

Winter 2026 Newsletter

52 Weeks of Firsts: *Let the Celebrations Begin!*



On January 17th, we celebrated our Firstival as part of the Philadelphia Historic District Partners 52 Weeks of Firsts. Our “First” commemorated the First Volunteer Fire Company in America in 1736, Benjamin Franklin’s Union Fire Company. We also celebrated Ben Franklin’s birthday. As part of the celebration, the museum received a hand-painted “#1” statue designed and decorated by Jenn Procacci. The statue will be on display at the museum throughout 2026.



A great crowd assembled for the ceremony. Including “Ben Franklin” himself.

The event was covered widely by the media, TV and print. If you missed it, you can still see the coverage online. Of note - Lee Ryan and Will Grow were interviewed for [WPVI's weekly feature - The Art of Aging](#). Carol Smith was interviewed for a Philadelphia Inquirer article - [Ben Franklin founded America's first volunteer fire department in Philadelphia](#). Carol was also featured in a KYW news hit announcing the 52 Firsts event.

Ben Franklin’s birthday was also celebrated on Friday, January 16th, with the annual parade in Old City. Members of the museum participated in the procession.



Ben Franklin/U.S. Semiquincentennial Limited Edition Challenge Coin

New to our Gift Shop. As our nation celebrates its 250th birthday, this coin commemorates that historic milestone while honoring Benjamin Franklin's pivotal role in founding Philadelphia's first volunteer fire company. You can buy the coin online. Support the museum and own a piece of our history.



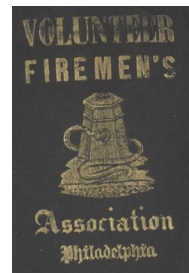
Save the Date

The 20th Annual Golf Outing will take place on **Wednesday, May 20, 2026**. We will return to Westover Country Club in East Norriton for the event.

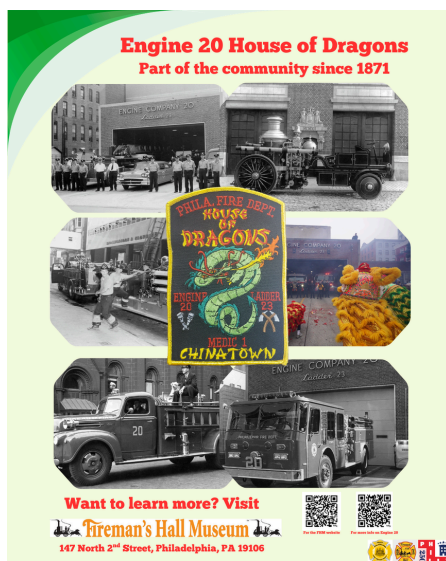
Registration forms will be available in the coming weeks. Suggestions for sponsors and raffle items would be greatly appreciated.

Volunteer LODD Project Continues

We have begun adding the names of the 75 volunteer firefighters who were killed in the line of duty (1806-1870) to the online memorial wall and the kiosk in the museum. If you visit [the memorial wall online](#), you can follow our progress.



Honoring the History of Neighborhood Fire Stations



One of the focal points of Philadelphia's 250th anniversary celebrations is the recognition of the city's many neighborhoods. We felt it would be a nice tie in to these events to celebrate the history of many of the fire stations that have anchored their communities over the years.

Accordingly, we have begun to design posters for display within the fire stations that the firefighters can then share with their community. Our first poster celebrated Engine 20, House of the Dragons, and it was unveiled on February 21 the same day that the Chinese Arch, only steps away from Engine 20, was celebrated by 52 Weeks of Firsts. We'll share more with you over the next weeks.

Social Media: Keep an eye on the Fireman's Hall website and follow the museum at @firemanshall on Instagram for all the latest news, and subscribe to our Youtube channel for the Curator's Corner and other updated offerings! Join the museum's Facebook group to become part of the conversation on ongoing research and to view photos and stories from our archives!