

# COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - January 2020

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*Celebrating*

9



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# COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - January 2020

# Chief

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## IT'S YOUR HOUSE!

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# *“Perfecting Your Vision 2020 and Beyond”*

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Scott Garber  
2019 VFCA President  
Staunton Fire Department

## Leadership Accountability It's All About Me!

**Accountability – the actions, attitude, and effort necessary to merge expectations with performance.**

As we move forward with our discussion about leadership accountability, I must address two common myths that often send leaders down incorrect paths, or worse, make them appear to be hypocrites.

### **MYTH #1: Accountability is a team thing.**

When I read books or listen to someone speak about leadership, I notice the theme of building positive, supportive, and unified teams is everywhere. However, when it comes to accountability, especially leadership accountability, it is not a team concept. The idea of “you hold me accountable and I, the leader, will hold you accountable” sounds great on paper or when said aloud, but there is one significant flaw in this logic. There is a complete lack of internal accountability being demonstrated where I recognize that I have the power to control both my expectations and my performance at all times. If I am relying on someone else to hold me accountable, am I really being accountable at all? The team accountability concept is based upon others controlling or setting my expectations for me. It means I am turning over the power of controlling my actions, attitude, and effort to say I need you to watch me and make sure I stay on the right path or do the right thing. Ultimately, the most significant issue with leadership accountability under this model becomes who is really leading, forging ahead, and setting the example?

### **MYTH #2: Accountability is something I, the leader, bestow upon other people.**

The second myth of accountability is that accountability is only something I do to other people. Specifically, the people that work within my department. If my view is that accountability is an external process of me holding others to my expectations or those of the department, then I am creating a culture of “them” and “they.” With this idea of accountability, I believe I must hold them accountable at all times and attempt to control their performance towards my expectations. This often comes across as micromanaging to those being led and to me it feels as if my entire job has become running around putting out fires all day. To those I am holding accountable, their perspective becomes one of contempt and I have now become part of the infamous “they.” The generic pronoun used to describe those higher in power within an organization when we feel there is

not a choice in whatever matter is at hand. Ultimately, this style of accountability is only sustainable for as long as the leader can manage the energy to keep it up and are physically present around those they are “leading” to enforce their expectations. Once the leader becomes too tired to keep it up, they retract to the confines of their office to hide because they just cannot manage the level of effort required to constantly hold people constantly accountable. Worst of all is that none of those on the department have ever learned how to hold themselves accountable to these expectations because the boss has always done it for them.

**TRUTH: Accountability, especially leadership accountability, is all about me.**

The truth about leadership accountability is that it is all about ME. It starts with ME. It sustains with ME. It grows with ME. It can be ended by ME. The concept of anything in leadership being “all about me” is a colossal departure from 99.9% of what I read and hear about good leadership, but when it comes to leadership accountability it truly is controlling MY actions, MY attitude, and MY efforts that dictate my application of accountability. Leadership accountability is an inside out process. It is through internal accountability that I set the proverbial bar or expectations. Those I am leading see what I am doing, how I am doing it, and most importantly I explain why I am doing what I am doing. As the example is set, then I have earned the right to set external expectations of those I am leading because they know that I am not and never would ask them to do something I am not doing or willing to do myself. In other words, I must exemplify accountability before I can ever expect it from those I lead – that is leadership accountability.

Once the example of leadership accountability is set, then it begins to grow.

**“The first fall of snow is not only an event, it is a magical event. You go to bed in one kind of a world and wake up in another quite different.”**

**J. B. Priestley**

# Celebrating 90 Years



# You're Invited!

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) was established in 1930 by a group of progressive fire chiefs from across the Commonwealth. In 2020, the VFCA will celebrate its 90th Anniversary as an association. In order to start this celebration off early, the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference Committee is planning some special activities as part of the 2020 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference (VFRC). As part of the planning efforts, the committee is looking to reach ALL fire departments across the Commonwealth through its officers and members to share information regarding the 2020 VFRC.

According to VDFP records, there are 740 fire departments in the state. One of the goals for the 2020 VFRC is to reach out to every FD and make sure they are aware of the VFCA and the benefits and services provided by the association and foundation. In addition, the VFCA wants to make sure the departments are aware of the VFRC and invite them to send at least one member to represent their department at the conference.

In conjunction with the VFCA 90th Anniversary, we are looking to have at least 900 or more attendees at the conference attending educational sessions. During the 2019 VFRC there were just over 800 in attendance for the educational classes. It is the hope of the VFCA and conference committee that by reaching out across the state and making personal contact with all fire departments this will make them aware of the VFCA and the annual conference and as a result, will serve as a means to help train and educate fire and EMS providers from all across the state.

The VFCA is hoping that every fire department will send at least one member to the conference to experience the event firsthand and the benefits of attending as well as being a member of the VFCA! The VFCA

also realizes that there may be some departments in the Commonwealth that are struggling financially and this may impact their participation. As such, the officers will share information with departments about the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation (VFCF) and their Scholarship Program. Specifically, the VFCF Scholarship Program covers attendance for the annual conference and encourages individuals and departments to apply for assistance if needed. Applications are accepted between September 1 and December 1 annually. Information is available on the VFCA website at [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us)

Members of the VFCA Board of Directors will be available to meet with jurisdictions or regional associations if desired, just let us know. The VFCA BOD believes that if departments are aware of the high caliber of education that takes place at the conference for the price, most will realize this is an excellent opportunity. Not only are they able to get excellent training, but are also able to walk the expo floor and see the latest and most current vehicles and equipment and have a great opportunity to network with other providers from all across the Commonwealth.

Registration is open and information includes a complete listing of classes, listing of vendors and associated networking events that are part of this event. On behalf of the VFCA Officers and Board members, we hope you will consider joining us at the 2020 VFRC as we start the 90th Anniversary Celebration of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association.

The VFCA is not just for Chiefs, but is open to all that want to support the mission of the association and further their knowledge and education as we collectively serve the citizens of the Commonwealth!

# VFCA CELEBRATES 45 YEARS OF WINTER CONFERENCES

Bill Smith

## Change has been the constant

2020 marks the 45th Anniversary of the Virginia Fire Chiefs hosting mid-winter conferences.

Over the years, the conference was not always named the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference. In its founding days it was called the Mid-Winter Fire Chiefs Conference and for many years it continued to be known by that name. In the mid-90's the name was changed to the Mid-Atlantic Expo & Symposium in an effort to attract a broader audience. That name remained until 2014 when the name was changed to the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference.

The idea of a mid-winter conference was first conceived of in 1975 under the leadership of then, Charlottesville Fire Chief Julian Taliaferro, who also was serving as the association president.

Exciting things were happening. That year one of the true success stories of modern times occurred when Bill Gates and Paul Allen created the company Microsoft. The first of the new hobby computers were starting to appear, including Altair 8800 and the battle for video recorder standards of VHS and Betamax had begun. Gerald Ford was President. This was also the year the Vietnam War finally ended. In 1975 the cost of a gallon of gas was 44 cents, a new car could be purchased for \$4,250, and the average cost of a new home was \$39,300. That same year the average yearly income was \$14,100 and for the first time the price of oil went over \$13.00 a barrel.

According to Chief Taliaferro, "the summer convention attendance was dropping and we were getting very few volunteers, so we decided to try something different."

That same year Kings Dominion Amusement Park was being built in Hanover County near Doswell, but it had not yet opened to the public. "The thought process was that if a theme park could draw people, maybe it would also draw fire service personnel for a middle of the winter get together since there was little else going at that time of the year" said Taliaferro.

So in February 1975, the first Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Mid-Winter Conference was held at the brand new Kings Quarters hotel located in Doswell adjacent to Kings Dominion. There were some training sessions, and it was also a great opportunity to meet and interact with other fire service personnel from across Virginia. The Mid-Winter Conference was held in Doswell for two years before moving on to Williamsburg in an effort to increase attendance.

That move was successful and for many years the conference was anchored in Williamsburg. The new location offered better facilities and opportunities for additional training sessions and also equipment displays. Over the years while in Williamsburg several different facilities were used to provide the needed logistics for a successful conference. Unfortunately, February's weather was not always the best to go outside to view and examine equipment and apparatus. There was often rain and/or snow to be dealt with.

So after dealing with weather issues for several years, in 1997 the VFCA leadership made the decision to move the conference to Hampton. It remained for just one year. The next year it was moved to Virginia Beach where everything could be housed inside and under one roof. Although somewhat controversial at the time, that move proved to be an

excellent decision and the conference attendees and exhibitors began to grow in numbers right away. Along with the location change, soon to follow, was another name change. The conference then became known as the VFCA Mid-Atlantic Expo & Symposium.

Then in 2014, the name was once again changed to better reflect what today's model includes. The conference is now named the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference.

Since coming to "the Beach" more than 20 years ago, the conference has grown tremendously with more and more attendees and exhibitors. Today the conference utilizes over 100,000 sq. ft. of exhibit hall space and utilizes nearly all of the classroom/meeting room space at the Virginia Beach Convention Center as well as a large portion of the Virginia Beach Fire Department Training Center. During the five day event there is an opportunity for all of Virginia's fire, rescue and emergency services personnel to attend the many and varied educational sessions, look at and examine the latest apparatus, equipment and technology available, and to network with peers from across Virginia.

Last year at the 2019 conference, we saw the highest attendance in conference history – over 800. Another 1,240 purchased day passes.

This year will also mark the 90th Anniversary of the founding of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association. To celebrate that milestone, every fire department in Virginia has been invited to send at least one member to the conference. Additionally, the planning committee is working on a 90th Anniversary Challenge Coin.

In looking back, those original goals of getting more people involved, both career and volunteer and providing relevant training dreamed of back in 1975, has truly come to be. So sit back now and watch what the next forty five years will bring!!!





# 2020 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE



The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association will host its annual Virginia Fire Rescue Conference - February 19-22, 2020 at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. This year's event will highlight 90+ educational sessions by over 50+ presenters. Planning for the event started at the conclusion of the 2019 VFRC and is continuing as we finalize the associated details. As this article is being written the exhibit floor is at 99% capacity and we are expecting a sold out exhibit hall with potential for overflow in the Lobby. The VFCA is happy to see many of our long term vendors returning for the event as well as to welcome some new vendors. The vendors are a very integral and important part of this annual event. They bring the latest and greatest apparatus, tools, equipment and technology to share with the attendees on how we can be more effective and efficient in the performance of our jobs.

The VFCA is offering several pre-conference sessions this year which will include an IMT 305 session that starts on Monday February 17 and will wrap up on Friday February 21. In addition, there will be Logistics and Planning Section programs that will both begin on Monday February 17 and wrap up on Wednesday February 19. There are many departments from all across the Commonwealth seeking this specialized training and it is our hope these sessions will be full and will have diverse attendance from all public safety disciplines including police, fire, EMS and other related departments. These sessions will be held at the VBCC this year so the attendees can be actively engaged in the conference activities.

The 2020 VFRC regular programs will begin on Wednesday February 19, 2020. A few of the sessions offered on Wednesday include: NFPA 1033 re-certification training, Rescue Boat Operator Class (HOT), Advanced Lifting, Moving and Stabilization (Day 1 of 2 HOT), The First Five Minutes: Must Have's for the First Arriving, Fire Service Mortar and a **Department of Defense – Half day Session**. In addition, some of the other sessions offered will include: Saving Our Own: Changing The Culture of Mental Health in Public Safety; Get to Know Cornerstone OnDemand: VDFP's New Learning Management System; Creating Partnerships with Customer Service, The Passion of Training: The Moral Imperative of the Company Officer, Stop The Bleed, High-Rise Fires: Implementing an Effective

Operational Policy in Your Department and Harassment in the Fire Service: Zero Tolerance or Total Tolerance. **The Opening Ceremony and Awards will be hosted on Wednesday from 1500- 1700 in the Ballroom.**

Some of the Thursday sessions include the following: Rescue Boat Operator Class (HOT), NFPA 1031 recertification training, Advanced Lifting, Moving and Stabilization (Day 2 of 2 HOT), Shakers Forum for Chief Officers, Shakers Forum for Company Officer/Firefighters, Critical Decision Making: Point to Point Decision Making for Fire Service Leaders, Advance Apparatus Specification Considerations, Managing Employee Fires and Put Me In the Game Coach. In addition, some of the other sessions offered will include: Strategies and Tactics for Highway Operations, Fire Protection Systems for Company Officers, A Continuum of Training: The Case for Effective Officer Training From the Ground Up, Going the Distance on Developing Leadership Habits, The Effective First Due Officer: Simplifying the Complex and Cult of Personality: Why can't we all get along?

Some of the Friday sessions include: NFPA 1031 recertification training , Tactical Drafting: How to Move Big Water in the Rural Environment (HOT), Surviving the Job – Behavioral Wellness, Building a Tradition of Passion, Great Expectations: Exploring what we expect from each other, Being a Catalyst for Change in a World of Resistance, Engine Boss – Skills for the Station to the Street, Social Media: It's the Devil; or is it?, Rediscovering the Past to Brighten the Future: A Glance Back at the Wisdom and History of Leadership, Communicating in the Firehouse with Candor and not Chaos and Rural Engine Company Operations. In addition, some of the other sessions offered will include: VFCA 2019/2020 SAFER Grant: What's it all About and How Can it Benefit Your Department?, Slab Savers Incident Command, The Art of Reading Smoke: The Next Generation, Chief Survival Officer, Tactical Considerations for the Volunteer Fire Department, The Successful Short Staffed Engine, Coaching in the Fire Service and RIT for REAL – Lessons learned from 400 firefighters during elevated stress RIT training.

Some of the Saturday sessions include the following: Courage Under Fire: Being the Best Fire Officer You Can, Advanced Hydrant Operations: Getting Greedy With Your Water, C.O.D.E. B.L.U.E. Leadership, Surviving the Fire Service



– Cardiovascular, Cancer & Behavioral, Battlefield Firefighting – Changing your vocabulary and tactical operations, Stretching the First Line in Multiple Dwellings, Leading from the Front ... of the Classroom, Top Liability and Risk Issues for Chiefs and Line Officers and A Successful Vent, Enter, Search and Why Seconds Matter.

**The 2020 big room session will be held on Saturday afternoon from 1300-1500. The Chief and members of the VFD and city government will provide a candid review of the workplace shooting that took place on May 31, 2019.**

The 2020 VFRC will wrap up with the following sessions: The Lucky 13: Lessons or Luck When You Are A New Officer, Fire Apparatus Purchasing: Where Do I Start and Where Does This Road Lead, This is Not Your Grandparents' Fire and Rescue Department: A Discussion on Today's Terrorism Threats, Challenges and Solutions and Courage Under Fire: Striving for Greatness!

In addition to the 90+ educational sessions there will be hosted networking

events scheduled during the 2020 VFRC to include the Thursday Reception hosted by the Battalion Chief Level Sponsors at the HGI and Saturday Casino Night also at the HGI. The VFCA will celebrate its 90th Anniversary in 2020 and the celebration will get kicked off at the 2020 VFRC.

On behalf of the VFCA Executive Officers, Board members, and the committee members that have been involved in planning this event we are very excited with the line-up and hope you and members of your department will consider joining us. We have set a goal of 900+ to be in attendance for the educational sessions and with your help and support we are confident we can achieve this goal!

For a complete summary of all the sessions being presented along with the Speaker bios please go to [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us) Early bird registration ends soon so please be sure to register early to save some money at <http://www.registration123.com/VFCA/20VFCA>. We look forward to seeing you at the beach in February 2020!



## 2020 MEMORIAL SERVICE TO BE HELD

The 2020 Annual Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Memorial Service for those we have lost during 2019 will be held once again during the 2020 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference held in Virginia Beach on Wednesday, February 19, 2020. The ceremony will be part of the Opening Ceremony that afternoon. If your department has lost a member during 2019, you are asked to pass that information on to the Chair of the VFCA Health and Safety Committee, Stephen P. Kopczyński utilizing the form shown below. Please submit on or before January 22, 2020.

### MEMORIAL INFORMATION SHEET

Name of Deceased: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Cause of Death (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Department Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Stephen P. Kopczyński, Fire Chief (Chairman, VFCA Health and Safety Committee)  
York County Fire and Life Safety Department P. O. Box 532, Yorktown, Virginia 23690  
FAX: 757-890-3609 • E-Mail: [flsafety@yorkcounty.gov](mailto:flsafety@yorkcounty.gov)

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# VFCA HOLDS ANNUAL RETREAT

David Hutcheson, VFCA 1st Vice President

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors met in Staunton for our annual retreat this past October to discuss our collective goals for 2020. The areas we are going to concentrate on for 2020 include;

- Professional Development
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Health and Wellness
- Legislative Issues

The professional development areas we decided to explore were gaining accreditation status to Virginia's non-DFP professional development programs such as VFOA, VCOA and NOVA LDI, etc. A second area is a concentrated effort to expand our fire service professional development programs. We will be exploring how states such as Florida and Texas structure, organize and support statewide professional development programs.

An especially important area we will be working on in the coming year and beyond is inclusion and diversity. We are committed to inclusion and diversity as a core organizational value in all facets of the VFCA. This includes; targeted recruitment of under-represented, historically marginalized groups for VFCA membership and VFCA leadership roles, VFCA Scholarships for 2020 Virginia Fire Equity and Diversity Conference with a commitment from the VFCA board to attend as well as support staff attendance.

Health & Wellness with emphasis on both mental as well as physical wellbeing are continued areas of importance across the Commonwealth fire service. We will explore using The VFCA as a clearinghouse for existing behavioral health and peer support resources such as how the state of North Carolina Peer Support Team model is utilized. We also hope to add a fitness and wellness track at the Fire and Rescue Conference this year to include daily morning PT options such as HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training), inaugural stair climb, and morning group runs on the board walk.

An area of continued importance over the last couple of years by the executive board is the legislative committee involvement in state wide legislative issues we face as a fire service. A major focus this past year has been working with the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on truly making cancer presumption legislation presumptive. We also would like to do more grass roots work by utilizing everyone in the fire service to have conversations with officials in your own back yards.

As your incoming VFCA President, I will be updating you on our progress in the upcoming year!

# WILLIAMSBURG GOLF TOURNAMENT 2019

David Hutcheson, VFCA 1st Vice President

The 5th Annual VFCA Williamsburg Golf Tournament was held on Friday, September 20, 2019 at the Golden Horseshoe. It could not have been a more beautiful day to enjoy the outdoors! We were happy to welcome a few new sponsors along with our returning supporters. There were 23 sponsors and 48 golfers. The combined totals of sponsorships, golfer entry fees and raffle sales brought in over \$12,000!

Tournaments take many hours of behind-the-scenes work in advance preparation and also on the day of the event. The Golden Horseshoe is very welcoming and accommodating to our ideas – it certainly creates a great golf experience for our players. In addition to the administrative staff of the Williamsburg Fire Department, additional assistance was provided during check-in by two members of the VFCA Admin Division as well as three volunteers from our city's CERT team! Thank you to everyone who played a role in the planning, preparation and execution of our event. We are looking to expand the prizes, sponsorships and overall player experience for 2020's tournament. We already have the course reserved and would love to welcome you onto our planning committee for tournament number 6!



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# CREATING EQUITY IN COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION

Battalion Chief Joshua J Davis, EFO, CFO  
Fire Marshal, Charlottesville Fire Department  
LS-CRR Chair

While attending the National Fire Academy the concept of Community Risk Reduction (CRR) and the importance of how it is used in the fire service was introduced in my second year of Executive Fire Officer (EFO). Historically, the focus of a fire department community risk reduction was the identification of fire hazards and planning an appropriate suppression response force to mitigate emergencies when they occur. Today, community risk reduction involves performing an assessment to identify and prioritize risks, selecting and implementing strategies, monitoring and evaluating activities, involving community partners, all in an effort to better protect residents and firefighters. This all-hazards approach provides the opportunity to have a much bigger impact on life safety and property loss.

When looking at the risk assessment process one quickly realizes it is highly dependent on data. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), any risk assessment methodology should include complete and known data from resources such as the U.S. Census, as well as dynamic information included in geospatially referenced parcel data. This information provides a baseline from which to recognize risk factors based on fire department operational data, demographics, socioeconomic, structure types, the presence of fire protection systems and ongoing risk-reduction efforts.

Using fire department operational data will help to demonstrate value to community members, elected officials, stakeholders, and is an integral part of completing a risk assessment. Before one can demonstrate value, one must be able to match resources deployed to the need, and that starts with knowing your communities risk and having a plan to manage them or mitigate those risks when they occur.

Over my 25 year tenure in fire prevention, data collection has been one of the most daunting aspects of the CRR process. **The NFPA 1300, Standard on Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Plan Development**, reports the first critical step in that process is the completion of a Community Risk Assessment (CRA), and the more comprehensive the data included in the CRA, the more accurately risks will be identified and the more effective the overall risk reduction program will be.

To complete a CRA, the fire service must get a clear picture of the community's characteristics, its unique risks, and its capabilities—all of which are most

accurately described by data. CRR teams need to analyze local demographics to understand the people who might be impacted by a particular problem. They should have data about the built environment, including building materials, occupancies, and abandonments, as well as a clear view of the local geography including waterways, highways, wildland interfaces, and landforms, in other words key infrastructure. The CRA should incorporate past loss and event history with information about deaths, injuries, causation, and dollar loss. Data about community service organizations and public safety response agencies provide input on capabilities to prevent and respond to emergencies. Together, this information will help the fire service identify and prioritize the true risks in their community to ensure resources are allocated most effectively.

To assist CRR teams in Virginia in preparation for those activities, it's worth taking a look at some of the key components of CRR—data collection, partnerships, and conducting a community risk assessment—to get a better understanding of the concept, its capabilities, and where it can go from here. The 2020 Sound the Alarm Summit will discuss fire department operational data, community risk reduction planning and assessing risk priorities. The Summit will be hosted in Chesterfield on April 9th and 10th, 2020 and will be a two-day workshop on community risk reduction planning. Instructors from National Fire Protection Association and Virginia Department of Fire Programs will provide specific information to assist fire departments with developing a CRR plan. The focus will be to provide tools and information for the development of a CRR plan. Personnel that should plan to attend this summit are fire service personnel working in fire prevention, data analysis, community planning and community risk reduction. Check the Sound the Alarm Summit web site for registration and agenda topics at:

<https://www.soundthealarmsummit.com/>

Additional information on CRR can be found at NFPA's public education resources such as "From Lone Ranger to Justice League," a tutorial on building strategic partnerships and one of the presentations offered by NFPA's regional education specialists. Additional free public education materials to support CRR efforts are accessible online at [nfpa.org/education](http://nfpa.org/education).



# VDFP FOCUS FOR 2020

## EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Mike Reilly, VDFP Executive Director

### VDFP IN 2019

## By the Numbers

**1.5 billion**

Instructional hours delivered in FY 19

**\$425,000**

Approximate savings from agency-wide budget reduction strategies

**16**

Levels of IFSAC accreditations

**1,600**

Training courses delivered in FY 19

**26,000**

Number of students instructed in FY 19



Twenty-four months and counting. This is how long I have served as the executive director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

In 2019, my staff and I faced agency challenges that aren't for the faint of heart. As a result of the many "fires" we've been exposed to, we are identifying opportunities to restore transparency, efficiency, and accountability throughout the agency. In 2020, we are laying the groundwork for a stronger agency administration.

#### Staff Reorganization

We designed a strategy to improve our service delivery, backed with a reorganization of leadership to prioritize areas of focus.

Agency-wide, we implemented budget reduction strategies that resulted in saving approximately \$425,000 (\$385,000, non-General Fund; \$40,000, General Fund). From reducing our statewide office footprint and instituting office consolidations; to reducing postage and printing costs and agency technology assets, we are better positioned for 2020.

In November, Virginia Fire Marshal Academy Chief **Garrett Dyer** became Virginia's first African-American State Fire Marshal. After an extensive, nationwide search, SFMO Dyer was selected as the best person to promote the Fire Programs mission and advance the law and fire code enforcement arm of the agency.

Deputy Director **Brook Pittinger** shifted her management purview to VDFP's Administration Branch, where she is responsible for reinstating an operational model for more efficiency and the dismantling of departmental siloes.

Training and Operations Chief **Bill MacKay** joined the agency in June and immediately aligned Senior Leadership with a strategic approach to fast-track the implementation of Cornerstone OnDemand, the new cloud-based learning management system that replaces the Fire Services Training and Records System (FSTRS). Firefighters in the Commonwealth will finally have a training registration tool that is mobile-friendly and delivers information in real time.

#### 2019: Accreditation and Increases in Training Offerings

Last fall, Fire Programs earned 16 levels of accreditation from IFSAC (International Fire Services Accreditation Congress), surpassing the five (5) levels of accreditation in place before.

In a single fiscal year, we increased the number of training courses delivered by 10 percent in FY 19. In delivering approximately 1,600 courses, we instructed more than 26,000 with a 400-plus adjunct instructor cadre.

As result, Fire Programs delivered over 1.5 billion instructional hours. That number is nothing short of amazing.

#### Cancer Prevention & Mental Health Awareness

We also had the pleasure of delivering our Carcinogen Reduction & Cancer Program in August at the global Fire Rescue International Conference in Atlanta, Georgia to hundreds of thousands of fire services professionals.

Regarding mental health awareness, we expanded our training first introduced in 2018 to the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy's Basic Law Enforcement School. Students were instructed how to communicate with individuals who suffer mental health conditions and how to identify warning signs, risks, and implement intervention tactics.

Both training topics have become mainstays in our training arsenal. In 2020, we will devote more support to increasing awareness of cancer risks and mental health impacts to Virginia's Fire Service.

## Agency Strategies for 2020

As you read this article, Fire Programs is amidst the 2020 Virginia General Assembly Legislative Session.

We are continuing with the support of our fire services organizations, as we collectively rally for the approval of three additional cancers to be recognized under the Workers' Compensation; presumption bill.

Introduced during the 2019 General Assembly session, lymphoma, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and cancers of the colon, brain, and testes are being considered to expand the list of cancers that are presumed to be an occupational disease covered by the Virginia Workers' Compensation Act. If the measure passes this year, the minimum number of years of continuous service recognized will be reduced from 12 years to five.

We will also prioritize the allocation of staff resources to firm up the agency's information security program and standardize best practices in records management, budget efficiencies, and compliance.

The entire agency is "all hands on deck" to make our new learning management system, Cornerstone OnDemand, a robust, dynamic tool for Virginia's fire service. This year, we will add more features to target training officers and instructors, and ready the system for online learning.

Finally, we will package training programs and look towards the future. Our goal is to provide offerings 18 to 24 months in advance to better serve our customers.

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# VIRGINIA'S NEW STATE FIRE MARSHAL GARRETT DYER STRESSES A COLLECTIVE VISION AND EFFORT

Claire Ozah, VDFP Marketing & Communications Intern



In November, Governor Northam announced the selection of Garrett Dyer as Virginia's new State Fire Marshal – a historic accolade – as Dyer is the first African-American to hold the position. He has more than 30 years of public safety experience under his belt.

In the role as State Fire Marshal, Chief Garrett Dyer will be responsible for overseeing the law and code enforcement branch of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP), and leading more than 28 inspectors and administrative support staff.

### SFMO Strategy: A Unified System for Community Risk Reduction

Dyer plans to develop a State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) 3-year strategic plan that comprises of a holistic overview of ensuring mandated requirements are efficiently and effectively conducted and ensuring a continued focus on community risk reduction efforts in the Commonwealth. Dyer will continue to work with stakeholders in advocating for residential fire sprinklers and other initiatives that promote safe communities by reducing fire related injury or death. SFMO Dyer's personal goals are to ensure the mission of the State Fire Marshal's Office to make fire safety a way of life in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He hopes to work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders in conducting needs assessments, analyzing data, providing education, and ensuring support that promotes a collective vision towards fire and life safety initiatives.

The importance of collective efforts cannot be understated as it takes an entire system to work in unity to reduce or eliminate risk that lead to safe communities. In Dyer's words, "I am extremely honored to serve the Commonwealth in the capacity as Fire Marshal, as the agency's efforts to identify and reduce risk associated with fire fatalities and other life altering events are paramount to the safety of citizens and visitors. I look forward to ensuring the mission of making fire safety a priority statewide."

### Dyer's Track Record in Public Safety

Dyer began his career in 1986 with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and rose through the ranks to become Assistant Fire Chief. At that time, Dyer was the first African-American to hold a high ranking, senior-level position with Fairfax County Fire. He retired from the Department in 2016.

Dyer served as the Assistant Chief of the Personnel Services Bureau, Operations Deputy Chief, Chief Training Officer, and supervisor for the Hazardous Materials and Investigative Services section, Fire Investigations Branch, and Fire Protection Systems Branch. In addition, Chief Dyer was a member of Virginia Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue Team and responded to several notable missions to include the Oklahoma City Bombing; the U.S. Embassy Bombing in Nairobi, Kenya, the Pentagon during 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and earthquakes in Izmit, Turkey and Douliu City, Taiwan.

Following his retirement, Dyer received the A. Heath Onthank Award for Outstanding Public Service. In 2018, Dyer joined the VDFP as the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy (VFMA) Chief and provided oversight for the delivery of fire marshal and fire and life safety education training programs.



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# Cornerstone | OnDemand



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# VDFP EMBRACES NEW YEAR WITH **CORNERSTONE ONDEMAND**

Vanessa Copeland, VDFP PIO

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) is kicking off 2020 with a new cloud-based learning management system in its cadre.

Cornerstone OnDemand will be available after January 6, 2020, for more than 740 fire departments and 40,000 fire services personnel in the Commonwealth. Equipped with a web-based look and feel, Cornerstone OnDemand is easy to navigate and is more intuitive than its predecessor, the Fire Services Training and Records System (FSTRS), which had a look and feel reminiscent of a website from the 1990s.

“Cornerstone OnDemand is reflective of the experience that we are aiming to provide Virginia’s Fire Service – cutting edge, agile, and strategic,” said VDFP Executive Director Michael Reilly. “With Cornerstone OnDemand, we’ve overcome a major challenge in delivering training offerings in real-time using a digital tool. We are excited about how we will transform with a system that has such advanced capabilities in today’s learning environment.”

Another first for Fire Programs – the launch of an online user guide to accompany Cornerstone OnDemand.

Cornerstone OnDemand Features Added in Phases

Cornerstone OnDemand is a powerful learning management system. Eventually, Fire Programs wants to expand the system’s online learning capabilities but first decided to increase features in phases to adjust according to VDFP operations and usage trends.

Cornerstone OnDemand Phase 2 will target features specific to training officers and instructors. Phase 3 will introduce online learning components. Timeframes will be announced at later date.

“Cornerstone OnDemand symbolizes a change that would’ve happened eventually. I’m pleased that in the process of implementing the system, we revamped our business processes and established a new cadence with current personnel,” said Bill MacKay, VDFP Chief of Training and Operations. “I want to commend Fire Programs staff that championed the transition to Cornerstone OnDemand and dedicated hundreds of hours to ensure the system is ready for our customers.”

FSTRS Still Active

FSTRS remains in read-only mode until for fire and EMS personnel to retrieve their records before using Cornerstone OnDemand for the first time. Back in August 2019, Fire Programs issued a call to action to Virginia’s Fire Service to print, download, and save transcripts as they wouldn’t be visible in Cornerstone OnDemand on Day 1.

For Cornerstone OnDemand newcomers, Fire Programs has a “cheat sheet” on its website to help users navigate the system for the first time. Visit the page dedicated to Cornerstone OnDemand at [www.vafire.com](http://www.vafire.com) to review training guides and links to resources, and to stay updated with Cornerstone OnDemand news and alerts.



## Cornerstone OnDemand Features

### Quick Access Widgets

Personalized views based on user roles, from the header bar to the Quick Access lists: pending evaluations, upcoming sessions, and your transcripts.

### Events Calendar View

View statewide training offerings in a traditional calendar view or by list.

### Training/Learning Search

Learns student training preferences. It will display targeted training that is specific to the user’s interests including featured, suggested, the most popular, and the newest training.

### System Notifications

Students will receive notifications of new sessions and waitlist requests.



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# ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS HOLD THEIR ANNUAL RETREAT

Renee Allen-Stallings, President

The Administrative Professionals Section Retreat was held in Chesapeake on October 17th and 18th of this year. We had 33 admin professionals attend from all over the Commonwealth for two days of awesome training.

We are the go-to person in the office and taking these two days to re-energize and learn practical and powerful skills helped us all return to our municipalities with new ideas and a fresh perspective. Our daily lives are complex enough, then we add work, interruptions, meetings and everyone else's items that they failed to plan for. We try to stay on track but often fall off track. We say that we try to "balance" our work and personal lives, when in reality the two are blended. We try to keep our workspace uncluttered when in reality, our "to do" list is only keeping our minds cluttered. Christina Smith, HR Administrator with Chesterfield Fire and EMS, presented us with effective methods to get things done by de-cluttering our minds to improve our productivity.

Let's face it, the workplace environment is not what it was 10 years ago. With the demands of life and society what they are, the workplace is sprinkled with more stress and tension. We all need to be more aware than ever before. The tragic events that took place in Virginia Beach on May 31st of this year prompted me to shift focus a bit on our second day of training. Friday morning Deborah Gaudet, Health and Safety Battalion Chief with Virginia Beach Fire Department, talked to us about peer support in the workplace and gave us the top five warning signs to watch for, as well as the objectives of stress first aid. Captain Tony Barakat and Deputy Fire Marshall Whit Gibbs, both with Chesapeake Fire Department, gave an active threat presentation and showed us different ways that could be of use if ever caught in that situation. April Achesinski, EMS Coordinator, and several other members with Virginia Beach Fire Department, spent time teaching us the importance of stopping the bleed in an active threat or any other situation. It was a different kind of training for us, but these were things that I felt were important for us to learn as we could all face this situation at some point. Having this knowledge, as basic as it is, could help to save a life.

We headed outside in the afternoon as Battalion Chief Gibson and Station 2 in Chesapeake welcomed us to come and "play with the toys"! We were given the opportunity to do forcible entry, work with extrication tools, tour their trucks, take a ride up in the bucket, and go out on one of their fire boats. Many had never had this opportunity and after an intense morning of training it was good to get outside and "play" for a while.

Just over three years ago I received a phone call on a Friday afternoon that changed my perspective of the firefighter community. Being an active EMT-B and volunteering for nearly 20 years, I am familiar with the EMS side of the house; being married to a firefighter I thought I knew a lot about fire as well. Becoming and serving as President of this Section over the last three years has given me the opportunity to learn and work with some wonderful people and to develop some amazing friendships. I am extremely proud of the Administrative Professionals Section and the growth we have experienced over the last couple of years. Being a part of this amazing group of women has given me the opportunity to network with likeminded individuals that face the same challenges as me and I have learned so much from all of you.

If you are not a member of this Section, I encourage to join today. We meet quarterly and work together throughout the year with fundraisers for the Foundation, but most important, we are there for each other offering support in this challenging field that we love being a part of. I thank you for allowing me to serve as your President, and I can't wait to see what the future hold for us!





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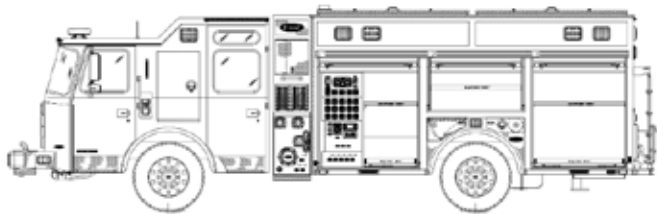
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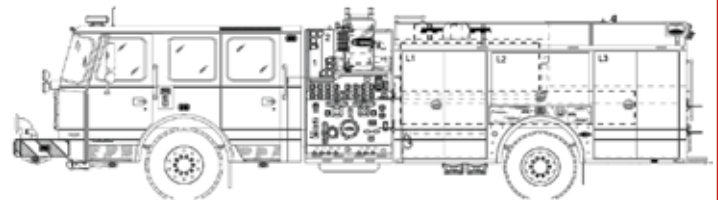
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# THE FIRE SERVICE "3 LEGGED STOOL" OCCUPATIONAL CARCINOGENS, CARDIOVASCULAR & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Chief Todd J. LeDuc, (Ret.), MS, CFO, FIFirE

The American Fire Service has made significant inroads in reducing overall on-duty line of duty deaths over the past decade plus. However, the occupational health risk confronting firefighter survival remains a trilogy of disease processes – I have termed the "three legged stool" – firefighter occupational cancers, cardiovascular events and behavioral health risks including responder suicide. While we continue to learn the magnitude of each of the occupational threats with better national tracking systems and evidence based research, we do know that these three comprise the largest threat to firefighter health, wellness and survival. I am honored to be discussing these in depth at the upcoming 2020 Virginia Fire Rescue conference held in Virginia Beach this coming February.

The United States Fire Administration collects data on line of duty deaths and publishes an annual report. Consistently, cardiovascular events have accounted for a significant percentage of the deaths and for every line of duty death between 17-25 additional members suffer non-fatal yet disabling cardiac events (Drs. Smith/Kales). Cardiovascular modifiable risk factors such as weight, cholesterol, blood sugar control and management of blood pressure take on an even greater significance for clinicians to head, given the extreme physical exertion demands of firefighting. Work by Dr. Denise Smith and others have also demonstrated hemodynamic changes that occur with heat stress, dehydration that lead to greater risk of cardiac events. Her most recent work, entitled "Better Heart" study funded by the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) also has demonstrated very high rates of cardiac enlargement among firefighter cardiac fatalities. Her research has led to the consideration of enhance cardiac screenings to be considered for early detection and intervention of firefighters at higher risk for cardiac events.

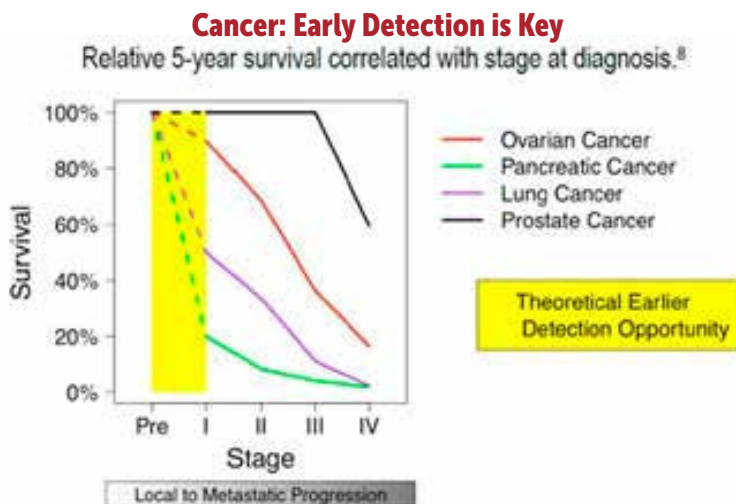
The second leg of the occupational risk to firefighters is that of cancer. We know that according to the National Cancer Institute approximately 39% of men and women will be diagnosed with cancer of any site at some point during their lifetime. Based upon the findings of the National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health report firefighters have a 9% elevated risk of cancer than that of general population and a 14% elevation of mortality that general population. Our service has begun making significant inroads with personal protective equipment enhancements, decontamination practices/skin wipes, hood exchanges and clean cab design concepts to name a few. However, we also know that an essential component of reducing our fire services losses from cancer is a comprehensive annual physical and early detection. Early detection of pre-cancer or stage one cancers typically are associated with extremely high survival rates compared with alter stage identification (figure 1).

- **Colon cancer:** 91% 5-year survival if caught early, 11% if it has already spread (Horner et al., 2009)
- **Prostate cancer:** 100% 5-year survival if caught early (ACS, 2009)
- **Breast cancer:** 98% 5-year survival if caught early, 15% survival in later stages (ACS, 2009; Cancer Research UK)
- **Bowel cancer:** 9 of 10 will survive 5 years if caught early (Cancer Research UK)

Figure 1

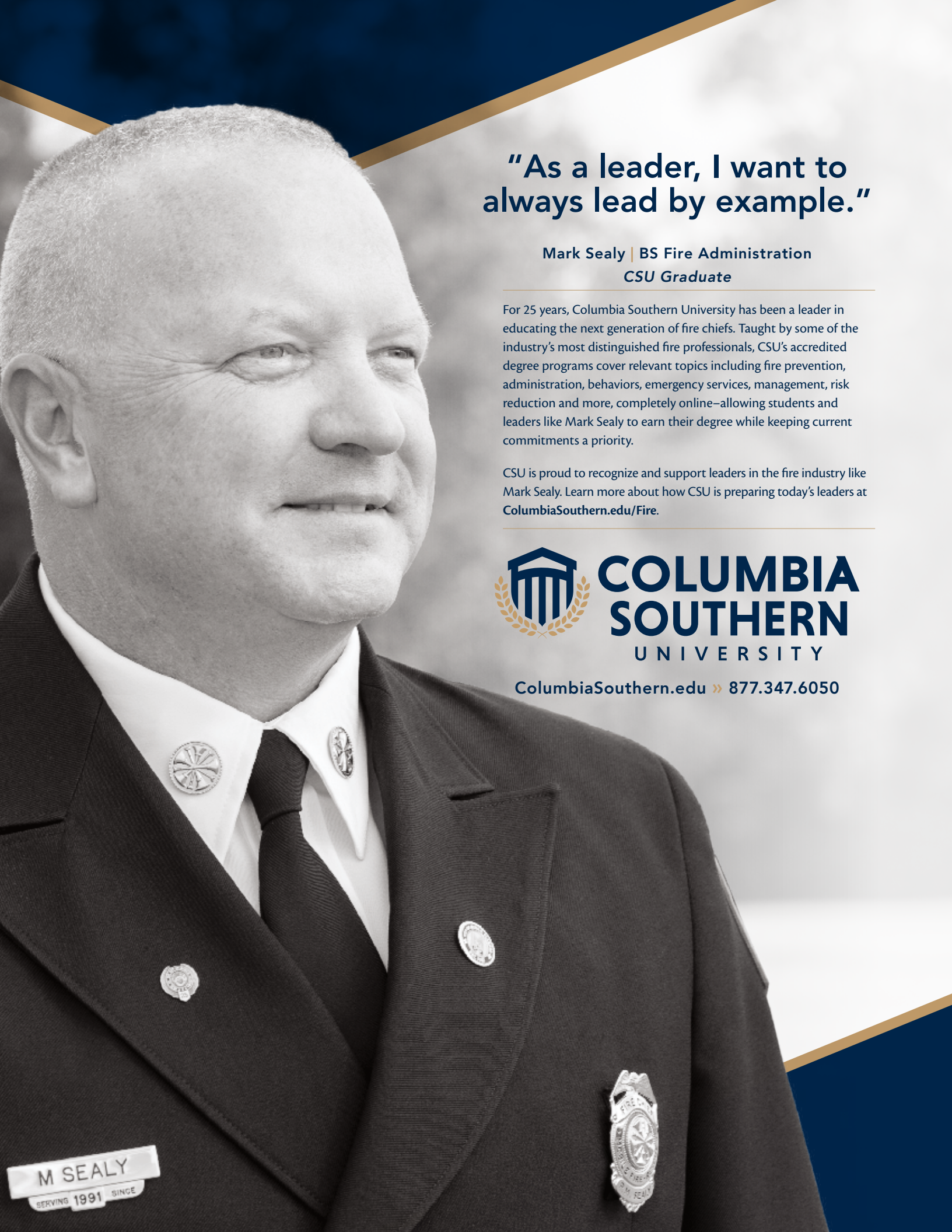
Finally, the third leg of the fire service health risk occupational stool is behavioral health risk due to continued exposure to repetitive trauma and unhealthy coping mechanisms. Research has demonstrated higher rates of stress, alcohol binge drinking and dependency, sleep disorders, post traumatic stress injury and suicide. Some studies have reported elevated suicide rates compared to general population although further study needs to be done including in minorities and retirees. Given the lack of a national tracking mechanism, anecdotal reports have reported that a department is more likely to suffer a suicide than line of duty death – although clearly these risks have an occupational linkage and in some states are afforded presumptive legislative recognition. While risk reduction programs for behavioral health such as peer support, resiliency programs and clinical support are crucial safety nets. However, evidence based behavioral screenings that are aimed at "early detection" for struggling members are also key as part of on-going wellness and annual physicals.

Each of these occupational threats to firefighter health, wellness and survival are preventable and if detected early through comprehensive annual occupationally appropriate exams allow for management and risk reduction. Of course, NFPA 1582 continues to evolve with guidance and the International Association of Fire Chief's Healthcare Providers Guide for Firefighter Physicals provide resources to assist with annual exams and early detection. It has been said, "what is predictable is preventable", our charge is to assure risk mitigation strategies are in place coupled with comprehensive annual medical exams aimed at early detection.



Chief Todd J. LeDuc, (Ret.), MS, CFO, FIFirE

recently retired as assistant fire chief of Broward County, FL. After 30 years of service. He served as Chief Strategy Officer for Life Scan Wellness Centers, a national provider of comprehensive physicals and early detection exams. He has served as a member of the International Association of Fire Chief's Safety, Health & Survival Section for well over a decade and is currently Secretary of the Section. He is a peer reviewer for both professional credentialing and agency accreditation. He is editor of the Fire Engineering book, Surviving the Fire Service and serves on numerous advisory boards and publications.



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always lead by example.”**

**Mark Sealy | BS Fire Administration  
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# VDEM INVESTING \$1.4 MILLION TO DEVELOP STATEWIDE SWIFTWATER RESCUE PROGRAM

Jeffrey Caldwell  
Director of External Affairs and Chief Spokesperson  
Virginia Department of Emergency Management



In the fall of 2018, Virginia was impacted by a one-two punch of Hurricane Florence in late September, followed by Hurricane Michael in October. While the Hurricanes did not inflict direct impacts from their strongest winds, the massive rainfall totals from each storm submerged much of Virginia. Heavy rains and flash flooding swept through much of the state, from Hampton Roads to Southwest Virginia, and 9 Virginians died as a result of these storms. Five of those fatalities were people swept away in the raging floodwaters while Virginians swiftwater rescue teams worked to save countless numbers of other people.

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) is investing \$1.4 million in federal grant funding to support local swiftwater rescue teams and to develop a comprehensive, statewide swiftwater rescue network. VDEM's goal is to invest federal State Homeland Security Program funding in a targeted manner

to support seven established regional teams and to enhance equipment and training in 12 other localities to develop a true network of 19 swiftwater rescue teams that can be deployed around the Commonwealth.

"Flooding is the deadliest disaster Virginians face," said VDEM State Coordinator Jeff Stern. "While hurricanes are often seen as wind events, and tornadoes, terrorist events and snowstorms grab headlines, Virginians from our coastal cities to our mountain towns are subject to more flooding events, and more potential for injury and loss of life due to flooding than any other disaster. Formulating memorandums of understanding with swiftwater rescue teams, just like we do with our other special operations programs will save lives and ensure responders are well-trained for these dangerous situations."

"Right now we are coordinating our efforts to develop a statewide water rescue program to enhance the response to water events across the Commonwealth, to include disasters," said Bryan Saunders, VDEM's Chief of Search and Rescue. "These funds will help teams receive additional training, purchase personal protective equipment, and other essential equipment to be more prepared when flooding arrives. The key will be standardizing team composition and training requirements, equipment and response models. Implementing a statewide approach will allow us to speed response to impacted areas and pre-deploy teams to areas with the highest risk as storms approach."

The program will be developed by a working group comprised of representatives from VDEM, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, Virginia State Police and members from the teams that will begin meeting in December. "We want to have everyone at the table to provide the best ideas to strategically invest this money and implement the new statewide approach," Saunders said. "Over the next several months, we will work together to develop protocols and training that can take mutual aid from the locality-to-locality perspective and expand that statewide when a Governor's State of Emergency is declared."

In coming months, this working group will define standard team structures, equipment needs, and develop standardized training required to certify swiftwater rescue teams that can be deployed under the statewide program.

"The intention is to certify these teams so they can work anywhere in Virginia," Stern said. "Eventually, these teams may also become a resource that Virginia can send around the country through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact to be pre-deployed or to respond to flooding disasters like we have seen with recent hurricanes in Florida and Texas."

The goal is to keep emergency responders safe when working to rescue those citizens trapped in life-threatening swiftwater emergencies. "Pure and simple, we want to save lives," Saunders said. "While this initial investment will need to be followed with additional resources, our plan is to start developing this statewide network of swiftwater rescue teams now so that we have a leg up on future disasters and avoid the loss of life we saw with the 2018 hurricanes and similar events."

# AN INTERVIEW WITH HENRY ROSENBAUM, FIRE MARSHAL, HENRICO COUNTRY DIVISION OF FIRE AND FRIENDS OF SMOKEY BEAR HOT AIR BALLOON PILOT

Fred Turck, Prevention Program Manager  
Emergency Response Branch , Virginia Department of Forestry

As part of Smokey Bear's 75th Birthday celebration, Virginia was able to bring the Smokey Bear Hot Air Balloon to the Commonwealth. Steve Buck, Retired USFS had the initial idea after he saw the balloon at a recent Boy Scout Jamboree. The USFS-George Washington/Jefferson Nation Forest and the Virginia Department of Forestry collaborated to make this happen. USFS Lee Ranger District and the Virginia Department of Forestry Shenandoah Work Area organized, planned, prepared and facilitated the event. This required 20-25 agency personnel along with many volunteers to accomplish. In addition, William French donated his land, a field, near the Shenandoah County Fair Grounds to be used for the balloon launch site. The Comfort Inn, Woodstock, donated rooms and allowed workers to use the hotel's facilities. Sager Realty paid the per-diem costs for three Friends of Smokey Bear Balloon staff and Southern States/Rockingham Petroleum Co-Op donated the necessary propane and a driver on site who facilitated refueling of the balloon between flights.

Q: Where did you grow-up?

A: I am a native Richmond area resident, raised, and still living here with my wife and two children.

Q: When did you join the fire service? How did you end up as Henrico's Fire Marshal?

A: When I was in high school, I became a lifeguard in which I had to take EMT classes. At that time, I wanted to be a lifeguard at Virginia Beach, the dream of many a young male lifeguard at the time. In 1981, I joined the Lakeside Volunteer Rescue Squad to get more training and experience. By the time, I graduated from high school my focus turned from the beach to finding a job locally with the fire service. In 1984, I was hired by Henrico County and became a certified paramedic in 1985. I spent several years in the training division and administration and I served as Captain at several stations before being appointed as Fire Marshal in 2011.

Q: Why the Fire Service?

A: I love making a difference in the lives of others; it is a way to give back to the citizens of the county and the community that have given me so much.

Q: Can you recall the first time you worked with the Virginia Department of Forestry?

A: Throughout my career, I have had many opportunities to work with Forestry. It was not always on a fire as you might expect, more times than not it was on the educational side of things. I remember working with Dave Terwilliger, when he and I collaborated on a school age project for the County. Henrico Fire

has a fire safety program for all 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades. Virginia Department of Forestry has been a part of this program since the 1990's thanks to David. Teachers and students do not really know the difference between the two organizations. They think we all are doing the same, protecting them and their property from fire.

Q: How did you get started in hot air ballooning?

A: In 1987, I took my first ride in a balloon; this ride was a life-changing event for me. In 1988, I got my Hot Air Balloon Pilot's license; purchased my first hot air balloon, which was called Fire 3 and later got my Commercial Pilot's license.

Q: What was the training like?

A: Training was both book and practical. I studied for my written exam given by the FAA; passed that and then I passed my flight test. The FAA examiner checks out my skills and abilities to maneuver the balloon safely. This was followed-up with a 1-2 hour oral review. To receive my Commercial license I needed to take another written test and have another check flight with a Commercial Pilot. Once you receive your Commercial license you are also considered an instructor, testing and mentoring new pilots. I really enjoy this aspect.

Q: What is your favorite thing about ballooning?

A: Sharing the sport of ballooning with people who do not typically have the opportunity to be involved with balloons. There is no age barrier; ballooning leaves an ever-lasting impression with folks. Ask anyone what was the last billboard they saw and a very few might be able to tell you. However, ask them if they ever saw a hot air balloon and if so what did it look like and where were you? Most will recall their encounter and tell you all about it.

I have used ballooning to promote Virginia Is For Lovers, Learn Not to Burn, Autism, Childhood Cancer, Move Over and of course Wildfire Prevention with the Smokey Bear Balloon. I am drawn to causes that are personal to me, ones I have a connection with. The Move Over Campaign honors Hanover Firefighter, Lt. Brad Clark, who was killed in the line of duty while responding to a crash on I-295 during Tropical Storm Michael.

Q: What is the hardest part of piloting a balloon?

A: Maintaining the balloon at a specific altitude. It may sound simple, but it is not. Anyone can get in a balloon, turn the burners on and the balloon will go up, turn them off and it goes down, keeping altitude is hard.

Q: What if any instruments do you have to help you pilot a balloon?

A: Really there are only three instruments, a temperature probe that monitors the temperature in the top of the balloon. You do not want it to go over 250° F. Then there is an altimeter to tell you how high up you are and VSI gauge, Vertical Speed Indicator. The best instrument is you the pilot, some say you need to be able to fly by the seat of your pants, meaning you must know your balloon and the environmental conditions and react to them and not solely rely on any instruments.

Q: What is something you wish more folks knew about ballooning?

A: Probably some of the history. Did you know man's first flight was not Wilbur Wright in 1903 at Kitty Hawk; it was someone in a balloon in 1783 in France?

Q: Do you have a favorite balloon story?

A: I have several, however one was unique and I will remember it forever. In 1997 I was flying the Virginia Is For Lovers balloon in Glen Falls, NY. It was a bad day for flying, overcast and foggy, so the balloon never flew; we were able to



display the balloons at the airport. The next year I was vacationing in Italy and was in Rome visiting the sights and The Vatican. I wanted to get a tour of The Vatican and was told I needed to get a pass from the Father at the table nearby. I went over and began talking with him as he asked where we were from and what I did, etc. I gave him a Virginia is For Lovers balloon pin that I had and he said, "I have seen this balloon". It was last year when he was visiting the states. He said, "It was in NY on a cloudy day and you were the pilot of the balloon". A lasting impression and a lifelong connection was made for sure.

Q: What is the biggest festival/event you have ever flown in?

A: This definitely is the balloon festival in Albuquerque, NM. It is the world's largest with over 500 regular balloons and another 100 special shaped balloons like the Smokey Bear balloon. It takes place on an 80-acre field, there are balloons everywhere. In addition there are about 10-12 helium (gas) balloons that are there competing in the American Challenge. The top 3 balloons qualify for the Gordon Bennett Cup Race in France. This is a 3-day race. It is the longest standing race in any sport with the first competition dating back to 1906.

Q: Is this a bucket list item for you?

A: Yes, for sure, someday maybe.

Q: What was your longest flight? Highest Altitude?

A: I flew once from the Community College near Charlottesville to Richmond, VA about 60 miles. This took me a little over 2 hours.

As for the highest altitude, I am one of a few pilots that have taken a balloon over the Continental Divide in Colorado. This was at about 14,000 feet, oxygen is necessary whenever you go over 12,500 feet. Most pilots fly in the 1000-2000 feet altitude maximum. I did fly one in Virginia over 10,000 feet.

Q: How much does a typical balloon cost?

A: A new standard shaped balloon can cost \$20,000-\$30,000; when you get into the specialty shapes like the Smokey Bear Balloon they can cost you \$100,000-\$200,000. Some may say that sounds like a crazy amount of money. I know some people who are major bass anglers and they spend \$20,000-\$30,000 on a bass boat, rods, reels and equipment and do not think twice. It is all about what you love doing, what you can afford and what you are passionate about.

Q: I read in a story about you that you have been a safety officer on several events; this must come with tremendous responsibility. What is that job about?

A: It is both an honor and privilege to be selected as a safety officer. Yes, it does come with a great deal of responsibility. As a safety officer, you must be a balloon pilot and you must understand the operations of a balloon, what they can and cannot do. You are helping the balloonist look out for other balloonists and the crowd, making sure everyone is kept safe. In addition, you must be in position to assist if something should go wrong, you have to be ready, willing and able to step in and help.

Q: In another article I read you have competed in races, what are those like?

A: Most are not races; but there are a couple of different events. In one such event you are given a set of coordinates and when you get these you will see a target on the ground. You have to fly over and drop a sand bag in the center of the target, the closest to the center wins. One is more of a timed event where you are given a GPS position and an altitude. You are timed how long it takes you to get there, if you ever do.

Well Henry, we have been talking for about 2 hours now and that is about all the

questions I have. It sure was a privilege to talk with you, learning more about you and the sport of ballooning. It was a bucket list of mine when my wife, Debbie, and I were able to go up in the Smokey Balloon with you at the control of the burners. Thank you for all you do with the Henrico Fire Service and your commitment to giving back. You are also a great ambassador for Smokey and his message. It is very evident that this is not a job for you, but it is a passion.



Fred Turck and Henry Rosenbaum



At the Shenandoah County Fair

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Happy 75th Birthday.**





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## 2020 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

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In recent months, there has been a flurry of legislative activity as we prepare for the 2020 Legislative Session to begin on January 8th, including General Assembly elections, new leadership appointments, and the on-going Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission (JLARC) study on cancer presumption. At the time this article was written, the JLARC study on cancer presumption had not been released. It is slated for presentation on Monday, December 16 at 1pm and will inform much of our efforts during the 2020 legislative session. Additionally, the fire services will collaborate on a legislative package that may include topics such as agritourism, red and white lights on VDOT's traffic incident management vehicles, binary explosives, and barricade devices.

### November 5th General Assembly election

On Tuesday, November 5th, Virginians went to the polls to elect all 140 members of the General Assembly. For the 2020 legislative session, Democrats will hold a two-seat margin in the Senate, 21-19, and pick up six seats in the House, which will go from 51-49 Republican to 55-45 Democratic control. Just two years ago, Republicans held a 66-34 advantage in the House, meaning Democrats have picked up 21 House seats in the last two elections.

### 2020 House Leadership

On Saturday, November 9, the new Democratic House majority met in Richmond to select Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn (D-Fairfax) as the Speaker-designee, slating her to be the first female Speaker of the House in Virginia's 400 year history. Delegate Charniele Herring (D-Alexandria) was chosen to be the House Majority Leader, also the first female to serve in this role in Virginia. Delegate Rip Sullivan (D-Arlington) will be the House Democratic Caucus Chair. Speaker-designee Filler-Corn announced the following chairmanships:

- Del. Luke E. Torian (D-Prince William) as Chair of the Appropriations Committee;
- Del. Vivian E. Watts (D-Fairfax) as Chair of the Finance Committee;
- Del. Jeion A. Ward (D-Hampton) Chair of the Commerce and Labor Committee;
- Del. Roslyn C. Tyler (D-Sussex) as Chair of the Education Committee.

Following Speaker Kirk Cox's announcement that he would not seek a leadership role in the Republican Caucus for the coming session, the Republican House Caucus chose Delegate Todd Gilbert (R-Shenandoah) as the House Republican Leader; Delegate Kathy Byron (R-Bedford) as the House Republican Caucus chair; and Delegate Jay Leftwich (R-Chesapeake) as House Republican Whip.

### 2020 Senate Leadership

The new Democratic majority in the Senate elected the following leadership positions:

- Sen. Dick Saslaw (D-Fairfax) as Majority Leader;
- Sen. Mamie Locke (D-Hampton) as Caucus Chair;
- Sen. Louise Lucas (D-Portsmouth) as President Pro Tempore-designee.

Additionally, the following committee chairmanships were announced:

- Sen. Chap Petersen (D-Fairfax City) as Chair of the Agriculture, Conservation & Natural Resources Committee;
- Sen. Dick Saslaw (D-Fairfax) as Chair of the Commerce & Labor Committee;
- Sen. John Edwards (D-Roanoke) as Chair of the Courts of Justice Committee;
- Sen. Louise Lucas (D-Portsmouth) as Chair of Education & Health;
- Sen. Janet Howell (D-Fairfax) as Chair of the Finance Committee;
- Sen. Mamie Locke (D-Hampton) as Chair of the Rules Committee;
- Sen. Barbara Favola (D-Arlington) as Chair of the Rehabilitation and Social Services Committee;
- Sen. George Barker (D-Fairfax) as Chair of the General Laws Committee;
- Sen. Lynwood Lewis (D-Accomack) as Chair of the Local Government Committee;
- Sen. Dave Marsden (D-Fairfax) as Chair of the Transportation Committee;
- Sen. Creigh Deeds (D-Bath) as Chair of the Privileges and Election Committee.

Senate Republicans announced their leadership:

- Senator Thomas K. Norment, Jr. (R-James City) was elected to his fourth term as Senate Republican Leader;
- Senator Ryan T. McDougle (R-Hanover) was elected to his third full term as Chair of the Senate Republican Caucus;
- Senator Mark D. Obenshain was elected to his second term as Co-Chair of the Senate Republican Caucus;
- Senator William M. Stanley, Jr. (R-Franklin) and Senator Bryce E. Reeves (R-Spotsylvania) were elected as Senate Republican Whips;
- Senator Stephen D. Newman (R-Bedford) was chosen as Republican Leader Pro Tempore;
- Senator Siobhan Dunnivant (R-Henrico) will chair the newly formed Campaign Committee.

### 2020 Virginia Legislative Black Caucus

As a result of the 2019 General Assembly elections, the VLBC has grown to 20 members across both the House of Delegates and Senate, who elected the following officers:

- Delegate Lamont Bagby (D-74th, Henrico) as Chair;
- Senator Jennifer McClellan (D-9th, Richmond) as Vice Chair;
- Delegate Sam Rasoul (D-11th, Roanoke) as Treasurer;
- Delegate Marcia Price (D-95th, Newport News) as Secretary;
- Delegate-Elect Joshua Cole (D-28th, Fredericksburg) was appointed by Chairman Bagby to serve as Chaplain.

### Speaker-Designee Names House Clerk and Director of the House Appropriations Committee Staff

Speaker-designee Eileen Filler-Corn nominated Suzette Denslow for the Clerk of the House and Keeper of the Rolls of the Commonwealth. Denslow currently serves as Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Ralph Northam. Additionally, the Speaker-designee appointed Anne Oman as Director of the House Appropriations Committee Staff. Oman has worked the past 17 years as an analyst in House Appropriations.

With all these changes afoot, we have the opportunity to educate the new members of the General Assembly on the priorities of the VFCA and the Fire Services as a whole. Please check the VFCA website (<https://vfca.us/Legislative>) for weekly updates during the 2020 Legislative Session.



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# IT'S YOUR HOUSE!

Lieutenant Matthew Haight  
Fort Belvoir Fire & Emergency Services

Let me ask you a question. What makes a firehouse great? Is it the calls, the apparatus, the people, or tradition? To me, what separates a mediocre firehouse from an exceptional firehouse are the people and traditions. It's no secret, due to shift work, the firehouse is our second home, and the people assigned to the firehouse become our family. Not every firehouse in the world is "Bronx Busy" nor is every firehouse in the world the Taj Mahal, and not every firehouse has top of the line apparatus operating out of it either.

Throughout my career, I have worked in firehouses that respond to less than 350 calls a year and firehouses that respond to over 3,500 calls a year. In both of these situations, people are always what can make or break a firehouse. Some of my fondest memories of the fire service are of firehouses that could be described as "less than desirable" by people not assigned there. Early in my career, I was assigned to a rural firehouse. A station that a lot of people in my department would refer to as a glorified metal shed, talk about how awful the firehouse was because it lacked a high call volume, and had old apparatus. When I was first assigned to this firehouse, it was literally four walls and a roof. Over the course of my time being assigned there, my co-workers and I took the time to add on to the station, remodeled rooms throughout the firehouse and kept up with general repairs. Through that hard work and team effort we were able to take a "metal shed" and turn it into a firehouse that we could be proud of. We carried a lot of pride in that firehouse and even though we weren't the busiest firehouse in the department, we had the most pride. We had taken pride and ownership in our firehouse and bonded together while making the firehouse a better place for everyone.

I have had people ask me why I wanted to leave certain firehouses, because from the outside, they believed that specific firehouse was THE place to be. Just due to the fact that it was the biggest station and the busiest with the state-of-the-art apparatus. With these firehouses, my experience was that I wasn't coming to work with friends/family every day but co-workers. Now don't get me wrong, you're not going to like everyone you work with, but it's important to come together and find a common ground and build a relationship regardless of your differences. Jeff Dixon, a great mentor and friend, is a perfect example of "you're not going to like everyone you work with." When Jeff and I first started working together we had issues pretty early on. Jeff was the senior firefighter medic and I was the young punk firefighter who had the "know it all" attitude. A few arguments and yelling matches later, Jeff and I finally had a sit down and found common ground. We discussed why we were having issues with each other and to this day Jeff and I are the best of friends. So much of the firefighter I am today is a direct result of his influence on my life. He was the first person in my professional career that took the time to mentor me as a young firefighter.

Remember, no matter which way you're looking at it there are tons of people who would gladly give anything to be where you are today. A past Fire Chief and dear friend Ricky Arrington once told me, "Don't go to a place for the money, money isn't everything. Happiness is priceless and if you are happy it means you enjoy where you are, and if you enjoy where you are, you'll never "work" a day



in your life." This logic can be applied to firehouses as well. If you're miserable at your firehouse then it doesn't matter how much money you're making, how many calls you're running, or how new your apparatus is, you will always find something to complain about.

People can help turn your average firehouse into a great firehouse through camaraderie. Some ways you can build camaraderie are training together, including each other in conversations, and my favorite, laughing. We need to remember that the firehouse is our second home and those in the firehouse are our second family. It's essential that we lean on each other when we need to. Create your own traditions whether it is something as simple as driver getting ice cream for the shift when they hit curbs, or having the rookie look for a "Blue Flare", make your own traditions and take the time to pay attention to the details. Make the firehouse yours and take ownership of building the firehouse up. Thomas Edison once said "Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time." You may not make your firehouse great overnight, but being tenacious and driven will be the key to making your firehouse great. Strive to make your firehouse THE firehouse everyone wants to be at.

Matthew Haight is a newly appointed Lieutenant at Fort Belvoir Fire & Emergency Services and has 16 years of fire/rescue experience. He also is a 2013 graduate of the Virginia Fire Officer Academy.

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# ON THE MOVE & ODDS AND ENDS

## David Eagle Appointed New Williamsburg Fire Chief

In early September, City Manager Andrew O. Trivette announced the appointment of David Eagle as Fire Chief effective October 15th. Eagle is the current Fire Chief in Danville, Virginia. He will succeed Williamsburg Fire Chief Pat Dent who retired at the end of June

With over 24 years of experience in Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Eagle worked his way up the ranks beginning as a firefighter/EMT in the Danville Fire Department in 1995. He became Assistant Fire Marshall in 1997, Fire Marshall in 2003, and Fire Chief in 2007. As Danville Fire Chief he is responsible for a \$9 million budget, a 145 person work force and serves as Emergency Management Coordinator for the city. Among his accomplishments in Danville, Chief Eagle improved Danville's ISO classification – now recognized as one of 77 fire districts nationwide currently with an ISO class 1 rating and achieving accredited status by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. He implemented the use of mobile data terminals that assist medical services in the field by providing GIS mapping and improving patient outcomes by allowing 15 lead ECG heart monitor readings to be sent from the field to the hospital.

As Williamsburg Fire Chief, Eagle will plan and direct the programs, services and activities of the fire department to ensure community safety and that public resources are used effectively and efficiently to support the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the City of Williamsburg. In addition, he will serve as the Coordinator of Emergency Management to ensure the City effectively plans, responds, mitigates and recovers from disasters that may impact the City. The Fire Chief functions as a member of the City's Executive Team and reports directly to the City Manager.

Chief Eagle holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications from Virginia Tech, an Associate in Applied Science in Fire Science from Danville Community College, he is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer Program in Emmitsburg, MD and he received a Graduate Certificate in Local Government Management from Virginia Tech.

"I'm humbled and honored to have been selected to lead such an outstanding team of professionals," said Chief Eagle. "I'm grateful and excited for the opportunity to serve the Williamsburg community."

The hiring process included an interview panel that was comprised of select fire chiefs from across the Commonwealth, coordinated in part with the assistance from the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association "Using a challenging process for applicants we had over 40 fire service personnel to consider. We narrowed that list to seven and interviewed five. Chief Eagle demonstrates, daily, the traits needed to lead our Department into its next chapter. The Williamsburg Fire Department is an unmatched team with a very strong leadership structure. Chief Eagle will be a great addition to the department."

## Assistant Fire Chief Mike Jefferson Will Serve As Interim Fire Chief In Danville

Assistant Fire Chief Mike Jefferson will serve as interim fire chief, starting Oct. 12, according to Danville city officials.

Jefferson has been with the Danville Fire Department since 1987, starting out as a firefighter and now serving as assistant chief

## Sean Carroll Stepping Down As CFSI Director Of Government Affairs.

The Congressional Fire Services Institute announced that Sean Carroll, Director of Government Affairs, has resigned from his position after 17 years of dedicated service to our nation's fire and emergency services. He recently accepted a position with Kidde as its Associate Director of Government Relations.

Sean's work at CFSI has had a tremendous impact on our nation's first responders and the family members of our fallen heroes. Since 2002, he has advocated for the CFSI legislative agenda by developing working relationships on Capitol Hill with members of Congress in the Senate and House on both sides of the political aisle and offering his counsel and knowledge on a broad range of issues. He has also organized and facilitated coalitions that worked together to advance many of the fire service's legislative priorities, including reauthorization of the AFG and SAFER grant programs and the United States Fire Administration, as well as the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act. For over 15 years, Sean was recognized as one of the fire service's most knowledgeable advisors on all matters relating to the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program.

## The Congressional Fire Services Institute Announces Michaela Campbell As The New Director Of Government Affairs

The Congressional Fire Services Institute announces Michaela Campbell as the newest member of its staff. She has assumed the position of Director of Government Affairs.

Prior to joining CFSI, Ms. Campbell served as a Legislative Assistant for Steptoe & Johnson LLP, where her portfolio included trade, tax, energy, labor, and environmental issues. She also previously served as a Legislative Correspondent in the Office of Senator Susan Collins, working on AFG/SAFER funding and a broad range of economic, tax, national defense, and homeland security issues.

"We look forward to the contributions Michaela will make to CFSI and to our nation's fire and emergency services," said CFSI Executive Director Bill Webb. "Her professional experience and diverse knowledge of important issues to our organization make her well qualified for her new role."

## In Memory

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of Retired Fire Chief Selby Jacobs of Prince William County Fire & Rescue. Chief Jacobs served as President of the VFCA from 2001 - 2002. The chief passed away on December 2nd at his home surrounded by his family. A funeral service was held on December 7th at Our Saviors Lutheran Church in Norge. Please keep Selby's family in your thoughts and prayers.



## NEW PROCESS FOR VIRGINIA OFFICE OF EMS FINGERPRINT-BASED BACKGROUND CHECKS

Deadline to utilize new process is January 1, 2020  
Ron Passmore, Manager, Virginia Office of EMS,  
Regulation and Compliance Division

All EMS agency personnel (career, volunteer, certified, non-certified [drivers/auxiliary] and Operational Medical Directors) are required by Virginia Administrative Code 12VAC5-31-540 to submit fingerprints for a criminal history background check, no more than 60 days prior to the individual's affiliation with the EMS agency.

Starting January 1, 2020, the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) will no longer process ink and paper fingerprint cards for background checks. The OEMS will be utilizing the state contractor FieldPrint to collect and submit electronic fingerprints for regulatory required background checks.

To submit your fingerprints, please visit the Virginia Office of EMS website, select the Regulation & Compliance Division, then select the Fingerprint Submission tab. Then, you'll answer a couple quick and simple questions to obtain your appropriate FieldPrint code. Next, follow the onscreen link to FieldPrint and schedule your appointment to submit your fingerprints.

FieldPrint assures that all areas of the Commonwealth are within 40 miles of a FieldPrint location. Should a FieldPrint location not be close enough or has limited operating hours, you can apply for an exception to receive and return a paper card completed by your local law enforcement agency, via FieldPrint. Please contact the Regulation and Compliance Division at 804-888-9130 for further instructions, PRIOR to scheduling your FieldPrint appointment.

Agencies do not have to wait until January 1, 2020 to begin using this process. Agencies can now begin using this process; however, all agencies MUST utilize this new process by January 1, 2020.

## OEMS WELCOMES RENOWNED EDUCATOR BOB PAGE

Chad Blosser, Education Program Manager, Virginia Office of EMS, Accreditation, Certification and Education Division



The Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) welcomes Bob Page to our team as a Statewide Continuing Education (CE) Educator. Bob, who lives in Virginia, will be working in collaboration with the Division of Accreditation, Certification & Education and our Local CE Educators across the Commonwealth to provide CAT 1 CE programs to all licensed EMS agencies at no charge.

Bob will continue to offer those classes for which he is famous, however it is our goal and Bob's wish that we transition Virginia CAT 1 CE courses from the traditional classroom format to focus more on

simulation and real-life scenario-based training. As such, Bob will be developing new courses, as well as adapting some of his existing classes to this new format.

Following his onboarding at the OEMS, we will post Bob's state email and phone number to this page on our website: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/statewide-ce-educator-bob-page/>.

Bob will be responsible for scheduling all training that he is conducting. The OEMS and Bob will ensure that the training is fairly and adequately distributed across Virginia.

All training conducted by Bob will require the host training site to be open to providers from across the Commonwealth. Bob will use Eventbrite as the ticketing agent for the programs he offers in order to ensure fairness to everyone and to guarantee every participant a seat in the session.

In addition to offering simulation and real-life scenario-based training in the field, Bob will also oversee the development of a new, interactive hour-long replacement program for the old monthly EMSAT broadcasts. The OEMS is aiming to bring this new—yet to be named—program online in January 2020. The programs will be conducted via webinar, making use of the existing EMSAT Host Sites. Tracie Jones, in the Division of Accreditation, Certification & Education will coordinate with Bob to ensure Host Sites receive the necessary access credentials to view the program. CE for these programs will be recorded initially by paper-based CE cards, but will transition to electronic reporting over the next six months.

We are pleased to welcome Bob to the OEMS and we look forward to offering quality simulation and real-life, scenario-based, CAT 1 CE programming to Virginia EMS agencies and providers for years to come.

# GOVERNOR'S EMS AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT THE 40TH ANNUAL VIRGINIA EMS SYMPOSIUM

The 2019 Governor's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Award winners were announced at the 40th Annual Governor's EMS Awards Ceremony in Norfolk, Virginia. These awards, given in Governor Ralph Northam's name, recognize outstanding EMS providers and organizations from across the Commonwealth for their demonstrated level of excellence and dedication to the EMS system.

Presented in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Office of Emergency Medical Services' Annual EMS Symposium, the awards ceremony caps off the week-long training event. The largest EMS training event in the Commonwealth and one of the largest in the nation, this year's symposium welcomed more than 1,700 participants. The symposium offers each participant the opportunity to earn up to 26 hours of continuing education credits for recertification as an EMS provider via more than 400 class sessions.

"We celebrated our 40th anniversary of the Virginia EMS Symposium this year, which marked a monumental milestone for this event! It highlighted the reason why we continue to bring this training opportunity to our providers year after year. It is because of their commitment to the EMS profession, their conscientiousness to maintaining their education and their dedication to saving lives," said Gary Brown, director, Virginia Office of EMS. "I am honored to recognize all of the 2019 Governor's EMS Award nominees and winners for their excellence in the field and thank them for their tireless efforts!"

The VDH Chief Deputy Commissioner for Public Health and Preparedness Dr. Parham Jaber, who also attended the Governor's EMS Awards ceremony said, "I feel privileged to be in the presence of such an outstanding group of individuals, who selflessly devote their lives to protecting the health and well-being of all people in Virginia. Congratulations to this year's award winners and thank you for your continued service to Virginia's EMS System."

The 2019 Governor's EMS Award winners are:

- The Governor's EMS Award for Excellence in EMS – Byron Andrews, III, Sterling Volunteer Rescue Squad, Alexandria Fire Department
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Administrator (The Kent J. Weber Trophy) – Anne Marsh, Arlington County Fire Department
- The Governor's EMS Award for Physician with Outstanding Contribution to EMS (The Frank M. Yeiser Trophy) – Dan Avstreich, MD, FACEP, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department
- The Governor's EMS Award for Nurse with Outstanding Contribution to EMS – Janet McCoig, BSN, RN, Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Prehospital Educator – Brian McIntosh, Chesapeake Fire Department, Tidewater Community College and Portsmouth Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Prehospital Provider – Christopher Adams, Lynchburg Fire Department

- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Health and Safety – Rappahannock EMS Council's Critical Incident Stress Management Team - Therapy Dogs and Clergy Volunteers
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS for Children – Samuel Bartle, MD, VCU Health
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Agency – York County Department of Fire and Life Safety
- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Telecommunication – Virgil "JR" Powell, Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center
- Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Emergency Preparedness and Response (The James A. Nogle, Jr. Trophy) – Hampton Roads Metropolitan Medical Response System

An additional award is presented at the ceremony to recognize the outstanding contributions to EMS by a high school senior. This is a scholarship award provided by the Virginia Office of EMS in conjunction with the State EMS Advisory Board. This year, two extraordinary high school seniors were selected:

- The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS by a High School Senior (The Dr. Carol Gilbert \$5,000 Scholarship) – Colton Allison, Harrisonburg Rescue Squad and Zoie Sadler, Mid-County Volunteer Rescue Squad in Northumberland County

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# SHOULD WE EXCLUDE VOLUNTEERS WHO AREN'T COMMITTED TO HELPING THE COMMUNITY?

Spencer Cheatham

Dr. Jason Decremer is the Director of Accreditation for the Connecticut Fire Academy. His research on the motivation of volunteer firefighters may be especially interesting to those of you who work to retain members and bring in new ones. His research is based on Dr. James Perry's public service model. I interviewed Dr. Decremer to see how his study can be of help to us.

**What is your fire department background?** I have been in the fire service, both career and volunteer, for 22 years and I have served with the Southbury Volunteer Fire Department for the past 15 years. My time in the fire service has been in multiple roles including as a Chief of Southbury. For the past 12 years I have worked for the fire academy. Since the beginning of 2019, I have also worked as an instructor for the IAFC's Recruitment & Retention Coordinator certification course.

**How did you decide to obtain your doctorate?** I finished my master's degree in curriculum design and "was in the groove." I didn't want to go into education and leaned towards public policy or public administration because I wanted to do something related to the fire department.

**What, other than the public service model, were you considering as your thesis?** I really didn't have an idea other than I wanted to do something related to public policy and how it can affect fire departments. One weekend, I was at the NFA. I was in the middle of my doctorate work, when Kirby Keifer sat down in the cafeteria with me. At the time, he was the acting NFA Superintendent. I asked him his thoughts on what to do. Without a second guess, he said "volunteer recruitment and retention." I liked that idea and worked to narrow it from there.

**What made you decide on the public service model?** My advisor said that the thesis had to be founded in some tangible, previous research. I searched online for such research for volunteer organizations, not just volunteer fire departments. I stumbled upon Dr. Perry's research on why people join and stay with organizations. I sent it to my advisor and she said, "that's it!" I liked it because it was not specific to one organization, but to almost all public service ones.

**Who was Dr. Perry and what is the public service model?** Dr. James L. Perry is a professor at Indiana University. In 1996, he published a study in the Journal of Public Administration in which he ascribed the motivation of volunteers in civic organizations to six dimensions:

- Attraction to Public-Policy Making
- Commitment to the Public Interest
- Civic Duty
- Social Justice
- Self-Sacrifice
- Compassion

He stated that the more of these traits a person carries the higher likelihood of joining and staying with a public-service organization.

**What did you research?** I put out a public notice and asked for volunteers to be interviewed. I wanted to interview people who were from communities of 20,000 residents or less, 1,000 calls or less per year, and were 100% volunteer. My research had to be with similar interviewees so that the contributing factors were minimized.

I interviewed 100 people who had left the volunteer fire service. 80% of them did not have a public service motivation trait. I also interviewed chief officers. I wanted people who had time in and were in leadership positions currently. This allowed me to gauge their motivation. 96.4% of them had one or more of the public-service model traits.

**It seems obvious, but how do you tie the public service model to volunteer firefighting?** It is important to understand that these traits come into play when hardships start to arise. For example, you have a volunteer firefighter who is having some trouble. Perhaps it is an especially stressful time at work or they are having trouble passing a certain fire class. The person who does not have a public service model trait will probably not weather that storm, as related to their membership. Unless their

leaders are superb at working them through this, your department will probably lose them. On the other hand, those with the traits will persevere. They may be frustrated with leadership at the department or may be having trouble at home, but they will work it out.

We shouldn't use this as a measure of who we let in. It should be used to measure how much time and leadership resources the individual will need when difficult situations arise.

**Is it possible for someone to join a VFD without being motivated by public service then gain that attribute later?** Dr. Perry concludes that you can't teach this and you can't force it on them. They either have it or they don't. It is connected with how you were raised. This rang true with my research. Someone may not realize they have it and joined for a different reason. In the end though, they hit obstacles and stayed because of their public service traits.

**Can someone be motivated by public service to varying degrees compared to another person?** You either have some of those six dimensions or you don't. The more they have, the higher their motivation.

What is the best way to determine if someone is motivated by public service? Can we ascertain this in an interview? Yes, and that is why it is so important to determine what a candidate's values are. After this research, I ask "How long have you lived in the town?" From there, I ask why they moved there. I want to find out what about the community led them there. Was it a small, close-knit community or a large one where people didn't know one another? The key here is not the community size, but whether they state that they were close with those in their community. Remember, many in New York City still maintain small, close-knit communities.

From there, I ask, "Were you previously involved in a public-service organization?" If yes, that is a great, positive indicator. If no, but they say something like "I didn't know opportunities existed, but I've always wanted to do something at this level," that is a win also. That is the hook! They have the internal drive. Now all we need to do is keep them active and engaged until we get them trained!

**What is the key takeaway for VFDs?** Unless your experiences with them show something blatant, such as "I could care less about people, I just want to bust stuff up," I don't think you exclude them. Remember, this isn't to say that those without the public service model traits can't be great firefighters. Instead, it informs us that they may require more time and "hand-holding" by leadership.

**Spencer Cheatham** is a past fire chief and past president of the West Point Volunteer Fire Department. He served as an interim chief and battalion chief in a career capacity with New Kent Fire-Rescue and currently works as a program manager for the International Association of Fire Chiefs. He still enjoys pulling duty one night a week as a firefighter/EMT with West Point, the community he has served for the past 24 years.

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CHARLES COUNTY, MD

**PIERCE ENFORCER PUMPER**  
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JOB #33701

28' 11" OAL / 9' 6" OAH  
ENFORCER 60" CAB  
SEATING FOR 6  
500 GALLON TANK  
NY STYLE LOW HOSEBED  
HALE QMAX 1500 GPM  
DD13 525HP, 1850 LB-FT  
44,000 lb. GVWR  
22" EXTENDED FRONT BUMPER  
6 KW HARRISON GENERATOR  
WHELEN LED EMERGENCY &  
SCENE LIGHTING

## 1 SHORT OVERALL LENGTH (28' 11")

Short overall length allows for better and faster placement while positioning to attack at the scene.

The 60" Enforcer cab and 129" short pumper body met Waldorf's specs while providing seating for six.

## 2 REDUCED STEP HEIGHT (20" from ground)

Minimizing the step from the cab to the ground, reduces body stress and chance for injury while exiting geared up.

The reduced height was achieved through consideration of frame rail size (10.25") and front suspension type (Dana, D-2000F).

## 3 LOWERED CROSSLAYS (64" ground to bed)

Low crosslays allow for rapid fire attack by making it easier to reach and deploy without having to use side steps.

The pump panel, plumbing and pumphouse were specifically designed to achieve the lowest position for the primary attack lines, approximately 9" lower than standard.

## 4 ERGONOMIC PUMP PANEL

The narrower the pumphouse, the shorter the wheelbase. Methodically placed controls in this tighter space makes it easier for the operator while manual push-pull controls simplifies operation.

Waldorf's compact design of a 45" pump panel was achieved even with the mandatory diesel engine emissions equipment. Additionally, a passenger side running board hose tray is provided for a preconnected LDH hydrant sleeve.

## 5 SHORT WHEELBASE (167.5")

A shorter wheelbase combined w/ a short overall length improves the ability to maneuver through and around obstacles and allows for more optimal placement on the fireground.

## 6 LOW REAR HOSEBED (5' 4")

The lower height allows 400' of attack line to be deployed efficiently while helping reduce firefighter injuries. Requirements helping to determine hosebed height include compartment space, water and hose requirements. Tank sizes for low hosebed pumpers typically range from 500 to 1500.

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# MAKING DISCIPLINE STICK IN THE FIRE SERVICE<sup>©</sup>

Richard R. Johnson, Ph.D.  
Matt Dolan, Attorney

Some individuals in government have suggested that grievance arbitrators' handling of employee discipline cases in the fire service tends to be biased in favor of the employees and against the fire department. The mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, for example, criticized the grievance arbitration process after being required to rehire a number of city employee that had been terminated from various city departments. He argued that the arbitration process keeps bad employees on the job. 1 The mayor of Plattsburgh, New York, when dealing with firefighter employee grievance cases, publicly stated his belief that the decisions of arbitrators "defy logic." 2 The mayor of New York City, when an arbitration decision required the re-hiring of several city employees who had been terminated for serious acts of misconduct, stated that arbitrators "would give an axe murderer a slap on the wrist." 3 Leaders in many other cities dealing with orders to rehire firefighters who were terminated for serious acts of misconduct have suggested that the grievance arbitration process is broken. 4

Prior social science research on grievance arbitration cases involving public employees also reveals that arbitrators frequently find in favor of the employee by reducing, or completely overturning, public employee discipline. A 1995 study examined arbitration decisions from 994 public sector employee discipline cases. It found that arbitrators only upheld the employer's discipline in its entirety in about 50% of these public sector cases. 5 Another study in 2007 reviewed 806 arbitration cases of public sector employee discipline and, again, found that the arbitrators sided with the employer in only about half of the cases. 6

If fire departments cannot discipline their employees when corrective action is warranted, several negative outcomes result. First, the employees of the agency will have difficulty determining where the boundaries lie between appropriate and inappropriate behavior—possibly leading to behavior that is not only inappropriate but that results in serious criminal charges. Second, toxic and dysfunctional employees will believe they are untouchable and, as a result, will be emboldened to engage in further misconduct. Third, the morale of the good employees will suffer as they have to continue to work alongside (and entrust their safety to) toxic and dysfunctional individuals. Fourth, the image of the agency and the profession will decline in the eyes of the public and local politicians—politicians and a public that votes on such things as raises, contracts, or tax increases for fire services. Finally, members of management can begin to feel that they have no control over the organization.

## Why Employee Discipline is Reduced or Overturned

**Why are the corrective actions applied to firefighters and EMTs overturned so often? Are the arbitrators acting so irrationally that fire departments are powerless? The evidence suggests that this is actually not the case.** Dolan Consulting Group (DCG) recently studied 661 cases of employee misconduct handled by 276 fire agencies and ambulance services across 44 states. These cases primarily represented situations that resulted in serious discipline, such as suspensions without pay or employment termination. This study examined what factors were associated with whether or not the employees accepted or challenged their discipline and examined how the discipline challenges were handled by grievance arbitrators or the civil courts. **This analysis revealed that there are clear and consistent reasons that employee discipline by fire rescue agencies is overturned almost half of the time.**

## Grievance Arbitration

Approximately 61% of the disciplined fire rescue personnel in this study appealed their discipline to a grievance arbitrator. In this research study, "grievance arbitrator" was defined very broadly to include the grievance arbitration processes as part of collective bargaining agreements between employers and labor unions, as well as other types of arbitration mechanisms such as civil service boards, employee relations boards, workplace standards boards, or equal employment opportunity boards. **These arbitrators ruled in favor of the employee in 54% of the cases by reducing or overturning the employee's discipline.**

**In each arbitration decision, the arbitrator provided a detailed explanation of his or her rationale for altering the discipline that had been issued by the employer. In all of the cases favorable to the employee, arbitrators found at least one error---and in some cases, three or four errors--on the part of the employer that justified reducing or overturning the disciplinary action. In 72% of the cases in which the employee discipline was reduced or overturned, the arbitrator noted inconsistent discipline on the part of the employer.** Inconsistent discipline can include instances in which the employer issued less severe punishments in the past to other employees who had committed similar offenses. **In about 60% of the cases, the employer failed to reach the legal standard of clear and convincing evidence that is required when suspending or terminating employees. In these cases, the employers had relied upon hearsay and weak evidence, while the disciplined employee had stronger evidence refuting their guilt.**

**In 59% of the cases the employers were found to have issued disproportionate discipline, meaning that the severe when compared to the seriousness of the misconduct, or was disproportionately severe when penalty issued by the employer was disproportionately compared to the employee's past record of good performance. In 47% of the cases, the employer was found**

<sup>1</sup> Staff (February 27, 2015). Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson says arbitration process keeps bad cops on police force.

Cleveland.com (Retrieved from: [http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/02/cleveland\\_mayor\\_frank\\_jackson\\_22.html](http://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2015/02/cleveland_mayor_frank_jackson_22.html))

<sup>2</sup> Lotempleo, J. (December 8, 2012). Plattsburgh mayor blasts fire union over arbitrator's decision.

Plattsburgh Press-Republican (Retrieved from: [https://www.pressrepublican.com/news/local\\_news/plattsburgh-mayor-blasts-fire-union-over-arbitrator-s-decision/article\\_2b374a7b-797e-50ac-9c64-6aa52028fa25.html](https://www.pressrepublican.com/news/local_news/plattsburgh-mayor-blasts-fire-union-over-arbitrator-s-decision/article_2b374a7b-797e-50ac-9c64-6aa52028fa25.html))

<sup>3</sup> Colvin, J. (April 6, 2012). Mayor says arbitrators would give ax murderer "slap on the wrist." New York Public Radio (Retrieved from: <https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/>)

<sup>4</sup> Cromwell, A. (December 21, 2017). Saint John Mayor critical of firefighter arbitration decision. Global Views (Retrieved from: <https://globalnews.ca/news/3930252/saint-john-mayor-critical-firefighter-arbitration/>)

<sup>5</sup> Mesch, D. J. (1995). Grievance arbitration in the public sector. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 14(4), 22-36.; Mesch, D. J., & Shamayeva, O. (1996). *Arbitration in practice: a profile of public sector arbitration cases.*

*Public Personnel Management, 25(1),119-132.*

<sup>6</sup> LaVan, H. (2007). *Public sector employee discipline: comparing police to other public sector employees.*

*Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal, 19(1),17-30.*

**to have violated the collective bargaining agreement** by failing to exercise progressive discipline. Finally, **in 40% of the cases, the employer was found to have violated the employee's due process rights or collective bargaining contract requirements**, such as by not providing an impartial hearing, not allowing the employee to present counter evidence, not providing an impartial determiner of guilt, or failing to meet required deadlines.

These cases reveal a consistent pattern. Fire rescue departments often see their employee discipline reduced or overturned at arbitration, but primarily for legitimate reasons. The disciplinary process must be legal, fair, and follow proper procedure. These cases were overturned because they each lacked fairness, legality, or they violated proper procedure in multiple ways.

### Civil Lawsuits

While grievance arbitration process is frequently criticized, not nearly as much hostility is directed at the civil courts. The civil courts, however, generally come to the same conclusions as the grievance arbitrators. In our study, 17% of the disciplined fire rescue employees chose to contest their discipline through a lawsuit instead of through grievance arbitration. **The courts sided with the employer as frequently as did the arbitrators. Only 59% of these lawsuit cases were decided in favor of the employer, with the courts reducing or overturning the employee's discipline in 41% of the cases. This suggests that grievance arbitrators and the civil courts resolve cases in a similar manner.**

When examining the civil court judges' justifications for reducing or overturning the fire rescue agency's discipline, the judges cited the same reasons as the arbitrators. All of the lawsuits that were decided in favor of the employees cited multiple employer errors that warranted altering the employee's discipline. **These employer errors included violation of the employee's due process rights or collective bargaining agreement requirements (79%), lack of clear and convincing evidence of guilt (60%), disproportionate discipline (29%), inconsistent discipline (24%), and failure to exercise progressive discipline (9%).**

### Getting a Second Opinion

It appears that there is nothing unique about the way grievance arbitrators reach decisions in discipline cases. Grievance arbitrators side with the employer at a similar rate as do the civil courts, and reduce or overturn employee discipline for the exact same reasons as do the civil courts. It should not be surprising, therefore, that trying to appeal the outcome of binding arbitration in court rarely changes the result. In our study, 45% of the cases that went to arbitration were later taken to civil court by the losing party to overturn the arbitrator's decision. In these cases the civil court judges upheld the arbitrator's decision the vast majority of the time.

In situations where the employee lost at arbitration (remaining terminated or suspended), but then filed a lawsuit against the department in court, the court upheld the arbitrator's decision 95% of the time. In situations where the employer sued to block the arbitrator's order to reduce or remove the employee's discipline, the court still upheld the arbitrator's decision 70% of the time. Even in the 30% of cases in which the court sided with the employer, the majority of these cases involved adjusting the arbitrator's order because the conditions or the ruling could not be fulfilled. For example, several of these cases involved an order to fully reinstate an EMT or paramedic, but the state had revoked the

employee's EMT credentials, making reinstatement as an EMT impossible. In such cases the judges simply modified the arbitrator's ruling so that the employee was reinstated as a firefighter rather than as an EMT. The judges only completely overturned the arbitrator's ruling in a couple of cases, and this was only when it could be proven that the arbitrator had grossly exceeded his or her authority.

### Five Reasons Discipline was Overturned

Fire agencies can implement effective discipline that won't get overturned by addressing common mistakes that they may or may not be making.

#### #1 – Disproportionate Punishment

The most common reason cited for overruling the employer's discipline was that punishment was distributed unfairly. In most cases, this involved situations where discipline was distributed unevenly. **These are cases where two employees who shared similar past performance histories committed similar acts of misconduct, yet one employee was punished far more severely than the other. Employees must be treated evenly when being given punishments and the only aggravating or mitigating circumstance that can justify different punishment outcomes for the same type of behavior is a record of prior misconduct.** Arbitrators overturned punishments if it appeared the severity of the punishment depended on anything else, including the employee's rank, years of experience, personal friendships, race, sex, or even attitude and lack of remorse. Only the seriousness of the offense and the employee's prior record of misconduct should matter.

Arbitrators also reduced or overturned discipline on the basis of disproportionate punishment if the punishment was far more severe than the seriousness of the act of misconduct would warrant. In other words, if the case involved a minor act of misconduct that was given a severe punishment rather than a minor punishment, or retraining in the spirit of progressive discipline, it was likely to be overturned by the arbitrator. **Some of these discipline decisions may have been, in fact, "last straw" offenses for an employee who had been exhibiting problem behavior for some time. If this prior past misconduct had not been documented and addressed, however, courts and arbitrators are unwilling to take these past problems into consideration.**

#### #2 – Insufficient Evidence

The second most common justification for overturning employer discipline involved insufficient proof of misconduct. While civil courts often utilize the "preponderance of the evidence" standard of proof in civil lawsuits, arbitrators generally use the higher standard of proof of "clear and convincing." The clear and convincing standard means that the information presented is substantially more probable to be true than not true. This standard of proof is a higher degree of proof than the "preponderance of the evidence, and it also the standard of proof utilized by arbitrators."<sup>7</sup> If the law enforcement agency only utilizes the lower preponderance of the evidence standard of proof when gathering evidence and determining whether an employee committed a particular act of misconduct, the employer risks having the discipline overturned by an outside arbitrator.

#### #3 – Due Process Violations

The third most common reason arbitrators overturn a law enforcement agency's discipline is that the employer violated the employee's due process rights when investigating the employee misconduct, determining guilt, or assigning

<sup>7</sup> *Calderon v.Thompson,523 U.S. 538 (1998); Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Department of Health,497 U.S. 261 (1990).*

punishment. Public employees are afforded certain due process rights by the U.S. Supreme Court, and by statutes and legal precedents within each state. These rights generally include a complete and impartial investigation, notice of the charges against the employee, an opportunity to challenge the charges with rebuttal evidence, and a determination of guilt by an unbiased hearing officer. Even murderers and terrorists are afforded their due process rights by the criminal justice system when they are investigated, arrested, and prosecuted. Therefore, **no matter how serious the employee's act of misconduct, and no matter how much evidence there is against the employee, if the employer violates these rights, the discipline is likely to be overturned, just as a criminal can walk free if his or her due process rights are violated in the criminal context.**

#### #4 – Procedural Errors

Procedural errors, such as failing to follow written policies or the agency's collective bargaining agreement, came next in frequency as a justification to overturn an employer's discipline. If a law enforcement agency fails to follow any of its own written procedures for handling employee discipline, it risks having its discipline overturned. The same is true for violations of its collective bargaining agreement with its employee's union, as this "agreement" is actually a legally binding contract. Violations of a legal contract will bring legal repercussions for the party that violates the contract. If there is a time limit for filing misconduct charges, for example, then this time limit must be met. If the contract permits employees to have a union representative present during questioning, then a union representative must be contacted and be present.

#### #5 – Other Mitigating Circumstances

To a much lesser extent, a collection of other mitigating circumstances were mentioned by arbitrators as additional justifications that helped sway them to overturn an employer's discipline.

**The most common of these was the employee's past record of good performance.** When issuing punishments, arbitrators expected employers to show leniency toward employees with lengthy employment histories of outstanding past performance. **Therefore, if past misconduct was not documented, it was irrelevant to the arbitrators' decision. As a popular saying goes, if it's not in writing, it didn't happen.**

Arbitrators usually expected employers to demonstrate some form of harm that resulted from the employee's misconduct in order to justify the punishment. Arbitrators usually have never been police officers and they do not understand your job. Employers often need to explain what repercussions specific acts of misconduct may have on the community or the department.

Finally, arbitrators tended to review the circumstances surrounding the misconduct by what was objectively reasonable from the perspective of the employee at the time, rather than the reality of facts that were determined later. This was the standard set by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Graham v. Connor*. It requires asking the question, "Based on what the officer knew, heard, smelled, and saw at the time, were the officer's actions reasonable?" Arbitrators expect employers to employ this standard.

#### Making Discipline Stick

DCG staff have taken the findings from this research study of fire rescue employee discipline cases and developed an **evidence-based course to not only educate fire rescue leaders about the reasons for discipline reversals, but also provide strategies to help ensure that discipline is delivered in a fair manner that will stand up to external arbitrator review.** Called *Making Discipline Stick in the Fire Service*®, this course is designed to assist supervisors, human resources professionals, city attorneys, agency executives, and union leaders in the fire rescue profession by increasing their knowledge about the most frequent causes of discipline reversals. When arbitrators and judges give written justifications for their decisions, they always provide advice to the employer about how the case should have been handled. **This course uses the very words and insights from these arbitrators and judges to help fire rescue agencies improve the fairness of their disciplinary processes and increase the likelihood the employee discipline they hand down will remain in place after external review.**



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# WHAT IS A FORENSIC FIRE INVESTIGATOR?

Retired Asst Fire Marshal Edmund G. Knight, III CFEI-CFII/CFI  
fireinv37@aol.com

According to Barron's Law Dictionary, Fourth Edition, Forensic is defined as: belonging to the courts of justice. The word indicates the application of a particular subject to the law. For example, FORENSIC FIRE INVESTIGATION is a branch of science that employs fire science technology to assist in resolving legal problems that pertain to fires and explosions.

Part detective, scientist, engineer, lawyer and code enforcer, the fire investigator represents the bringing together of many disciplines all homogenized into one. The fire investigator makes the initial determination as to the **Origin** and then the probable **Cause** of the fire and/or explosion based on his or her site and evidence inspection. This determination is made for several reasons; to determine what caused the fire or explosion, who or what is responsible for it happening and then why it happened.

For the legal community, the perpetrator must be brought to justice and his or her motive and means along with the perpetrators' opportunity have to be determined in order to create a **Prima Facie** [a valid/credible] **Case**.

For the insurance industry, the investigator's responsibility is to determine what failed and why it failed. This process enables the insurance company(s) to place on notice, manufacturers, installers and in some cases the maintenance company or persons responsible for repairs and any other interested parties who may be liable for an upcoming civil suit. This process is commonly known as subrogation (the substitution of one person in the place of another with reference to a lawful claim or right).

The fire investigation profession requires a mind that questions everything, leaving nothing to chance. The investigator then prepares a detailed written and signed report that he or she will testify to in a court of law, typically before a jury. The clarity and conciseness of the investigator's report will in most cases determine the success or the failure of the court case as his responsibility dictates. The investigator must also have sharp skills in photography, interviewing techniques, and human behaviors.

According to acceptable reference documents, there are four universally recognized classifications of fires. They are: natural fires [lightning, volcanic eruption]; accidental fires [products that fail due to flaws in manufacture, installation and or maintenance]; incendiary fires [fires that are intentionally caused or "set" by individuals knowing full-well the act is a crime]; and when these three categories fail the "giggle" test, then the cause of the fire must be classified as undetermined at this time.

A fire Origin and Cause Investigator must keep an open mind at all times while he or she performs the origin and cause investigation at a "hot" fire scene. A prerequisite knowledge [the practical use] of electricity, mechanics, chemistry and of course firefighting are useful to come to a preliminary conclusion. It may be necessary to call upon an electrical or mechanical engineer and in some cases a chemist or metallurgist may be needed. Some cases may require all of the disciplines.

It is sometimes useful to request the required disciplines at the fire scene so they may see, first-hand the circumstances before the scene is disturbed. It may be necessary to notify all interested parties to attend the inspection of the scene in its present condition. Remember, if you move anything at the scene, you can be charged with spoliation of evidence before a judge, which could jeopardize the case should it go to a hearing or trial.

Play-it-safe but don't become paranoid. If you take it [any suspected evidence] you own it, it is your responsibility for its safe-keeping. Photograph it [lots of photos], sketch the area [from where you will remove it] evidence tag it, and if possible have a witness. You take it you own it.

Be sure to store the evidence in a safe and secure place. The more you protect the evidence, the less chances you will have of being accused of spoliation by "the other side". Always maintain a chain of custody file. Anyone examining the evidence for any reason, must sign their name and the date on the evidence sheet along with yours as a witness.

You will eventually [someday] arrive in that big courtroom that will intimidate you or make you feel small. However, always remember, and the judge won't let you and others in the courtroom forget, that you [the expert] are being paid to testify on behalf of your client and that you as an expert are one of the persons [other than your opposition's expert (s)] in the room who is permitted to opine as to what happened. All other witnesses are permitted to testify to facts, only.

The jury and the guests in the courtroom have all come to see you, hear you and watch you perform. Like on American Idol, when the stage becomes yours, strut your stuff. Always remember, what you say will follow you forever, your right hand up-to God, "to solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God", is the most serious commitment a person can make. You will be that person, the expert, the FORENSIC FIRE INVESTIGATOR.

Ed Knight has served as a forensic investigator throughout his 40 plus years in the fire service. As a municipal career firefighter, fire marshal, origin and cause investigator and expert witness Ed has investigated thousands of fires and explosions and testified hundreds of times in criminal and civil courts throughout the United States.



# Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation

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## Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation Announces Annual Fund Raising Campaign

The purpose of the Foundation is to provide educational opportunities, including scholarships, to Fire and Emergency Services providers – both Volunteer and Career; develop Public Relations programs to promote and raise public awareness of Virginia's Fire and Emergency Services; to assist other related organizations in the development and implementation of Public Education Programs; and provide grants to other Fire and Emergency Service Organizations. Fund development is through donations, corporate giving, and fund raising events, such as golf tournaments.

Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation is pleased to announce its upcoming campaign to raise funds to sustain our Mission. There are sponsorship levels to meet every budget. As we work to spread the word and maximize participation the Foundation can realize the benefits and the Virginia Fire and EMS Service and its providers will be the benefactors. Please consider the appropriate level of support that you can commit to over the next five years or perhaps a one-time donation best suits your situation. Please indicate on the tear off section below if you will be making a one-time donation or if you are interested in partnering with the VFCA over the next five years.

Level of Support	Number of Opportunities
\$100 - Firefighter	1000
\$250 - Company Officer	50
\$500 - Battalion Chief	500
\$750 - Deputy Chief	250
\$1000 - Fire Chief	100

Once you decide on the appropriate level please complete the form below to reflect that information. You can submit your donation along with the bottom part of this form and send to VFCA, P. O. Box 699, Blackstone, VA 23824. Please do not forget to reflect if this is a single donation or a five year pledge. Because of dedicated and committed individuals such as yourself, the VFCA will remain fiscally sound and will be able to sustain these key programs to assist the fire departments and providers across the Commonwealth. The VFCA is a 501 c 3 recognized organization and as such your donation is tax deductible. VFCA does accept payment through major credit cards on the website – [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us).

Thank you for your pledge of support! Your donation will make a difference!!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Sponsorship \_\_\_\_\_ Payment enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Term of Support \_\_\_\_\_ One Year \_\_\_\_\_ Five Year

# VFCA Member Advantage



## Mission Statement

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, (VFCA) serves the communities of Virginia through its fire service leaders and advances the Fire & Rescue Service through leadership, education and advocacy.

### Member Benefits

Your membership in the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association makes you a member of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation, the companion non-profit educational organization that offers educational seminars, the Virginia Fire Officer Academy, the scholarship program and other such worthy programs. It's a full palette of programs and services from which you can choose those of particular interest to you, the VFCA member.

#### 1. Career Development Mid-Atlantic Expo & Symposium (MAE&S)

The premier fire and emergency services conference offering a mix of association business, networking and over 40 educational sessions during the event. The MAE&S is a cost and time efficient way to sharpen your skills, expand your knowledge base and broaden your fire service network.

Virginia Fire Officer Academy  
This award winning four-and-a-half-day program assists fire and emergency services professionals to move from a tactical view to a comprehensive strategic view of fire and emergency services, operations, personnel safety, and administration. Participants will enhance their professional development through a unique four and one-half day hands-on, interactive learning experience designed to provide a better understanding of the relationship between leadership, ownership and safety.

#### Educational Seminars

From broad-based tactical and fire ground

training to more focused programs such as "Horse Sense" that hones and prepares officers to lead and manage their organizations on a day-to-day basis.

#### 2. Information & Idea Exchange

Commonwealth Chief Magazine  
Touted as one of the country's best fire and emergency services organization member publications, Commonwealth Chief magazine puts the latest thinking and current issues – as well as all you need to know about your association – in your hands on a quarterly basis.

#### Exhibitor Trade Show

The exhibitor show, held in conjunction with the Annual Conference, presents a unique opportunity for chiefs, company officer's, firefighters and others to spend quality time with the vendors who provide the very latest in technology, products and services utilized by today's modern fire service.

#### VFCA Website at [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us)

Your source for the latest wide-ranging information about the association and its activities at your fingertips – 24/7. Register on-line or download a conference registration application, peruse the latest and back issues of Commonwealth Chief magazine, or obtain LODD information. VFCA's website is changing continually to provide you with the information you need when you need it!

#### Networking Opportunities

Opportunities occur throughout the year to learn informally from your peers. At VFCA

events or on the Website, you can connect with the fire chiefs and other fire service personnel from around the state who share your concerns, but from a slightly different perspective.

#### 3. Political Action

Legislative Summit  
VFCA leadership plays a leading role in the Annual Legislative Summit where major fire/EMS organizations from across the Commonwealth come together to decide what legislative issues are important and relative in today's ever changing environment.

#### Advocacy

Members and leaders take the fire service story directly to state and federal elected representatives to work for laws and regulations that enhance your ability to provide safe communities. VFCA appointments to many state boards and advisory bodies ensure fire and emergency services input on actions that affect us all.

#### 4. Personal/Family

Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance. Each VFCA member is provided with AD&D insurance benefits in the event an unexpected tragedy should strike.

### Membership Categories

Annual Membership fees  
(Check the appropriate category)

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active   |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career Chief Officer   | \$75.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Chief Officer  | \$40.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FF & Co. Officer   | \$40.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliate  | \$40.00  |
| Individuals in professions allied to the fire service (such as Sections, Public Education; Emergency Services; Technical Rescue or other areas that not covered under Active) |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate  | \$100.00 |
| Representatives of companies with an interest in fire prevention, fire suppression, insurance, or other fire-service-related products   |          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life or Honorary   | \$20.00  |
| Individuals who have been selected to receive Life or Honorary Membership in the Association by a vote of the Executive Board.  |          |

(Life or Honorary members receive complimentary membership. To receive mailings, the member fee is \$20/yr.)

## Membership Application

Join today by filling out the membership application and paying online at [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us)  
Mail this application and payment (check payable to VFCA): VFCA • P.O. Box 699 • Blackstone, VA • 23824

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Fire Dept/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ FDID# \_\_\_\_\_  
Rank/Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Chief Officer:  Yes  No Retired:  Yes  No  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pay by Credit card:  Visa  Master Card  AMEX  Discover  
Credit card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: (3digit # on back) \_\_\_\_\_  
Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Address if different from above: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the following:

Register me as one of the following Sections:  Admin. Professionals  Federal/Military  Company Officer  Life Safety-CCR

DFP Division:  1  2  3  4  5  6  7 Type of Department:  Volunteer  Career  Combination

If you have questions concerning this application and/or membership status, contact VFCA Member Services at (888) 818-0983 or email [memberservices@vfca.us](mailto:memberservices@vfca.us)



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The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - January 2020

# Chief



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