strengthen its firefighting capabilities; and

**WHEREAS,** Throughout the early 19th century, additional fire companies were formed, including hook and ladder companies and leadership positions such as Chief Engineer, reflecting the Department's rapid growth and increasing organization; and

**WHEREAS,** On April 12, 1842, the New York State Legislature formally incorporated the entity as the "Fire Department of the Village of Oswego," and later, in 1852, redesignated it as the "Fire Department of the City of Oswego" following the City's incorporation; and

**WHEREAS,** The department continued to evolve with advancements in firefighting technology, including the introduction of steam-powered engines in 1865 and the installation of fire hydrants in 1867; and

**WHEREAS,** By 1875, the Oswego Volunteer Fire Department had reached its peak strength, consisting of 10 companies and more than 600 members; and

**WHEREAS,** A significant milestone occurred on May 19, 1876, when legislation was enacted to establish the Oswego Fire Department as a paid professional department, followed by the formation of the Board of

Fire Commissioners and the appointment of its first paid officers and firemen; and

**WHEREAS,** Over the decades, the Department has demonstrated resilience and dedication in responding to major incidents, including the devastating fire of May 20-21, 1892, the most destructive in the City's history; and

**WHEREAS,** The Oswego Fire Department has continually embraced innovation, transitioning from horse-drawn apparatus to motorized engines in the early 20th century, incorporating emergency medical services in 1972, and expanding into specialized rescue operations including marine and scuba rescue; and

**WHEREAS,** The department has also honored the ultimate sacrifice of its members, including Fireman John W. Dougherty, who died in the line of duty on February 10, 1904, exemplifying the bravery and commitment of all who have served; and

**WHEREAS,** Through the leadership of numerous Fire Chiefs and the dedication of countless firefighters, the department has maintained its mission to protect life and property while adapting to the evolving needs of the community; and

**WHEREAS,** Today, the Oswego Fire Department stands as a modern, highly trained, and well-equipped professional organization, continuing its proud tradition of service with the recent addition of new apparatus in 2026; and

**WHEREAS,** The 150th Anniversary of the Oswego Fire Department provides a fitting opportunity to reflect upon its rich history, honor its members past and present, and recognize its enduring contributions to the City of Oswego and the State of New York; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Oswego Fire Department, and to extend its deepest appreciation to all those who have served and continue to serve with courage, professionalism, and unwavering dedication; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Oswego Fire Department.