

The 50th Anniversary of Colorado's Genesee Volunteer Fire Department Featured on This Week's Monday Morning Radio

Management strategies that for-profit businesses can glean from a volunteer fire company's enduring success.

GENESEE, COLORADO, UNITED STATES, September 4, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This week's edition of [Monday Morning Radio](#) tells the remarkable story of Genesee Fire Rescue (GFR), a little volunteer engine company that could, and has, for five decades.

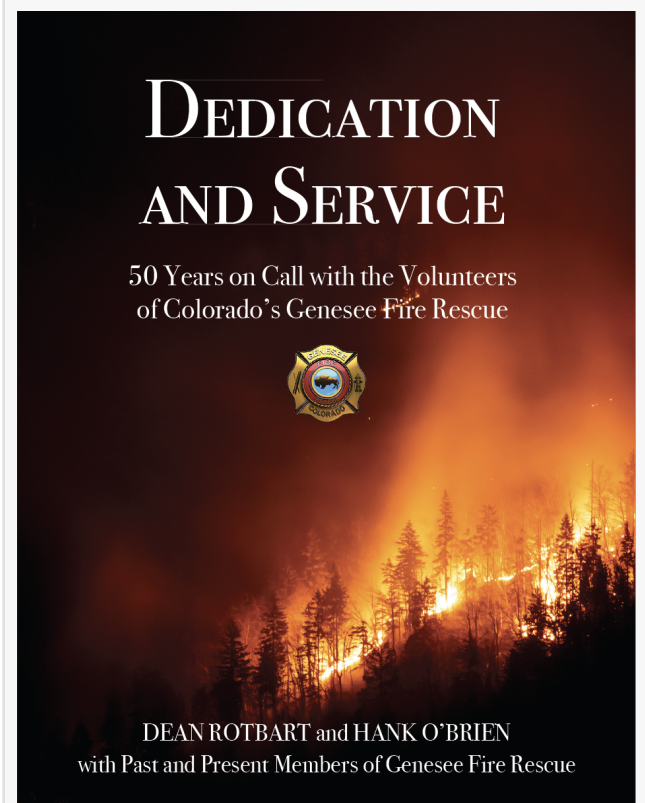
The podcast is available to download or stream for free from tinyurl.com/MMR090423. It is also available on [Apple Music](#) and other major audio platforms.

Located in the majestic foothills of the Rocky Mountains, 20 miles west of downtown Denver, the unincorporated community of Genesee is home to approximately 4,000 residents and 1,500 homes. The fire district, comprising a four-square-mile area, features a cornucopia of awe-inspiring vistas, woodlands, mountain flowers, wild birds, and roaming game.

Along with the beauty comes danger, with the U.S. Forest Service ranking Genesee's wildfire risk greater than 97% of all communities in Colorado.

Since 1973, standing between the tranquil foothills environ and catastrophic infernos have been Genesee's resident male and female volunteer firefighters.

Monday Morning Radio host Dean Rotbart spent 18 months chronicling GFR's half-century evolution, growing from a three-person company of well-intended amateurs into a force of 40 of the most professional, well-equipped volunteer firefighters in Colorado.



Cover Design: Avital Romberg

Rotbart's new book, "[Dedication And Service](#): 50 Years on Call with the Volunteers of Colorado's Genesee Fire Rescue," is available now on Amazon. The book is co-authored by GFR Lieutenant Hank O'Brien.

"As it turns 50, GFR has grown into a model of capable emergency response, community wildland prevention and suppression, innovative training academies, and the recruitment and promotion of female firefighters and officers," Rotbart writes. "Moreover, a half-dozen or so times annually, members of GFR join with companies from around the region and nation in battling federal wildfires as far away as Texas, California, and Oregon."

"Dedication and Service" not only salutes the accomplishments of Genesee Fire Rescue but also honors the tens of thousands of other volunteer and mostly volunteer fire departments throughout the nation dedicated to public service and safety.

"Why do the volunteers do it?" Rotbart asks. "They get paid nothing for the hundreds of hours that many of them devote each year to training and service. They put life and limb at risk. They witness injuries and tragedies that, once seen, can never be forgotten. They are on perpetual call, often summoned to the station in the dead of night, and in Colorado, at least, asked to perform in blizzards and sub-zero conditions."

To help explain the commitment of Genesee's volunteer firefighters, Rotbart and his son, Monday Morning Radio co-host Maxwell Rotbart, invited two active GFR members on this week's podcast.

Jason Puffett joined GFR in 2010 and became its volunteer chief in 2015. Then, in 2017, the elected board that oversees the fire department asked Puffett to guide GFR as its first paid, full-time leader.

Volunteer Hank O'Brien, co-author of "Dedication and Service" and a certified EMT, is a third-generation firefighter. He joined GFR in 2015 and conducted more than two dozen oral histories



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Monday Morning Radio Host Dean Rotbart

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Dean Rotbart

with past and current members of the fire department.

The reasons individuals commit to become volunteer firefighters vary. Some see volunteering as a stepping stone to a full-time paid career in the fire service. Others are carrying on a family tradition or seeking the camaraderie and lifelong friendships that fire departments foster.

O'Brien tells Monday Morning Radio that every volunteer

shares a common goal regardless of what initially brought them through the fire station door.

"We want to be there for fellow community members who might be having the worst day of their lives," he says. "You come home [after responding to a fire or medical emergency] and you go, 'You know, that was really worth it. That made my day.'"

The volunteers of GFR are a diverse group who bring unique skills and life experiences to the fire company.

O'Brien, for example, has worked as a national/global sales, marketing, and general management executive in the food and pharmaceutical industries. When not donning bunker or wildfire gear, other members — past and present — hail from all walks of life: lawyers, physicians, pilots, bankers, engineers, professors, entrepreneurs, armed services members, FBI agents, homemakers, students, and retirees.

As Rotbart and O'Brien point out in "Dedication and Service," the commitment of today's volunteer firefighters is steeped in an American ethos that — while so much else has changed or vanished — has endured since Benjamin Franklin helped organize Philadelphia's all-volunteer "Bucket Brigade" in 1736.

A sense of history and continuity is one intangible that equips each volunteer firefighter with a mission and an unassailable sense of pride.

"'Dedication and Service' is a poignant celebration of the heroes next door, those ordinary yet extraordinary individuals who show up for their neighbors," Rotbart says. "The half-century legacy of Genesee Fire Rescue is an inspiring testament to the enduring spirit of American volunteerism, a beacon that continues to shine in towns and cities nationwide."

Rotbart has hosted and produced Monday Morning Radio since June 2012. He is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated former reporter and columnist with The Wall Street Journal. His 2021 book, "September Twelfth: An American Comeback Story," was awarded the Gold Medal by the Nonfiction Authors Association.

Rotbart's son Maxwell, who earlier this year was named a permanent co-host of Monday Morning Radio, is an educator, author, and historian. His popular "Doc History" videos — available on YouTube at tinyurl.com/DocHistoryVideos — are designed to make history fun and relatable for middle and high school students.

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