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The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - January 2022

Chief

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2022

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"IT STARTS WITH ME!"

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



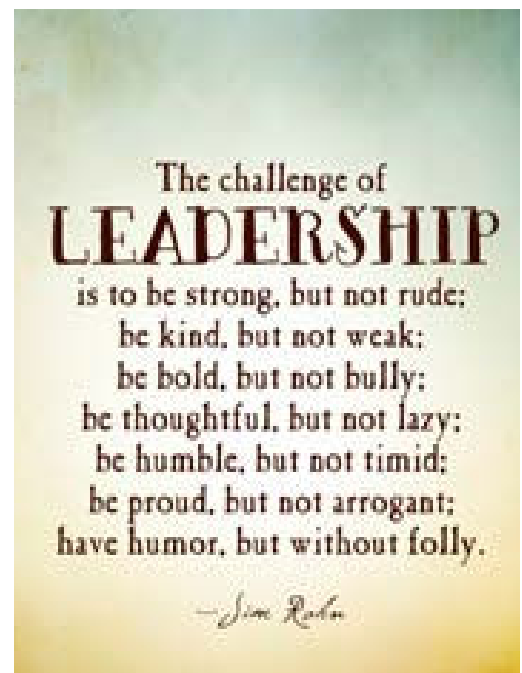
Keith Johnson
2021 VFCA President
Loudoun County Fire & Rescue

As we just completed the Thanksgiving holiday and enter the rest of the holiday season, I can't help but to give thanks to all those that serve not only in our frontline fire and EMS positions, but those that take on administrative roles, those positions that support our fire and rescue service, and those persons that volunteer their time to be on fire service committees, boards, and associations. We know that much of the time these positions are not compensated and often require a great deal of time away from family and friends and outside a person's normal assigned work capacity. As I look at the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors, there are over 30 fire and EMS service professionals that all work together as a team to help guide this association and contribute to the work that we do; that does not count all the personnel that work tirelessly to put on the annual Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference, the Virginia Chief Officer and Virginia Fire Officer Academies, our legislative committee, and the numerous fund-raising events that support our Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation. We would not be successful without the dedication and passion of these outstanding individuals that are dedicated to Virginia's Fire and EMS service. For this, I say a big Thank You for all that you do. While the holiday season is a time for giving thanks, I hope to share in this short message that every day is a day for giving thanks. While I clearly remember my time of sitting around the kitchen table helping to solve all the problems in the fire service (and perhaps the world), I always tried to find the positive in what we do, and what we are afforded in our professions. For each of us that is different as some do it for money and benefits, others for the satisfaction of helping others, some are following multi-generations of fire and EMS professionals or all the above. Whatever the reason you joined the fire and EMS service, I am confident that there is a benefit and many things to be positive about. No matter how it is presented, negativity is damaging in our profession and in our workspaces. It may be found in gossip, attitude, general communication, and even in one's lifestyle. We know that negativity can lead to distrust within a team, a decrease in employee engagement, and diverts attention from the positive productivity and performance that we do. I find that author Norann Voll provides us five ways to practice gratitude and may be useful for all of us in limiting negativity in our daily lives:

1. Tell other people "thank you" when they do something kind for you, no matter how small the deed.

2. Don't allow other people's bitterness or negativity, or any other outward circumstance, to influence your inner peace. Look for the best in everyone and believe and say the best about them.
3. Anger, disappointment, failure, and frustration are parts of life, but don't let them become your default emotions. Don't be complacent and resign yourself to victimhood. Choosing to live from a place of gratitude brings peace.
4. Set time aside each day to make a list of what you are thankful for. Start with the tiniest details and write down even just one thing. On days when you're feeling empty – go back and read some of your list.
5. Build gratitude around you with small, daily, unexpected, undeserved acts of love, compassion, grace, and forgiveness.

In a world of political, and sometimes social divide, I am proud that our fire and EMS service remains strong, full of dedicated and passionate people that serve others, including total strangers, each day. There are many ways to serve, so no matter how you serve our profession, the best way is to do it with a smile and compassion. In closing, I hope that all of you have a wonderful holiday season and remember to be thankful for yourself and each other. I hope each of you get time to spend with your family and friends. God bless each of you and thank you again for your trust in me and your service to the Commonwealth of Virginia.





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PLEASE HELP US EXTEND OUR DEEPEST APPRECIATION TO THIS YEAR'S SPONSORS. THEIR SUPPORT MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR THE VFCA TO DELIVER THE OUTSTANDING AND AFFORDABLE CONFERENCE AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES YOU EXPERIENCE EACH YEAR!

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2022 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE

Ian Bennett, VFCA Professional Development Chairman

The 2022 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference is shaping up to be a spectacular event as we host Virginia's Fire Services at the Virginia Beach Convention Center February 21-26, 2022. We missed seeing everyone in 2021 and cannot wait for this conference. The exhibit floor once again promises to fill the convention center with something for everyone to look at, try out, climb on, or purchase. Our exhibitors are a big part of the conference every year and we hope that you will visit them and see what they have to offer.

Education this year again will have a variety of offerings to suit every rank in the Fire and EMS service. There is significant focus on hands on training (HOT) this year with offerings on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. HOT classes this year include: The CAN Man, Heavy Vehicle Rescue, Command Simulations, Mayday Under Fire, Residential Primary Search, Water Thievery: Functionally Maximizing Supply Pumper Operations, Dynamic Fire Behavior/Flashover, and Ladder Ninja.

The educational area has opportunities for everyone from Monday through Saturday with a variety of sessions that will be sure to meet your expectations. We will continue to offer the 1031/1033 recertification hours this year that we have in the past. There will be multiple opportunities from Wednesday through Friday to get your Fire Inspector/Investigator hours. The Virginia Department of Fire Programs is coordinating these sessions to maximize this opportunity.

Educational sessions will have some familiar presenter faces once again this year, however; we also have tried to bring in some new faces who may be presenting for the first time or are presenters on the national stage that are coming here for the first time. We know that there is a lot of talent and passion for our profession, so we hope that you will take full advantage of the 90+ educational offerings.

With recruitment struggling for many departments in the Commonwealth, we have once again partnered with the International Association of Fire Chiefs to present the certification course entitled "Recruitment and Retention Coordinator Certification Course" on Thursday and Friday. Be sure to sign up quick, as this course has a very small student enrollment limit. There are tremendous networking opportunities to help improve your recruitment and retention efforts.

Some other offerings this year include:

- Women in the Fire Service track on Thursday featuring an educational session and a panel discussion
- Hazardous Materials track with classes offered Tuesday through Friday
- EMS track with classes offered Tuesday through Saturday
- A Leadership Deep Dive workshop Saturday morning

Saturday afternoon will feature a general session on the Champlain Towers building collapse in Surfside, Florida that occurred in June 2021. Virginia Task Force 2 will discuss their deployment to assist with the urban search and rescue mission. You will not want to miss this session as it is sure to provide an insight to all of us into the challenges of handling such a large-scale incident.

For a full listing of course offerings and to get in on the early bird registration with reduced rates, please visit <https://www.registration123.com/VFCA/22VFCA/>. We look forward to seeing all of you at the Beach in February.

ACCURATE AND RELIABLE RESPONDER LOCATION-TRACKING SCHEDULED TO BE RELEASED IN EARLY '22

POINTER location-tracking tech from DHS S&T and NASA is tested by Virginia fire departments, scheduled for commercial release next year



Using low frequency magnetic fields, POINTER will provide the ability to locate responders quickly and precisely at challenging incident scenes

POINTER (Precision Outdoor and Indoor Navigation and Tracking for Emergency Responders) addresses a top priority for structural firefighting search and rescue operations: the ability to quickly locate a responder who might be disoriented or separated from their colleagues. In the works for years, It's scheduled for a soft commercial release in early 2022, with a full commercial rollout expected later in 2022.

Developed by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T) and the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, this groundbreaking new 3D technology uses magnetoquasistatic fields. These low-frequency magnetic fields are capable of penetrating dense materials such as wood, concrete and rebar to locate responders within centimeters of their actual position. It can also detect whether the responder is standing, sitting or lying down.

POINTER uses magnetoquasistatic fields to 3-dimensionally locate responders to within 1 centimeter in emergency situations. (DHS Video by Science & Technology Directorate/Released)

The POINTER receiver worn by responders is about the size of a cell phone, weighing just ounces and powered by a small, rechargeable lithium battery. It has been tested by fire departments across the country, including a September 2021 operational test with firefighters in Fairfax, Loudoun and Stafford counties in Virginia.



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2021 WILLIAMSBURG GOLF TOURNAMENT RAISES FUNDS FOR THE VFCA FOUNDATION

The 7th Annual VFCF Williamsburg Golf Tournament was held on Friday, September 17, 2021 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.

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. The administrative staff of the Williamsburg Fire Department provided excellent support for this year's event. Thank you to everyone who played a role in the planning, preparation and execution of the event. We already have the course reserved for the 2022 event and would love to welcome you for tournament number 8!



ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS HOLD ANNUAL RETREAT

Jessica Wilkes, VFCA Admin President



During the 3rd quarter, the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) Administrative Professionals held our 2021 Retreat. This is an annual retreat for our members and non-members. We are grateful that we were able to hold our retreat again after missing it due to Covid-19 in 2020. There was a little concern during planning that our attendance would be low due to Covid-19 and traveling during these trying times. I am happy to report however, there were 25 attendants for the two day gathering.

Our meeting was held in Roanoke Virginia at the Valley View Holiday Inn. The retreat began on Thursday September 23rd with a breakfast buffet provided by Holiday Inn and a meet/greet for all attendees. After breakfast, our day kicked off with a welcome from Chief David Hoback and speakers from different areas of expertise and great information to be shared. Our speakers on Thursday were Christiana Smith, David Guynn, Tiffany Bradbury, and John Metro. Thursday was also our nightly social and dinner which was held at Kabuki's Japanese Steakhouse. Everyone had a great time socializing and meeting those that they had worked with or talked to before, but had never gotten to meet in person.

On Friday, September 24th, we kicked off our day again with breakfast buffet provided by the hotel catering and kitchen staff. We had Marci Stone who spoke about her personal journey as a female in the fire service. Then after that we got a little more active as we had Jennifer Boswell speak and teach Self Defense. This was a fun time for us all!!! The self-defense class concluded our retreat for 2021 and we are already looking forward to our retreat in 2022. September 22nd and 23rd have already been penciled in for next year in Manassas Virginia.

As President of the VFCA Administrative section, I would like to thank everyone who attended and made the 2021 retreat a success. For those that were not able to attend or those that are not yet part of our section, I would encourage you to come be part and join us for fun and exciting times!!!

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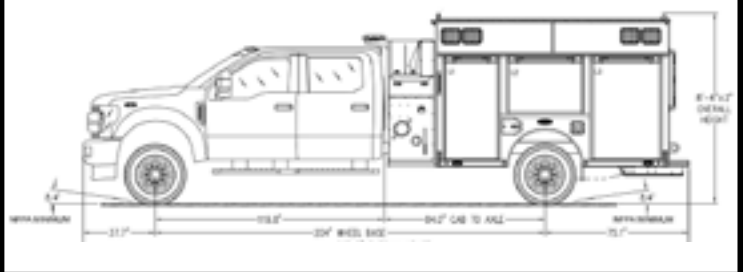
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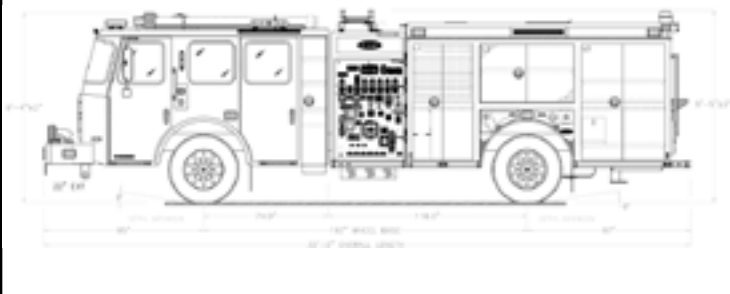


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VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION 2021 ANNUAL RETREAT DEEMED A SUCCESS

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) held their annual Board of Directors retreat on October 13-15, 2021 at the Blackburn Inn located in Staunton, Virginia. VFCA President Keith Johnson welcomed everyone to this year's retreat.

The retreat commenced on Wednesday evening, October 13th with the VFCA Executive Board meeting and dinner.

On Thursday morning, October 14th, the day began with VFCA board members joining together in a group physical training session led by Chief Kevin Good, to get that blood pumping prior to the day's events. The morning physical training was followed by the VFCA Board of Directors meeting, attended by the full board and various stakeholders. This was followed by a lunch break sponsored by Interstate Rescue. Immediately after lunch, the VFCA Board of Directors reconvened and began its strategic planning session. President/Chief David Hutcheson of Virginia Beach focused on the accomplishments of 2021 as well as future accomplishments that will be considered for the remainder of the year and into 2022.

On Friday, October 15th began with another PT session led by Chief Good. The Board closed out their annual retreat with a refreshing session on "Becoming an Effective Advocate for the Fire Service" led by CJ Stolle, Devon Cabot and Elizabeth Parker of Two Capitols Consulting team.



CJ Stolle of Two Capitols Consulting shown leading the session on "Becoming an Effective Advocate for the Fire Service"

The retreat was closed out at noon by Incoming President John Prillaman. The retreat was another great success and thank you to all that came together to help make this year's retreat a rewarding learning experience.

6TH ANNUAL ROANOKE VALLEY GOLF TOURNAMENT BENEFITS THE VFCA

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation (VFCA) held the 6th Annual Roanoke Valley Golf Tournament on November 5th at the Hanging Rock Golf Club in Roanoke County. It was a beautiful fall day in the Roanoke Valley, and everyone seemed to have a great time, even though this year's event was a little different due to the COVID-19 precautions. The course was in great shape and the staff at Hanging Rock served as great hosts. Once again the event raised funds for the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation. The funds raised will be used to support the Virginia Fire Officer Academy, Chief Officers Academy and to provide scholarships to first responders and/or their immediate families. It was an outstanding event and we are already looking forward to next fall.

We appreciate everyone who came out to the event and everyone who assisted with the tournament. We would especially like to thank Chick-Fil-A Salem generously providing delicious meals for the golfers.

Thanks to all that came out to support this year's event!





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2021 VIRGINIA CHIEF OFFICER ACADEMY WAS A HUGE SUCCESS

Chief Todd Spruill



The Virginia Chief Officer Academy (VCOA) started off with a competitive application process of 41 applicants of which 25 were selected by a group of graduates that manage the academy. The VCOA was held at the W. E. Skelton 4-H Center at Smith Mountain Lake on October 17th through the 22nd.

Class kicked off in the Taubman Conference Center Sunday afternoon at 1530 where students were welcomed by Jason Ferguson (Botetourt) and the staff of the VFOA, Robert Washington (Williamsburg), Tim Furey (Camp Peary), and Todd Spruill (Richmond). They received an introduction to the program with some icebreakers, student introductions, and class business. After that they headed over to the Smith Central Activities Building for dinner from Mission BBQ. Students then retired to the Hepler- Jamison Lodge for an evening of networking and rest.

Monday morning started at 0600 at the flagpole for morning physical training (PT) led by Robert Washington. The learning for the day was focused on personal leadership development. Students spent the morning learning about Personal Leadership Goals and Reality with Tim McKay (Chesterfield). The afternoon started with Rich Graulich (Norfolk) providing a leadership self-assessment for the students to look at "Who Are You Really" followed by Randy Feltner (Naval District Washington) about personal physical development. The structured day ended with a campfire where Tim McKay facilitated a discussion about 21st century leadership.

Tuesday morning started again at 0600 with morning PT with Robert and Randy. Small team leadership was the focus of the learning for the day. John Galganski (James City County) kicked off the morning learning with "Effective Communication and Difficult Conversations." Andrew Snead (Richmond) took the stage in the afternoon with "Human Resource Trends and the Importance of Having a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan." Amy Valdez (Virginia Beach) followed with "About Making Data Informed Decisions and How to Get the Most Out of Your Resources." The evening activity was a progressive team building exercise on the recreational field led by 4-H center staff where students had to work through challenges as a team.

Wednesday morning PT with Randy and Robert started again at 0600. The learning focus for the day was leading teams and started with Tiffany Bradbury (Botetourt) talking about "Emergency Public Information and the Media." Bob Stripling (Town Action Management) engaged the class about "How to Manage the City Manager." After lunch Meade Whitaker (Albemarle) led a group activity about "Communicating Your Vision Using Legos." Chris Jett (Stafford) took the stage to "Get Serious About Personal Mental Health." The evening activities started with a cook out and networking at the Willard picnic shelter prepared by VCOA and VFOA staff. Afterwards there was a campfire chat facilitated by Alec Oughton (Henrico) about "How to Be a Leader and Follower at the Same Time."

Thursday PT started again at 0600 led by Robert. Executive level leadership was the premise for the days learning. Bill Leighty kicked off the morning with an inspiring talk about "Crisis Management and His Adventures Aiding the Former Governor." After lunch Jason Irby (Spotsylvania) discussed "Work Life Balance and Structuring Your Career Plan, Education, Family, and Faith." Students were then led through a letters to myself activity facilitated by VCOA staff for post academy goal setting.

Friday started off like the rest of the week with 0600 PT with Robert. The learning focus continued with "Executive Level Leadership With a Facilitated Fire Chief Roundtable" with Chris Eudailey (Spotsylvania-retired), John Prillaman (Salem), and Jason Ferguson (Botetourt). Jack McGovern (Fredericksburg) followed with a presentation on "The Importance of Developing a Meaningful Network and Where to Go From Here." The week ended in the Smith Central Activities Building with a graduation ceremony recognizing the 25 graduates in front of family, friends, and co-workers. Students received their certificate, ribbon, and challenge coin for successfully completing the Virginia Chief Officer Academy leaving with a new network of friends and some new tools for the toolbox.

Graduates included:

Michael Ayers, Galax Fire Department; Andrew T. Barden, York County Fire & Life Safety; Anthony W. Batten, Chesterfield County Fire & EMS; George J. Beodeker, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire & Emerg. Svcs.; Lance Blakey, Charlottesville Fire Department; Adam Bowers, Fredrick County Fire & Rescue; Steven Bradle, Chesapeake Fire Department; Michael P. Carte, Virginia Beach Fire Department; Kevin D. Cook, King George Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services; Kiah Cooper, Henry County Department of Public Safety; Mac Craft, Roanoke Fire-EMS; Steven Hall Jr., Richmond Department of Fire & Emerg. Svcs.; Gerry R. Maiatico, Warren County Dept. of Fire & Rescue Svcs.; John F. McCormick, Abingdon Fire Department; Frederic S. McEvilly, Fauquier Co. Dept of Fire, Rescue & Emerg. Mgmt.; Benjamin P. Mullins, Abingdon Fire Department; C. Todd Owen, Martinsville Fire & EMS; Robert A. Paxton, Salem Fire-EMS; Raymond E. Richards, Spotsylvania County Fire, Rescue & Emerg. Mgmt.; Michael Roth, Henrico Division of Fire; Kasey Seay, Pittsylvania County Public Safety Department; Daniel L. Spearin, Albemarle County Fire Rescue; William L. Ward, Williamsburg Fire Department ; RJ Whaley, Henrico Division of Fire; Jonathon N. Yeaman, Danville Fire Department

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2021 VFOA HELD AT SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE FACILITY

Lt. Mike Hirsh



Photo: Patrick Perkins Photography

Since 2007, over one thousand people have become better leaders in the fire service because of their experience in the Virginia Fire Officer Academy. Coming from volunteer, career or combination organizations, students have been encouraged to develop skills through educational programming, role playing, self-reflecting, core values and team building.

This is the work of the Virginia Fire Officer Academy (VFOA), a vibrant platform that helps mold company officers for the future, by showing they are students as well as leaders. Teaching how to develop relationships with peers, subordinates and superiors. Learning about formal leadership as well as informal leadership, personality types and self-improvement. Personal development, wellness and physical training are not overlooked.

In its early years, Virginia Fire Officer Academy offered a series of lectures and over time the curriculum has developed into a highly sought-after program. The staff consists of alumnus and functions as an Incident Management Team. Cost is absorbed

by a small tuition and the support of many, through fund raising efforts of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation. Departments from across the country have sent students so they can take home this style of learning to

their region. With collaboration and networking, similar academies have formed in Virginia and are modeled after the VFOA.

Participants frequently say the VFOA was the best experience of their professional life as they make new connections and discover techniques that can redefine their positions. They learn, as many will cite, concepts that transfer into their personal lives. It's akin to learning to be a team member at work, at home and in the community.

Candidates apply directly to the VFOA each year through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association website. Attendees are selected by a panel, based on resumes, essays, recommendations, demographics, etcetera. Students come from rural, suburban and urban departments. They must have the support of their department and

ideally are nearing promotion or have recently promoted to a Company Officer.

This year, the residential week long program was offered from the 17th through the 22nd of October. An extensive search was performed for a venue and the chosen site was the W.E. Skelton 4H Educational Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake. This location was

a fabulous place to have the academy. It offered dormitory style housing for students and staff. There were several rooms available for academic sessions as well as areas for hospitality and networking. The buffet style cafeteria served our needs, and no one went hungry. The 4H Center staff seemed pleased with the group, certainly they are used to 4H students which may need a little more attention than leaders in the fire service. The 4H center has housed over 450,000 students since it was founded in 1964, and it is an honor for the VFOA to add a few more to that number.

On graduation day, the VFOA hosted a joint ceremony with the Virginia Chief Officer Academy. Many guests and families enjoyed the commencement. Friendships were forged and departments changed. The support from departments across the Commonwealth allows this program to flourish.

In Virginia, the fire service is leading the way with officer development, thanks to the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, the leaders who developed the academy and the staff that carry the torch. The VFOA has influenced the culture, one leader at a time and

continues to do so.

Alumnus, share your experience with your colleagues, subordinates and leaders. Chiefs, think about the development of your company officers and encourage them to apply. If you are a newly promoted officer or expecting to promote within about two years, reach out to alumni, your chiefs and peers, then apply. Discover how this program can help you as a leader, friend, spouse and person.

In our memories we find experiences, purposes and skills that can be discovered or refined when exposed to the environment that allows for development.

Those graduating included:

Engine Company 1

Jason Arnold Roanoke County Fire & Rescue
Christopher Dunn Winchester Fire and Rescue
James Fox York County Fire & Life Safety
Christopher Spracklin Norfolk Fire-Rescue
Daniel Vecchiolla Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire and Emerg. Svcs.

Engine Company 3

Benjamin Bond Amherst County Dept. of Public Safety
Martin Dean Goochland County Fire-Rescue
Bradley McDaniel Charlottesville Fire Department
Matthew Walker Albemarle County Fire Rescue
William Wrenn Botetourt County Fire & EMS

Engine Company 5

Ryan Custalow Henrico Division of Fire
Thomas "TJ" Halsey Augusta County Fire & Rescue
Benjamin Haug Blackstone Volunteer Fire Department
Benjamin Jenkins Shenandoah County Fire & Rescue
Brian Rafter Norfolk Fire-Rescue

Engine Company 7

Erin Barger Salem Fire-EMS
John Burruss II Spotsylvania County Fire, Rescue & Emerg. Mgmt
Chris Colquhoun James City County Fire Department
Austin Cucciardo Warren County Dept. of Fire & Rescue Svcs.
Joseph Sibert Newport News Shipbuilding Fire & Rescue

Engine Company 2

Ronald Brown King William Fire & Emergency Services
Jarrod Hill Lexington Fire Department
Robert Hodges Suffolk Fire and Rescue
Jonathan Metro Roanoke Fire-EMS
Charles Tilghman Chesapeake Fire Department

Engine Company 4

Chad Baker Bedford County Dept. of Fire & Rescue
William Carter III Danville Fire Department
Noah McGee Fort Belvoir Fire & Emergency Services
Gregory Pyton Lynchburg Fire Department
Christopher Rock King George Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services

Engine Company 6

Christopher Hoover Richmond Department of Fire & Emerg. Svcs.
Daniel Knotts Chesterfield County Fire & EMS
Matthew Morris Winchester Fire and Rescue
Roger Robinson II City of Manassas Fire & Rescue Department
Amanda Sibert Hampton Division of Fire & Rescue

Engine Company 8

Jacob Ballantyne Fauquier Co. Dept. of Fire Rescue & Emerg. Mgmt.
Corey Harbour Martinsville Fire & EMS
Andy Lane Williamsburg Fire Department
Haley Ransom Goochland County Fire-Rescue

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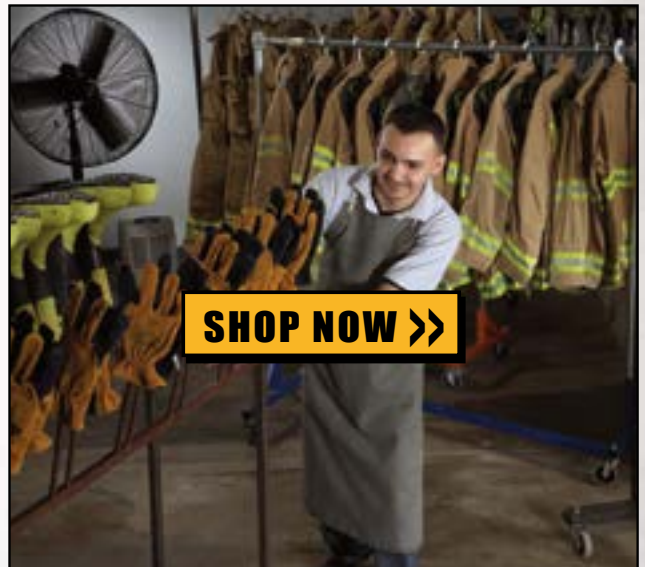
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PIERCE ENFORCER PUMPER
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BOYDTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT • PIERCE SABER PUMPER • Sold by Randy Smith
BUCKHALL VOL FIRE DEPT • PIERCE FREIGHTLINER TANKER • Sold by John Thompson
CITY OF HAMPTON • PIERCE ENFORCER 107' LADDER • Sold by Drew Smythers
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ALL DELIVERIES ALL STOCK UNITS



MEET THE CHIEF



Getting to know John Prillaman

In this issue we will meet one of the many fire chiefs who will be spotlighted in the coming issues of Commonwealth Chief this year. Here we take a look at John Prillaman, Fire Chief, Salem Fire & EMS.

CC: Describe your tenure in the fire service...

JP: I have been in the fire service for 32 years. I began my career in the Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Department as a volunteer firefighter.

CC: Please describe your career journey...

JP: I began my fire service career as a volunteer firefighter with the Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Department (Station #11) in 1989. I quickly realized that I wanted to make the fire service a career, but at the time, in the Roanoke Valley you had to be 21 years old to be hired as a career firefighter. In 1991, I joined the United States Air Force as a firefighter. I completed basic training at Lackland Air Force Base (Texas) and then completed the fire academy at Chanute Air Force Base (Illinois). During my 4 ½ year enlistment, I served at Dover Air Force Base (Delaware), Osan Air Force Base (South Korea) and Charleston Air Force Base (South Carolina). I also had the opportunity to participate in several deployments across the globe.

CC: Please describe your form of government...

JP: The City of Salem has a five-member City Council. Members are elected at-large and serve a four-year term. City Council elects the Mayor and Vice-Mayor from their members for a two-year term. The City Council appoints a professional City Manager and Assistant City Manager to oversee the daily operations of the city.

CC: Describe the sources of funding for your organization...

JP: The Salem Fire & EMS Department receives funding through the city's general fund, which is mostly funded by personal property taxes and other local taxes. In the current fiscal year, the department's budget is just over \$7 million. The department also receives funding through the Virginia Department of Fire Programs Aid to Localities and various federal and state grants.

CC: What population does your department serve?

JP: The population of the City of Salem is 25,317.

CC: How many square miles do you cover?

JP: The City of Salem's land area is 14.3 square miles

CC: Describe the department composition...

JP: The Salem Fire & EMS Department is comprised of 70 uniformed personnel. The staff positions include Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, Battalion Chief of EMS, Battalion Chief of Training, Fire Marshal, Deputy Fire Marshal and a Logistics Captain. The remainder of the personnel are assigned to Operations. The department also employs two civilian administrative staff and 22 part-time EMS personnel.

CC: Tell us about your equipment...

JP: The Salem Fire & EMS Department is comprised of three fire stations and an administrative building. Front-line apparatus includes: two fire engines, one ladder truck, four Advanced Life Support medic units, a Battalion

Chief, and an EMS Supervisor. We also have two reserve fire engines, two reserve medic units and a reserve ladder truck.

The Salem Fire & EMS Department is a member of both the Division 6 Hazardous Materials Response Team and the Division 6 Technical Rescue Team. Personnel cross-staff various haz-mat and technical rescue vehicles, including a foam response unit.

CC: Describe your call summary...

JP: In calendar year 2020 the Salem Fire & EMS Department responded to 5,017 calls for service (4,058 EMS Incidents, 416 Fire Incidents, & 543 Public Service Calls.

CC: What is the most challenging issue or issues facing your department today?

JP: The most challenging issue facing our department today is staffing. Our department has had numerous retirements, including some personnel choosing to retire early. We have also had some leave the department to pursue careers outside of the fire service. These departures have caused significant staffing issues, as it usually takes about a year to recruit and train their replacements. We have had good luck recruiting high quality personnel, but we are now looking at ways to ensure that we retain our current workforce.

CC: How would you describe your management style?

JP: I would describe my management style as participatory. I rely on our Command Staff to assist in setting our strategic direction and value their input on important decisions. We also have several work groups that have been very instrumental in moving our department forward. Examples of our work groups include Apparatus, Equipment, and Public Education & Uniform. These work groups are made up of personnel from each shift, to ensure everyone's input is included when making decisions that affect the department.

CC: Does your department have a formal, long-range strategic plan?

JP: The Salem Fire & EMS Department does not have a department specific formal, long range strategic plan; but we do participate in the City of Salem's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan includes the long-range goals and objectives for our department.

CC: How have current economic times impacted your department?

JP: The City of Salem, like most jurisdictions, began an economic downturn more than 10 years ago. This caused many needed capital projects to be put on hold, due to funding. This included a delay in purchasing needed apparatus, equipment, and upgrades to our fire stations. The city has seen an increase in revenues, and we have been able to replace all our front-line apparatus. We are now looking at making major upgrades to our facilities.

CC: Are you doing things differently today because of the economy?

JP: Due to today's uncertain economic times, we are much more strategic in our budgeting process. We evaluate every program and service we provide annually and budget accordingly.

CC: What challenges do you see facing the fire service today?

JP: There are many challenges facing the fire service today. Some of these include, taking care of our personnel (both mentally and physically), attracting and retaining personnel, and dealing with the increase demand for our services. The fire service has always stepped up to new challenges and I don't see that changing in the future. A major challenge for fire service leaders, will be deciding when to say no to new requests and focus on our true mission.

CC: What do you look for in a new recruit?

JP: It is a simple process when we look for new recruits. We look for people that will fit well with our family. We can train someone in fire and EMS skills, but we cannot train someone to be a good person. We look for good people that are looking for a fire service career for the right reasons.

CC: How do you view training?

JP: Training is the most important thing that we do in the fire service. Our personnel continuously train to ensure that they are proficient in basic skills and are always looking for ways to improve our operations. Our department requires all uniformed personnel to complete annual SCBA training and participate in live burn training. The only way to truly be proficient at a skill is to train on it regularly. This not only includes the basic skills, but also leadership and management skills. We are currently working on a program to provide periodic leadership training to all levels of our department, from the rookie to the Chief.

CC: Do you have a close working relationship with neighboring departments?

JP: Yes. The Salem Fire & EMS Department is very fortunate to have some great partners in the Roanoke Valley. Botetourt County Fire & EMS, Roanoke County Fire & Rescue, Roanoke Fire & EMS, and the Salem Fire & EMS Department all participate in a regional hiring and training process. This process allows someone interested in being a career firefighter, to apply with all four jurisdictions at one time. We share a regional physical and written exam and even conduct our interviews at the same location on the same date. Once a recruit is hired, they must complete the Roanoke Valley Fire & EMS Training Academy before they have their respective badges pinned on them. The 29th and 30th joint recruit schools are now in session and will graduate this spring. The Roanoke Valley enjoys a robust automatic and mutual aid system, with units responding across jurisdictional lines every day.

CC: What's in the future for the fire service as you see it?

JP: I believe the fire service will see some significant changes in the future. The traditional method of providing emergency services will need to be looked at to ensure that we are deploying our valuable resources effectively. There will be more of a reliance on data to make smarter strategic decisions. Fire Chiefs will need to leverage technology to justify their staffing and strategic decisions. A greater emphasis will need to be placed on being proactive rather than reactive; examples include community risk reduction and paramedicine. The future of the fire service is bright, but will require leaders to embrace change.

CC: How has being a member of the VFCA helped you become a better chief/leader?

JP: I have had the honor of serving on the VFCA Board of Directors for more than 10 years and I will have the privilege of serving as the organization's President in 2022. I have been able to meet so many great fire service leaders as a result of being a member of the VFCA. Many of these leaders are not only colleagues, but are true friends. I have been able to reach out to members of the VFCA, when I have needed help both personally and professionally. This type of assistance is invaluable, and I believe it truly makes a difference and has made me a better Fire Chief. I have also had the opportunity to serve on the VFCA Legislative Committee and have personally seen how the organization has been an active participant in the legislative process. With the help of Two Capitals Consulting, the VFCA has truly made a difference in advocating for Virginia's fire service.

DR. LORI MOORE-MERRELL TAKES OATH AS USFA'S FIRE ADMINISTRATOR



Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell (above right) is sworn in by FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell.

We are honored to welcome Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell as the new U.S. Fire Administrator. Read Dr. Moore-Merrell's remarks at her swearing-in ceremony on Oct. 25, 2021. (<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/about/administrator-remarks-102521.html>)

PROTECTING AMERICA'S FIRST RESPONDERS ACT OF 2021 SIGNED INTO LAW

Increases coverage and ensures prompt access to benefits

On Nov. 18, President Biden signed into law the Protecting America's First Responders Act of 2021 (PAFRA). PAFRA ensures that first responders and law enforcement who are disabled in the line of duty have prompt access to benefits. It also protects the death and disability benefits for their families.

Changes in PAFRA include:

- Expanding the Public Safety Officer's Benefit (PSOB) program to public safety officers that are not currently covered, such as officers who act outside of their jurisdiction in an emergency situation and trainee officers.
- Defining more broadly what it means to be disabled to include first responders who can still perform work that involves simple tasks, perform work for therapeutic purposes or receive special accommodations to be able to work.
- Closing a loophole that prevents children of first responders who are born after the first responder's death from receiving education benefits.
- Facilitating quicker processing of benefit claims and speeding up benefit payments by indexing the award amount to the date of the final determination, rather than the date of death or injury, for cases that remain pending for more than 365 days.
- Increasing the interim death benefits amount from \$3,000 to \$6,000 and tying interim benefits to the consumer price index going forward.

Help keep residents safe during a natural gas emergency

Every day, natural gas is safely and efficiently delivered to millions of businesses and homes in the United States through more than 2 million miles of underground pipeline.

Virginia Natural Gas operates, secures and maintains the pipeline in our service territory. With safety being our highest priority, we adhere to federal, state and local pipeline safety regulations by performing extensive quality control checks, educate the public on natural gas pipeline, leak recognition and damage prevention and work closely with emergency and public officials to develop emergency response plans.

How to recognize a pipeline leak

- **LOOK** for blowing dirt, discolored vegetation or continued bubbling of standing water.
- **LISTEN** for a hissing or roaring noise near a natural gas appliance or line.
- **SMELL** for the distinctive, rotten-egg odor associated with natural gas. Natural gas is colorless and odorless, so we add a chemical odorant called mercaptan for easy detection of a suspected natural gas leak. This odorant has a distinctive "rotten egg" type odor. You should act any time you detect even a small amount of this odor in the air. Be aware that "odorant fade," while uncommon, can occur. Odorant fade occurs when a physical or chemical process causes the level of odorant in the gas to be reduced. This can happen in both existing gas pipe and new installations.

Note: Be aware that some individuals may not be able to detect the odorant because they have a diminished sense of smell, olfactory fatigue or because the odor is being masked by other odors in the area. Certain conditions may cause the odorant to diminish so that it is not detectable. Some gas lines, due to their unique function, may not have odor at all.



Online Survey

Please take a moment to complete a survey about natural gas safety and you by scanning the QR code or visiting surveymonkey.com/r/FV2MQPB to help us make sure we are keeping our communities safe.

Learn more

For more information about natural gas and emergency response procedures and training, contact us at **800.552.7473**.

To learn about our emergency response plan, which recognizes and mitigates threats and also sustains the integrity of the pipelines. Visit virginiannaturalgas.com/integritymanagementplan.

Complete your training today!

Earn a one-hour training credit and certificate of course completion while learning about the importance of natural gas pipeline safety.

virginiannaturalgas.com/respondertraining
(Use password: virginia)

Help keep everyone safe during a natural gas emergency

Even though natural gas pipeline incidents are uncommon, it is still important to be prepared by knowing the signs of a potential problem.

You should take the following action any time you detect any of the signs of a pipeline leak:

- **DO NOT** try to identify the source to stop the leak yourself.
- **AVOID** using any sources of ignition, such as cell phones, cigarettes, matches, flashlights, electronic devices, motorized vehicles, light switches or landlines, as natural gas can ignite from a spark or open flame, possibly causing a fire or explosion. Natural gas is non-toxic, lighter than air and displaces oxygen. In severe cases, if not used properly, natural gas can also lead to asphyxiation.
- **CALL** Virginia Natural Gas immediately at our 24-hour emergency response line **800.552.7473** with the location and type of emergency.
- **SECURE** the area by establishing a safety zone around the incident and control access. You may need to reroute traffic and evacuate area homes and businesses.

How we respond

Once we are notified of the emergency, we will immediately dispatch trained personnel to the site, keeping you informed of our progress. We will take all necessary actions to correct the problem. We will work together to ensure our community is safe.

Prevention – the best defense against leaks

Emergency officials and first responders do their part daily to prevent natural gas leaks by keeping the following safety tips in mind:

- Understand that natural gas is lighter than air and displaces oxygen. Although natural gas is non-toxic, in extreme cases of oxygen displacement, it may lead to asphyxiation. Natural gas has a risk of ignition near a spark or open flame.
- Know where the pipelines are in your jurisdiction. If you notice any missing or damaged pipeline markers, contact Virginia Natural Gas at **1.866.229.3578** so they can be replaced.
- Virginia law requires all underground utilities be marked before any type of digging or excavation. Be on the lookout for any suspicious activity or unauthorized digging. If the excavator has not notified the state of their intent to dig, they must stop all activity immediately. The excavator is required to present a valid dig ticket number when requested by first responders. Also, no one, including homeowners, should be digging, ditching, drilling, leveling or plowing without having first contacted our state's One-Call number (**811**) to locate underground utilities.
- Remember, pipeline markers, like the sample pictured, indicate only the general area of the pipeline and not the exact location or depth. Pipeline markers may not be present in all areas.
- Information about transmission pipelines operating in your community is available through the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) and online at: npms.phmsa.dot.gov.





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VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS **NEWS**



LEARN ABOUT VDFP GRANTS

AID TO LOCALITIES (ATL)

ANNUAL REPORTS ACCEPTED QUARTERLY

The Aid to Localities funding is an annual allocation to jurisdictions in the Commonwealth authorized by Code of Virginia § 38.2-401. The funding is derived from an annual assessment against all licensed insurance companies doing business in the Commonwealth writing a Code-defined type of insurance. The Fund is used to provide an annual population-based allocation to 323 qualifying jurisdictions within the Commonwealth. There are set minimum payments that all cities, towns and counties will receive. Those minimums are as following: no eligible county or city will receive less than \$20,000 and no eligible town will receive less than \$10,000. Minimums were temporarily increased in FY21 & FY22 to \$30,000 and \$15,000 respectively.

Section § 38.2-401.B of the code requires jurisdictions to complete and submit an annual report and disbursement agreement before the jurisdiction is eligible for their ATL allocation. If, at the end of any annual reporting period, the eligible jurisdiction has not submitted a satisfactory annual report and two complete disbursement agreements, its ATL funds for the next year shall be forfeited.

The allocation may only be used for fire service purposes and may not supplant or replace locally appropriated funds. ATL funds can only be used for the following items:

- Training volunteer or career firefighting personnel
- Funding fire prevention and public safety education programs
- Constructing, improving and expanding regional or local fire service training facilities
- Purchasing emergency medical care and equipment for fire personnel
- Payment of personnel costs related to fire and medical training for fire personnel
- Purchasing personal protective equipment, vehicles, equipment and supplies for use in the receiving locality specifically for fire service purposes

LIVE FIRE TRAINING STRUCTURE GRANT

APPLICATION PERIOD FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATIONS ARE DUE JANUARY 1ST AND JULY 1ST, REPAIR APPLICATIONS ARE ACCEPTED YEAR ROUND

The Live Fire Training Structure Grant Program was established in accordance with §38.2-401-D of the Code of Virginia to provide grants to Virginia localities seeking to construct, renovate, or repair permanent Live Fire Training Structure in accordance with NFPA 1402. A Live Fire Training Structure is a structure specifically designed for conducting live fire training evolutions on a repetitive basis in accordance with NFPA 1001 and 1403. The code provides funding in the amount of \$975,000 annually.

The application deadline for renovation and new construction projects is January 1 and July 1 of each year and must be approved for award by the Fire Service Board. Repair applications are accepted throughout the year and are approved for award by VDFP. The funding levels are:

- New construction \$450,000 plus \$30,000 A&E fees
- Renovations \$50,001 up to \$450,000
- Repairs \$50k and below

GRANTS CONTINUED



REGIONAL FIRE SERVICE TRAINING FACILITIES GRANT (RFSTF)

APPLICATION PERIOD IS FROM JULY 1ST THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1ST

The Regional Fire Services Grant Program was established to provide regional fire services training facilities/props to Virginia localities. The code does not specifically provide funding for the training grant. Funding is allocated from any excess funding remaining in the Live Structure fund.

The annual application period is from July 1 through September 1 and must be approved for award by the Fire Service Board. The maximum amount of award is \$50,000 and funds may not be used for any purpose other than acquisition of regional fire services training props as approved in the grant application.

CONFERENCE AND EDUCATION ASSISTANCE GRANT

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE ON OR BEFORE JULY 1ST

The Conference and Education Assistance Grant Program was established to provide additional financial assistance for professional development for members of Virginia's fire and emergency services community. The grant program provides needed financial support for training conferences and seminars sponsored by Virginia-based non-profit organizations that further the education of fire and emergency services personnel throughout the Commonwealth. Applicants must be a legally recognized non-profit or governmental entity representing the local, regional, or statewide interest of the fire and emergency services community.

Unlike all the other VDFP grants, the Conference and Education Grant is funded solely by VDFP's budget. The Executive Director of VDFP determines the amount of any financial award as funds are available. The applications are due on or before July 1 of each year. The applications are evaluated by a review panel. The panel reviews applications and provides recommendations to the Executive Director. Final decisions will be made by the Executive Director based on the panel's analysis.



THANK YOU CHIEF MACKAY

VDFP Training and Operations Chief Bill MacKay will retire from the Department on January 1, 2022. We here at VDFP want to thank him for his many years of support to the fire service community and wish him a happy and safe retirement! Jamey Brads has been selected as the next Chief of Training and Operations and has been working alongside Chief MacKay since late November to ensure a smooth transition.

“IT STARTS WITH ME!”

Michael J. Barakey

Background: The fire service is challenged to balance an employee's rights to free speech and an employer's desire for an inclusive and diverse workforce for which everyone is comfortable in their work place. Fire officers are faced with the necessity to identify and admonish any and all biases, both conscious and unconscious in nature, from occurring in the fire house. The fire house is a dynamic workplace. Regardless if the department is career, combination, paid on call or volunteer, the fire service combines individuals, with different backgrounds, ideals, and beliefs into fire houses to work as a team to meet the mission to serve and protect. With the commingling of individuals in a fire house workplace, even with the shared desire to serve and protect, social interactions and situations can have an effect on the cohesiveness of the team. The fire house is unlike any other workplace in a city, county or municipality. Although employees in all workplaces are covered by federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against an employee because of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetic information, biases are inevitable and are harmful to the individuals who take the oath to serve and protect. The fire service, who attracts a progressive and ever changing workforce, has an obligation to ensure each fire house is welcoming to everyone.

Fire service leaders must become innovative to attract and retain firefighters and emergency service providers who are comfortable in the unique fire house environment. Although most work places have changed for non-essential employee in 2020, i.e. teleworking and distant work spaces, firefighters continue to work in a fire house and are not afforded the option to work in any other environment other than side-by-side their coworkers.



The fire service, as a progressive and ever changing workforce, has an obligation to ensure each fire house is welcoming to everyone, for each man and woman who takes the oath to serve and protect lives and protect property (Picture by author).

Need for Action: Each fire officer has to take a stance to identify and admonish any and all biases, both conscious and unconscious in nature, from occurring in their fire houses. “It Starts With Me!” is the motto, expression, and phrase that places the responsibility on the fire officer and their firefighters to be self-aware of their actions. All firefighters have an obligation to be courteous, respectful, and understanding to not only the citizens they protect, but their very coworkers. All firefighter and officers must be considerate in the performance of their duties; while engaging-in patient care, while serving their citizens, while working in the fire house with their coworkers, while dispelling any biases towards the very citizens they serve and the very coworkers they serve with. “It Starts With Me!” is the commitment that no one will engage a patient, citizen or coworker in an argumentative discussion in the face of provocation. In addition, in the performance of a firefighter and fire officer's duties, no one will use abusive language or gestures and will not express any prejudice concerning race, religion, politics, national origin, gender, lifestyle or any similar personal characteristics. This is the expectation of each and every officer, firefighter, emergency services provider and fire department staff member.

Firefighters and fire officers, as stewards of the fire service and as public servants, must be aware of their actions. Firefighters and fire officers are accountable for their words, decisions, actions, postings and performance on and off duty. Firefighters and fire officers are evaluated through many indicators, from adherence to their job description to acceptance from their peers. Trust occurs when individual firefighters and fire officers are competent, by meeting the defined expectations in the job description and performance expectations by both their supervisors and their peers. Competent individual firefighters and fire officers then come together to make a cohesive team. The team's goal is to provide quality services on each fire ground, emergency incident scene, and medical emergency while being responsive and caring. Positive interactions in the fire house can improve the team's performance. As stewards, it is important that firefighters and fire officers perform competently during incidents, while displaying foresight, awareness, and empathy towards one another. As the fire service navigates the future, it is imperative to remain focused as stewards, and to dispel biases towards citizens and each other. This is accomplished by having teams that respects and understands each other so that everyone in the fire house feels welcome, included and valued.

Solution: The Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue (SFR) developed the Fire Fellowship Team (FFT) as an innovative way of placing the future in the hands of dedicated firefighters and fire officers who desires a more inclusive and understanding fire department. The goal was to develop a team of diverse firefighters and fire officers who could articulate the core desire to have a fire service that is free of conscious and unconscious biases for which everyone feels welcomed and valued. The FFT's mission is to foster and share a commitment of respect for one another, welcome diverse perspectives, and develop connections within the fire house that will allow the department to grow. The FFT leads fire house discussions, coffee pot chats, that allow firefighters and officers to discuss each other's relevance, diversity,

and uniqueness as a person serving in SFR. **"It Starts With Me!"** is the foundation of the FFT's mission and is why the FFT is successful in SFR. The FFT was conceptualized at the station level and without question has developed into a cohesive group with the desire to make a difference for all. **"It Starts With Me!"** was adopted by the team members who leads the fire house discussions. **"It Starts With Me!"** began with the Fire Chief and SFR's movement for a more inclusive, caring and understanding department. SFR's FFT has fifteen ambassadors who facilitate face-to-face discussions with the simple but challenging goal of fostering an understanding that all members of SFR are welcome. The FFT ambassadors serve as coaches to lead discussions and influence others to be more inclusive, caring and understanding of one another. The firefighters and fire officers of the FFT immerse themselves into their organization to get the best out of others. The FFT asks that each firefighter and fire officer engages in self-reflection as the topics are discussed at the fire house. As topics are discussed around the table or coffee pot, each firefighter's perspectives are considered and respected with the goal to reduce and eliminate biases.

Members of the FFT are self-motivated leaders and have the wisdom to foster change. The FFT fosters discussion to improve the performance of the team. The FFT approaches their table top discussions with a coached-based leadership style that "just in time" and "moment based" discussion is required when traditional and formal fire service classes do not exist. "We are in it together, and we give our all for the mission and organization. Coaching concentrates on elevating the team to higher performance while identifying and meeting individual goals and expectations along the way. Coaches often sacrifice, and a coach will demonstrate the values necessary for success. Coaching is face-to-face leadership, drawing together diverse talents and experiences for continued achievement. A coach encourages diversity and assembles a well-rounded and multifaceted team. Coaches get the best out of individuals, and the result is a team that can meet goals and improve achievement. A coach will inspire individuals to explore the unknown and become uncomfortable. A coach makes individuals better so that the team can thrive."

It is time for everyone in the fire service adopt the simple yet powerful motto, **"It Starts With Me!"** Consider the inspiration that the fire service can achieve by exploring the unknown, while becoming uncomfortable with the goal of being a more cohesive and tight-knit family who understands that although firefighters have different backgrounds, different paths, and views, we serve as one. The fire service needs to become a more inclusive workforce, free of prejudice and free of stereotypes. Consider developing and supporting a FFT, with ambassadors that will lead meaningful discussions to make the fire service a better today than it was yesterday. Remember, **"It Starts With Me!"**

<https://www.eeoc.gov/overview>

Critical Decision Making: Point-to-Point Leadership in Fire and Emergency Services. Fire Engineering Books & Videos. 2018, page 118.

MICHAEL J. BARAKEY (CFO) is a 28-year fire service veteran and the chief of Suffolk (VA) Fire & Rescue. He is also a hazmat specialist, an instructor III, a nationally registered paramedic, and a neonatal/pediatric critical care paramedic for the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters in Norfolk, Virginia. Barakey is the participating agency representative and former task force leader for VA-TF2 US&R team and an exercise design/controller for Spec Rescue International. He has a master's degree in public administration from Old Dominion University and graduated the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program in 2009. Barakey authored Critical Decision Making: Point-To-Point Leadership in Fire and Emergency Services through Fire Engineering Books and Videos, regularly contributes to Fire Engineering, and is an FDIC International preconference and classroom instructor.

ON THE MOVE & ODDS AND ENDS

Clary promoted to Fire Chief at Ft. Pickett

Congratulations to Danny Clary of Fort Pickett Fire Rescue for recent promotion to Fire Chief!

Chief Clary has a twenty-seven year history in the fire service that started out as a young volunteer eager to learn. During his 20 years as a volunteer, he has served the community in several capacities to include EMS Lieutenant, Fire Lieutenant, Fire Captain, Training Committee, and head of the Public Education/Fire Prevention Committee. The training and experience he obtained as a volunteer afforded him the opportunity to take his passion to a paid status in 1997 when he was hired by Fort Pickett Fire Rescue. Starting out as a firefighter/EMT, he worked his way through the ranks to Firefighter/Medic, Senior Firefighter on shift and eventually Assistant Fire Chief in December 2007.

Throughout his years of service, his quest for knowledge has only expanded for not only training classes, but also formal education. He completed his Bachelors in Fire Administration, Masters in Safety, Security and Emergency Management, his Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy, and in February 2021 he received Chief Fire Officer Designation through the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He has worked on a variety of projects including the creation of a career development program, establishing a Department of Defense training program and maintaining the departments EMS license. In May he was appointed as the Interim Fire Chief at Fort Pickett which gave him the opportunity to expand his knowledge as he worked on various projects to keep his department moving in a positive direction.

November 25, he was promoted to Fire Chief of Fort Pickett Fire Rescue.

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COMBINATION DEPARTMENT TRAINING CHALLENGES

Ray Blake

As many departments move to a combination model to improve service delivery, they often find that their training program needs adaptation as well. While many issues need addressing in the transition from all-volunteer staffing to volunteer and career staffing, training poses a significant challenge. Simply using a typical all-volunteer or all-career department model will not work.

Certification training, station level training, multi company drills, and continuing education are just a few of the training types that may be required by your department, accrediting agency, or regulatory agency. Regardless of the training type, trying to make it all work in a combination system can be challenging. This is especially true if the department's response model includes crews cross staffing both engines and ambulances.

For departments that run EMS calls, those call types will undoubtedly be the bulk of the call load and can take up most of the day. This can make training difficult if crews are assigned to both the engine and the ambulance. Running several EMS calls in addition to any complement of fire calls can have a significant effect on the crew's ability and desire to conduct daily training. However, it is vital to find ways to make training work even if it doesn't necessarily look the way we want it to.

In an ideal circumstance, the crew could take their engine company out of service, go to the training ground for an hour or two, and conduct drills in a normal training environment, while other stations covered their calls. Smaller combination systems with a cross-staffing model typically don't have that luxury. One crew going out of service hampers both the EMS and fire service delivery for that run area. In rural departments, second-due response times can be rather long. This can be frustrating for the company officer and influence low morale for the firefighters who want to train. The following strategies can allow crews to take advantage of opportunities that could maximize training and make the shift a little more productive

The first strategy is to work well with your volunteer force. Typically, there are more volunteers around at night and on weekends. If this is the case, consider trying to conduct your training during these times. This may allow you to train with more people and not sacrifice service delivery. This is often not popular because it interferes with the typical evening and weekend routine that we all know and love, recliners and ice cream. However, no successful combination system got to where they are by doing things "the way we've always done them." You must think outside the box and that may mean having some quality downtime during the day and completing training in the evenings when it can be better accommodated.

The second strategy is modification. If you want to run hose drills, but can't go out of service to run some elaborate scenario, consider modifying the drill. You may not have the time or ability during the shift to go out of service, go to the training center, and run a high-rise drill with full PPE and SCBA, but you may have time to pull the engine around back and just stretch attack lines. You may not have a two-story building immediately available to practice throwing ladders at different targets, but you may be able to go through the steps of getting the ladder off the apparatus, properly carrying, and setting it, or maybe just tying the halyard several times. Proficiency in task level assignments contributes greatly to the overall success of the strategic operation, but these basic skills can also slip away over time if not practiced.

The military refers to this concept as "hip pocket training." Noncommissioned officers are known for taking advantage of any block of time that the day may present and using it to conduct some level of training. One example is room clearing. Ideally, this is done at an urban assault training facility. However, in many cases, a unit (especially reserve components) may not have immediate access to those types of facilities. The modified method for this training is referred to as the glass house. Unit leaders will use tent stakes and engineer tape to create layouts of common floor plans. Soldiers will move through these layouts as if they had entered a building with that specific floor plan. The training is not perfect, but the soldiers are building muscle memory for vital skills.

It is also helpful for company officers to have training drills written down with various modifications that allow them to be made simple, or more complex based on time, staffing, and call load. Not having to think of something to do on the spot can save you a lot of time and effort. It is much more efficient to have these drills available in an electronic file or written down somewhere that is easily accessible. Keeping notes and bullet points on your phone is one way to accomplish this. Training sessions should also be planned out as much as possible. Officers should know which drills they want to conduct each week and be prepared to implement them as time allows. Have backup plans and be ready to modify the drill as needed.

These suggestions address a few elements of training and certainly only scrape the surface. How much overtime should the department budget to allow volunteer and career personnel to train together? How will they accomplish company evolutions with integrated staff? How will travel funds be allocated fairly to both types of personnel? What schedule can be used to accommodate the most personnel? These can be addressed as well with an open and motivated mind as well as some "outside the box thinking." After all, isn't that the trademark of a good firefighter.



Ray Blake is the Training Captain/ Recruitment and Retention Coordinator for Dinwiddie Fire and EMS and is a firefighter in the Virginia National Guard. He has 18 years in the fire service, previously with Chesterfield, Petersburg, and Prince George. He has an AAS in Fire Science from Columbia Southern University and is certified as Officer 4 and Instructor 3.





BIG CHANGES TO STATE GOVERNMENT IN 2022

Written by Two Capitols Consulting, VFCA's full service Government Relations firm

As the calendar year changes, so will our state government. With the election of Mr. Glenn Youngkin to be Virginia's 74th Governor, as well as former-Delegate Winsome Sears as Lieutenant Governor and former-Delegate Jason Miyares as Attorney General, the official transition is fully underway for all three offices into Republican leadership. Governor-Elect Youngkin will be sworn in on the steps of the Capitol in Richmond on January 15, 2022, at which point he has full authority to appoint members of his Cabinet, key advisors, state agency leadership, and over 4,000 positions on Virginia's Board and Commissions.

In addition to the change of parties at the executive branch level, the House of Delegates is also undergoing a transition, as Republicans will assume control with a 52-48 majority. At an internal meeting, the House Republican Caucus selected their leadership with Delegate Todd Gilbert (R-Shenandoah) serving as Speaker and Delegate Terry Kilgore (R-Scott) serving as House Majority Leader. Similarly, the House Democratic Caucus chose their leadership, opting for former Speaker of the House Eileen Filler-Corn (D-Springfield) to serve as Minority Leader and Delegate Charniele Herring (D-Alexandria) as Caucus Chair.

With the 2022 legislative session kicking off on January 12, the largest priority will be passage of the 2023-2024 Biennial Budget, which takes effect on July 1, 2022. With a revenue surplus around \$2.6 billion and a Senate still in Democratic control with a 21-19 majority, there will be negotiation between the parties to craft a bipartisan budget that addresses Virginia's needs for the following two years. Additionally, the Virginia Fire Services have crafted a combined Fire and EMS Legislative Package that includes four pieces of proactive legislation:

- Enhanced VRS Benefits for 9-1-1 Dispatchers;
- Expansion of Cancer Presumption (beyond five years of retirement);
- Return funding stream of LODA back to the Commonwealth of Virginia; and
- Funding an emergency manager for each locality.

Additionally, there are 12 policy statements that are used to educate elected officials on key issues to the fire services, such as the impact of Marcus Alert, COVID and Fire Programs funding, agritourism, on-demand mobile fueling, in-building communications, as well as the dangers of barricade devices, exploding targets, and fireworks. You can find more information on the legislative package at <https://vfca.us/Legislative>.



Lastly, over 20 fire chiefs participated in a training workshop last fall entitled Become an Effective Advocate for the Fire Service, which provided tips and tricks on how to talk to legislators and state officials about issues that matter most to VFCA. At the conclusion of the workshop, Senator Emmett Hanger (R- Augusta County) joined the group for a conversation about Virginia's budget surplus, state funding for fire services, and obstacles to fire and EMS training.

With a 60 day session this year, the 2022 Legislative Session will be wrapping up in mid-March. If you have any questions for your legislative team in Richmond, please feel free to contact Two Capitols Consulting directly.

CJ Stolle - cj@2capconsulting.com; Devon Cabot - devon@2capconsulting.com; Elizabeth Parker - elizabeth@2capconsulting.com

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE...

A BUSY FALL IN WASHINGTON, DC

Ken LaSalla, IAFC Director of Government Relations and Policy



Congress has been focusing on three major pieces of legislation this fall. They are an approximately \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill; a \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill; and an omnibus appropriation bill for FY 2022. The IAFC has spent the spring and summer working to ensure that these bills address the nation's fire and emergency service priorities. We will be working this fall to ensure that the final products meet your needs.

THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

Over the summer and fall Congress was able to move this bill forward after tough negotiations and it was sent to the President to sign. That bill was signed into law by the President on November 15, 2021.

THE \$3.5 TRILLION RECONCILIATION BILL

While H.R. 3684 covered surface transportation and water projects, the \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill will cover other Biden domestic policy priorities. As we went to press this bill was still being negotiated

FY. 2022 APPROPRIATIONS

In December, Congress is expected to pass a large FY. 2021 appropriations bill. The House began work on these bills in the summer and even passed a large appropriations bill on July 29. That bill (H.R. 4502) included \$2.5 million for the National Firefighter Registry for cancer and \$6.5 million for the SIREN grant program to assist EM<S agencies. H.R. 4502 also included more than \$2 BILLION FOR THE U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildland Fire Management programs, including \$20 million for the Volunteer Fire Assistance program. The bill included \$1.1 billion for wildland fire management programs at the U.S. Department of the Interior as well.

The House Appropriations Committee reported its FY. 2022 DHS Appropriations bill (H.R. 4431) on July 15. The bill was not considered on the House Floor. In addition, the Senate is working on its version of the DHS appropriations bill. Figure 1 shows the House's proposed funding levels.

H.R. 4431 would allow the FEMA Administrator to waive the following requirements to the SAFER grants:

- The local cost share.
- The three-year performance period.
- The requirement that SAFER funds not supplant local funds
- The requirement that the recipient fire department maintains its budget at 80% of the average funding over the past three years.

In addition, the FEMA Administrator also would be authorized to allow fire departments to retain and re-hire firefighters as part of the SAFER program. For the AFG program, the FEMA Administrator would be allowed to waive the local match requirement and the maintenance of expenditures requirements (preventing a fire department's budget from being reduced to not less than 80 percent of the average amount of such expenditures in the preceding two fiscal years).

Congress will have a busy agenda as we start to approach the holidays. They will have to balance priorities in passing bills to enact President Biden's agenda while also passing the annual appropriations bills. There also is a need to raise the federal debt limit, which may cause complications. The IAFC will be working to ensure that priorities like the fire station construction grants, N.G. 9-1-1 deployment; and the AFG and SAFER grant programs are funded. You can keep track of what is happening in Washington, D.C. by following our webpage: www.iafc.org/gr.

Figure 1: The House's Proposed Funding Levels

Program	FY 2020 (Enacted)	FY 2021 (Enacted)	FY 2022 (President's Budget)	FY 2022 (House)
AFG	455 ¹	460 ²	370	370
SAFER	355	560 ³	370	370
USFA	46.844	49.269	53.212	53.212
UASI	665	705	689.684	705
SHSGP	560	610	594.686	610
US&R	37,832	37,832	37,832	37,832

In Millions (\$)
 1. Includes
 2. Includes
 3. Includes

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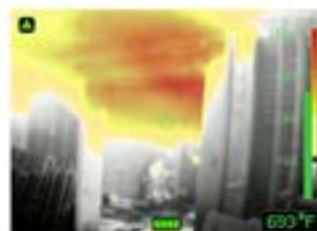


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2021 GOVERNOR'S AWARDS RECOGNIZE EXCELLENCE IN EMS

Tristen Graves, Virginia Office of EMS, Public Relations Assistant

The Governor's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Awards program is a prestigious recognition and the highest honor given at the state level to recognize the men and women who serve to protect and respond in the midst of challenging situations. Do you know someone or an EMS organization worthy of recognition? Nominate them for the Regional EMS Awards for a chance to be selected for the Governor's EMS Awards.

Each of Virginia's 11 Regional EMS Councils conducts an annual awards program, highlighting the remarkable level of dedication and commitment EMS personnel provide to the citizens of the Commonwealth. The regional award winners are then submitted for consideration to receive a Governor's EMS Award.

The awards program seeks nominations for 12 categories and one scholarship. Anyone can submit a nomination! The nomination process begins near the beginning of each year. For more information about the regional EMS awards program, please contact your Regional EMS Council by visiting www.vaems.org or learn more at: www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/other-ems-programs-and-links/governors-ems-awards-program-2/.

Congratulations to the 2021 Governor's EMS Award winners:

The Governor's EMS Award for Excellence in EMS

Craig DeAtley, Fairfax County Police Department

The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to Leadership in EMS (The Kent J. Weber Trophy)

Gregory Woods, Southwest Virginia EMS Council

The Governor's EMS Award for Physician with Outstanding Contribution to EMS (The Frank M. Yeiser Trophy)

- **John Morgan, M.D., Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System and**
- **Norman Rexrode, M.D., Russell County Hospital**

The Governor's EMS Award for Nurse with Outstanding Contribution to EMS

Greta Morrison, R.N., Russell County Hospital

The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Prehospital Educator

**Kelsey Rideout, Fredericksburg Fire Department,
Mary Washington Healthcare, AHA Training Center**

The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Prehospital Provider

Candace Brown, Lynchburg Fire Department

The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Health and Safety

Kelley Rumsey, Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU

The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS for Children

Jill Lucas Drakeford, Carilion Clinic

The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding EMS Agency

Botetourt County Department of Fire and EMS

The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Telecommunication

Daniel Hartsock, Washington County 911, Washington County Lifesaving Crew

The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Emergency Preparedness and Response (The James A. Nogle, Jr. Trophy)

Cindy Williams, Riverside Health System

The Governor's EMS Award for Innovation Excellence in EMS

**James Huffman, Virginia EMS Regional Directors Group,
Regional Council Technology Support**

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.

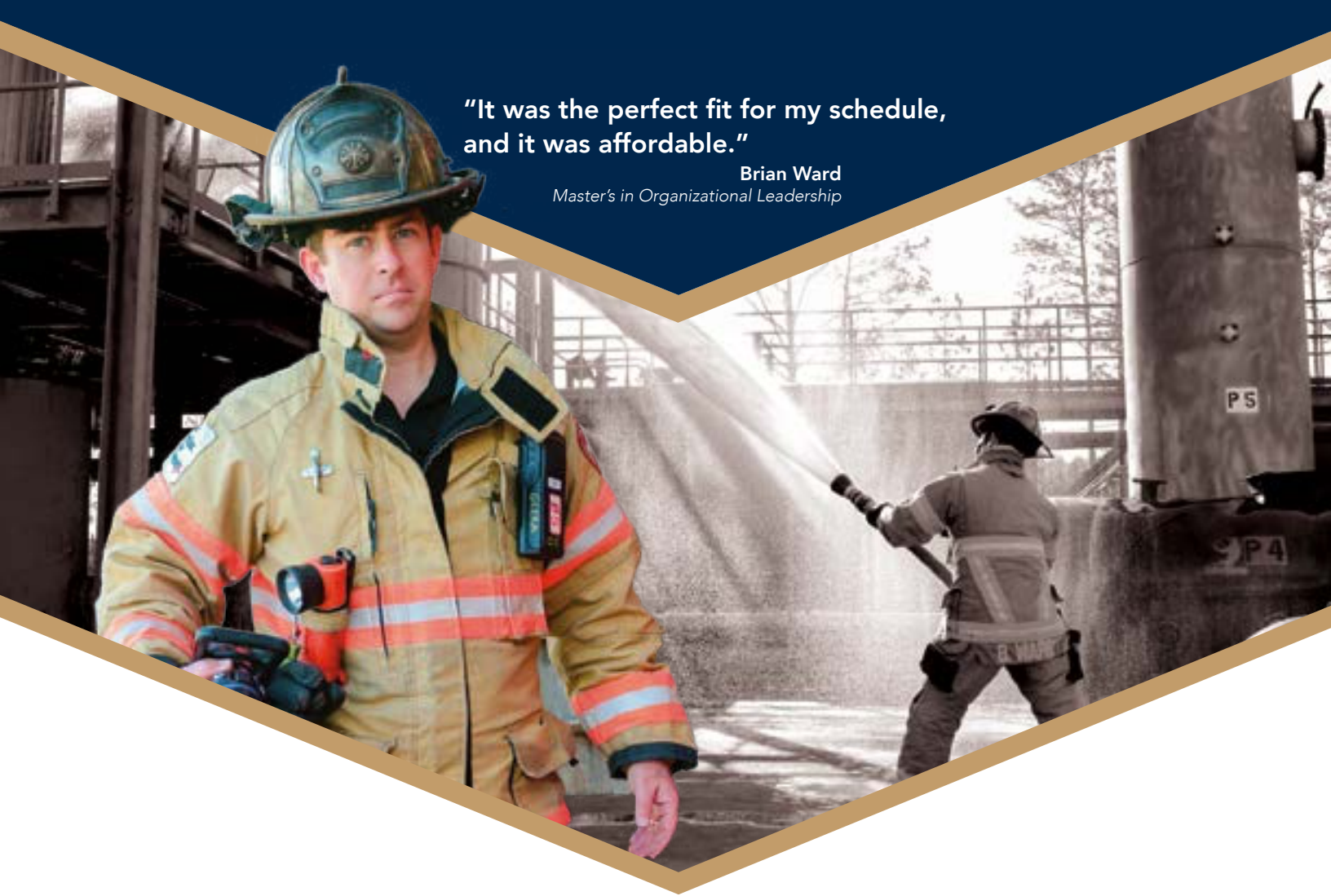
The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS by a High School Senior (The Dr. Carol Gilbert \$5,000 Scholarship)

Madyson Wilkerson, Halifax County Rescue Squad

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FCA Executive Director Chris Eudailey is shown in early November with the Columbia Gas donation after meeting with Matthew Ruskan from Columbia Gas. Thanks a bunch for the support Columbia Gas!



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NICK BASKERVILLE IS WITH PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE. HE IS A PART OF THE VFCA COMPANY OFFICER SECTION.

Background:

I found that I slipped, tripped, and fell into the fire service. While working active duty in the military, I became a volunteer firefighter in Maryland from a suggestion from a co-worker. Once done with military service, I became a career firefighter in Northern Virginia. In 2007, a mentor recommended that I try this new, week-long class that has the theme "Safety through Leadership". I didn't realize it at the time, but attending that class, also known as the Virginia Fire Officer Academy, would turn out to be one of the best classes for my career.

Since that class, I helped as a staff member for about five to six years. I moved to joining and serving in the VFCA Company Officer Section since then. Along the way, I found my way doing things with the International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters (IABPFF) and the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN). I became an adjunct instructor for VDFP and I have been a member of the public speaking group Toastmasters since 2015.

Best Mentor Moment:

I showed up at a station after taking Aerial Operator and it's time to do practical skills associated with class. This class was not on my bucket list of classes to take, and proved challenging. And who do I find showing me the ropes that day? None other than a person that I mentored through his probationary year. He got me through that day, and through my training. I have met so many people with potential areas that I can't match. Seeing people I have mentored or supervise surpass me in skills is a great feeling. Helping others to actualize their potential is the best feeling of accomplishment that I will ever have.

Inspirational books or quotes

There are countless books that I have read and used in various capacities. Here are the two that I use the most often:

1. Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey. The theories and concepts in this book are what I use to be more efficient and effective in my actions. I read the book as a supervisor in the military, and refer to it as I evaluate what and how I do things.
2. Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankel. I came across this book in my college studies about psychology. Frankel is a Holocaust survivor that developed a theory of human nature being motivated by the search for a life purpose. When I am having my worst day, I remember that a guy stripped of everything and only offered death, still found a reason to live.

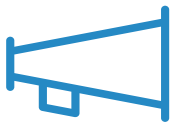
Future Plans:

Looking at the future, I look forward to:

1. Being a part of the 2022 VCFA Company Officer Summit (tentatively planned for November 2022). We'll need help planning, hosting, and running the event. I look forward to seeing some of you be a part of that.
2. I look forward to getting more officers and aspiring officers into the Company Officer Section. The more of us that are involved, the more of us that will benefit.
3. And I look forward to helping individuals and groups talk and listen in more effective ways. A number of the classes, program areas, and events are a chance to add these skills that are so sorely needed.

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FIRE



THE VFCA... WHAT THE LIFE SAFETY AND CRR MEMBERS ARE SAYING...



Joseph A. Mullens, Division Chief/Deputy Fire Marshal, Rockingham County Department of Fire and Rescue

How long have you been a member of the VFCA Life Safety/CRR Section? I have been a member of the VFCA Life Safety/CRR Section since its introduction in 2018. I currently serve as the vice-president for the Section and represent the Section on the VFCA membership committee.

Why is being a member of the Life Safety/CRR Section important to you? Being a member of the VFCA Life Safety/CRR Section is important to me as it allows for outreach to other agencies in the Commonwealth to share thoughts and ideas related to improving Community Risk Reduction efforts.

What can members expect from the Life Safety/CRR Section? Members can expect to receive assistance and guidance for life safety and community risk reduction efforts within their communities as well as training opportunities through out the year and at the VFCA Fire and Rescue Conference.

How can a member and their department benefit from the section? Departments, and members, can benefit from the VFCA Life Safety/CRR section through outreach programs and training to assist with risk reduction efforts in their communities not only related to reducing fire loss but also strengthening relationships to improve the overall safety of the community.



**Keith Chambers, Assistant Chief of Community Risk Reduction and the County Fire Marshal
Chesterfield Fire and EMS for 31 years. Involved with Fire Marshal's Office since 2005 (16 years)**

How long have you been a member of the VFCA Life Safety/CRR Section? 3 years.

Why is being a member of the Life Safety/CRR Section important to YOU? The single largest advantage is the networking and collaboration with likeminded professionals across the state. Localities have specific concerns that each are attempting to address. Knowing there are community risk professionals experiencing similar concerns that may have already developed effective initiatives to combat their respective issues is hugely beneficial. Additionally, having the ability to discuss community risk, fire code or legislative changes with other members allows all of us to hear varying perspectives that may have not been considered. For any potential problem, issue or concern present in a community, there is a host of CRR professionals within the CRR section to obtain honest feedback, opinions, and potential solutions.

What can members expect from the Life Safety/CRR Section? Besides the opportunity to have at your disposal the knowledge and experience of other community risk professionals from around the state, members will also have the unity of the group to leverage change. Change often occurs at the legislative or code development levels and having the solidarity of the group to demonstrate a united front speaks volumes to those making the final decisions. I recall, several years ago a specific fire code that all attending local fire marshals were opposed to changing. A sitting, voting board member made the statement, "100% of the fire professionals in this room are opposed to this, therefore I must vote against the change". That statement demonstrates what members of the Life Safety /CRR section can expect, unity within our profession to affect positive change.

How can a member and their department benefit from the section? Imagine having the ability to reach out and communicate with multiple experienced, knowledgeable, affiliated professionals with similar backgrounds that all have the same desire for risk reduction. Or, having the ability to discuss an issue, concern or problem with others that may have already experienced something similar. Moreover, having these same professionals offer to you and your department solutions that have already been tried and tested. These are the benefits. A group of individuals that are not afraid to keep secrets and have a desire to ensure your locality succeeds as much as they want their own to succeed. A group that understands the 5-E's and is more than willing to stand up alongside of one another for positive change.



Joshua J. Davis, Assistant State Fire Marshal, Virginia Department of Fire Programs

How long have you been a member of the VFCA Life Safety/CRR Section? I started my membership in 2017 as the selected President of the VFCA Life Safety-Community Risk Reduction Section President.

Why is being a member of the Life Safety/CRR Section important to YOU? I joined the VFCA because fire prevention is the most proactive function in the fire service, Life Safety/Community Risk Reduction provides us with the tools and planning process to help achieve that goal.

What can members expect from the Life Safety/CRR Section? By choosing to be a member of the VFCA LS-CRR section you will get the opportunities to get involved and make a difference in Community Risk Reduction in your department and participate in CRR efforts around the Commonwealth of Virginia. Gain knowledge and guidance on key issues including funding, recruitment and retention, mental and behavioral health, cancer prevention, volunteers, succession planning and community relations resources for special areas including company officers, administrative professionals, community risk reduction, and Federal / Military section. Easy ways to connect with fellow leaders from other areas of Virginia to share information and gain new perspectives.

How can a member and their department benefit from the section? A Department membership is an investment not only in you, but also the department and your community. You will gain the opportunity to bring tangible benefits back to your department which will include:

- Be included in a collaboration of resources that provide experience in Community Risk Planning, Community Risk Assessments, and State Coalition groups.
- New and improved skills for managing and leading as an officer or frontline firefighter.
- Access to the latest training and resources from top experts in the field.
- Best practices, policies and toolkits to support and improve department operations.
- Strategies for leading through the current economic and fiscal challenges.
- Empowerment to get engaged and make a difference in today's fire service.



David Guynn, MS, CFO, Deputy Fire Chief Roanoke Fire-EMS

How long have you been a member of the VFCA Life Safety/CRR Section? I have been a member of the VFCA Life Safety/CRR Section for three years. I joined immediately after I moved to Virginia to assume the Fire Marshal role for the City of Roanoke.

Why is being a member of the Life Safety/CRR Section important to YOU? I believe that membership in the Life Safety/CRR Section is important because fire chiefs, fire marshals, and code officials are stronger when working together to build a safer Commonwealth. We make more progress as a unified fire service, and the Life Safety/CRR Section helps us stay coordinated and focused on important issues.

What can members expect from the Life Safety/CRR Section? Members can expect to be a part of a community of professionals who are dedicated to improve the lives of all Virginians through comprehensive, strategic community risk reduction. Working within our section and the VFCA as a whole, our members are working to make us a leader in CRR nationwide.

How can a member and their department benefit from the section? Members and departments benefit by having access to an incredible community of CRR professionals who are willing to share their knowledge and expertise!



VIRGINIA FD'S HONOR TENNESSEE SOLDIER KILLED IN AFGHANISTAN



Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Knauss

U.S. Army photo

A funeral procession for fallen Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Knauss passed through Virginia on September 16th on its way to Arlington National Cemetery.

The procession began in his hometown of Knoxville, Tennessee.

Knauss, 23, was one of 13 service members killed in an Aug. 26 attack at the airport in Kabul. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on Tuesday, Sept. 21.

A police motorcade that began in TN and continued across Virginia, escorted the hearse. Along the way, many Virginia Fire Departments honored Knauss by displaying American flags hung from aerial apparatus or overpasses. Firefighters and civilian personnel could be seen standing at attention and saluting Knauss as the procession passed.

Knauss is survived by his wife and other family members.



Photo: Roanoke-Salem Fire EMS



Photo: Staunton Fire and Rescue



Photo: Bristol VA-TN Fire Departments



Photo: Fairfax County PD

BIG STONE GAP POLICE OFFICER AND FIREFIGHTER MICHAEL CHANDLER KILLED IN LINE OF DUTY INCIDENT



Big Stone Gap Police Officer Michael Chandler was working the overnight shift early Saturday (11-13-21) morning when he was flagged down to check on an individual inside of a vacant property. During that encounter, the suspect (who was wanted on probation violations) gunned down the young officer. A backup deputy from the Wise County Sheriff's Office discovered Michael unresponsive in a nearby ditch. He was rushed to the hospital where he fought for 15 hours. Sadly, Officer Chandler did not survive his wounds. His killer was apprehended following an extensive manhunt that led investigators to Tennessee.

Officer Michael Chandler proudly served as both a Police Officer and a volunteer firefighter in the quiet, small town of Big Stone Gap, Virginia. He leaves behind a wife, who is also a Police Officer, and a young daughter. Michael was described by those who knew him as polite, kind, respectful and helpful. He truly loved to serve the people, and he always did so with a smile on his face. He was the first officer killed in the line of duty in Big Stone Gap in over a century.

Officer Michael Chandler's life was ended on his 29th birthday.

Please keep Billy, his department and community in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with this difficult time.

Botetourt County Department of Fire and EMS

The Governor's EMS Award for Outstanding Contribution to EMS Telecommunication
Daniel Hartsock, Washington County 911, Washington County Lifesaving Crew

FEBRUARY IS FOR HEARTS: FOCUS ON YOUR CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

February is American Heart Month. It's an opportunity for the fire service to promote awareness about heart disease and ways to adopt healthier lifestyles. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the leading cause of death across the nation is cardiovascular disease. The concern for heart health is especially relevant to the fire and emergency medical services.

Our annual report on firefighter fatalities in the United States for 2019 found that the leading cause of fatal injury was stress or overexertion, a general category that includes all firefighter deaths that are cardiac or cerebrovascular in nature, such as heart attacks and strokes. Over half of firefighter fatalities in 2019 were cardiac- or cerebrovascular-related.

Causes of firefighter fatalities (2019)



To reduce the number of on-duty cardiovascular deaths among U.S. firefighters, prevention is truly the best medicine. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recommends that fire departments follow established medical screening guidelines, adopt risk reduction measures during firefighting operations, and develop and participate in comprehensive wellness and fitness programs.

The American Heart Association reminds everyone that focusing on your heart health has never been more important, since people with poor cardiovascular health are also at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

This February, the U.S. commemorates American Heart Month. It's an opportunity for the nation to promote awareness about heart disease and ways to adopt healthier lifestyles. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has a free toolkit to assist you with community outreach in promoting awareness and prevention efforts. The CDC also provides resources for public health professionals.



3rd Annual VFCF Fire Chiefs 5K Run/Walk and 1 Mile Fun Run

Saturday, March 12, 2022

A Colonial Road Runners Grand Prix Event

**Colonial Williamsburg –
Duke of Gloucester Street**



A 5k run and 1 mile fun run through historic Colonial Williamsburg.

Starting at Bruton Parish Church and passing the historic Capitol Building and Governor's Palace. You will loop through the City of Williamsburg Municipal Center, past the Williamsburg Fire Station before returning to Colonial Williamsburg to finish on Duke of Gloucester Street.

Schedule:

Packet Pick-up / Registration	6:45 am – 7:45 am
1 mile Fun Run	7:30 am
5k Run	8:00 am
Awards	9:15 am

Entry Fee:

Early Registration through February 28, 2022	\$30
Late Registration through March 9, 2022	\$35
Race Day Registration	\$40
Fun Run	Free
Fun Run with Shirt	\$5 (must register by 2/28)

Online Registration:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Williamsburg/VirginiaFireChiefsFoundation5k>

Awards:

Top 3 overall Male and Female for Runners and Walkers

Age groups: 14 and under, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70 & over

T-Shirts: Guaranteed to the early registered runners only! All others on a first come, first served basis.

Race Director: Donald Booth – 757-810-7538 (donald.booth@diginc.com)

Race Coordinator: Rick Platt – 757-345-1431 (rickplatt1@juno.com)

Finish line results provided by the Colonial Road Runners! **All race proceeds benefit the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation**, providing leadership training and scholarships to Virginia's front line officers, fire fighters, and their immediate family members.



Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

Male _____ Female _____ Division: 5k Run _____ 5k Walk _____ Fun Run _____

Age on Race Day _____ Birthdate _____

Emergency Contact _____ Contact Phone _____

T-Shirt Size - Adult Small ___ Adult Medium ___ Adult Large ___ Adult XL ___ Adult XXL ___

Entry Fee (Check One)

Early Registration - \$30 _____ Late Registration (after 2/28) - \$35 _____ Day of Race - \$40 _____

Make checks payable to: **Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation and mail to:**

VFCF
P.O. Box 699
Blackstone, VA 23824

Release and Waiver (Please read and sign)

I know that running/walking is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter and run/walk unless I am medically able and properly trained. I know that, although police protection might be provided, there could be traffic on the course route; therefore, I assume the risk of running/walking in traffic. I also assume any other risks associated with running/walking this event including, but not limited to, falls, contact with other participants, and the effects of weather and conditions on the road. I understand I am solely responsible for my own safety while traveling to or from or participating in this event. Knowing these facts and in consideration of your acceptance of my entry, I hereby for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators, or anyone else who might sue on my behalf covenant not to sue, and waive, release, and discharge the sponsors or contributors to this event, any race officials, volunteers, the city, police and fire agencies, their representatives, successors or assignees from any and all claims of liability for death, personal injury, or property damage of any kind or nature whatsoever arising out of, or in the course of my participation. This release form and waiver extends to all claims of every kind and nature whatsoever, foreseen and unforeseen, known and unknown. The undersign further grants full permission to use any photographs, video tapes, motion pictures, recordings, or another record of this event for any purpose. Minors will be accepted with parent's signature. I certify that I have read this waiver and release and fully understand its significance.

Signature

Date



VFCF ANNOUNCES BENEFIT GOLF TOURNAMENTS FOR 2022



The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation will be holding three benefit golf tournaments around the Commonwealth in 2022. The proceeds from these events will be used to help support the continuance of the Virginia Fire Officers Academy and the Virginia Chief Officers Academy. In addition, scholarships are also supported for first responders and or their immediate family members.

Event	Date	Start Time
12th Annual VFCF /Spotsylvania –Lees Hill Golf Club POC—Chris Eudailey—ceudailey@vfca.us or 540-809-9397	6-17-22	1200 Hours
8th Annual VFCF /Williamsburg –Golden Horseshoe POC—Beth Eberhardt—eeberhardt@williamsburg.gov or 757-220-6220	9-16-22	1230 Hours
7th Annual VFCF /Salem –Blacksburg Country Club POC—John Prillaman—jprillaman@salemva.gov or 540-375-3080	10-3-22	1200 Hours

Additional information can also be found at www.vfca.us . The VFCF is actively seeking sponsors and door prizes for each of these events. The goal for these three events for 2021 is \$50,000.

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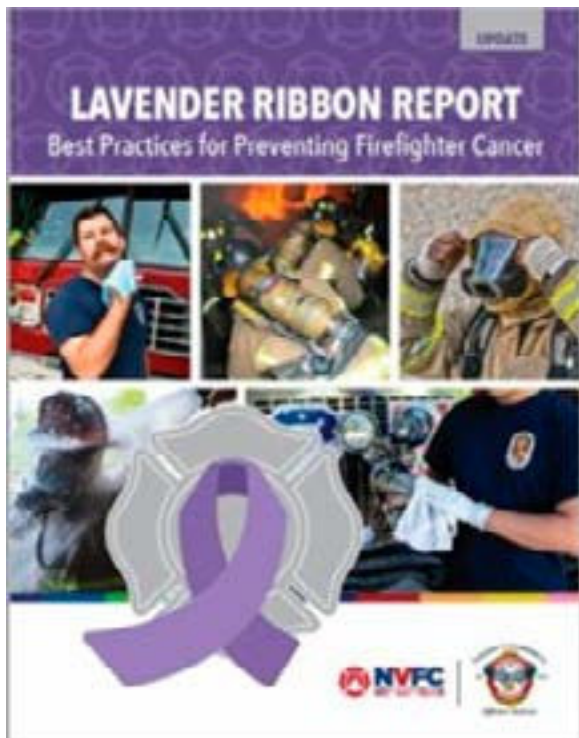


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IAFC-VCOS AND NVFC RELEASE LAVENDER RIBBON REPORT UPDATE TO REDUCE OCCUPATIONAL CANCER RISKS



The International Association of Fire Chiefs' Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (VCOS) and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) have released an update to the Lavender Ribbon Report that provides 11 best practices for reducing exposure risks and preventing occupationally caused cancer in firefighters. The new Lavender Ribbon Report Update includes additional information, essays, articles, research, and ideas for successfully implementing the best practices.

Cancer is a leading health risk facing firefighters, largely due to the chemicals and carcinogens they are exposed to while on the job. In 2018, VCOS and the NVFC released the original Lavender Ribbon Report to provide specific actions that firefighters can take to protect themselves and their team from these risks. The Lavender Ribbon Report Update takes things a step further by sharing personal stories, examples of how departments are implementing the best practices, and other information to reinforce the actions firefighters need to take to lessen their exposure risks.

"The risks we face aren't going anywhere, and we can't remain stagnant in addressing this critical health and safety issue," said Chief Brian McQueen, chair of the NVFC's cancer subcommittee and co-author of both the Lavender Ribbon Report and the Lavender Ribbon Report Update. "This new release will equip firefighters with further tools and knowledge so they can successfully implement the best practices, along with motivation for why it is so urgent that we take action now. Don't let this document sit on the shelf – use it so that we can prevent the tragedy of firefighter cancer."

Chief John M. Buckman III, VCOS educational coordinator, commented, "The VCOS hopes that all public safety personnel will read both the original Lavender Ribbon Report and this updated version. Firefighter health and wellness, especially occupational cancer, must be a top priority and is a continuous process that requires strong leadership and commitment to take the right actions. This updated report is designed to reignite the passion for helping firefighters protect themselves from carcinogen exposure. This is a large document and will require significant individual and organizational commitment. Don't let its size stop you from using each piece to improve your organization."

Studies show that firefighters have higher rates of many types of cancer than the general population. It is critical that both individual firefighters and fire service leaders implement the best practices to reduce exposures to toxic chemicals and carcinogens. Use the Lavender Ribbon Report Update to implement practices that will make the department safer and reduce the number of firefighters who have to face the anguish of a cancer diagnosis.

Download the Lavender Ribbon Report Update on the NVFC web site at www.nvfc.org/lrr and the VCOS web site at www.vcos.org/beatffancer.

BATTLE CRY

Warren Cersley



One of my daughters recently gifted to me a beautiful framed American flag made from fire hose. Over a hot cup of Triple Tap Coffee, I thought about what memorable campaigns, skirmishes and battle names I would paint on the flag if it were to become my fire service battle flag. All of us do have our own battles.

I was blessed to never suffer long term effects from the hellish things that I saw during my fire service career, even though I can remember some of the worst calls, as if they happened yesterday, even the tastes and smells that you couldn't wash off. Others, are bothered by that one call or a series of those one calls.

Public servants aren't issued mental erasers.

What Fire Service, Law Enforcement, EMS leader or group of leaders will take the time, NOW, to look at how to address and manage situations where members suffer from things that stay on them, even when they are out of uniform? To say that they have a syndrome or a disorder, PTSD, is not enough and seems to me to have become an easy box to check off and a place to put, classify and warehouse people, who we made sick.

PROTECTING FIRST RESPONDERS FROM OPIOID EXPOSURE



New fentanyl detection standards will protect first responders in the field.

One alarming aspect of the opioid crisis is the frequency first responders encounter synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. Fentanyl and related compounds present a safety hazard for first responders – including emergency medical and law enforcement personnel at all levels – if they are not adequately prepared with proper protective equipment and reliable detection.

In response, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) funded and provided subject matter expertise for development of three standards for detection of fentanyl and fentanyl-related compounds in the field. These standards promote the protection of those on the frontline of the opioid crisis through a specification, guide and test method for field detection equipment:

- ASTM E3243-21 Standard Specification for Field Detection Equipment and Assays Used for Fentanyl and Fentanyl-Related Compounds.
- ASTM E3289-21 Standard Guide for Using Equipment and Assays for Field Detection of Fentanyl and Fentanyl-Related Compounds.
- ASTM E3290-21 Standard Test Method for Establishing Performance of Equipment and Assays for Field Detection of Fentanyl-Related Compounds.

These 3 new standards, published in July 2021 by ASTM International, will be put into effect almost immediately through a DHS S&T-led research and development effort with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. They will be used to support collection of reference spectra to build out instrument libraries for approximately 50 Drug Enforcement Agency controlled substances including fentanyl, fentanyl analogues and other emerging synthetic drugs.

These standards will help increase operational efficiency and responder safety by giving first responders the ability to identify fentanyl, its analogs and other synthetic drugs through use of standardized methods, reliable equipment, and a centralized, accurate reference library.

Source: USFA

I didn't know it was leadership at the time, it just seemed like the right thing to do, when, as a Captain in the early eighties, I detailed several people to gather every person on scene at a house fire where we had, moments before, lost four small children. I stood on the front of our LaFrance wagon and I looked at each one and I said that although the outcome wasn't what we desired, each of them could be proud of their readiness, their training, their hustle, and that I was so proud of each one of them for giving those children the best chance that they had. Maybe I was expressing my hurt and pain openly to them with hopes that their pain wouldn't become internally encapsulated and another delayed, cumulative, haunting hurt to be hidden away in each of their already experience inflated thin mental trauma balloons.

This Chimborazo Boulevard fire, the smells and tastes and the hurt on the faces of the crews reminded me of my first six months in the fire house when the opposite shift suffered the loss of seven children in two apartment fires, only blocks apart. In one of those fires when the front door was forced, men were in the kitchen enjoying a card game, while four little children died upstairs.

Paint Chimborazo on my flag and Boston Ave. and Chicago Ave. on theirs.

Many of us knew or know WWII, Korea, Vietnam and Middle East Military veterans. The one common theme from all of the ones that I have met is their hesitancy to discuss their mental hell, just as in the Fire Service. What a cruel and evil disservice it is to call and send our bravest, our youngest, our brightest, and our most talented to service and to not train our leaders to recognize and to react when they suffer from seeing things that no eyes should ever see.

In the Fire Service we can throw in day to day work pressures, massive percentages of EMS responses, a divorce, a separation, financial woes, sick children, substance abuse, sleep deprivation, child alienation, line of duty deaths involving friends, elderly care, a pandemic or two, and other real life stuff that comes along.

Great teams communicate better.

Have informal coffee table meets for team listening. No judging, no rank, no phones, no TV, no bullshit.

Make your table large enough so that everyone has a seat.

If we truly believe that we are our brother's keeper we must listen closely for their Battle Cry.

Thanks for your time.

Have a Great day - it's a Great day for it.

This article is being reprinted with permission. It was originally posted in November 2021 to a Facebook Group titled: In These Boots.

Retired Battalion Chief Warren Cersley spent his career with the City of Richmond, VA Fire Department.

Chief Cersley lives in Mechanicsville, VA.

CRR...IS IT DIFFERENT FROM FIRE PREVENTION, OR JUST A NEW CONCEPT?

Joshua Davis, Life safety – CRR Section President



In 2015, I introduced the concept of Community Risk Reduction to the Charlottesville Fire Department. Establishing a CRR program as a goal within the department's Strategic Plan was a new concept for the Charlottesville Fire Department and for the City Leaders and was not initially included in the Strategic Plan. Today, I have seen a move to rebrand fire prevention into CRR. While I can see some benefit to this concept, I would like to express some things to consider when making this reactionary change to fire prevention. CRR is not necessarily a name, but reflects a targeted and focused approach to reducing the community's risk. This approach, I think, goes far and beyond school-based programs and an inspection program that are common to a prevention division. These activities are a part of CRR but are not the sum total of CRR. In other words, CRR is so much more than one division.

Fire Service Leaders should be looking at CRR as a way for the fire department to lead and manage emergency services in our communities. I do not see CRR as a trendy name change for Fire Prevention or Community Outreach. To truly address CRR, it needs to be a culture change that looks at all risk and identifies partners and stakeholders needed to best reduce, mitigate or prevent risk in our communities.

This systematic and scientific approach is what is amazing about utilizing CRR to lead and manage our organizations. CRR requires us to continually identify our community's risks through data and local knowledge and then apply strategies and tactics to reduce them. Communities change, as do their risks. If we lower one risk, another will be there to replace it. If we are constantly utilizing these risks to develop our plans, goals, and processes, then we are properly leading and managing our departments which better serve our communities.

The real truth of the matter is that most fire departments are actually the department of Community Risk Reduction. We do not need dramatic events to change our perspective on CRR, though many of us have them. CRR is what we signed up for and is what the fire service is. We Serve and Protect our community by reducing the frequency, severity, and duration of emergencies. Though we may not have been taught initially about CRR in this manner, CRR is the fire service. My challenge to the fire service would be to lead and manage our Fire Departments with a holistic CRR approach which will create safer communities.

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION WEEK



CRR Week – What's it all about? by Ed Comeau

CRR Week 2022 takes place January 17 to 23 and is a great opportunity to promote the concepts of CRR to your two communities – those outside and inside your department.

"But wait," you say... "isn't Community Risk Reduction all about making our towns and cities safer?"

Absolutely it is, but don't forget that an important part of making your communities safer is getting the people in your department on board, and that's how CRR Week first started in 2020, to help raise awareness about CRR among fire fighters and departments. The idea was that a department couldn't be doing community outreach if the members of a fire department hadn't bought into the concept and the value of CRR.

But, that's not how it worked out.

While our focus audience in 2020 was internal, towards fire fighters, what happened is that departments across the nation reached outward to their communities promoting CRR. Not our intent, but then we thought about it...by having fire fighters reaching out, they are learning CRR by doing CRR – a win/win!

CRR Week kicks off on Monday, January 17, which is Martin Luther King Day, a community day of service. Each day of the week has a focus on a different CRR "E" (Education, Engineering, Economic Incentive, Enforcement and Emergency Response), starting with Education. However, you don't have to follow this schedule, the idea is that you come up with a plan for what works in your community. Perhaps your greatest risk would be solved through Engineering? Or Enforcement? Or is your department running its wheels off on repeat calls, so you need to address the issue of Emergency Response?

CRR Week is all about what works and what is needed in your community. So, join departments across the U.S. this year during CRR Week and learn CRR by doing CRR!

You can find more information at www.CRRWeek.org or on Facebook and Twitter @crrweek.

CRR Week is a grass-roots project by an ad-hoc group of fire service folks from across the nation. You can learn more about the project at <http://crrweek.org/about-us/>

Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation

P.O. Box 699, Blackstone, VA 23824

Phone: (888) 818-0983

Web Site: www.vfca.us



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 VFCF 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 VFCF, 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 VFCF will remain fiscally sound and will be able to sustain these key programs to assist the fire departments and providers across the Commonwealth. The VFCF is a 501 c 3 recognized organization and as such your donation is tax deductible. VFCF does accept payment through major credit cards on the website – 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

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 or
Mail this application and payment (check payable to VFCA): VFCA • P.O. Box 699 • Blackstone, VA • 23824

Name: _____ Fire Dept/Organization: _____ EDID# _____
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: _____

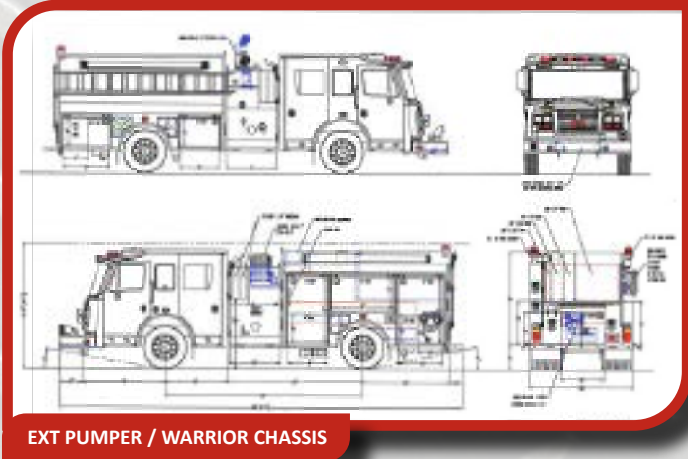
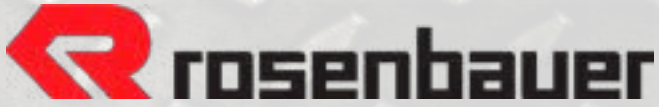
Please check the following:

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

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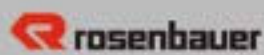
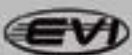
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