

# COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - October 2021

# Chief

**EACH YEAR, FROM 2016 TO 2018, FIRE DEPARTMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES RESPONDED TO AN ESTIMATED AVERAGE OF 189,300 COOKING FIRES IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.**



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**FIRE DEATHS**



**IN PROPERTY LOSS**



**INJURIES**

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AT YOUR DEPARTMENT**



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## 2,100 GALLON FXT TANKER (5)

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### 3000 GAL. FXT TANKER

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10" Newton Dump (rear), 1500 GPM  
Waterous Pump, Job# 35847

### 3000 GAL. FXT TANKER

Freightliner M2-106 6x4 Chassis  
(3) 10" Newton Dumps (sides & rear)  
Job# 35544

### 1000 GAL. FXP PUMPER

Freightliner M2-106 Chassis  
1250 GPM Waterous Pump  
3" Deluge Outlet, Job# 35634

### 2100 GAL. FXT TANKER

Freightliner M2-106 Chassis  
(3)10" Newton Dumps, Air Control (Rear)  
1250 GPM Waterous Pump, Job# 35689



MORE STOCK UNITS



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# COMMONWEALTH

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## Chief

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## VFCA & Its Professional Interest Sections

Keith Johnson, President  
(571) 465-0119

John Prillaman, 1st Vice President  
(540) 375-3080

Allen Baldwin, 2nd Vice President  
(540) 419-3358

David Hutcheson, Past President  
(757) 651-7641

James H. Johnson, Treasurer  
(434) 395-1089

Rick Tally, Division 1  
(804) 247-4705

Matt Tobia, Division 2  
(571) 465-0408

Greg Wormser, Division 3  
(434) 401-7309

Todd Lagow, Division 4  
(276) 393-2481

Vance Cooper, Division 5  
(757) 385-8592

Marci Stone, Division 6  
(540) 537-5530

Corey Smedley, Division 7  
(703) 746-5241

Kevin Duck, At-Large #1  
(757) 435-1835

Nestor Mangubat, At-Large #2  
(757) 407-0622

Kevin Good, At-Large #3  
(703) 805-4843

Dwayne Bonnette, At Large #4  
(804) 646-5430

Jessica Wilkes, Adm. Professionals President  
(540) 853-2327

Blane Johnson, Company Officers  
(240) 315-8578

Julien Crolet, Federal / Military  
(703) 805-4843

Jay Davis, Life Safety/CRR  
(434) 970-3247

R. Christian (Chris) Eudailey, Executive Director  
(540) 809-9397

Tiffany Bradberry, Administrative Assistant  
(540) 293-1251

Bill Smith, Editor  
(757) 810-1690



## THANKSGIVING DAY PRESENTS HIDDEN HAZARDS

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Keith Johnson**  
2021 VFCA President  
Loudoun County Fire & Rescue

As we near the end of Summer, I sincerely hope that everyone has had time to enjoy some time off from work and professional obligations as we “begin” to recover from COVID-19. Notice I said begin, as we all know this is a marathon, not a sprint and many throughout our Commonwealth are still suffering sickness and the loss of loved ones. What I, other leaders throughout the Commonwealth’s fire service, and nationally have been faced with is how we go about resuming “normal” operations such as training, opening our fire and rescue stations, and performing community outreach activities, most of which were impacted by COVID. Many of us are now placed in positions of working with our Town, City, or County government officials to provide input regarding decisions being made for mandatory COVID-19 vaccines for public safety personnel, or whether periodic testing be required for those not vaccinated. We see every night on the news and in our periodicals the fine line that science and politics play in our jobs as Chief Officers and public safety personnel. Whatever decisions are made, I think we all agree that it should be done with the safety of our personnel and the public in mind. Let us all reach out to our networks to ensure that as we advocate for certain efforts, we remain united as a fire and EMS service in our mission.

Signs of normalcy in your Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) include the return of the Virginia Fire Officer Academy (VFOA) and the Virginia Chief Officer Academy (VCOA) the week of October 17-22, 2021, at the W. E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake. Our usual location at the University of Richmond was unavailable when these academies were being planned. The 2022 VFCA Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference is fully on-track for February 23-26, 2022, at the Virginia Beach Convention Center with pre-conference sessions scheduled for February 21-22, 2022. In addition, we completed the June 18th Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation (VFCF) Spotsylvania Golf Tournament with 131 golfers in attendance, and the foundation raising just over \$30,000. The 3rd Annual VFCF 5K Run/Walk – will be hosted again in Williamsburg on March 12, 2022, the 6th Annual VFCA Salem Golf Tournament at the Hanging Rock Golf Club on October 29, 2021, and the Annual VFCF Williamsburg Golf Tournament at the Golden Horseshoe in Williamsburg on September 17, 2021. The VFCA Administrative Professionals group is proud to announce their annual retreat is back on for September 23-24, 2021, in Roanoke, VA. The VFCA is also proud to announce an exciting monthly series sponsored by the IAFC and VFCA entitled: Growing as a Leader: Six Ways to Build, Engage and Retain Your Team! Presenter Jan Spence brings practical, tangible takeaways to these monthly virtual sessions that will enhance your leadership skills. You’ll leave with action steps you can use

immediately to reduce your own stress, build a better team, and help your department grow. These virtual sessions will focus on Understanding and Navigating Generational Differences within the fire service. Please visit the VFCA Website for information on all these events at Virginia Fire Chiefs Association - Home Page ([vfca.us](http://vfca.us)).

The VFCA leadership along with our legislative consultant, Two Capitols Consulting, will be participating in the annual Fire and EMS Stakeholder Legislative Summit on September 30, 2021. At this event, VFCA leadership and other public safety stakeholders will be developing the 2022 Virginia Legislative priorities and issues that will be provided to the members of the Virginia General Assembly.

As you can see, your VFCA remains active and beginning to recover from the pandemic that has impacted us so very much. In closing, I continue to be proud to help lead this organization and proud of our Board of Directors, staff, and members. God bless each of you and thank you again for your trust in me and your service to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**“You see, if you take pains and learn in order to get reward, the work will seem hard; but when you work... if you love your work, you will find your reward in that.”**

~ Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)  
Russian novelist

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We are pleased to be able to recognize these Companies that have gone above and beyond this year under these challenging times and that have continued to support the VFCA!

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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# Virginia Department of Forestry

## Agency Mission

The VDOF mission is to protect and develop healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians.

## Program Areas

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) was established in 1914 to prevent and suppress forest fires and reforest bare lands. More than 100 years later, we still fight wildfires and plant trees, but the agency has grown and evolved to meet the needs of Virginians and the forestry community.

VDOF programs are each focused on a specific aspect of forestry, administered at the agency headquarters level, with the related projects and activities conducted through our field staff assigned to the three operational regions. Program areas include:

- Wildfire Suppression, Prevention and Public Safety
- Forest Health
- Forest Legacy and Land Conservation
- Forest Stewardship & Management
- Urban & Community Forestry
- Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA)
- Water Quality Protection
- Forest Research
- Tree Improvement
- Forest Products Marketing and Utilization
- Conservation Education
- Tree Nursery Program
- State Forest System
- State-Owned Lands Program



## Wildfire in Virginia

The VDOF responds to an average of more than 700 wildfires in Virginia per year. Based on the agency's 10-year average, these wildfires burn more than 9,000 acres and damage or destroy 18 homes and 72 other structures each year. The good news is that agency suppression efforts, in cooperation with Virginia's other fire service agencies, protect more than 3,000 other homes and structures from wildfire-related damages, with a protected value of more than 171 million dollars per year! In Virginia, nearly all wildfires are caused by people, whether it's intentional (arson) or unintentional (e.g., escaped debris burning). Through proactive wildfire prevention programs, such as youth education and homeowner outreach, the agency is able to mitigate the leading causes of wildfire. Early detection, well-trained personnel, modern equipment, and close working relationships to local, state, and federal fire cooperators are the key elements in the success of the agency's prevention and suppression programs.



The training and equipment required of VDOF's field staff for emergency fire response are equally applied to non-fire disasters and emergency situations, such as storms, flooding, and ice damage. Just in the first nine months of 2021, VDOF's All-Hazard response personnel have provided an Incident Management Team to support the Commonwealth's rollout of COVID-19 community vaccination centers during the first half of the year, completed chainsaw/road clearing operations, and provided IMT support following the February ice storm, and have supplied 67 personnel in various IMT and operational roles in support of the western wildfire season...all while continuing to cover the agency's customer needs here in the Commonwealth!

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From left to right:  
 Shelley D. Colvin, Vice President & COO  
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 R. Scott Colvin, Vice President of Sales & Service

Family owned and operated, Maryland Fire Equipment Corporation is celebrating their 60th Anniversary as one of the most respected fire, rescue, and safety distributors on the East Coast. Maryland Fire Equipment values their longstanding relationships with the leaders of fire equipment manufacturing: Globe Turnout Gear, MSA Cairns Helmets, Elkhart Brass, Stanfield Lifeliners, and many others.

Maryland Fire Equipment's mission has always been to provide their customers with a wide variety of top quality products, and excellent service. "Our customer base is the most loyal and engaged," says John Raley, Fire Equipment Sales Manager. "Customers repeatedly say that we provide top notch customer service."



Maryland Fire Equipment Corporation's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Center has been in operation for over 35 years and offers complete sale, inspection, cleaning, repair, alterations, and customization solutions for all of your PPE cleaning & repair needs. "As a 3rd Party Verified ISP, our staff takes great pride in playing a vital role in our firefighters heroic efforts to save life and property," states Don Peete, PPE Center Manager. "We strive to ensure that the PPE they wear on a daily basis has been cleaned, inspected, repaired and ready for the next call."

The true secret to Maryland Fire Equipment's success is their employees. Their employees take pride in their work and most have firefighting experience. "As a retired Deputy Chief, who else better to ask about buying and repairing fire equipment than someone who has used the very equipment for 40 years on a regular basis," said Roger Lightner, Virginia Sales Representative. "I take pride in what I do as a sale rep, but I also look at it from a customer's perspective making sure they are happy."

In Maryland Fire Equipment's ongoing dedication to provide their customers with the equipment and services needed for maximum performance, they offer hose coupling and repair services. Along with hose, Maryland Fire Equipment repairs helmets, flashlights, nozzles and other firefighting appliances.

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Maryland Fire Equipment's sales staff at various tradeshows and in their Rockville, MD showroom. They service Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.





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# MYTHS AND TRUTHS ABOUT THE COVID VACCINES

Lisa Kaplowitz, M.D. and Danny Avula, M.D.

On a daily basis firefighters face countless threats and occupational hazards. Thankfully there are a number of tools and resources to mitigate or lessen the risk of serious injury or illness to most, if not all of these treats, to include COVID-19. Firefighters are at significant risk of contracting the SARS-CoV-2 infection (COVID) through exposure to people ill with COVID-19. In addition, occupational factors that increase stress on the body such as arduous work, long work shifts, and environmental exposures (including wildfire smoke) can contribute to increased susceptibility and potentially more severe illness for COVID-19. USFA reported over 150 firefighter deaths due to COVID 19 as of mid-May, 2021, with many deaths not reported. In addition, the long-term risks of COVID-19 are just beginning to emerge, and there is already convincing evidence that a large number of individuals have persistent symptoms (Long Haul COVID).

Fortunately we now have three safe and highly effective COVID-19 vaccines.

- All three COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of getting COVID-19 and, most importantly, are highly effective at keeping vaccinated people from being hospitalized and dying, even with the more transmissible Delta variant. No vaccine works 100% of the time
  - A small percentage of people who are fully vaccinated will still get COVID-19 if they are exposed to the virus that causes it.
  - The vast majority of hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 are occurring in unvaccinated individuals
- Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines, and these vaccines have received and continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history.
- If you've previously had COVID-19, you still need the vaccine. The protection you get from the vaccine can be stronger than the protection you get if you were infected.

There are multiple reasons to be vaccinated, including:

- You will be protecting yourself, and helping prevent the spread of the virus to your colleagues, friends, and family.
- After you are fully vaccinated, you can resume many activities that you did before the pandemic.
- As more people get vaccinated, you can slowly return to doing the things you enjoy.
- The highest spread of cases and severe outcomes such as hospitalization and death is happening in places with low vaccination rates
- You will not need to quarantine and take time off work if you are exposed, as long as you do not have symptoms.

There are many myths about the COVID vaccines that we need to dispel.

<b>✘ MYTH</b>	<b>✔ TRUTH</b>
The vaccine was developed too quickly to completely study its risks.	Now, nearly 15 months and 360 million U.S. doses later, COVID-19 vaccination is the most heavily studied vaccine program in U.S. history.
The messenger RNA (mRNA) technology used to make the COVID-19 vaccines is brand new.	Researchers have been studying and working with mRNA vaccines for decades, e.g., for flu, Zika, and rabies. Because these vaccines can be developed in a laboratory using readily available materials, vaccine development can proceed faster than traditional methods of making vaccines.
If you get vaccinated, you have a high risk of dying.	Deaths have only extremely rarely been linked to vaccine. Meanwhile, over 610,000 Americans have died from COVID-19 disease. Nearly all of them were unvaccinated.
Getting COVID-19 disease is less risky than getting COVID-19 vaccine.	More Americans have died from COVID-19 disease than died in all U.S. wars in the last 125 years put together: (Spanish-American War, WW I, WW II, Korean War, Vietnam War, 1991 Gulf War, Desert Storm (2003), and in all U.S. military activities in Iraq and Afghanistan. )
Children don't need COVID-19 vaccine	Probably because of the Delta variant, CDC reported recently that COVID hospitalizations of children under 18 are now at the highest level ever recorded.
If children get vaccinated, their growth and development will be affected.	There are no data to suggest this kind of risk and no reason to suspect this problem as a side effect of COVID-19 vaccine.
If you get COVID-19 vaccine, the DNA that makes up your genes could be changed	The vaccine does not contain any DNA and there is no risk of DNA or other genetic change.

If you get COVID-19 vaccine, you could become infertile.	No risk of infertility has been identified in any studies of COVID-19 vaccine or any other vaccine now used in the United States...and there is no biologic reason to think that infertility is a risk.
If you get vaccinated, it could become a risk to your pregnancy.	Although COVID-19 disease itself has clearly been shown to be a risk both to a pregnant woman and to her fetus, no risk has been found in studies of pregnancies of vaccinated women or to their children.
If you get vaccinated, you can't breastfeed.	No risk of breastfeeding has been identified in several studies. In fact, the infant gets antibodies against COVID-19 from the breastmilk of vaccinated women.
The vaccine contains fetal tissue.	The vaccine does NOT contain fetal tissue. The Vatican has issued a specific statement supporting COVID-19 vaccination.
The vaccine contains animal products or animal tissue.	The vaccine was not produced in animals and does NOT contain any animal tissue.
If you get vaccinated, you could become magnetic.	COVID-19 vaccines do not contain ingredients that can produce a magnetic field at the site of your injection. All COVID-19 vaccines are free from metals.
The vaccine contains a micro-chip.	There is no vaccine microchip, and the vaccine will not track people or share personal information or gather it into a database.
After you are vaccinated, you will test positive on a COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) viral test.	This is not true. The vaccine does not contain any SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

For more information about COVID, COVID in Virginia and COVID vaccines: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>

# 50 YEARS



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# THE FUTURE IS HERE

## NREMT TO SUNSET ALS PSYCHOMOTOR EXAMS BY 2023

Debbie Akers, Director of the Division of Accreditation, Certification & Education

In early August, the National Registry announced their intent to sunset the Advanced Life Support (ALS) Psychomotor Exam for both the Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Paramedic certification levels. This change will bring Emergency Medical Services (EMS) education and certification practices more closely in alignment with those of other medical and allied health professions.

The ALS exam redesign is being conducted with an Expert Panel of 20+ people from the EMS industry. This panel is working with the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) staff and the Board of Directors to ensure that the needs of the EMS community are being met.

As the process continues to move forward, NREMT will continue working with the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (CoAEMSP), the National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO) and EMS educators across the country.

### Paramedic Certification

Currently, candidates for certification as a Paramedic are required to complete a portfolio in their educational program and then complete the certification process by taking and passing a Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) focusing on the cognitive domain and a hands-on Psychomotor Exam.

The portfolio ensures the student is competent in their physical skills and clinical processes while the CAT analyzes their cognitive knowledge (terminology and factual information) with the psychomotor exam assessing their abilities to include clinical judgement, leadership and communication.

The current paramedic cognitive exam must be completed in 2:30 minutes and features between 80 and 150 items.

Beginning in mid-2023, candidates for certification as a Paramedic will be required to complete Student Minimum Competencies in their education program and they will then sit for a CAT with an integrated Performance Exam—more on the Performance Exam later in the article.

Under the new model, the student minimum competencies will ensure the student is competent in their physical skills and clinical processes while the CAT analyzes their cognitive knowledge, mental processes and clinical judgment with the Performance Exam assessing their abilities to include mental processes, clinical judgement, leadership and communication.

The new paramedic certification exam is expected to be between 3:30 minutes or more featuring between 130-190 items. Due to the length of the exam, there will be automatic breaks built into the process.

### Advanced EMT Certification

Currently, candidates for certification as an Advanced EMT are required to complete their educational program and then complete the certification process by taking and passing a Computer-Based Test (CBT) focusing on the cognitive domain and a hands-on Psychomotor Exam.

The CBT analyzes the student's cognitive knowledge (terminology and factual information) with the psychomotor exam assessing their abilities to include mental processes, clinical judgement, leadership and communication.

The current Advanced EMT cognitive exam is a linear 135 items and must be completed in 2:15 minutes.

Beginning in mid-2023, candidates for certification and Advanced EMT will be required to complete Student Minimum Competencies in their education program and they will then sit for a CBT with an integrated Performance Exam.

Under the new model, the student minimum competencies will ensure the student is competent in their physical skills and clinical processes while the CBT analyzes their cognitive knowledge, mental processes and clinical judgment with the Performance Exam assessing their abilities to include mental processes, clinical judgement, leadership and communication.

The new Advanced EMT certification exam is proposed to be a linear 170 items taking 3:00 hours. Due to the length of the exam, breaks are anticipated.

### Performance Exam

The new Performance Exam will be scenario-based with a series of questions pertaining to the scenario. These questions will help assess the student's clinical judgement, communications and leadership abilities. Questions in the new Performance Exam will involve students interacting with the question in such a way that their actions and choices dictate the direction of question. This could include interactive videos or immersive virtual reality items that include patient scenarios requiring input to guide the scenario.

Performance Examination test items will begin to appear in the NREMT Cognitive Exam between April and June 2022.

### Implementation Timeline

The ALS Psychomotor Exam will be retired by mid-2023 at which time it will be replaced with the Computer-based Performance Exam. The implementation of these changes will take place in a phased approach beginning in 2022 and wrapping up in mid-2023.

Candidates (students) starting a testing process—be it the old process or the new one—will be required to complete certification under the process they started. Candidates will not be permitted to switch processes mid-stream.

As the National Registry releases more information, the Office of EMS will continue to update Virginia agencies, educators and the Virginia EMS Advisory Board.





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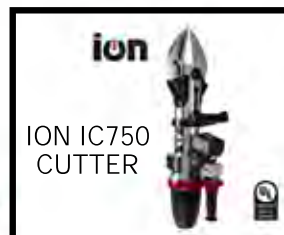


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# VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS FOUNDATION SPOTSYLVANIA GOLF TOURNAMENT

R. Christian Eudailey



The 11th Annual VFCF/Spotsylvania Golf Tournament was held on June 18, 2021 at Lees Hill Golf Club in Spotsylvania. Planning for this event started in January 2021 with key committee members that included Dick Singer, Charles Sterne, Deuce Jewell and myself. The committee had set as a goal to have 144 golfers on the course and to raise \$30,000 from the event this year.

Registration began at 1100 hours and golfers were treated to a Chick-fil-a Chicken Sandwich before the start of the event. The VFCF Board would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the local Chick-fil-a Franchise located at Southpoint for its generous donation of sandwiches for the golfers and volunteers. The Putting Contest was held at noon and there were 55 golfers that participated. Doug Walczak, who was a member of the IAFC Golf Team, won the contest and graciously donated the \$500 cash award back to the Foundation!

The shotgun start of the event was delayed briefly due to waiting on some of the golfers to arrive. If you have spent any time in this area of the state or further north you understand the impact traffic has on the daily lives of the residents and visitors. We still had golfers arriving at 1230. They were taken out on the course to join up with their teams. The round of golf went well and teams started arriving back at the clubhouse around 1700 hours. As the majority of the teams arrived, dinner service which was provided by Mission BBQ and co-sponsored by Honeywell Morning Pride and StedAIR was served.

The event this year was the absolute best held to date! It attracted 131 golfers and generated 59 sponsors and related donations. We had some great sponsors again this year that contributed to the overall success of this event. Some of the top sponsors included Atlantic Emergency Solutions, Maruca Design and Build, Dick Singer, Light Leadership Group, LLC, Breg Environmental, Local 995 Richmond, SAFE Properties, DuPont, AT&T, Loudoun Career Firefighters Association and Fairfax County Professional Fire Fighters and Paramedics. In order to appropriately acknowledge all the sponsors, we have included a list on a separate page in this edition that includes the complete list of the sponsors and related donations.

As a result of the combined efforts of the committee the event this year raised just over \$28K that will help support the Robert E. White Scholarship Fund as well as the Virginia Fire Officer Academy and the Virginia Chief Officer Academy. As I was writing this article, I received a call from the Fredericksburg Eagles and was advised they were sending a check for \$1800 that will allow the VFCF to meet its goal this year of \$30K!!! On behalf of the VFCF Board of Trustees and the Spotsylvania Planning Team, we want to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all the sponsors and the 131 golfers that attended the tournament to make it a HUGE success!!! And a special THANK YOU to the Fredericksburg Eagles for the above and beyond donation of \$1800 that allowed us to reach our fundraising goal!!! The 12th Annual Tournament will be held on June 17, 2022 – please pencil in the date and we hope to see you there!

# MENTORING OUR INTERNAL SUCCESSORS

Alex Oughton

“Blessed is he who plants trees under whose shade he will never sit.” – Author unknown

The job of every fire chief (whether you want to admit it or not) is to prepare your organization for your inevitable departure. Intentional succession planning is an essential part of caring for an agency and the community you protect and helps develop interest and competencies in the organization’s next generation of leaders. Moreover, developing internal candidates who are both willing and able to fill the next available leadership spot helps stabilize the direction of the agency, as these candidates come with an inherent understanding of the department’s mission, vision, values, culture, challenges, and opportunities. Organizational stability fixes a proverbial compass point that is known and understood by all members of the organization, allowing department staff to concentrate on adjusting the sails to get the most out of the wind instead of trying to understand where the heck they are headed. Predictability and stability reduce distractions and stress, and they may help lead to improved morale.

The unfortunate reality in fire service leadership development is that very little one does in field operations (emergency response) completely prepares future leaders for administrative or executive leadership positions. The knowledge and skills that make an officer successful in managing fires, critical medical calls, multiple-casualty incidents, hazardous materials events, or any other dynamic incident with life-or-death implications are powerful and useful but do not translate directly to roles in administration or executive leadership. Employing unmodified or unrefined emergency response approaches in an administrative setting can set a new executive up for failure, particularly if employed when making programmatic or human resource decisions. This application may result in poorly defined problems, inadequately vetted solutions, unanticipated consequences, ineffective stakeholder communication, regulatory and compliance issues – and the list goes on. Emergency operators are trained to react quickly, get to the incident rapidly, process limited information (sometimes from unreliable sources), develop the best plan of action (somewhat independently) in a compressed time frame, execute the plan, and adjust on the fly as the incident evolves. For the most part, this system is applied to one incident or emergency at a time, and they routinely knock this stuff out of the park when faced with it.

Please don’t misinterpret any part of the preceding paragraph to mean that excellent emergency operators can’t be good administrators or fire service executives. They absolutely can and do every day. In fact, solid field leaders can be quickly molded into outstanding administrators. They must, however, demonstrate intellectual humility, recognize that they are operating in a different environment, and be willing to adapt their approach accordingly. As experienced administrators and executive leaders (hopefully with substantial operational time as well), we can help emerging leaders by explaining the challenges associated with the administrative environment and reframing techniques used in their previous operational experiences. In addition, we can coach our successors on how to apply those refined techniques to the “calls” they must respond to as administrators or executive leaders (program management, policy development, organizational changes, budget problems, human resource challenges, etc.). Sounds like a bunch of mumbo-jumbo, right? Bear with me and I’ll lay out an example.

## Administrative Size-up for the New Executive Officer

Any fire officer worth their weight in dimensional lumber (timely, right?) rarely makes operational decisions without first sizing up the situation. Using a residential fire as an example, an officer will typically make a quick lap to ensure they have as good of an

understanding of the incident as possible (problem definition) before determining their mode of operation (solution). They take a quick look at sides A, B, C, and D to determine, among other things, if there are observable victims in immediate need of rescue; the best estimate of the location and scope of the fire; building characteristics and structural integrity; access and egress points; and other risks for BSTMH (bad stuff that might happen) like exposed fuel tanks, power lines, fire above or below your entry point, etc. Once this is complete, the officer in charge can make a more informed decision about how to approach the fire.

The concept of size-up is fundamentally solid and can be adapted to the administrative or executive leadership setting with some minor adjustments. Specifically, when sizing up non-operational organizational issues, one would be wise to slow down, evaluate the problem in much greater detail, engage stakeholders, consult subject matter experts, anticipate potential pitfalls, develop a plan, model/test the plan, and refine it as needed prior to implementation. This is not an exhaustive list, but it gives the reader an idea of the path.

When modeling this slow, intentional, administrative approach with the same hypothetical example of a house fire, I’ll offer how it might play out. First, when the alarm sounds, and administrator might consider whether or not staff will even respond to the call. Does the organization have the capacity? Are all needed resources available at the outset? Does this distract the organization from other emergencies? Is our staff too busy to handle this fire? If the decision is made to respond, the executive should do so slowly and intentionally considering details, documents, politics, or overarching philosophy around community factors, topography, weather, financial environment, time of day, time of year, etc. Upon arrival, a painstaking size up should be conducted considering construction type, year the property was built, building codes that existed at the time of construction, chemical or physical characteristics of the materials used for construction, and occupant details such as language barriers, disabilities, existing relationships, socio-economic hurdles, insurance status...you get the point. Things that one might see and discard as background static on the emergency scene - not because they are not germane to our strategic incident priorities, but because the officer in charge doesn’t have the time or bandwidth to process non-essential information - can and must be considered in administrative decisions as an executive. This evaluation should be done slowly and methodically to ensure that the plan of attack - the solution and its requisite financial allocation - has the highest likelihood of being the right solution for the stakeholders concerned, communicated appropriately, and executed effectively and efficiently the first time. Executives that repeatedly back the line out, reposition, and redeploy should not expect to be executives for long.

Applying a comprehensive size-up to an administrative problem may look something like this:

**Side A – Operational Assessment** – The impact on operations tends to be the most visible to communities and workforce. An operational impact assessment should be conducted for all initiatives. Administrators exist to make sure the “tip of the spear” has the tools and training required to serve the community. Changes that are unlikely to impact service delivery should be given a lower priority and those that will stand in the way of effective operations should be discarded. Some

people in operations may not be able to connect the dots between an initiative and how it impacts service delivery. It is our job and the future leader's job to help our members connect them.

**Side B – Political Assessment** – Fire departments are community-driven entities, funded by public dollars and influenced by community members' service expectations. As such, assessments must consider how an initiative aligns with community expectations, government philosophy, and partner agency efforts. Initiatives in conflict with a community vision are not likely to be successful. Side B acknowledges that the fire/EMS department is but one component of a broader government operation. In other words, we are not the only game in town.

**Side C – Legal Assessment** – Fire departments are workplaces and service-providers regulated by employment laws, procurement laws, occupational safety and health laws...and the list goes on. Initiatives should be evaluated in partnership/consultation with your legal team or the municipality's attorney. The administrator, executive, or fire chief is not the subject matter expert, despite the occasional lack of intellectual humility that may lead one to believe that they are.

**Side D – Fiscal Assessment** – Public funds are not limitless, and localities (thankfully) cannot run up debt. They are required to balance their budgets. Executives and administrators must understand the overall fiscal picture – the health of the local economy and broader pressing issues that their boss and elected body are trying to address. As stated when we looked at Side B, we are not the only game in town. Infrastructure funding (water, sewers, and roads), school funding, recreation expenditures, payroll improvements, or any number of other broader initiatives may all compete for limited funding, and a solid assessment of the support behind competing projects will help the executive understand the potential for their own initiative to receive the required funding for implementation now or in the future.

**Exposure Identification - Evaluate the BSTMH (bad stuff that might happen)** – Every decision you make will have some challenges to overcome. When you tip one domino, there are always others that fall. It is always better to understand the BSTMH and prepare for it while refining the solution. You'll probably never identify all exposures and predict all the BSTMH, but the exercise will help an administrator or executive refine an approach or develop contingency plans. Ben Franklin is credited with saying "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." Who knows if he actually said that, but it is good advice...particularly when considering BSTMH.

**Reading the Smoke – Assess the Agency** – Change is hard. Organizational change is even harder. Each of our agencies has been through significant change over the past two years, and the need to adapt to our environment is not likely to ease. That said, too much change in a compressed time frame can raise the temperature in an organization to untenable and unsustainable levels. In their book *Leadership in the Line* (2002), Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky discuss the need to "control the temperature" that comes with "changing the status quo...surfacing hidden conflicts and challenging organizational culture" (p. 107). Executives must evaluate the volume, velocity, density, and color of the smoke showing in their agency to determine if the temperature is too high to move forward with their initiative. It is not an exact science, and we get it wrong. So will your successors. They do, however, need to consider it.

To wrap up, we have the responsibility to set our organizations up for long-term success. Finding, educating, developing, coaching, and mentoring our successors is work that we owe our community, our bosses, and our members. Helping emerging leaders adapt the current set of tools that they have so effectively employed as emergency responders into a set of tools that they can use to be equally effective administrators or executives is one way to help prepare your agency. We can do this by being authentic about adaptive challenges we faced when transitioning from our operational roles to administrative roles. We can share what we learned and give our successors a jump-start by adapting common language that we all love, giving it new meaning that will help our members be successful in administrative and executive leadership roles. We want and need them to be much better than us. Fire chiefs who find and develop potential successors in advance of their departure are planting and nurturing the trees whose shade the community and remaining workforce can enjoy for years to come.



Fire Chief Alex Oughton joined the Henrico County Division of Fire in 1999 and served most recently as its Deputy Fire Chief for Operations. Chief Oughton oversees an agency responsible for fire prevention and suppression, emergency medical services (EMS), technical rescue,

hazardous materials mitigation and disaster preparedness in Henrico.

Division of Fire has an approved budget of \$64.8 million and 601 employees in fiscal year 2019-20. The division responds to approximately 50,000 calls for service each year and operates 21 firehouses, with two additional stations planned, along Staples Mill and East Nine Mile roads.

Henrico holds a Class 1 rating from the Insurance Services Office, which is based on a comprehensive review of the county's fire response, including its water distribution infrastructure, fire department capabilities, and training.

Chief Oughton began his fire service as a volunteer with the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad and the Manassas Park Volunteer Fire Department before taking a staff position with Spotsylvania County Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management in 1996. He joined Henrico Fire in 1999 as firefighter/paramedic and held station operations leadership positions before transitioning into administration in 2014.

Chief Oughton has served as the chairman of the Central Virginia Fire Chiefs Association. He holds associate degrees in fire science and emergency medical services from J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College. Chief Oughton also has a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies and a graduate certificate in public administration from Liberty University. He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program.





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# HOW TO BECOME AN ADJUNCT INSTRUCTOR

Emma Giambalvo, Marketing and Communications Intern

Across the entirety of the Commonwealth, there are more than 40,000 trained Firefighters. They range from being in large departments, with their own vigorous internal training, to small departments who rely on VDFP for almost all of their training. The coordination of said training involves many moving parts which make up the agency's division offices and fire marshal academy, along with the teachings of over 350 Adjunct Instructors.

With the amount of training offered, there is often a need for subject matter experts, or SME's. SME's are crucial to ensuring the integrity of the programs, such as making sure our course offerings meet NFPA standards, have current relevancy to Virginia's fire service, and meet the needs of our diverse stakeholder community.

VDFP strives for the adjunct workforce to be reflective of Virginia's firefighters. We are looking for adjunct instructors that are skilled in conveying topical information to adult learners and carry a passion for teaching.

Instructors alike will prove the importance of skillful instruction, for Bill MacKay, Chief of Training and Operations at VDFP, training new firefighters is an exciting experience,

"I can attest to the rewarding feeling that one gets when that recruit who entered the fire service 'completely green', completes their initial training and is prepared to be a contributing and competent member of the firefighting team."

The Virginia Fire Marshal's Academy, along with VDFP Training and Operations, also relies on proper instruction. Recognizing the significance of their courses to localities, Jared Goff, Chief of the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy at VDFP, says the academy is constantly evaluating the efficacy of each delivery,

"We are taking a modern approach to adult learning and delivery. As we evaluate the how and why of instruction and course content, we are proud to be working alongside our federal, state, and local agencies to enhance our programs."

The process of recruiting SME's and adjunct instructors has traditionally gone in many directions. As an agency, VDFP has the goal of streamlining this process:

- Division chiefs will contact VDFP with adjunct instructor opportunities.
- VDFP will announce new instructor opportunities on our website (vafire.com).
- Candidates can contact the appropriate division chief to apply.

When the agency is developing new course offerings or updating

existing courses, members of Virginia's fire service are contacted to serve as SME's to assist in the improvement of curriculum. An announcement on the VDFP website is published, and becomes the primary source of requesting,

"Effective training is the core of a successful emergency response," MacKay added, "Being proficient in the essential skills that are required on the emergency scene makes for a more efficient and safer response."

Several of the trainings that are offered need highly skilled instructors, and some require expertise in risk reduction efforts. There are courses offered that are considered and titled a 'high risk program.' These are: Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF), Heavy Technical Rescue Program (HTR), NFPA 1033 Fire Investigator, and the Basic Law Enforcement School for Fire Marshals. Due to these courses inherent higher degree of risk and their highly specialized nature of curriculum, there is an evaluation process required for selecting potential candidates.

Program managers, otherwise known as Division Chiefs, are responsible for the overall management of the courses that fall under their responsibility. When the programs need adjunct instructors, a notice for candidates will be coordinated inside the agency. The recruitment is then targeted within the certain division the courses are being held in.

Bringing in the most qualified candidates is essential to all areas of instruction, MacKay said "there is nothing more valuable than perfected training; VDFP Instructors have opportunities to shape the future of current and future emergency responders. More important is the fact that the information that you share with your students may give them the skills to save their life or that of a fellow responder."

The agency has begun the process of revamping recruitment for all part-time positions. Like many of your departments, we too have a workforce that is shifting, and we anticipate many more opportunities over the coming years. Going forward, VDFP will continue to strive to provide the firefighters of Virginia with instructors that are relevant to the field, committed to the success of the students, and are ready for the developing future.

For more information, visit [vafire.com](http://vafire.com) or contact your appropriate division chief.

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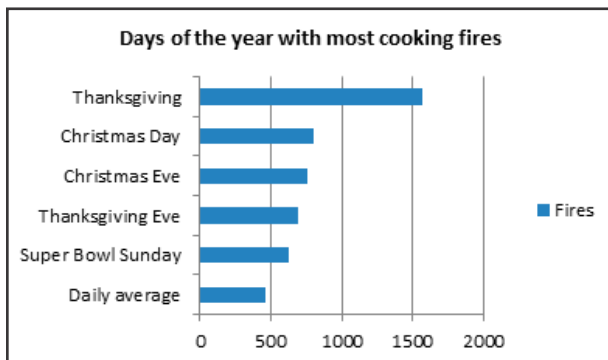
# THANKSGIVING DAY PRESENTS HIDDEN HAZARDS

## THREE TIMES AS MANY COOKING FIRES OCCUR ON THANKSGIVING AS ON A TYPICAL DAY

Thanksgiving may be our second favorite holiday of the year, but is it also the most risky?

As you might have heard, the fourth Thursday in November is the biggest day of the year for home kitchen fires – and by quite some margin.

When most of us think about Thanksgiving, images of turkey, stuffing and time spent with loved ones typically come to mind, not fire hazards. However, an increased risk of fire is, in fact, a reality of Thanksgiving. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), three times as many home cooking fires occur on Thanksgiving as on a typical day.



NFPA's latest cooking estimates shows that there were 1,570 cooking fires on Thanksgiving in 2018, reflecting a 241 percent increase over the daily average. Home cooking fires also spike on other major U.S. holidays, including Christmas Day, Christmas Eve and Super Bowl Sunday. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires.

A combination of factors collectively increase the risk of home cooking fires on Thanksgiving. People are often preparing multiple dishes with lots of guests and other distractions, which can make it all too easy to forget what's on the stove. That's when cooking mishaps are most likely to occur.

While the number of cooking fires spikes on holidays, it's also one of the leading causes of home fires year-round. Between 2012 and 2016, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 172,100 home cooking fires per year. These fires resulted in an annual average of 530 civilian fire deaths, 5,270 reported injuries and \$1.1 billion in direct property damage.

Ranges or cooktops were involved in the 63% of reported home cooking fires, 86% of cooking fire deaths and 79% of cooking fire injuries. Households that use electric ranges have a higher risk of cooking fires and associated losses than those using gas ranges.

### Avoiding a fire on Thanksgiving

Fortunately, there are many simple steps people can take to ensure safe cooking on Thanksgiving. A little added awareness about potential fire hazards and taking a few basic precautions in the kitchen can go a long way toward keeping your Thanksgiving fire-free.

Here are NFPA's top five tips for cooking with fire safety in mind on Thanksgiving and beyond:

- Remain in the kitchen while you're cooking, and keep a close eye on what you fry! Always stay in the kitchen while frying, grilling or broiling food. If you have to leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove. Regularly check on food that's simmering, baking or roasting, and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.
- Keep things that can catch fire such as oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels and curtains away from the cooking area.
- Be alert when cooking. If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the stove or stovetop.
- If you have a small (grease) cooking fire on the stovetop and decide to fight the fire: Smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning off the burner. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled. For an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.
- If you're cooking a turkey using a disposable aluminum pan, consider doubling up and using two pans to avoid a puncture, as dripping turkey juices can cause an oven fire.

NFPA discourages the use of turkey fryers, a popular cooking method on Thanksgiving. The use of turkey fryers can lead to devastating burns and other injuries, and the destruction of property due to the large amount and high temperature of oil used. NFPA urges those who prefer fried turkey to look for grocery stores, specialty food retailers and restaurants that sell deep fried turkeys.



Unless otherwise specified, the statistics presented here are estimates derived from the United States Fire Administration's National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and NFPA's annual Fire Experience Survey (FES).

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# VIRGINIA FIRE OFFICER ACADEMY INCIDENT COMMANDER, MICHAEL HIRSH. MICHAEL IS A LIEUTENANT IN THE KING GEORGE FIRE, RESCUE & EMERGENCY SERVICES AND IS A PART OF THE VFCA COMPANY OFFICER SECTION.

## Background:

I joined the New Market Volunteer Fire Company in 1986 as a junior member and volunteered there for many years. After becoming an EMT-B and Shock Trauma Technician, I joined the Broadway Emergency Squad in addition to the New Market Rescue Squad. About three years after becoming a Trauma Technician I became a Cardiac Technician, since then that certification has become what we know now as an EMT-Intermediate.

## Career:

In August 2005, I joined the ranks at King George County Department of Emergency Services. Back then there were only four of us on shift at a time. Over the past sixteen years we've changed names, uniforms, staffing and added to our mission. We are now King George Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services and have grown tremendously since I was hired in 2005. In 2016, I promoted to Operations Lieutenant and was assigned to Company 2 on C shift where I have been a supervisor to a total of four employees on any given shift. Throughout the years, Chief David Moody has supported my ambitions and helped me achieve my goals. I've had many positions within my Department such as fleet manager and Master Technician before I promoted. For many years I've been involved with the apparatus committee for both EMS and fire suppression vehicles as well as the building committee and volunteer membership committee. I am a 2013 graduate of the Virginia Fire Officer Academy and currently serve as Incident Commander for the program after many years on staff serving as the logistics and operations sections.

## Some of my favorite books are:

Never Split the Difference by Chris Voss. He is a retired hostage negotiator from the FBI and now has a company that teaches negotiation techniques. Each day as a company officer, I find myself negotiating. Sometimes it's over supper plans and other times it is about leave requests.

"Extreme Ownership" by Jocko Willink and Leif Babbitt. If you don't know Jocko, check him out.

"Turn the Ship Around! A True Story of Turning Followers" by L. David Marquet. Truly a leadership success.

When asked about leadership quotes, one of my favorites is "Tell it like it is," courtesy of my late grandfather. He was a straight shooter and imparted that trait upon me as I grew up. If you want a quote from me, "some days I'm your friend, some days I'm your dad, and other days I'm your boss."

## Leadership Style:

My leadership style changes by the person and sometimes by the day. A fluid style is what I'd call it, as different people will respond to different types. I often get it wrong and choose the style that works best for the other guy. Listening is one of the best practices I've learned, and I strive to improve at it daily. I try to be the leader that I want to have. I've learned from leaders in my past, some good lessons of who I strive to be and others that I never want to be. I do admit I'm not good at sugar coating what I have to say. I also believe that just because you can manage it, doesn't mean you have to.

Successful leadership moments happen. I like to think they happen on purpose more than by accident. Honesty and integrity are some of the values that make them happen.

Mistakes and wrong decisions happen, own them and learn from them. I like to reach out to those around me for feedback. I don't see things from your perspective, so I'll gladly listen to your point of view.

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# MEET THE CHIEF



## Getting to know James Bonzano.

*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 James G. Bonzano, Chief of Warren County Fire and Rescue Services.*

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

**JB:** 1984 to present, 37 plus years

### **CC: Please describe your career journey...**

**JB:** I was hired in 1984 with the Arlington County Fire Department. I have an Associate of Applied Science degree from Northern Virginia Community College in Emergency Medical Service Management. I later graduated from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, with a Bachelor of Science in Health Science with a minor in Management, and later received my Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership and Innovation from Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia. I am also a graduate of the George Washington University and as such, am a Certified Public Manager. Previously, I served with the Arlington County Fire Department for 34 years in progressively responsible leadership roles, including acting assistant chief, south deputy chief, personnel services section chief, and emergency medical services battalion chief. Following the terrorist attack on the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, I served as the EMS branch director for the emergency response. Most recently, I served as Arlington County's Fire Chief from 2016 until my retirement in 2018. Since 2018, I served as a public safety consultant for Interagency Readiness Solutions. On January 1, 2021, I was hired as the Warren County Fire & Rescue Chief. Chief Bonzano went on to say, "I am honored and humbled to join the Warren County Department of Fire and Rescue Services leadership team. It is a privilege to be entrusted with the care of the community and all who comprise the Department of Fire and Rescue Services."

### **CC: Please describe your Form of Government...**

**JB:** The current County government consists of a five-member Board of Supervisors, representing the five Magisterial Districts of Warren County. A County Administrator serves as the executive officer of the county. The Fire Chief reports directly to the County Administrator.

### **CC: Describe the sources of Funding for Your Organization...**

**JB:** Our \$6.2 million departmental budget is primarily funded by tax-based revenue and our EMS Cost-Recovery Program. These two funding sources are augmented by local, state, and federal grant opportunities.

### **CC: What population does your department serve...**

**JB:** Our estimated 2021 population is 40,480 with an estimated 0.39% growth rate.

### **CC: How many square miles do you cover...**

**JB:** Warren County has a total land area of 217.86 square miles. The rural part of the County contains 207.36 square miles, and the Town of Front Royal covers 10.5 square miles.

### **CC: Describe the department composition...**

**JB:** The Warren County Department of Fire and Rescue Services is comprised of a combination career/volunteer fire and EMS response system. We staff 6 or 8 volunteer stations with 24/7 career coverage providing fire, EMS and ALS response coverage. Two stations remain volunteer dependent. Our Emergency Response program is supported by our Fire Administration which is comprised of the Office of the Fire Chief, Fire Marshal/Community Risk Reduction, Training Division, Recruitment and Retention, and Office of Emergency Management. In all, the Department has 40 uniformed full-time employees, 12 uniformed part-time employees, 3 civilian employees and 110 emergency response and support volunteer members.

### **CC: Tell us about your equipment...**

**JB:** The departments inventory consists of - Fire Engines: 3, Rescue/Fire Engines: 5, Tankers/Water Tenders: 5, Aerial Ladder Trucks: 2, Wildland Response Vehicles: 8, ALS Medic Transport Units: 10, ALS Response SUV's: 1, Heavy Duty Rescue Squad: 1, Water Response Boats: 3, Water Response Support: 1, Haz-Mat Support Trailer: 1, Air Support Trailer: 1, All-Terrain Vehicle: 1, SUV: 4, Reserve Fleet: 3

### **CC: Describe your call summary...**

**JB:** In CY-2020, WCFR responded to 5,239 EMS based incidents and 768 fire based incidents for a total of 6,007 incident responses.

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

**JB:** Our community is primarily a bedroom community with many of our residents working in the NOVA/Washington Capital Region. This poses a significant challenge in recruiting and retaining volunteer response personnel.

### **CC: How would you describe your management style?**

**JB:** I do not consider myself having a "management" style, but rather I strive to serve in a servant leadership capacity. Being the Fire Chief of a combination career and volunteer Fire and EMS department, one must lead versus manage. To bring eight individual volunteer stations, two automatic aid stations and a career response system together to support our Departmental Slogan of "One Department – One Mission" is challenging, but rewarding all the while. If we simply work our problems from our customer, back and put the need of the collective response system before our own; we can only succeed and meet the needs of our community.



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

**JB:** While WCFR does not have a long-range strategic plan, it remains a top priority and is currently in development.

**CC: How have current economic times impacted your department?**

**JB:** In early 2019, our community was shaken when news broke that the Executive Director of the Front Royal-Warren County Economic Development Authority (EDA) allegedly misappropriated \$21 million (currently being handled in the court system). While the EDA is a separate legal entity from Warren County and the employee not one of our own, the allegations have created great turmoil throughout the Front Royal-Warren County community with regards to the financial status of the County and its tax rates and revenue. As a result, the community which we serve has been extremely outspoken against any tax increase for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and our elected officials have chosen to not proceed with any capital improvement projects which could lead to a potential tax increase for citizens. Additionally, the COVID pandemic has adversely affected our volunteer fire stations ability to complete fund raising opportunities to generate funds and revenue for volunteer responder's safety needs and has placed each volunteer company in a situation of financial distress that is out of their control.

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

**JB:** As a result of the economy, the financial distress to our volunteer stations and the dependence on local tax-based revenue, the Department is preparing an aggressive public education campaign in an effort to rebuild the trust of the taxpayer, all the while demonstrating the importance and need of their support.

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

**JB:** I have seen many challenges over my 35 years in the service to include the effects of fire-based EMS, impacts of 9/11, cultural diversity, safety driven initiatives, and decrease in nationwide volunteerism. One thing remains clear, we must continually examine the challenges facing our profession today and we must never underestimate the challenges we will face in the future of our service.

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

**JB:** Currently, WCFR recruits must possess a minimum level of certifications to be eligible for employment. Recruits should be highly motivated and willing to put their skills to the test in our community.

**CC: How do you view training?**

**JB:** Both training and education are paramount in any Department. My goal is to ensure that our department is continually afforded the training and education opportunities for personal and professional growth and development.

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

**JB:** Many of our regional departments have seen leadership changes over the past several years. As the "new guy on the block" coming from the NOVA COG System, I know the values of collaborative partnerships, regional initiatives, and working together for the common goal of our communities. All of which I look forward in continuing to build upon current relationships, not only in our region, but across the Commonwealth.

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

**JB:** The future of the fire service is forever changing. While it is hard to anticipate what is in store, we must continually evaluate our organization, our people and the citizens we serve and be prepared to make appropriate adjustments to ensure the safe and reliable response services of our department.

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

**JB:** The VFCA has provided critical networking and training opportunities that have proved invaluable to the success of the Department and my career.

# THE 2022 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE IS COMING SOON... MAKE PLANS TO BE THERE!

Ian Bennett

The Professional Development Committee has been busy planning another outstanding educational platform for the 2022 conference. The dates for the 2022 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference are February 21-26, 2022. If you have not already registered, please do so TODAY, and bring a friend or co-worker!

Here are some highlights to look forward to for the 2022 Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference:

- The conference will start on Monday with several week-long Incident Management Team classes.
- The exhibit hall will include the ENTIRE convention center exhibit space and it is almost FULL of your favorite vendors and exhibitors.
- Several training programs will be geared toward training officers, company officers, chief officers, EMS, leadership, management, hands-on-training, fire inspector and investigator, firefighter safety and health, mental health, strategy and tactics, etc.
- As in the past several years, many of our offerings will count towards EMS, inspector and investigator continuing education credits.
- We will continue to host our hospitality night, networking reception and casino night to enhance your social networking opportunities.
- Several Hands-On-Training classes will be held at the Virginia Beach Training Center on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
- An EMS track is being offered with classes scheduled Tuesday through Friday.
- Hazardous Materials specific classes are being offered Tuesday through Friday.
- The Department of Defense agencies will have a dedicated training day on Wednesday.
- Women in the Fire Service will be debuting at this year's conference with an educational session and a roundtable discussion on Thursday.

- Saturday will feature a general session in the afternoon highlighting the deployment of the Virginia Task Force 2 Urban Search and Rescue Team to the Surfside, Florida building collapse.
- The VFCA will again be using our new conference application (APP)... There will still be a tri-fold pamphlet for the non-technological folks.
- We will continue a complimentary Friday and Saturday lunch as part of your conference registration.

The VFCA is listening to your feedback and has implemented several of your suggestions. Based on our past successes, we highly encourage you to take advantage of these affordable and outstanding training and networking opportunities. This is YOUR CONFERENCE and the VFCA needs your support. You will not be disappointed in the quality of training, exhibit hall space and networking opportunities available at the conference. The Virginia Fire Rescue Conference is a great "bang for your buck" and once again, we challenge you to bring a friend or co-worker.

In closing, the VFCA Conference Planning Committee and the Professional Development Committee would like to thank our partnering state agencies (VDFP, VDEM, VAOEMS, VDOF), DOD and VAGEMSA for their continued support— together we continue to deliver a quality conference to you!

Mark your calendars for February 21- 26, 2022. Please visit [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us) for more details. REGISTER NOW!!! See you at the Beach!

# ON THE MOVE & ODDS AND ENDS

## Beamon named Director of Prince George County Fire and EMS Department

Prince George County has named a new Director to lead the Fire and EMS Department - Paul Beamon. Chief Beamon comes to Virginia from Georgia where he spent a number of years working for hospitals, ambulance services and in the fire/EMS world.

Beamon holds a Master of Public Administration with a concentration in Healthcare Management from Purdue University, a Bachelor of Science, Business Administration with a concentration in Public Administration from Southern New Hampshire University, an Associate of Applied Science, Fire Science Technology from West Georgia Technical College and an Associate of Applied Science, Paramedicine from Dekalb Technical Institute.

Welcome to Virginia Chief!

## Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Department

Chief Travis Griffith announces the promotion of Battalion Chief Toby Martin to Deputy Chief of Operations. Toby started in Roanoke County as a volunteer in 1992 and as a career firefighter in 1999. He later became a Firefighter/Medic. In 2009, Toby was promoted to Lieutenant, in 2013 to Captain, and in 2018 to Battalion Chief. As a Battalion Chief in 2018, Toby had the pleasure of being able to offer firefighting jobs to his children Nicole and Teddy.

Toby grew up in the Stewartsville area where his father was Chief of the Stewartsville-Chamblissburg Volunteer Fire Department. Toby also served as a volunteer there from 1988-1992. Toby is passionate about Fire Service Honor Guards. He currently serves as an instructor for the National Honor Guard Academy. In 2017, Toby was the Branch Commander for Honor Guards at the National Fallen Firefighter Memorial. Toby has also been the Commander of Honor Guards for several years for the Virginia Fallen Firefighter and EMS Memorial Service held in Richmond.

## Obituary: Michael Painter - VBFD

Master Fire Fighter Michael B. Painter, age 60, of Virginia Beach, passed away suddenly on June 24th, 2021. Mike proudly served with the Virginia Beach Fire Department for 33 years with his last years as an Assistant Fire Marshall.

Mike has been assisting with the VFRC for some time in helping get the floor loaded and helping secure door prizes for the Casino Night.

Mike was larger than life, the ultimate practical joker with a magnetic personality you just wanted to be near. Mike had an extraordinary smile and infectious laugh, a true life of the party. He would lend a helping hand to anyone and was the kind of man that even if you just met him once it felt like you had known him forever. He loved his family, and he loved being a firefighter. Devoting his life in service to his community and his colleagues was something that brought him great joy. Mike was an exceptional man, a wonderful husband; father, brother, uncle, and friend who will forever be missed.

Mike is survived by his wife Sheryl, two sons and a daughter and other extended family.

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# REFLECTIONS OF HOW COMMUNICATIONS EVOLVED IN 2020

Jenny Bragiel, Communications Specialist  
Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System

I joined the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System April 2, 2020. This was the day that all stations closed to visitors and that the headquarters where I work closed. All non-essential people were teleworking. We did not know how long the pandemic would last; many were still hoping it would end by summer. Open houses, education and outreach efforts were all cancelled. The need to recruit and educate did not go away though. This was true for many fire departments across the United States and the world. My position as communications specialist was brand new for the department and a major task was to evolve our communication effort to the public and find new ways to overcome the challenges of 2020.

## Programs Become Virtual

One of my first tasks was to take a joint program with one of our local police departments and the library and make it virtual. The program is called Books and Badges. The pre-pandemic version was to have first responders read books to kids in one of the local libraries. The libraries were all closed due to the pandemic, but we wanted to keep the program going. We recorded our members reading the books and placed them on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. This turned out to be a very positive program that allowed us to continue to connect with the community, and inspired kids to read more.

Our next program was a summer camp that was co-hosted with the Sheriff's Department. Working on this joint effort required compromise and strong communication between the two organizations. Many concerns about what the kids would see and how controlled the environment would be to ensure digital safety for the camp were raised and explored. Originally, we planned to use a Google Drive to host the videos, but when we launched the camp we found out that Google limits the amounts of views and tries to force users to log into a Google account. This created many viewing problems. To fix this issue we moved the videos to YouTube and utilized a playlist that would automatically play the next video. According to feedback received. YouTube was a breath of fresh air for parents and made the camp easy and user friendly.

Beyond making sure the format is extremely easy and user friendly, we also learned about activities. We had provided multiple activities for every lesson that could be printed at home. We expected parents and kids to pick and choose from all the activities. The parents felt they needed all the activities to be printed and done. This feedback and understanding of the parent's, helped us understand the importance of limiting activities so as not to overwhelm both parent and child.

The last major virtual program for us was Fire Prevention Month. Typically, we hold open houses at all our stations, and we visit all first-grade classrooms in the county. Both of which were not possible. We made things work though. We learned from our summer camp and made our efforts more open, easier for users to access and navigate. We developed a fun comic-book style interactive game to teach kids about personal protective equipment, a fun interactive virtual magazine for kids, and a virtual first grade program with quizzes. We redesigned our kid's page to make it fun and engaging to kids. All except the virtual first grade program were open to everyone and were pushed out using Twitter, Facebook, Nextdoor and YouTube. For Facebook, we used the new series feature for videos, and saw great success with our Fire Prevention Month videos and interactives. We kept our interactives simple with audio for kids that cannot read. These meant kids could easily navigate them with limited supervision.

## Lessons Learned

In 2020 we significantly increased our digital communications. We learned a lot about what works and what doesn't work. Here are my top 3 lessons.

### 1. Don't Over Do It

For the summer camp, we provided too many activities. For our EMS Week, we did too many member spotlights. Many virtual things are relatively easy to put together. Member spotlight videos can be made quickly using basic video editing software that comes standard on computers. Providing printable materials is easy with many organizations providing many different activities. It is important as the communicator to limit this content. Too much can be overwhelming and can hurt your overall efforts.

### 2. Have a Variety of Content

Fire departments are busy places. We found that doing things like station tours, engine tours, division spotlights are time consuming and more difficult to put together in an engaging way. Public education can be relatively quick and easy. Many messages have already been broken down for social media. This makes it easy to drown your followers in public education. While public education is important, it is also important to include different types of content to keep followers engaged such as recruitment, tours, spotlights, and trainings. We also found success in using a variety of methods in communicating our messages. Using infographics, gifs, videos, and images can help give the same message new life.

### 3. It Doesn't Always Have to Be from You

Making all original content is a great way to put your brand front and center but utilizing others' content and collaborating with others can also be beneficial. For COVID-19 messaging in general we shared what was put out by the County Government to ensure one voice. This helped both the County and us. By sharing other organizations' posts, we found they started noticing us. This eventually led to them also interacting with our posts, helping us expand our own reach. Social media is meant to be interactive and not just our department talking at the public and members. It can be difficult to engage individuals and other organizations, but the effort is well worth it.

My time with the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System has been limited, but in my short time here I have seen us adapt to communication challenges and find success in an otherwise challenging year. This adaption does not have to be expensive; all our efforts have been done in house or in collaboration with partners. The amount of time they have taken varies from project to project, some taking only a couple of hours, while other projects took months. Through these efforts we have connected with our community and we look forward to a time where our digital efforts and in-person efforts complement and enhance each other.



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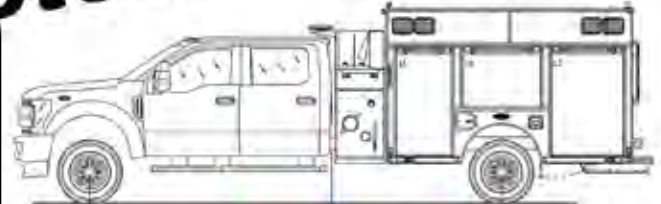
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# PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS PRIORITY #1

Julien Crolet NR-Paramedic, FP-C  
Acting - Deputy Fire Chief  
USAG Fort Belvoir Fire & Emergency Services



I've had the pleasure of working for Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services since 2013. The opportunities that have been provided throughout my time in the fire service have led me to serving my organization in a variety of different roles and responsibilities. Many times during my initial years I thought on my style of leadership and conceptualized actions I would take if I was ever in a formal leadership position to lead, motivate, and influence others. The majority of my thoughts were centered on team based activities, meetings and a multitude of other in person aspects that could contribute to a professional, progressive and enjoyable working atmosphere. This was largely due to the fact that the people I held in high esteem always seemed to motivate me through these mediums.

Around January of 2020, the world's attention and priorities changed in focus on arising Covid-19 numbers throughout. Fire service organizations everywhere adapted and overcame a variety of challenges that ensued from the pandemic. During this time I served in our Training and Occupational Safety Branch and directly supported the branches Assistant Chief in developing baseline guidance, public health engagement, PPE requirements, decontamination best practices and assisted in implemented ever changing recommendations to keep a healthy and safe workplace. Even with this virus being on my forethought with daily work requirements, there was one significant impact that I failed to provide any thought to: The impacts that Covid-19 had on emerging leaders and how the majority of my concepts would just be thrown out the window.

Six months later I was promoted to the rank of Assistant Fire Chief with the organization's Community Risk Reduction Branch. Fortunately, I was able to have a few months of left seat/ right seat time with the off going Assistant Chief and picked up anything he was willing to pass on in a month prior to his retirement. I became engaged in learning new managerial responsibilities, leading our organizations accreditation process, command officer training and soaking up as much information as possible from the branch I would soon be leading. In the fall and winter, a rise in regional pandemic related statistics prompted more aggressive mitigation strategies. On top of cleaning facility logs, physical barriers and distancing employees, our branch was able to implement a schedule that reduced the daily number of employees in the office at any one time. Telework was encouraged when possible and almost all meetings went to a virtual platform including staff, command huddles and Division wide Fire Chief all-hands meetings.

The first weekly staff meeting I had with our team was on a virtual platform. While the virtual platform was dynamic and offered a lot of positive features, I quickly realized the difficulties of leadership, managing and influencing a team through virtual and online mediums. The virtual meetings made it challenging to learn my team's attributes, strengths and weaknesses. It made truly getting to know my team difficult, as we typically only met for specific purposes and ended the call when finished. Meetings with my leadership and colleagues were also virtual, again contributing to hearing a voice and getting after topics at hand but not truly getting to know and understand the person behind it. As a new formal leader I found this as one of my most challenging aspects.

There are several approaches I utilized to overcome and work through this challenge. I utilized every in person opportunity I could from daily physical training to assisting with job related duties. Though these events were few and far between due to the operational environment, capitalizing on these moments assisted in understanding my team and how they operated. I solicited feedback prior to and post any change that had been implemented and continuous listen to my team's request(s). This has fostered trust between all on my team even through a virtual environment. Another effective tactic has been supporting the team is taking breaks from computers, phones and tablets when they need it. This can be done by encouraging daily physical training, a walk outside, lunch away from the office, or simply just sitting outside for a few minutes. Even just a few minutes can assist in re-energizing and our productivity.

The Army's number one priority is "People First" mindset and continuously supporting my team while delivering clear expectations has resulted in a cohesive team that is ready for any challenges. People are our greatest strength and our most important weapon system. Ensure that we never lose sight of the importance to acknowledge employees that have gone above and beyond. It's easy to lose track of the small tasks your team does in a virtual environment. If you're able to keep track of tasks and continue to acknowledge, recognize and award strong work, you will continue to influence moral in a positive way. Though the virtual environment has provided me with challenges I could not be more fortunate to work for such an exceptional team of professionals. These are just some of the aspects I've learned from them and other leaders from my organization and I continue to learn and grow every day from their engagement. We must take care of our people and treat each other with dignity and respect. It is our people who will deliver in our communities; please take care of one another!



# VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS NEWS



The Virginia Department of Fire Programs would like to welcome the newly elected Virginia Fire Services Board Chair, Chief R. Scott Garber. Chief Garber was elected at the Board's meeting held on June 4th. His predecessor Walt Bailey, who served as the boards Chair since June of 2014 reached his term limit. Scott currently serves as the City of Staunton's Fire Chief and is extremely active within the Virginia Fire Service Community. Serving as the 2nd Vice President for the Southeastern Association of Fire Chiefs and as a Past President of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association. The board would also like to congratulate Keith Johnson on his reelection as the board's Vice Chair. Mr. Johnson is currently Chief at Loudoun County Fire and Rescue and the President of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association. The board's next meeting will be on September 24th at the Virginia Beach Convention Center in conjunction with the First Responders Conference.

## VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD



"We want to thank Mr. Bailey for his many years of dedication and service to the Virginia Fire Service's Board and fire service community."

## MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS:



**Ben Reedy**  
Insurance Industry Representative  
Slemp Brant Saunders & Associates  
Marion, VA



**Abbey Johnston**  
Virginia State Firefighter's Association  
Representative  
Deputy Chief of Operations with  
Bedford County Fire & Rescue



**Steven Sites**  
Virginia Municipal League Representative  
Assistant Fire Chief - Fire Marshal  
and Building Official for the  
City of Fairfax Fire Department



**Donald L. Hart, Jr.**  
VACO Representative  
Accomack County Board of  
Supervisors

# VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD LEADERSHIP TEAM



## BOARD COMMITTEES



Keith Johnson  
Vice Chair, VFSB

### Administration, Policy and Finance Committee Members:

Lee Day  
Bettie Reeves-Nobles  
Jerome Williams

Scott Garber  
Ernie Little  
Ben Reedy



Bettie Reeves-Nobles  
Committee Chair

### Live Structure Committee Members:

Rick Gregory  
Jimmy Poindexter  
Jerome Williams

Dennis Linaburg  
Abbey Johnston  
Steven Sites



Ernie Little  
Committee Chair

### Fire Prevention & Control Committee Members:

Dennis Linaburg  
Scott Garber  
Rick Gregory

Keith Johnson  
Robert Farrell  
Steven Sites



Jerome Williams  
Committee Chair

### Fire Education & Training Committee Members:

Abbey Johnston  
Donald Hart  
Ben Reedy

James Calvert  
Lee Day  
James Poindexter

*Mark  
your  
Calendars:*

VIRGINIA BEACH  
CONVENTION  
CENTER

Sept. 23rd: Committee  
Meetings  
and  
Sept. 24th: Full VFSB  
Meeting

Visit VDFP's website at  
<https://www.vafire.com/>  
for full meeting details

## VFSB FIRE & EMS STUDIES

- NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY STUDY  
DRAFT TO BE VOTED ON AT SEPTEMBER  
MEETING
- MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENDING  
SITE VISIT.
- PENDING REQUEST WITH THE TOWN  
OF LEBANON



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# Robert E. White Memorial Scholarship

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation offers annual scholarships for continuing education. The scholarship program was established in 2002 in memory of Mr. Robert E. White, a citizen of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The objective of the scholarship program is to assist individuals desiring to further their academic education through a variety of opportunities such as college classes, National Fire Academy classes, Virginia Fire Chiefs Association events (such as the Virginia Fire & Rescue Conference), certificate programs and other fire and EMS classes or conferences. Individual scholarship awards may range from \$250 to \$2,500 and can be utilized for any direct expenses such as registration, tuition, books, meals, lodging or transportation.

## Eligibility Criteria

- Active fire/EMS service personnel in Virginia (Volunteer or Career).
- Spouses or dependents of active fire/EMS service personnel in Virginia (Volunteer or Career).
- VFCA Membership (individual and/or Chief) is required for consideration.
- Must be pursuing a degree that will benefit Public Safety field.
- Provide proof of enrollment with scholarship application.
- Non-profit organizations (such as fire departments, etc...) are eligible to apply.
- Programs/Degrees eligible for consideration include the following: VFRC, VFOA, VA Fire Chiefs Academy, Associate, Bachelor and Master Degree Programs.

## Selection Criteria

- Complete scholarship application and submit by annual deadline. **(December 1st)**
- Written Statement – Please attach your statement to application and it should include your background, educational goals, why you believe this educational opportunity will be useful to you and why you are applying for financial assistance. **Failure to complete this portion of the process and fully address the items listed will result in your application being disqualified.** For organizational applications, please include a description of the organization, how the educational program will benefit the organization and why financial assistance is necessary. These statements will serve as a criterion for the selection and should be typewritten using 12 point aerial font, double spaced and no more than three pages in length. **Failure to complete this portion of the process and fully address the items listed will result in your application being disqualified.**

## Application Information

- Applications will be accepted between September 1 and December 1 annually.
- Successful applicants will be notified by January 1 of awards.
- Scholarship awardees will be invited to Annual VFR Conference to be recognized and presented their scholarship. **Attendance is not mandatory.**
- Awards may vary in amounts up to \$2500.

## HOW TO APPLY:

Visit [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us) for application information.

The application period is September 1st — December 1st each year. Successful applicants will be notified by January 1st. Verification of attendance will be required.





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# FIRE PREVENTION WEEK 2021



NFPA has announced "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety" as the theme for Fire Prevention Week, October 3-9, 2021! Learn more about #FirePreventionWeek on the NFPA website, where you'll find resources for fire departments and the public. Here's a link: <https://bit.ly/2XXM9yl>

## About Fire Prevention Week

Since 1922, the NFPA has sponsored the public observance of Fire Prevention Week. In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed Fire Prevention Week a national observance, making it the longest-running public health observance in our country. During Fire Prevention Week, children, adults, and teachers learn how to stay safe in case of a fire. Firefighters provide lifesaving public education in an effort to drastically decrease casualties caused by fires.

Fire Prevention Week is observed each year during the week of October 9th in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began on October 8, 1871, and caused devastating damage. This horrific conflagration killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres of land.

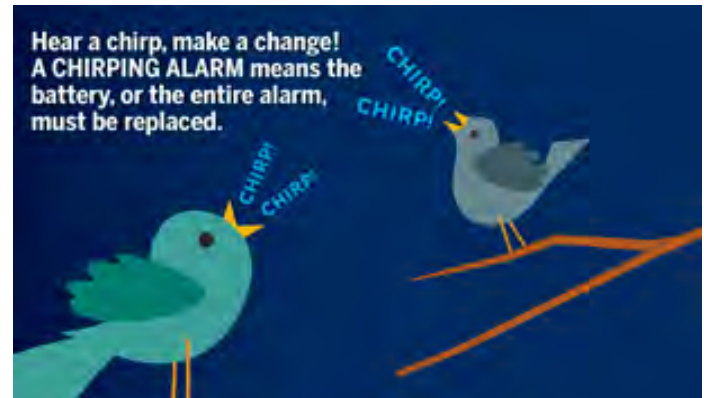
## 2021 Campaign

This year's FPW campaign, "Learn the Sounds of Fire Safety!" works to educate everyone about the different sounds the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms make. Knowing what to do when an alarm sounds will keep you and your family safe. When an alarm makes noises – a beeping sound or a chirping sound – you must take action.

## Importance of fire prevention

In a fire, mere seconds can mean the difference between a safe escape and a tragedy. Fire safety education isn't just for school children. Teenagers, adults, and the elderly are also at risk in fires, making it important for every member of the community to take some time every October during Fire Prevention Week™ to make sure they understand how to stay safe in case of a fire.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) ALARMS



## What's the difference between smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms? Why do I need both?

Smoke alarms sense smoke well before you can, alerting you to danger. In the event of fire, you may have as little as 2 minutes to escape safely, which is why smoke alarms need to be in every bedroom, outside of the sleeping areas (like a hallway), and on each level (including the basement). Do not put smoke alarms in your kitchen or bathrooms.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that displaces oxygen in your body and brain and can render you unconscious before you even realize something is happening to you. Without vital oxygen, you are at risk of death from carbon monoxide poisoning in a short time. CO alarms detect the presence of carbon monoxide and alert you so you can get out, call 9-1-1, and let the professionals check your home.

## How do I know which smoke and CO alarm to choose for my home?

Choose an alarm that is listed with a testing laboratory, meaning it has met certain standards for protection. Whether you select a unit that requires yearly changing of batteries, or a 10-year unit that you change out at the end of the 10 years, either will provide protection.

CO alarms also have a battery backup. Choose one that is listed with a testing laboratory. For the best protection, use combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms that are interconnected throughout the home. These can be installed by a qualified electrician, so that when one sounds, they all sound. This ensures you can hear the alarm no matter where in your home the alarm originates.

# Smoke Detectors and CO Detectors Save Lives!

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# GROWING AS A LEADER: SIX WAYS TO BUILD, ENGAGE AND RETAIN YOUR TEAM

## Understanding and Navigating Generational Differences

*For the first time ever, there are five, even six different generations in the workforce. Each generation has their own style of communicating and varying expectations for workplace interactions. So how can those in leadership roles prevent communication issues that obstruct information, hinder collaboration, and cost time and money? Join us for September's topic entitled: Understanding and Navigating Generational Differences*

*In this highly interactive, high-energy session, Jan Spence, CSP will use her vast knowledge helping companies and individuals take their teamwork, listening, and communication skills to the next level by sharing tips on how to set established protocols and clear processes of communication, thus increasing employee engagement and overall productivity. By the end of the session, participants will have the necessary tools they can implement immediately to successfully navigate the varying and unique needs of a multi-generational workforce.*

*The subsequent monthly topics and delivery dates are:*

### **TOPIC TITLES**

- Understanding and Navigating Generational Differences
- Dealing with Difficult People
- How to Successfully Recruit
- Leading and Engaging Volunteers and Employees
- Time Management Tools and Techniques

### **DELIVERY DATES**

- September 22, 2021
- October 13, 2021
- November 17, 2021
- December 14, 2021
- January 19, 2022

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## SPEAKER

Jan Spence, CSP



Jan Spence is a Certified Speaking Professional, author, and consultant.

## QUESTIONS

Theo Stamatis

[Tstamatis@IAFC.org](mailto:Tstamatis@IAFC.org)



*This training is provided on behalf of the Volunteer Workforce Solutions program, a partnership between the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. It is funded by a DHS/FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant.*

# LOUDOUN COUNTY'S COMMAND COMPETENCY CENTER

Deputy Chief Randall Shank  
Battalion Chief Brian Fluharty  
Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Training Division

The Loudoun County Command Competency Center (CCC) provides interactive simulations of incidents through computer programs and three-dimensional models. The exercises take firefighters, Company Officers, and Command Officers through simulated incidents to teach them how to make better decisions on the fire ground - decisions that which could potentially save firefighter and civilian lives.



The Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System opened their Command Competency Center in 2018. We have found SimsUshare CTC™ is a versatile training simulation software: the software provides us with virtual incident command, fire, HazMat, and command training simulator, all rolled into one. Simulations are easily and rapidly created utilizing our own photos from within Loudoun County, Virginia. Command, size-up, planning, and decision-making are perishable skills.

## The Command Competency Center is divided into four primary areas.

- The fire command training area is divided into several sections to replicate an emergency incident as realistically as possible, from dispatch to arriving on the scene of incidents to include fires, hazardous material incidents, active violence, and multiple casualty incidents.
- The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) area like the fire command training is designed to replicate an emergency medical incident with realistic scenarios. The scenario begins at dispatch and concludes at patient transport to the local Emergency Department. This area can be used for practical exercises during EMS training classes, testing, and for continuing education.
- Active Violence Incidents (AVI) – Software simulations has provided us with an interactive simulation for conducting Act of Violence Unified Command Training with the Loudoun County Hostile Threat Group, consisting of

local law enforcement and fire and rescue. This group uses computer-based scenarios to conduct unified command competency simulations. These simulations began with both agencies being dispatched to an active shooter incident. In these types of simulations, it is paramount and stressed upon to have a unified command established between law enforcement and fire and rescue. The unified commanders work in conjunction with each other to deploy appropriate resources into the hot, warm, cold zones appropriately. Such resources being deployed are Rescue Task Force (RTF) teams which consist of both law enforcement and fire and rescue personnel. Law enforcement will provide protection, while fire and rescue locate, triage, provide immediate life safety care, and remove injured patients. The simulations along with the role-players will provide cues to the unified incident commanders to identify the hot, warm, and cold zones. The role players will provide information on the location and the severity of injury to the patients which need evacuation. The simulations are consistent and produced repeatedly so the "once-in-a-lifetime-incident" can be managed multiple times in the lab. The unified command competency simulations are improving joint law enforcement and fire-rescue operations. Since the joint training has started, Unified command has been established on several significant incidents, such as: large structure fire, two barricaded subjects, and a water rescue incident involving searches for two possible victims.

- Dispatcher Training - The Loudoun County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) serves as the County's public safety answering point (PSAP) for all fire, rescue, and law enforcement calls utilizing an Enhanced-911 system. Dispatchers and call takers from Loudoun County Fire and Rescue and the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office process emergency and non-emergency calls and texts 24 hours a day. Our dispatchers are provided the opportunity to work a handful of times assisting in the Command Lab, in which they have found it to be very beneficial with their job functions. First, it allows the dispatcher the opportunity to practice: CAD work (CAD commands, nature codes, etc.), typing skills, listening skills, etc. It also has provided the opportunity to put to practice what they are being taught and how various scenarios could play out in real life (structure fires, MAYDAY situations, AVI situations, etc.). These scenarios also allow there to be a stronger link between command staff/field personnel and employees in the ECC. It allows for there to be discussion between both sides to ensure a well-rounded working relationship over the radio/phones

**Candidate Simulation Area:** Includes everything found in responding Chief's vehicle. A large screen and mobile data computer (MDC) sit in front of the command module to display elements of the simulation. The incidents are dispatched to the MDC, unit officers and the incident commander can view the MDC during the simulations to receive incident notes and updates recorded during the simulations. Every attempt is made to make these simulations as realistic as possible to what would be encountered when running an actual incident.

**Simulation Control Room:** This is the hub for the various sections being tasked and is operated by instructors who are trained in the equipment's operations and have related field experience. The simulation control room projects all the images to workstations and command vehicle props utilizing the Sim U Share software. The sequence of images is determined by the storyboards which account for potential actions of participating personnel.

A simulation typically lasts from 15 to 20 minutes with eight to ten personnel participating during an incident. Participants playing the roles of responding

companies' stage via radio in the classroom, and then take their assignment at the simulation work stations. As the incident escalates and the Incident Commander begins to prioritize incident tasks, assign units, and assign additional officers to the command responsibilities for each task on the incident scene.



During the simulation, it's possible the instructors will role-play victims, media representatives or various others role playing actions to distract the incident commanders, as in real life. After the incident is complete, the participants reconvene in the classroom to hotwash the incident.

The Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System began using the CCC on a regular schedule in 2018. Since the inception, the computer-based software utilizes to create the simulations have allowed us to train system personnel, along with numerous personnel from the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office. These simulations have greatly enhanced our officer's skill sets, which in return has improved the safety of our entire operations on the incident scene. The CCC is being utilized year around to conduct trainings and promotional processes. Some of the simulations being utilized range from a structure fire in single family dwelling, to strip shopping centers, to water rescues and Active Violence Incidents.

Overall, the Command Competency Center has greatly improved the on-scene operations and safety of all personnel within the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System (LCC-FRS). Personnel are subjected to simulated emergencies in a controlled environment allowing for the needed repetitions to achieve proficiency.

For information about Loudoun County's Command Competency Center, contact Deputy Chief Randall Shank at [randall.shank@loudoun.gov](mailto:randall.shank@loudoun.gov)






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# GOVERNOR NAMES VOLUNTEER CHIEF OF THE YEAR, DOUG MONACO

Spencer Cheatham

On June 4, Governor Northam awarded Fire Chief Doug Monaco the 2020 Virginia Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year Award. We often hear doom and gloom when it comes to the volunteer fire service. It is usually described as “in decline” and “a system of the past.” While it is true some departments are trying to adapt to changes in society and their communities, Little Fork Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company, in Culpeper County, serves as a bar for other volunteer departments to strive for. There is little doubt that Chief Monaco’s leadership, since the formation of the department, has been instrumental in its success.

Doug Monaco is from Centreville in Fairfax County, where his father served as the fire chief, and his mother was a leader in the ladies’ auxiliary. As you can imagine, with parents that were that involved at the firehouse, Doug and his brother grew up at the station. Before joining the department at 16, he remembers fondly, “I was eight years old, running around the bingo hall with all that cigarette smoke that was there back then, and that’s when I started drinking black coffee and really learning the firehouse life.”

At 19, Doug was hired as a firefighter by Prince William County. “I didn’t even know what the salary was. I was just so excited to have a career as a firefighter, I didn’t even care.” Doug worked there for 33 years and retired as a captain.

During his time in the career fire service, he continued to volunteer in the communities where he lived. He stayed with Centreville until moving to Remington in Fauquier County and was chief there for a few years. In the early 90s, he moved to Jeffersonton in Culpeper County. Soon after, he got involved with the formation of a new department there, Little Fork, and became a charter member when it opened in 1994.

The department was formed because there were a series of fires that were between different fire companies. Chief Monaco says that he remembers the circumstances. “Those other companies were doing a great job, but you can’t make up significant time when the distance is so far away.” So as not to alienate anyone, the new department decided not to take the name of the towns nearby but of two landmarks: historic Little Fork Episcopal Church and Little Fork Creek.

He remembers those were tough times for the department. Just starting out, it was not uncommon for the volunteers to “pay for fuel out of their own pockets.” Over the years, other departments have helped them out tremendously. Their first engine was donated by Linden VFD and Stonewall Jackson VFD in Prince William donated the doors on their present station. Recently, Centreville had a pumper for sale but decided to donate it when they realized Chief Monaco’s dad was their former chief. Their other current engine, a 2001 E-One, was bought “at a significant discount” thanks to OWL’s generosity.

Through the early years and even today, the object hasn’t been to have the shiniest apparatus or the nicest station. A “culture of doing whatever it takes to get the calls answered” is best illustrated by Chief Monaco. “We’ve lived out

of a 40’ x 80’ garage building since we bought it in 1996. I’m talking where ambulances are parked between pumpers, and we had to pull the pumper out to get the ambulance out. The heavy rescue is sitting outside now, and we have an ambulance that we put heaters in so the drugs wouldn’t freeze that has sat outside for years. But you know what? We haven’t missed a call in 10 years.” The department runs about 650 calls per year, including EMS transport.

So how does this small department with few resources manage such a feat? Personally, having talked to Chief Monaco, there is little question that it is directly due to his leadership. “I look at firehouses as if they have a culture, and it is not in our culture to miss a call. It is not even thought of. Whatever it takes.”

His leadership values include honesty, fairness, and family. Delegation is key as well. Yes, Chief Monaco is the Fire Chief, but he understands that he can’t do everything himself. For staffing, he relies on three people (daytime, weeknight, and weekend) to make sure the calls get answered. There is someone in charge of grants, someone in charge of recruitment, and numerous other people in charge of various other aspects that make a volunteer department run smoothly. Chief Monaco gives them space and the resources they need to do their job, but expects great things.

We’ve all felt the “calling” of the fire service and understand how it becomes a part of who we are. Just like his dad, Doug finds family at the firehouse. His brother, Ralph, joined the fire service with him many years ago in Centreville. He was in the Warrenton Volunteer Fire Company for 30 years, then moved and became a Captain at Little Fork. Ralph’s daughter joined several years ago and is an EMT. Although he moved away from the area, Chief Monaco fondly remembers when his son was a part of Little Fork and eventually made the rank of assistant chief. “It was great to fight fire with him.” The department brought the chief and his fiancé, an ICU nurse, together as well. She joined ten years ago and is now a lieutenant. The chief has four grandkids, so perhaps there will be a fourth generation of Monaco firefighters in the future.

Little Fork also works to reach beyond their community. Through the help of their chief, the company has built the state’s premier technical large animal rescue team. It started when they sent a few people to a class in Loudoun on how to treat horses in emergencies. They came back and said there was a technical rescue class coming up soon, and they needed to send some people. “Some people” ended up being 10-15 members who attended that class. They were fortunate enough to be taught by Rebecca Husted, who wrote a book on the subject as well as the NFPA standards.

“We started putting stuff into practice, and there is very little in the way of tools you can buy for that. We had a lot of tools made for us, like a bucket attachment for tractors. Our local vet worked with us and started traveling with us on rescues as well. It is something we keep going. There is another class coming up, and we are sending 17 people to that one.” The chief says that large animal rescue fits right in with fire/EMS. Its rank structure, notification systems, chain of command, use of specialty rescue practices, and the ability to interact with other fire departments makes it familiar. “We probably have \$80-90k invested in the equipment. We don’t charge for services, but it all works out. Some people we help can’t afford to donate, but some people, where the barn looks better than my house, will stroke a substantial check without even batting an eye. There have been some horse groups that have helped with the funding as well.” The team



doesn't do anything unless there is a vet there and they call for a local department to help with manpower. Using powered devices to do the actual rescue is a last resort. Mostly, it is done by hand, pulling and pushing.

Chief Monaco had some words of advice for other volunteer departments:

- "Don't overdo the rules. Many departments have archaic bylaws which hold them back."
- "Use mentors to encourage new people to come down and run. They are going to be afraid initially because they don't even know where to start. Once we get them on the first few calls, we've got 'em."
- "Streamline everything you do. When you put an application in, it will go to the board, and we can have you in within 3-4 days. You go to orientation, and then gear is issued almost immediately. Within 2-3 weeks of saying you are interested; you are riding as an observer. You've got to get them in when they are interested."
- "An electronic sign is one of the best investments we've ever made. We get members from that monthly. We use humor, and we change it up all the time and use messages from fortune cookies, but it always says 100% volunteer, 24/7/365. Volunteers needed."
- "We've had 3-4 success stories of our members who get jobs as career firefighters, and they stay with us. That's a big deal! It is such a big help to get someone to think so much of the community that they come back to pay back. We help them get there, though. We do mock interviews, get them through FF and EMT, so they know what they are getting into, and I guess they have gratitude for getting them where they are."

After seeing Little Fork struggle financially for years, Chief Monaco sees some brighter lights in the future. "We've been saving money for the last ten years and we finally saved enough to put a down payment on a station addition for \$3M. The county fire association earmarked some money to help, we raised some money, and after all that, we'll have a note for about \$1.7M. It's under construction now. The addition will add five bays, bunkrooms, a dayroom, watch room, offices, showers, and locker rooms."

There is little doubt that Doug Monaco is the type of person you'd like to work for. His sense of family and fairness, combined with his understanding of what motivates volunteers, has served Little Fork well. The 10,000 people served in this 65 square mile area can rest assured, knowing that they are protected by an excellent department.

Spencer Cheatham is a past fire chief and past president of the West Point Volunteer Fire Department. He served as an interim chief and battalion chief in a career capacity with New Kent Fire-Rescue and currently works as a program manager for the International Association of Fire Chiefs. He still enjoys pulling duty as a firefighter/EMT with West Point, the community he has served for the past 26 years.

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."**

**– Margaret Mead**



Little Fork Technical Large Animal Rescue Team



Fire Chief Doug Monaco



# Glenn A. Gaines

## Leadership Legacy Award

In 2015, the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association established the Glenn A. Gaines Leadership Legacy Award. This award is designed to recognize an individual on an annual basis who exemplifies the ability, character and dedication to excellence and displays leadership attributes portrayed by Fire Chief Glenn A. Gaines.

### **Eligibility Criteria:**

- Any current career or volunteer firefighter up to and including a chief officer within the Commonwealth of Virginia is eligible to compete for this award.

**Nomination Criteria:** Nominate individuals for their significant achievements or contributions to the fire service in the following areas:

- Accomplishments (in mentoring and professional development)
- Initiative (including helping others beyond their own agency through mentoring and professional development, including advocacy)
- Technical Competence (including serving as an instructor)
- Demonstrated leadership and mentoring ability
- The inclusive dates for the Glenn A. Gaines Leadership Legacy Award are January 1st through December 15th of each calendar year.

**Selection Process:** Nominate individuals for their significant achievements or contributions to the fire service in the following areas:

- The VFCA President and Board of Directors will serve as the selection committee and will make their decision by January 31<sup>st</sup>.
- The VFCA President will review and tally the results and announce the winner during the annual Virginia Fire Rescue Conference that is held each February in Virginia Beach, VA. The individual selected should be in attendance at the conference.

### **HOW TO APPLY:**

Visit [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us) for application information. Uploaded documents should not exceed 750 words. Nomination packages that do not meet requirements will be rejected.

The application period is September 1st — December 1st each year.





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**Eanes-Pittman Public Safety Training Center  
Chesterfield, Virginia**

# THE EVER CHANGING FACE OF TODAY'S HOUSE FIRE, THE TACTIC'S OF DEALING WITH IT AND HOW TRAINING CAN HELP

Bill Smith

In his article on "Change vs. Evolution that appeared in the last edition of Commonwealth Chief, Lt. Matthew Haight of the Fort Belvoir Fire & Emergency Services pointed out that change is often a bad word in the fire service. He suggested that instead of using that word, maybe we should be using the word that we should have been using all along and say "I'm not afraid of evolving."

Although we didn't know it at the time, this article has its roots in a "change" that started way back in the early 80's when two young officer's, now Retired City of Fairfax Battalion Chief Joe Bailey and Retired Captain William "Wally" Burriss began teaching strategy and tactics and ICS for the National Fire Academy around 1980-81. That was when they put the mobile simulator on the road for the City of Fairfax. All of this was supported and promoted by Fire Chief Gene Dailey and what was then called Virginia Fire Services Training. Over the years since, Joe and Wally have continued to teach for what we now know as the Virginia Department of Fire programs. I suspect many of you may have even met or learned from these two innovators.

As we know, building construction and furnishings have changed dramatically over the last three decades, but the "tactics" and equipment used by firefighters has changed very little. We also know these new methods of construction and new materials used in the manufacture of building contents, negatively impact firefighter safety. This is not an unknown problem. Many studies point to concerns involving modern construction. Changes in fire behavior that require a renewed focus on how to properly handle these incidents is now a reality for today's Fire Service. While we haven't necessarily changed what the fire service does or how they do it, we can change our behavior by examining the effect new building construction materials and techniques and furnishings have had on the burning characteristics of today's structures. Becoming aware of how those new burning characteristics impact firefighter safety is a critical skill set.

This problem is not just about lightweight construction. Fires create highly toxic environments. In today's world we have a greater fuel load, and faster fire propagation.

Firefighters are at increased risk of death and injury due to trauma while working inside of common residential occupancies. Extreme fire behavior and the failure of the building from collapse is frequently a causal or contributing factor in traumatic fatalities during structural firefighting operations.

About four or five years ago, and after seeing these changes over many years, Joe and Wally decided to take the bull by the horns so to speak. With the help of David Jolly at the Virginia Department of Fire programs, they were given the freedom to update and make major adjustments to the curriculum of two of the VDFP courses that deal with strategy and tactics. The two courses, Strategy and Tactics for the Initial Company Officer (STICO) and Preparation for Initial Company Operations (PICO) are handed off from the National Fire Academy.

They spent six months reviewing everything they could discover from studies conducted by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). These studies were performed with assistance from the International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI), FDNY and other fire departments across the country.

UL and NIST were able to demonstrate how fire growth, the fire environment and fire

dynamics have changed primarily due to building construction. They were able to explore common misconceptions that have led to ineffective tactics which are dangerous for firefighters and increase the risk for occupants in need of rescue.

Since the "Transitional Attack" had been developed, it was included as a part of the STICO class changes. It focuses on moving towards a fresh and increasingly safer approach to interior firefighting due to shorter time to flashover, shorter escape times, and the shorter time to collapse. As Joe succinctly puts it, "these three factors alone should be enough to push the fire service to evaluate staffing, training, & tactical adjustments."

Have they met with resistance, opposition, or conflict? Absolutely! Resistance to change primarily comes from those overwhelmed with fire service tradition! Eddie Buchanan from Hanover sums it all up by stating "it is not about why he would do that; he states that he cannot argue why he would not!"

Since the changes were implemented in the STICO and PICO courses taught by VDFP, Joe and Wally have continued to teach the new concepts and ever so slowly change minds and make things safer for today's firefighter.

One such example was recently shared with me with the hope that it might prove to be beneficial to other firefighters across the Commonwealth.

Before coming to Virginia, Matt Caplan, a volunteer fire officer with the Stephens City Volunteer Fire Department, had previous experience in Maryland; he was an active volunteer in Prince George's County from 1992 to the end of 2006. During that period, we had always done an aggressive interior attack for all offensive structure fires. He reported that "transitional attacks were not even a thought; a transitional attack was considered forbidden and amateurish."

Prior to joining Stephens City, he reported that he had taken a 10 year break from the volunteer fire service. When he joined Stephens City in 2017, he was introduced to the transitional attack approach to modern day firefighting and did not have buy-in at the time. He went on to say "it wasn't until I took the STICO class this past April that I fully understood the importance of the transitional fire attack approach with today's modern firefighting."

Later, following his STICO class, he found himself responding to a reported structure fire on July 4th of this year. Below is a snapshot of what followed:

All of the career staff was out on medical calls and Matt went down to the station around midnight to help staff the engine company until their return. Around 12:30 a.m., a call was dispatched for an outside fire with exposure, but was quickly upgraded to a full structural assignment. Matt went driver only on the engine. He arrived on scene with a single story, single family dwelling, with smoke showing on side Alpha. With his 360, he found heavy fire involvement on side Charlie. He deployed a cross-lay to the Charlie side of the structure where he was aided by a resident on the scene with hose advancement. Matt then returned to the engine and charged the handline. He then returned to the Charlie side and conducted a transitional attack, along with a soffit sweep. He was able to extinguish the entire Charlie side prior to additional units arriving and making entry nearly five minutes after his arrival.



Photo: Rescue Captain John Udy, a volunteer at Stephens City

As mentioned above, Matt had attended a STICO class presented through the Virginia Department of Fire Programs in April of 2021 in Frederick County. Later, he attended a PICO class with Joe and Wally after the fire and shared his story with them and the class. He credits the knowledge and tools gained from STICO as the mechanism to transform his approach to structural firefighting.

According to Fire Chief Steven Majchrzak, "This was an instance of multiple overlapping calls stretching the resources of the system, which was mitigated by dedicated volunteer members serving their community and answering the call late at night on a holiday weekend," Majchrzak said.

Joe and Wally strongly feel the STICO course will outfit students with the knowledge and courage to think about how modern construction, furnishings and associated principles are impacting our tactics, strategy, and our ability to survive.



Photo: Sgt. Matt Caplan, Stephens City Volunteer Fire Department

**We know firefighters today are at increased risk of death and injury due to trauma while working inside of residential occupancies. What are you and your department doing differently & tactically to access and mitigate the common house fire dangers in today's environment?**

Many thanks to Retired, City of Fairfax, Battalion Chief Joe Bailey and Sgt. Matt Caplan for their contributions of information and suggestions for this story.

# THE 5 ES OF COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION (CRR)

## What is Community Risk Reduction (CRR)?

NFPA 1300 defines CRR as a process to identify and prioritize local risks, followed by the integrated and strategic investment of resources to reduce their occurrence and impact.

During August, USFA will focus on the 5 Es of community risk reduction:

**Education:** CRR improves community relations and puts a face to fire safety.

**Engineering:** CRR is a great way to work with local organizations and government to promote new fire safety products to your community.

**Enforcement:** Identify potential risks and non-compliance in your local properties. Teach your community how fire safety codes protect them.

**Economic incentive:** Economic incentives can be a useful tool to encourage individuals and businesses to make choices that reduce risk.

**Emergency Response:** Make sure your department has the equipment it needs for every call and your crews are well trained.

Consider taking this opportunity to refresh your departments understanding of CRR and make plans for the year ahead. CRR Week is January 17-23, 2022.



# 6th Annual Roanoke Valley

Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation  
Golf Tournament  
October 29, 2021



## Hanging Rock Golf Club

1500 Red Lane, Salem VA 24153

All proceeds benefit the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation which provides educational opportunities to fire and emergency services professionals.

### Sponsorship and Support Opportunities

#### Official Title Sponsor - \$1,500

Includes full registration for 4 Players  
Corporate banner placement on site and at awards ceremony, Signage at designated hole  
Title Sponsor acknowledgment in tournament program

#### Gold Sponsor - \$1,000 Golf

Includes full registration for 4 Players  
Opportunity to provide company promotional items  
Signage at designated hole  
Gold Sponsor acknowledgment in tournament program

#### Cart Sponsor - \$500

Company Signage placed in each golf cart  
Opportunity to provide company promotional items  
Sponsor acknowledgment in tournament program

#### Beverage Cart Sponsor - \$250

3 company sponsor signs placed onto beverage cart  
Opportunity to provide company promotional items  
Sponsor acknowledgment in tournament program

#### Putting Green Sponsor - \$300

Opportunity to provide company promotional items  
Signage on putting green during event  
Sponsor acknowledgment in tournament program

#### Driving Range Sponsor - \$300

Opportunity to provide company promotional items  
Signage on driving range during event  
Sponsor acknowledgment in tournament program

#### Hole Sponsor - \$125

Custom signage placed on hole  
Sponsor acknowledgment in tournament program

#### Golf Only \$ 70.00 Per Player

#### Donation Only \$

### Make check payable to: VFCF

Select your support or sponsorship from above:

Total Amount Enclosed: \$

### Tournament Information

Registration & Range Open at: 11:00am

Shotgun Start at: 12:00 Noon

Format: Captains Choice

50/50 Ball Drop

Many Raffle and Door Prizes

Mulligan/Red Tee for \$10

### Sponsor and Player Information:

Sponsor Contact:

Player 1:

Email:

Sponsor Name & Address

Player 2:

Email:

Phone:

Player 3:

Email:

Email Address

Player 4:

Email:

Please send this form with your check for your sponsorship and/or players fees to:

John W Prillaman

216 South Broad Street, Salem VA 24153

(540) 375-3080 or [jprillaman@salemva.gov](mailto:jprillaman@salemva.gov)



It is an honor for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) to announce that the 40th Annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend will be held in person on October 2-3, 2021, at the National Emergency Training center in Emmitsburg, MD. Last year, and the beginning of 2021, has been an extraordinary time in our nation and worldwide with the global pandemic. With the ever-changing restrictions, the NFFF has been monitoring regularly on whether we would be able to hold a Memorial Service to ensure that the nation's fallen firefighters from 2019 and 2020 would not be forgotten.

We are honored to continue the tradition of gathering in front of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial this October to honor the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice.

On October 3rd, The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation will again broadcast a National Tribute to honor and remember America's fallen firefighters. Most importantly, our Fire Hero Families will be invited to attend the Memorial Service where we all will once again gather, as a grateful Nation honors and remembers the sacrifices of America's fallen firefighters.

Constructed in 1981, the 7-foot stone monument features a sculpted Maltese Cross, the traditional symbol of the fire service. An engraved plaque on the monument bears a message from President Ronald W. Regan. At the base of the monument an eternal flame symbolizes the spirit of all firefighters – past, present and future. Plaques encircling the monument list the names of the men and women of the fire service who have died in service to their communities since 1981.

A Wall of Honor is now in place around to monument. The first plaque was placed on the Wall with the names of firefighters who died in the line-of-duty during 2004.

A brick Walk of Honor® winds through the beautiful campus, connecting the monument site to the historic National Fallen Firefighter Chapel.

**2020 Roll of Honor**

**Darrell C. Hamlett**

- Captain
- Lynchburg Fire Department
- Age: 54
- Year of Death: 2016

Darrell was hired on October 31, 1996, by the Lynchburg Fire Department, where he served for 20 years. He began his firefighting career at the early age of 16 as a volunteer firefighter. Like many of us, it was during the early years as a volunteer where he began to understand the satisfaction that came from being a public servant. His commitment to community and service is what led him to

the Lynchburg Fire Department and ultimately the rank of captain. As a 20-year veteran, Darrell had both the life experience and job skills necessary to be a positive role model, friend, and leader to the many people he encountered. This remained evident through his self-performance appraisal that was completed the spring before his untimely passing, where he documented his goal for the next three years was, "to continue to guide and provide the leadership to employees working under me to have a positive impact to their own career development and professional goals."

Darrell's biggest love was nature. His passion was deer and turkey hunting, which he started at a young age with his father and grandfather, a tradition he later carried to his son. Darrell was known for his commitment to his family, along with his steady and consistent work ethic throughout his career, no matter where he was assigned or what task he was given. He understood that the assignment didn't make the employee; what made an employee was the exposure to strong, knowledgeable colleagues and an environment that was structured and positive with collaboration amongst peers.

Darrell is survived by his wife, Kathy Hamlett; children, Craig and Lacy Hamlett; grandchild, Paislee Rena Hamlett; parents, Earnest and Linda Hamlett; sisters, Debra Staton (Barry) and Mandy Hamlett; brother, Rodney Hamlett (Tammy); father and mother-in-law, Jack and Becky Lacy; brother-in-law, David Cyrus (Gwen); and sister-in-law, Vickie Martin (Butch).

## VFCA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### October

13-15	VFCA Annual Retreat 0800 Hours	Staunton
14	VFCA Full Board Meeting 1000 Hours	Staunton
17-22	VFOA - VCOA W.E. Skelton 4H Educational Conference Center Go to the VFCA website for more information	Smith Mountain Lake
29	6th Annual VFCA Salem Golf Tournament Hanging Rock Golf Club Salem 1100 Hours	

### November

14-15	Company Officers Summit 0800 Hours	TBD
16	Executive Officers Meeting 1000 Hours	Virtual

### December

21	VFCA Full Board Meeting 1000 Hours	Glen Allen
21	VFCA Board of Trustees 1300 Hours	Glen Allen

# 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 in standing water.
- **LISTEN** for a hissing or roaring noise of natural gas escaping.
- **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. 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.

*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.*

## 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.



## 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 [virginianaturalgas.com/integritymanagementplan](https://virginianaturalgas.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.

[virginianaturalgas.com/respondertraining](https://virginianaturalgas.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.

If a natural gas leak is suspected or detected, here are a few suggestions to ensure your safety and the safety of those in the area:

- **DO NOT** attempt to stop the flow of natural gas, operate any pipeline valves or repair the leak yourself.
- **AVOID** using any sources of ignition, such as cell phones, cigarettes, matches, flashlights, electronic devices and motorized vehicles until you are a safe distance away from the potential leak, as natural gas can ignite from a spark or open flame, possibly causing a fire or explosion.
- **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.

## 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 **800.552.7473** 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: <https://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov>.



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





## VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION WHAT THE MEMBERS ARE SAYING...



### **Patrick Wilcox - Deputy Fire Chief, Fort AP Hill**

**Why did you join the VFCA?** The networking opportunities! Getting AP Hill involved in a professional organization and the benefits of their Virginia Fire Officer Academy.

**Why should anyone join the VFCA?** Professional and personal growth.

**What are the benefits of being a VFCA member?** A wide variety of programs to get involved with, meetings to remain involved and informed.

**What is your experience with the VFCA?** The VFCA serves as great benefit to the fire service. I appreciate that there is a federal/military section that represents federal interests throughout Virginia as this has offered an avenue for networking and facing challenges.

**How would you describe the VFCA to a new member?** A local organization that provides an avenue to know what is happening in the fire service statewide. Fundamental for professional and personal development.

**What is the culture of the VFCA?** Professionals with progressive mindsets and interests.

**What does the VFCA do that makes you proud?** The outreach VFCA provides such as the Virginia Fire Officer Academy.



### **Sherry Phillips, Executive Assistant to the System Chief, Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Administrative Professionals Section**

**How long have you been a member of the VFCA Administrative Professionals Section?** I have been a part of this group for 2 years. I joined just before COVID-19, so I have had few opportunities to attend meetings, but find content through newsletters to be valuable during interaction with the Fire Chief.

**Why is being a member of the Administrative Professionals Section important to YOU?** As the Executive Assistant to the Fire

Chief, I find it is important to me to be a member of the Administrative Professionals Section because it enables me to engage with the Fire Chief and to be familiar with items that come across his desk so that I can better assist him in his management of our System.

**What can members expect from the Administrative Professionals Section?** The Administrative Professionals Section is a support group that meets quarterly and provides productive and informative topics of discussion. There are activities that you can participate in as support staff such as golf tournaments and races which provides opportunity for networking and engagement with peers.

**How can a member and their department benefit from the section?** The opportunities that allow you to network and to find peers that can provide input into items that come across your desk is one of the supports I have enjoyed. The email interaction when people are problem-solving and looking for ideas to offer to their department on advice of other departments has been valuable to others and input amongst the group has been beneficial to me in my position.



## FALL WILDFIRE SEASON OFFICIALLY BEGINS

This past May a landowner snapped this photo showing the fire cresting a ridge. The lights of the USFS bulldozer can be seen plowing a fire line on the near side of the ridge.

Much of Virginia is currently in moderate drought conditions and it has been some time since the area has seen a substantial amount of rainfall. Friday is the official start of the fall wildfire season, which runs from Oct. 15 to Nov. 30. The Virginia Departments of Forestry, Emergency Management, and Fire Programs have been preparing for what could be one of the most severe fire seasons the Commonwealth has seen in several years due to the dry conditions. "Due to extended periods of below-average rainfall, dry weather conditions, and record-high temperatures across our Commonwealth, most of Virginia faces an increased risk of wildfires this fall," said Governor Ralph Northam in announcing the beginning of the fire season.

The Virginia Departments of Forestry, Emergency Management, and Fire Programs have been preparing for what could be one of the most severe fire seasons the Commonwealth has seen in several years due to the dry conditions.

"Due to extended periods of below-average rainfall, dry weather conditions, and record-high temperatures across our Commonwealth, most of Virginia faces an increased risk of wildfires this fall," said Governor Ralph Northam in announcing the beginning of the fire season. "We all have a responsibility to do our part to prevent wildfires, and now is the time for Virginians to learn about how they can reduce wildfire risks and ensure the safety of their homes, families and communities."

According to a release, VDOF is stressing the importance of taking extreme caution with anything that could cause a wildfire.



### **Andrew Vita - Assistant Chief, City of Fairfax Fire Department**

**Why did you join the VFCA?** I joined the VFCA to broaden my perspective on issues impacting the Virginia fire service, make a difference in these issues, and broaden my network of peers.

**Why should anyone join the VFCA?** I recommend joining the VFCA to become part of the positive change needed to improve the operational response of the Virginia fire service and the safety of our members.

**What are the benefits of being a VFCA member?** As a member of the VFCA you have access to a network of peers to assist in solving local challenges and the power of the collective body for solving state wide challenges.

**What is your experience with the VFCA?** I have attended the VFCA Conference and the Fire Chief Summit, both top notch education and training programs.

**How would you describe the VFCA to a new member?** A network of problem solvers with over ninety years of proven success.

**What is the culture of the VFCA?** Professionals who work collaboratively for positive outcomes

**What does the VFCA do that makes you proud?** They support the values of integrity and collaboration.



### **Julien F. Crolet – Assistant Chief, Fort Belvoir Fire & Emergency Services**

**Why did you join the VFCA?** For years I saw the VFCA as a progressive organization. When I started my career as a firefighter in King George County It was a goal of mine to be able attend the Virginia Fire Officer Academy at some point in time due to the praise of the program from my colleagues and mentors. I was able to attend the VFOA in 2012 which only confirmed what everyone was saying. I was not a member at the time due to the fact I believed it was only for Chief level officers. My department made a commitment to fund VFCA memberships for those who have attended VFOA or VCFOA which led me to being more involved.

**Why should anyone join the VFCA?** Networking! Surrounding yourself with the most progressive and knowledgeable individuals who share a common goal - continuous improvement of the fire service in Virginia.

**What are the benefits of being a VFCA member?** Training, VFOA, VCOA, Sound the Alarm Summit, Fire Chief Summits, engagement opportunities, friends, legislation support, 5k's, Having a section to support military and federal departments, professional organization affiliation, golf tournaments, scholarships, Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference.

I have experienced multiple VFCA programs including VFOA, Sound the Alarm Summits, Virginia Fire and Rescue Conferences, Chiefs Summit, and multiple networking events. I have served as the Fed/Mil section VP and currently the Fed/Mil section president. In my experience, the VFCA is truly a group of professionals who share a dedicated passion for the fire service and take pride in many programs/initiatives that improve a variety of aspects.

**How would you describe the VFCA to a new member?** Professionals dedicated to ensuring exceptional fire service delivery statewide.

**What is the culture of the VFCA?** A professional inclusive atmosphere of dedicated performers that utilize clear communication and a team based approach to positively influence the fire service.



### **Mandy R. Waybright, Office Manager, Harrisonburg Fire Department Administrative Professionals Section**

**How long have you been a member of the VFCA Admin Professional Section?** I joined the VFCA Administrative Professionals Section almost a year ago when I joined the Harrisonburg Fire Department.

**Why is being a member of the Administrative Professionals Section important to YOU?** I started my role as the Office Manager for the Harrisonburg Fire Department with no fire service background. I don't pretend to know everything, by joining the Administrative Professionals Section it gives me an avenue outside of our department to reach out to for ideas and to bounce ideas off.

**What can members expect from the Administrative Professionals Section?** The Administrative Professionals Section holds quarterly in person meetings when possible. Over the past few months there have been several interactive educational webinars.

**How can a member and their department benefit from the section?** The Administrative Professionals Section allows you to network with other administrative professionals, which is instrumental in personal and departmental growth. Just like any other organization you will get out of it what you put into it. For example, there have been several instances where a member was looking for information on a certain topic and sent out a question to the group and we were able to assist them. However, you have to be willing to put yourself out there and ask for help.



## **Renee Allen-Stallings, Office Administrator, Isle of Wight Fire Rescue Administrative Professionals Section**

**How long have you been a member of the VFCA Admin Professional Section?** I have been a member of the VFCA Admin Professional Section for 6 years, 3 of which I was honored to serve as President.

**Why is being a member of the Administrative Professional Section important to you?** Being a member of the VFCA Admin Professionals Section is important to me in many ways, but I will touch on only two. Having a group of dedicated individuals that are familiar with the struggles I face on a day-to-day basis is a tremendous asset. When no one else understands the frustration, this group does. We reach out to each other for help with

problems that arise and many times someone else has already faced the issue and can give insight or suggestions as to how to deal with said issue saving a lot of time and effort with research or developing a process. Also, I enjoy the opportunity to serve the VFCA in assisting with fundraising for the Foundation to provide scholarships for training for those that may not be able to attend training on their own. Several times over the years at the Virginia Fire Chief's Conference I have had individuals come to me to say thank you for all that we do to raise money through the Silent Auction and 50/50 raffle as they were able to attend due to those fundraising efforts.

**What can members expect from the Administrative Professionals Section?** As a member of this amazing group of like-minded individuals, you are surrounded by people that understand the problems that arise daily in our position. It is a group of individuals that come from small, large, career, and combination systems that love what they do and are there to help in any way that they can whether it be questions about policies, data management, even uniforms! No question is too big or small for this group. You have the opportunity for career development through trainings and retreats, and if you are as fortunate as I have been, you also develop friendships that go beyond the Admin Section; they are there when "life" happens, and you need a shoulder to lean on or an ear to listen.

**How can a member and their department benefit from the section?** As a member of the Admin Section, you have a vast source of information at your fingertips that can help you and your department on many levels. With the diverse makeup of the group, a wealth of knowledge is available. Often, we have found the wheel does not need to be reinvented as someone else or another department has faced a difficult situation, implementation of a new policy/procedure etc. and can offer their experience and resources to help guide you through whatever you or your department may be facing. It is a wonderful group to be a part of.



## **James A. Stenhouse - Planning Lieutenant, Henrico Division of Fire**

**Why did you join the VFCA?** My connection to the Virginia Fire Chief's Association (VFCA) was in conjunction with my acceptance into the Virginia Fire Officer Academy (VFOA). I was honored to become a part of an association that is rich in history and culture. I saw it as an opportunity to give back to the fire service by being an ambassador of public service.

**Why should anyone join the VFCA?** I would recommend others to join the VFCA for an array of reasons. The VFCA is involved in many different entities. The training opportunities are extensive. The VFCA hosts conferences and other functions during the calendar year. There are opportunities for educational advances in the public safety sector. The VFCA is actively involved in legislative issues that will assist in the protections that are needed in public safety.

**What are the benefits of being a VFCA member?** One of the most beneficial takeaways from being a VFCA member is the networking capability that is provided. The VFCA has job listings that allow its members to see new employment opportunities for public service personnel. The VFCA also offers free courses through Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) across the Commonwealth to its members.

**What is your experience with the VFCA?** I was able to successfully complete the VFOA in June of '16. It was an honor to go through the week-long program with fire personnel from all over the Commonwealth of Virginia. I've met some lifelong brothers and sisters. All of my experiences with the VFCA have been very positive and rewarding.

**How would you describe the VFCA to a new member?** The VFCA is more like a catalog of in-depth resources that continuously work for the betterment of public safety personnel. The VFCA also focuses on the health and well-being of public safety personnel.

**What is the culture of the VFCA?** The culture of the VFCA is one that promotes togetherness in its approach to maintaining public trust through education, legislation and safe work practices.

**What does the VFCA do that makes you proud?** I am proud of the VFCA, but to singularly point out one area that makes me the proudest is that the VFCA awards scholarships and awards. This ensures that future generations of public safety personnel will have the necessary resources to help subsidize some of the financial hurdles in the pursuit of an education.

# VIRGINIA TASK FORCE 1 DEPLOYS TO HAITI AFTER EARTHQUAKE

An urban search and rescue team from Fairfax County headed to Haiti after a devastating earthquake hit the country on Saturday, August 14th.

Virginia Task Force 1, sponsored by the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, joined federal disaster response crews. In their response to the Haiti earthquake, Fairfax County has deployed a Medium USAR Team as part of USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Assistance Response Team.

A team of 65 rescue professionals will take 26 tons of rescue and medical equipment to the country, plus four search dogs.

Captain Kristi Bartlett and her dog Ivan are going to put what they've trained for into practice and find survivors buried in the rubble.

"That person may be barely responsive, they may be unresponsive. If the person is alive, the dog's gonna get there and bark and let people know, hey, there's somebody here, because they may not be strong enough to scream out for help," Bartlett said. The 7.2 earthquake has killed at least 2,207 people, injured more than 12,268 others and destroyed nearly 130,000 homes. As we went to press more than 344 were still missing. People in the Caribbean island nation rushed into the streets to seek safety and to help rescue those trapped in the rubble of collapsed homes, hotels and other structures.

Once the team is in Haiti, they'll assess for hazards, including gas and electrical dangers. They'll also make sure structures are safe for the dogs and rescuers.

Members of the team are taking two dozen tons of rescue and medical equipment, including tools to assist in breaking through concrete to reach survivors.

Bartlett said its rewarding work.

"I look forward to getting in and helping as much as we can," she said.

The earthquake struck the southwestern part of the hemisphere's poorest nation, almost razing some towns and triggering landslides that hampered rescue efforts in two of the hardest-hit communities. The disaster added to the plight of Haitians, who were already grappling with the COVID pandemic, a presidential assassination and deepening poverty.

The epicenter of the quake was about 78 miles west of the capital of Port-au-Prince, the U.S. Geological Survey said. The widespread damage could worsen by early next week, with Tropical Storm Grace predicted to reach Haiti late Monday or early Tuesday.

The 65 person USAR team returned from Haiti on August 26th after completing its USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance mission. 4 deployed members remain in Haiti assisting the UN as they coordinate United Nations OCHA humanitarian assistance.

# VA TF 2 ACTIVATED TO MA/NJ AHEAD OF HURRICANE HENRI



VATF2 Photo

Several members of Virginia Task Force 2 headed to Boston ahead of Hurricane Henri. Eight members of Virginia Task Force 2 East Coast Cache have been activated to support the White Incident Support Team (IST). The team left Virginia Beach Saturday, 8/21/21, around 5 a.m. and were headed to Boston, MA, in preparation of Tropical Cyclone Henri which was upgraded to a hurricane Saturday morning. A Virginia Beach Fire Department-sponsored agency, VATF-2 USAR is one of 28 FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Teams positioned across the country. VATF-2 has conducted search and rescue operations in the aftermath of numerous disasters including aiding in the search and rescue operations in Surfside, FL to assist with the Champlain Condo collapse.

Twenty-seven members of VA-TF2 were activated by FEMA for a Mission Ready Package-Water (MRPW) and East Coast Cache to support the Blue Federal Government Incident Support Team. The teams will support the missions from the remnants of Hurricane Ida in the Northeast. The Task Force was headed to Hillsborough, New Jersey.

The IST-Cache team returned home to Virginia Beach just after 4:00 on August 25th.

# VATF2 MOVED AND IS STAGING IN LOUISIANA AS HURRICANE IDA MAKES LANDFALL AS A CATEGORY 4 STORM.

On August 27, 35 members of VA-TF2 East Coast Cache were activated to support the White Incident Support Team (IST) in preparation of Hurricane Ida. They left around 10 p.m. and are headed to Alexandria, LA, to stage and await further orders from @FEMA.

The team returned home to Hampton Roads on Sunday, 9/5/21.

**WELCOME HOME to both TEAMS!**



# VFCA BOARD SELECTION TOUCHSTONES

Once again it's time to think about board seats and several committee positions that will come up for election and/or appointment in 2022. With that in mind, the board is announcing a call for candidates. Any VFCA member in good standing (i.e., one who is current on dues) is eligible to apply for a committee or board-level position or nominate a fellow VFCA member to serve the organization in this capacity. If possible, board members should have previous committee level work prior to being nominated for a Board position. The term of service is one year following the installation in February 2022.

Current board members may declare their candidacy as well, and each will go through the same review process as other candidates.

To help ensure that the most qualified candidates attain these positions, the executive officer's and board has developed the following list of criteria to guide the nominating committee in selecting the board slate. Those VFCA members wishing to serve on the board or a committee should review the following traits before declaring their candidacy.

## Attributes & Characteristics

- Understands, and is committed to, the VFCA and its organizational strategies
- Has experience with other organizations
- Has demonstrated an ability in and commitment to teamwork
- Has demonstrated a willingness to make tough decisions
- Can focus on projects and tasks
- Possesses a broad understanding of current membership needs, the industries with whom we interact, and the customers we serve
- Has effective interpersonal and communications skills
- Demonstrates leadership skills
- Can commit to full participation on the board in terms of preparation, board meetings, and committee assignments
- Has a flexible schedule that allows for annual commitment of approximately 10-15 days for meetings and travel, plus research, e-mail communication, phone calls, and writing articles for Commonwealth Chief magazine, their division or other work as necessary
- Has the consistent e-mail and web access needed to support communication, board/committee work, and research
- Has the ability to bring one new sponsor to the VFCA annually

## Knowledge & Understanding

- Demonstrates a knowledge of the goals and objectives of the organization
- Has specific experience necessary to the success of the organization at the time of the nomination
- Understands organizational structure and planning methods
- Knows the contemporary options for governing organizations
- Understands the contemporary issues facing VFCA

## Diversity

- Brings diversity to the organization as it relates to such things as geography, experience in the VFCA, types of members, and the fire/rescue service environment
- Contributes fresh perspectives and new ideas
- Signals to current and potential members a commitment to openness and inclusiveness
- Attracts potential members who might be from traditionally underrepresented groups

The nominating committee (appointed by President Keith Johnson) will review all candidate nominations, narrow the field, and interview finalists. The nominating committee members will have diverse backgrounds and come from all across Virginia. They will possess a wealth of experience as it relates to this task.

The committee will select a slate of individuals that will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval at the December 2021 meeting. At that point, Board members will have an opportunity to participate in the election process by accepting or rejecting the slate. An option will also exist to withhold acceptance of one or more candidates on the slate.

Successful candidates will take their positions on the board following the Installation of Officer's Ceremony on February 23, 2022.

**All interested parties should contact the VFCA Executive Director, Chris Eudailey no later than November 1, 2021. You may reach him by phone at (540) 809-9397 or [executivedirector@vfca.us](mailto:executivedirector@vfca.us)**

# COULD YOUR DEPARTMENT BENEFIT FROM A STATEWIDE AWARD AND \$500? NOMINATIONS FOR BEST PRACTICES IN FIRE SERVICE HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARDS

Health, safety and wellness within fire departments are top priorities throughout the Commonwealth and across the nation. In Virginia, most departments have developed extensive policies, practices and/or procedures to address this important issue and to ensure the health, safety and wellness of their members. We all know that before we can care for the public, we must ensure that our personnel are trained, equipped, conditioned and capable of effectively performing the functions for which the public expects from us. This means having fit personnel who know how to operate safely and who practice safety, health and wellness 24/7. It means departments having those necessary guidelines, policies, procedures and/or practices in place so that our members know what is expected and it means ensuring that these expectations are followed from an individual perspective, from a crew/team/company/ unit/station/shift perspective and from an overall departmental perspective. There are many excellent examples/models of health and safety practices that have been implemented by departments of all kinds (volunteer, combination and career) in the Commonwealth. Why not have your department nominated and recognized as an award-winning agency that is committed to the health, safety and wellness of the overall department and, in particular, its members.

Each year, the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association – Health and Safety Committee coordinates a “Best Practices in Health and Safety” awards program through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation. This program seeks to recognize programs from volunteer, combination and career fire departments in the Commonwealth of Virginia annually during the VFCA Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in February. Three awards are given, one in each category (volunteer department, combination department and career department). Winning departments receive a \$500 contribution from the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation. Wouldn't it be nice for your department to receive \$500 to support its operations in some way? Probably more importantly, this would be a fantastic message to send to your members that their organization has been recognized for programs that show your commitment to health, safety and wellness.

Nominations are currently being accepted in each of the three categories (volunteer, combination and career) between now and December 1. This year the VFCA/VFCF is utilizing an on-line submittal process which is available on the VFCA web site at [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us) and by selecting the tab titled “VFCF Health and Safety Awards Submission.” It is desired that nominations be submitted on-line, however for those unable to do so a form has been included with this publication. All nominations/ submittals (electronic and printed/mailed) must be received on or before December 1, 2021. Programs/practices etc. implemented within the current and two prior years (2021, 2020 and 2019) will be considered.

Recognition for the latest awards will occur at the 2021 VFCA Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in February at the Virginia Beach Convention Center.

# VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS FOUNDATION BEST PRACTICES IN FIRE SERVICE HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation is pleased to announce the annual “Virginia Fire Chiefs Best Practices in Fire Service Health and Safety Awards.” The VFCA and the VFCF are committed to fostering health and safety within the various fire departments throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. This award program was created to further recognize the health and safety efforts of Virginia fire departments. The awards are intended to acknowledge creative, comprehensive and/or significant accomplishments and programs that provide for the health, safety and welfare of our fire service members. Each year the VFCA/VFCF will honor formally established fire departments within the Commonwealth of Virginia, in each of the following three categories: volunteer fire department, career fire department and combination fire department. The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation Best Practices in Fire Service Health and Safety Awards recipients will be announced and honored at the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association's--Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in February 2022. Award winning departments will be presented with an award and the VFCF will make a \$500 contribution to each winning department. Information about this program is available on the VFCA website at [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us)

## Nomination Information

Nominations (electronic or by mail) for the upcoming “Virginia Fire Chiefs Best Practices in Fire Service Health and Safety Award” program must be received on or before December 1, 2021:

On-line electronic submittal of nominations is preferred and the appropriate information can be found on the VFCA web site at [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us) and by selecting the tab titled “VFCF Health and Safety Award Submissions.”

For those departments unable to submit an on-line nomination the attached form can be used and mailed to:

Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 699  
Blackstone, Virginia 23824

Questions may be referred to Chris Eudailey, VFCA Executive Director, at (540) 809-9397 or email [executivedirector@vfca.us](mailto:executivedirector@vfca.us)

## Criteria

Any fire department within the Commonwealth of Virginia that has established creative, comprehensive and/or significant accomplishments/programs that provide for the health, safety and welfare of their members. Program must be in place/operational at time of nomination and must have been implemented within the last three years.

## Eligibility

Must be a formally established fire department within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

One award will be presented in each of the following categories:

- Volunteer Fire Department
- Career Fire Department
- Combination Fire Department

## Selection Process

Once all packages are received, an award Selection Committee will review the nomination packages and forward their recommendation to the VFCA President and Executive Director.

## Awards Presentation

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation Best Practices in Fire Service Health and Safety Awards recipients will be announced and honored at the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association's--Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in February 2022. Recipients will receive the award and a \$500 contribution to the department.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The following five items must be addressed in a number-by-number format:

- 1) Brief Abstract of Accomplishment/Program: Brief executive summary the accomplishment/program.
- 2) Brief Description of Fire Department Nominated: Provide a brief overview of the nominated fire department.
- 3) Description of Accomplishment/Program: Describe the accomplishment/program being nominated, including its objectives and clientele being served.
- 4) The Results/Success of the Program: Provide a description of the results and success of the accomplishment/program in meetings its objectives (provide examples and measurements where possible).
- 5) Worthiness of Award: Provide brief justification for why this accomplishment/program should receive this award.



# VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS FOUNDATION

## BEST PRACTICES IN FIRE SERVICE HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARDS



### APPLICATION/NOMINATION FORM

Name of Fire Department \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Fire Chief \_\_\_\_\_

Check One Volunteer [ ] Career [ ] Combination [ ]

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Accomplishment/Program Information:

Accomplishment/Program Title:

Implementation Year \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting documentation must be attached to this application/nomination form.

**COPY FORM AS NEEDED**

# 2021 MEMORIAL SERVICE TO BE HELD

The 2021 Annual VFCA Memorial Service for those we have lost during 2021 will be held once again during the 2022 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference held in Virginia Beach on February 23, 2021. If your department has lost a member during 2021, you are asked to pass that information on to the Chair of the VFCA Health and Safety Committee, Stephen P. Kopczynski utilizing the form shown below.

## MEMORIAL INFORMATION SHEET

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

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

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

Cause of Death (If available) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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# Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation

P.O. Box 699, Blackstone, VA 23824

Phone: (888) 818-0983

Web Site: [www.vfca.us](http://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](http://www.vfca.us).

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

# VFCA Member Advantage



## Mission Statement

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

### Member Benefits

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

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

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

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

#### Educational Seminars

From broad-based tactical and fire ground

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

#### 2. Information & Idea Exchange

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

#### Exhibitor Trade Show

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

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

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

#### Networking Opportunities

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

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

#### 3. Political Action

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

#### Advocacy

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

#### 4. Personal/Family

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

### Membership Categories

Annual Membership fees  
(Check the appropriate category)

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

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

## Membership Application

Join today by filling out the membership application and paying online at [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us) 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](mailto:memberservices@vfca.us)

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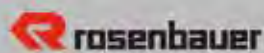
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# COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - October 2021

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