



Millbrook wins sixth straight

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# Grant to study firefighter recruitment

By Alex Bridges

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WINCHESTER — “A big experiment” aims at helping localities recruit and keep volunteer firefighters.

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association recently received a federal grant for \$942,080 to conduct the Volunteer Workforce Solutions study. The effort uses two approaches to study recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. The grant applies to firefighters only, not people solely in emergency medical services or administration, though officials acknowledged many firefighters have EMS training.

Officials from area departments gathered Thursday at the Frederick County Public Safety Building for a presentation on the study given by representatives of the

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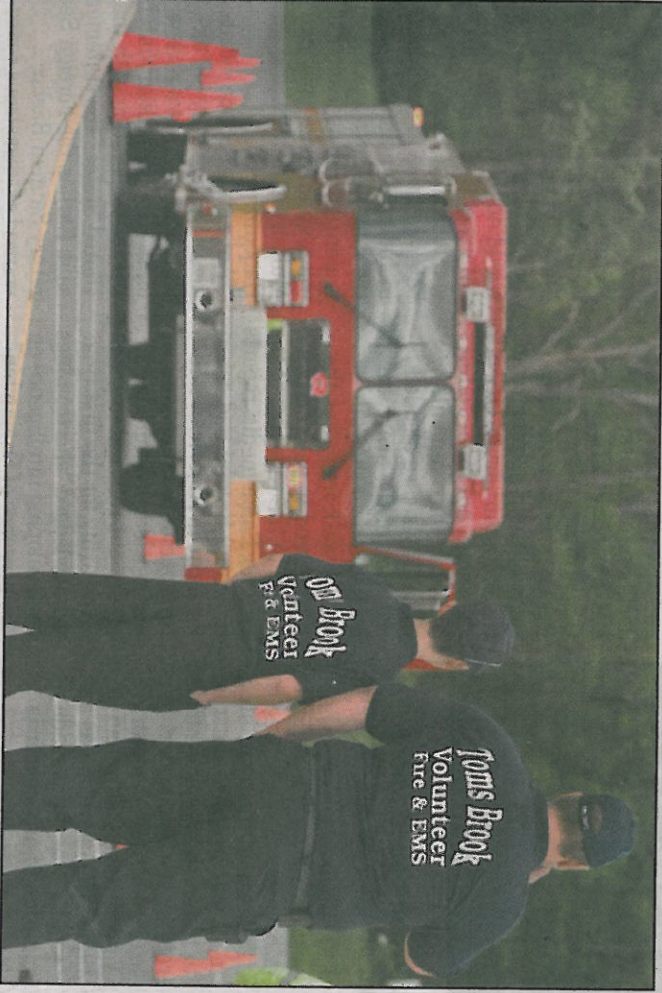
**SHARON BARONCELLI, PROGRAM SPECIALIST WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS**



International Association of Fire Chiefs, an agency aiding the state organization. “The VFCA had the foresight to know that volunteerism’s an issue,” said Sharon Baroncelli, program specialist with the international group. “We are decreasing our numbers and how can we go about recruiting and retaining the good ones we have.”

Frederick County and Winchester agencies combined for the study and the partnership “bring[s] something different to the table,” Baroncelli said. Shenandoah and Page

counties join a group of 10 agencies as part of the geographic information system approach to the study. As part of the study, localities were required to provide the addresses of all their existing paid and volunteer firefighters. This information will be used in marketing campaigns to include methods designed to target potential volunteers, according to Baroncelli. Firefighters also are asked to complete an anonymous survey by May 24 as part of the study. The study aims to look at the makeup and



Rich Cooley/Daily

Tom's Brook volunteer firefighter Jason Shipe and his son, Gary Wayne, 14, of Maurertown, watch the Firefighters Rodeo during the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival last Friday.

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