

Cy-Fair Fire Chief Amy Ramon Earns Fire Service's Top National Honor

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, August 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When Amy Ramon signed up as a 20-year-old volunteer firefighter with the Cy-Fair Volunteer Fire Department in 1990, she was driven by a simple desire to serve her community. Thirty-six years later, that same drive has earned her one of the fire service's highest individual honors: the International Association of Fire Chiefs' (IAFC) Fire Chief of the Year Award.

Established in 1996, the [IAFC Fire Chief of the Year Award](#) recognizes one career fire chief and one volunteer fire chief nationwide for exceptional leadership, innovation, integrity, and contributions to the fire service. It is considered a lifetime achievement honor, evaluating a chief's entire body of work, with this year's award paying particular attention to the years 2023 through 2025. Winners are chosen by a panel of IAFC members, and were honored at Fire-Rescue International in Kansas City, Missouri, on Wednesday, August 12, 2026.

Chief Ramon was nominated by the Harris County Emergency Services District No. 9 (ESD9) Board of Commissioners, with letters of support from the International Association of Fire Fighters, the Cy-Fair Professional Firefighters Association, and Cy-Fair Fire Department leadership.

Chief Ramon's path to the top of the fire service wound through more roles than most careers ever hold. She advanced from firefighter and paramedic to station officer, board member, and assistant chief of EMS before the ESD9 Board of Commissioners hired her as fire chief in July 2014, following a national search. She has now led the department for 12 years and has spent more than three decades in the fire service overall.

"Chief Ramon has led our organization through some of the roughest waters a chief executive will ever have to navigate," wrote Mike Clements, assistant chief of administration for Cy-Fair Fire Department, in the nomination letter. "...She understands all facets of running a self-sustaining \$102 million operations budget and a \$38 million capital budget...Her business acumen is unparalleled, and she pairs that expertise with steady leadership, sound judgment, and a clear vision for the future."

When Chief Ramon took over, the department staffed only four of its 13 stations with 24-hour fire suppression coverage, relying mainly on volunteers and part-time firefighters. Under her leadership, Cy-Fair has transformed into one of the largest combination fire departments in the

country, now operating all 13 stations around the clock with a mix of full-time, part-time, and volunteer personnel. The department serves a population of more than 600,000 residents and responds to approximately 46,000 emergency incidents a year, running 16 medic units daily. Plans are already underway for eight additional stations over the next decade to keep pace with one of the fastest-growing areas in the country.

"In 2025, her leadership produced measurable results across operations, administration, and financial management...The Cy-Fair Fire Department maintained strong response performance while managing increased call volume and continued population growth. At the same time, the department was recognized for excellence in financial transparency and responsible budgeting, reflecting disciplined oversight of a large public safety budget and a commitment to accountability to taxpayers," wrote Naressa MacKinnon and Cameron Dickey, president and vice president of the ESD9 Board of Commissioners, in their nomination letter.

Part of what makes Chief Ramon so effective is the rare combination of qualifications she brings to the role. She is a credentialed Chief Fire Officer, a Certified Fire Executive, and a licensed attorney with a Juris Doctorate from South Texas College of Law. That mix shows up in how she runs the department: decisions that are operationally sound, fiscally disciplined, and grounded in policy.

Chief Ramon has also made firefighter health a defining priority of her tenure. She championed a comprehensive mental health program, which offers counseling access and proactive support tools for firefighters and their families. It has reached more than 54 percent utilization among personnel. Chief Ramon has also implemented cancer screening initiatives to address the elevated occupational cancer risks firefighters face.

Through all of this growth and change, Chief Ramon stays focused on what matters most: the department's people. Clements wrote in the nomination letter: "The Chief's door is always open. Chief Ramon will stop what she's doing, ensure she calls the member by their first or last name, and has at least one question about their family, a hobby, or a detail she remembers from interacting with them. In an organization our size, this takes intentionality."

Chief Ramon's influence reaches well beyond Cy-Fair. She sits on the Executive Board of the Harris County Fire Chiefs Association, which represents more than 50 agencies, and serves as second vice president of the Texas Fire Chiefs Association, a role that puts her in line to become the association's president next year. She regularly teaches at Texas Fire Chiefs Association's (TFCA) Battalion Chief and Company Officer academies and advocates at the Texas Capitol during legislative sessions on firework safety, firefighter wellness, and funding mechanisms for local fire departments. In 2024, her peers named her Texas Fire Chief of the Year.

"As the Presiding Officer of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection...I have had a front row seat to see Chief Ramon give of her time and experience," wrote Michael Glynn, 11th District Vice President of the International Association of Fire Fighters, in his letter of support. "...It is through

work like this that her dedication to the betterment of all Texas firefighters is exemplified as she tries to 'leave it better than she found it.'"

Leading a fire department well demands more than operational skill. It tests intellectual, emotional, and political staying power, the ability to make hard calls under pressure and hold a team together through it. Chief Ramon's colleagues say that's exactly where she has excelled.

Chris Fillmore, president of the Cy-Fair Professional Firefighters Association, IAFF Local 5248, wrote, "What makes these accomplishments even more remarkable is that they have been achieved while navigating complex and, at times, intense political pressures. Chief Ramon has faced significant external scrutiny and, at times, direct attacks on her position for standing firm in her commitment to do what is right both for the community she serves and for the personnel within her department. Despite these challenges, she has remained resolute, demonstrating exceptional courage, professionalism, and integrity...Her leadership has not only transformed her department but has also set a standard for others across the fire service."

When asked about the honor, Chief Ramon kept the focus on her department: "This recognition belongs to every member of this department who shows up and does the work every day. I'm grateful to our commissioners, our Cy-Fair members, our union partners, and this community for the trust they've placed in us."

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About CFFD:

The Cy-Fair Fire Department (CFFD) provides professional fire and emergency medical services to the citizens of Northwest Harris County, Texas. From its beginnings in the late 1950s, the Cy-Fair FD is now one of the largest, busiest combination fire departments in the United States, with over 40,000 emergency responses each year. CFFD covers the 164-square-mile area of Harris County Emergency Services District #9 (HCESD9) in the unincorporated part of Northwest Harris County. Responding from 13 stations strategically located throughout the territory, the 550-plus men and women of the fire department are among the best trained and equipped firefighters, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and dispatchers in the nation.

About the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC):

The IAFC represents the leadership of firefighters and emergency responders worldwide. IAFC members are the world's leading experts in firefighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials spills, natural disasters, search and rescue, and public safety legislation. Since 1873, the IAFC has provided a forum for its members to exchange ideas, develop professionally and uncover the latest products and services available to first responders.

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This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/934183140>

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