

COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - October 2024

Chief



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COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - October 2024

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IN 2024: SMOKEY BEAR TURNED 80

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Vance Cooper
2024 VFCA President
Virginia Beach Fire Department

Virginia Fire Chiefs Association has already begun efforts of advocating, educating, and leading among our elected officials on the number one most important issue - Funding. HB 2175 from two sessions ago highlighted Virginia's Fire Service shortcomings because of inadequate funds. A follow-up study to HB 2175 was requested by the General Assembly this year and Virginia Commonwealth University's Wilder Center was selected to lead this effort. The VFCA is participating on this team and will make sure your voice is heard through communicating what is most important to you. Today, we know that incorporating additional testing methods during annual health screenings related to cancer and cardiovascular disease can drastically lower our mortality of occupational illnesses. Reducing cost and wait times of heavy apparatus will help us effectively and safely respond to our communities call for help. Reducing or eliminating the impacts of unfunded mandates surrounding recent changes in pharmacy & OSHA regulations would provide relief to staffing shortfalls and strained budgets. Each of these are impacting every one of us and remains our top priorities. As you continue these conversations in your community please remember to highlight:

- Cancer is the leading cause of firefighter death annually followed by cardiovascular disease.
- Firefighters have a 9% higher rate of cancer diagnosis and a 14% higher mortality rate than the general population.
- The International Agency for Research on Cancer identifies our profession as a Group 1 carcinogen.

- Toxic industrial chemicals and materials found in our PPE, Fire Stations, all fires as well as hazardous materials incidents contribute to the increased risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease.
- Fire trucks cost over one million dollars and ambulances over four hundred thousand, which is more than double from 2 years ago and take over 40 months to receive.
- New pharmacy and labor regulations are from unfunded federal mandates and forces additional funds for staffing and equipment in a time that has already outgrown current budgets.

We also know that depending on your localities emerging challenges that other competing needs will exist. We stand ready to assist you with those too and the best way is to contact your VFCA's Division Vice President. The list can be found in each edition of Commonwealth Chief magazine or on our home page Board of Directors and Staff - Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (vfca.us)

As we enter Virginia's legislative season, remember how important your voice is - and we will emphasize your needs in our pursuit of worthy goals.

Respectfully,
Vance Cooper





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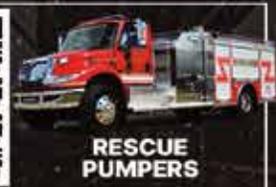
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2024 VIRGINIA CHIEF OFFICER ACADEMY

Battalion Chief Randy Feltner, 2024 VCOA Incident Commander

July 28th, 2024 was a special day in the lives of 30 Chief Officers and perspective Chief Officers from all over the Commonwealth as they became the newest graduates of the Virginia Chief Officer Academy. They joined an elite club that has less than 250 graduates of this program since its inception in 2016.

The Virginia Chief Officer Academy accepted students from all corners and backgrounds to include volunteer and career Chief Officers from departments serving rural and suburban settings, cities and federal installations. The curriculum design of the Virginia Chief Officer Academy is to take the knowledge these current and perspective Chiefs have and enhance it to fully prepare them for the job both on and off the fireground. There is a diverse array of speakers that are brought in to accomplish this goal. These speakers come from all walks of life in public service to include current and former Chief Officers, City Managers, Leadership from the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and a Chief of Staff for two Governors.

The Class of 2024 was a special group that was chosen from one of our largest applicant pools in recent memory. These graduates are listed below.

The application process for the 2025 Academy will open in the early spring of 2025, please stay tuned to the VFCA website and Virginia Chief Officer Academy's Social Media pages for information. If you are a current or perspective Chief Officer, this Academy will be a life-changing experience.

On a personal note, serving as the Incident Commander for this year's Academy was the biggest highlight and highest honor of my career. Serving alongside my friend Wendy Harrison, the VFOA Incident Commander was a great experience, we worked well together as a team but as a girl dad it was wonderful to see her put in the work as the first female Incident Commander in the history of the VFOA. The Chief Officer Academy would not have been a success without the unbelievable team we put together. We had 5 new staff members, but you wouldn't have known it watching them work over the months prior and during the week we were in Richmond. I will close by saying thank you to the TEAM, while I will be stepping away and Battalion Chief Meade Whitaker will be taking the lead I do so with a smile on my face because I know the Academy will be strong as ever as our team steps up and continues to make it an amazing experience for the future of Virginia's Fire Service Leadership.

2024 VCOA Staff

Incident Commander – Randy Feltner (Naval District Washington)

Deputy Incident Commander – Meade Whitaker (Albemarle County)

Logistics – Section Chief – Tavish Valdez (Virginia Beach), Kyle Hehl (Suffolk), Jonathan Yeaman (Danville)

Operations – Section Chief – George Beodeker (Navy Region Mid-Atlantic), Jeremy Hartman (Salem), Courtney Cave (Shenandoah)

Planning – Section Chief – Donald Epps (Spotsylvania), Philip Liggins (Naval District Washington)

Battalion 1

Jonathan Apperson	Louisa County Dept. of Fire & EMS
Drew DeHaven	Winchester Fire and Rescue Dept.
David Harless	Danville Fire Department
Roger Kennedy	Naval District Washington Fire and Emergency Services
Jerry Richie	Hose Company Number 4

Battalion 2

Anthony Barakat	Chesapeake Fire Department
Troy Ellis	Navy Region Mid Atlantic Fire and Emergency Services
Baraka Kasongo	Roanoke Fire-EMS
Niclas Mitchell	James City County Fire Dept.
Christopher Shaver	Augusta County Fire-Rescue

Battalion 3

Ty Burch	Fort Belvoir Fire & Emergency Services
Diana Foley	Martinsville Fire & EMS
Christopher Kearney	Chesterfield County Fire and EMS
Duane Noell	Roanoke Fire/EMS
Michael Sima	Warren County Department of Fire and Rescue Services

Battalion 4

Shawn Case	Fort Belvoir Fire & Emergency Services
Christopher Ray	Henrico County Division of Fire
Brandon McAlexander	Martinsville Fire & EMS
Ryan Norris	Williamsburg Fire Department
Rebecca Smith	Roanoke Fire-EMS

Battalion 5

Riana Castilloveitia	Navy Region Mid Atlantic Fire and Emergency Services
Brandon Golla	Botetourt Fire & EMS
Richard Landon	City of Fredericksburg
Charles Perryman, Jr.	Culpeper County Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.
Christopher Stowell	Richmond Fire & Emergency Services

Battalion 6

Duane Dagers	City of Chesapeake Fire Department
Michele Greep	Henrico County Division of Fire
Shawn Maddox	Albemarle County Fire Rescue
Andrew Funk	Mount Weather Fire and Rescue Department
Sean Taylor	Rockingham County Dept. of Fire and Rescue



**A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO SUPPORTED
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THE VIRGINIA CHIEF OFFICER ACADEMY**

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2024 VFOA GRADUATES 40 NEW STUDENTS

Wendy Harrison

The 17th annual Virginia Fire Officer Academy (VFOA) was held June 23-28, 2024, on the beautiful campus of the University of Richmond. Living up to its age-old tradition, the academy was a huge success, graduating 40 students.

The VFOA would not be possible without the support of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and many other sponsors including the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and Atlantic Emergency Solutions.

A week-long residential academy, the VFOA is both challenging and rewarding to our students. We would like to thank the many instructors dedicated to delivering a curriculum determined to instill in the future leaders of the fire service the tools necessary to provide "Safety Through Leadership". At the culmination of the academy, our students, armed with their new-found knowledge, navigate through role-playing scenarios designed to put their skills to the test. Our instructors include:

Signature Team Building

Mr. Art Jackson (Eagles Nest Performance Management)
Mr. Randy Keirn (Fully Involved Consulting, Inc.)
Deputy Fire Chief Tim McKay (Chesterfield Fire & EMS)
Mr. Jeffrey Phipps, Jr. (Hanover Fire-EMS)
Mr. Kenny Mitchell (Operation Yellow Tape), and
Fire Chief Matt Tobia (Harrisonburg Fire Department)

The VFOA would like to recognize and congratulate the 2024-1 graduating class, representing 40 fire departments across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Douglas P. Brede, Albemarle County Fire and Rescue
Tracey L. Payne, Amherst County Department of Public Safety
Spencer R. Willett, Ashland Volunteer Fire Company
Gregory M. Pumphrey, Augusta County-Fire Rescue
Nathan T. Shields, Botetourt Fire & EMS
David J. Dean, Camp Peary Fire Department
Tyler W. Floyd, Charlottesville Fire Department
Ryan R. McCoy, Chesapeake Fire Department
Jonathan D. Merchant, Jr., Chesterfield Fire and EMS
Keivon D. Henderson, Richmond Fire and Emergency Services
Thomas B. Maxwell, Fort Belvoir Fire & Emergency Services
Phillip B. Peer, Frederick County Fire & Rescue Department
Shaun M. DeBlasio, Gainesboro Fire and Rescue
Mason R. Mire, Goochland County Dept of Fire- Rescue and Emergency Svcs
Jasper Allen L. Gutierrez, Hampton Division of Fire & Rescue
Christopher W. Fessler, Hanover Fire-EMS
Chase B. Coffey, Harrisonburg Fire Department
Larvell L. Mason, Henrico County Division of Fire
Adam M. Wood, Henry County Department of Public Safety
Stephen P. Rajotte, James City County Fire Department
Carrington C. Balderson, King George County Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Jonathan W. Harlow, Lexington Fire Department
Paul D. Austin, Louisa County Fire & EMS
Jamie L. Maxwell, Lynchburg Fire Department

Benjamin E. Dalton, Martinsville Fire & EMS
Ryan J. Bono, Mount Weather Fire and Rescue- FEMA
Tyler M. Brown, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire & Emergency Services
Donald E. Carter, New Kent Fire-Rescue
Ronald L. Smith, Norfolk Airport Authority Fire Department
Brandon K. Morse, Norfolk Fire-Rescue
Dennis S. Holmes, Jr., Portsmouth Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services
Jeremy S. Saum, Rockingham County Department of Fire & Rescue
Austin R. Maze, Shenandoah County Department of Fire & Rescue
Benjamin A. Wallace, Spotsylvania Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management
Jordan D. Taylor, Staunton Fire & Rescue
Matthew P. Caplan, Stephens City Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company
William A. Soucy, Stony Point Volunteer Fire Company
Ethan T. Hoover, Victoria Fire and Rescue Inc.
Robert W. Donaldson, Waynesboro Fire Department
Jacob M. Callis, York County Fire and Life Safety

We would also like to thank the dedicated staff members who volunteer countless hours behind the scenes ensuring the success of the academy. They are:

Incident Commander – Wendy Harrison, Chesterfield Fire and EMS
Deputy Incident Commander – Ryan Passera, King George Co Fire Rescue & Emergency Services
Deputy Incident Commander – Rachel Winter, Chesterfield Fire and EMS
PIO – Blake Roberson, Chesapeake Fire Department
Deputy PIO – James Fox, York County Fire and Life Safety
VFCA Liaison – Bill Donati, Powhatan County Fire & Rescue
Operations Section Chief – John Garner, Chesterfield Fire and EMS
Operations Deputy Chief – Willie West, Henrico County Division of Fire
Operations Staff- Jeffrey Phipps, Jr., Hanover Fire-EMS
Operations Staff – Chris Poff, Roanoke County Fire and Rescue
Curriculum Section Chief – Daniel Myers, Henrico County Division of Fire
Curriculum Deputy Chief – Ashley Fontaine, James City County Fire Department
Curriculum Staff – Cody Lewis, Fort Barfoot Fire and Emergency Services
Curriculum Staff – Anthony Conant, Henrico County Division of Fire
Logistics Section Chief – Jason Focht, Roanoke Fire-EMS
Logistics Deputy Chief – Stacey Wills, Roanoke Fire-EMS
Logistics Staff – Joseph Smallwood, Martinsville Fire & EMS
Planning Section Chief – Andrew Ware, Richmond Fire and Emergency Services
Planning Deputy Chief – Mark Seeterlin, James City County Fire Department
Finance Section Chief – Mechelle Jones, Chesterfield Fire and EMS
Finance Deputy Chief – Kris Emond, Camp Peary Fire Department
Technology Section Chief – Daniel Oursler, Spotsylvania Fire, Rescue & Emergency Mangement



VFOA Class 24-1



Instructor Staff – Class 24-1



We take great pleasure in announcing our esteemed Tuesday speaker at the Virginia Fire Officer Academy. We extend a warm welcome back to Randy Keirn, a renowned Chief Officer, Instructor, Author, and Community Educator, who has dedicated his life to imparting leadership skills in every aspect of his professional and personal life. We looked forward to him sharing his valuable insights on conflict resolution, which will undoubtedly prove to be an enriching experience for our academy members.



The Virginia Fire Officer Academy takes great pleasure in announcing our distinguished speaker for Thursday. Chief Tim McKay, a seasoned fire service veteran with 32 years of experience and currently serving as Deputy Chief of Chesterfield County Fire and EMS, presented his esteemed program, 'Tough Talking - The Art of the Difficult Conversation.' This interactive lecture utilized case studies and real-world examples to engaged and challenged our members, fostering growth in leadership and communication skills.



The Virginia Fire Officer Academy is pleased to welcome back Art Jackson, a renowned motivational speaker and executive coach, to our academy. Art, a graduate of the United States Military Academy, brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table, having worked with the Department of Homeland Security, the Central Intelligence Agency and authored three leadership books. We are confident that his expertise and approach will set the tone for the week.



Our members had the privilege of hearing from Kenny Mitchell for the first half of the day. He shared valuable insights on mental health, its impact on the fire service, and the significance of prioritizing it in daily life as a firefighter and officer.



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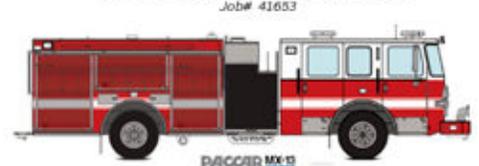
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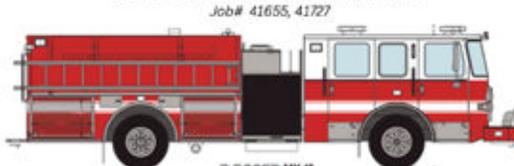
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VALUED LEADERSHIP

WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Ken Fowler



When we talk about valued leadership, let's begin by looking at some flawed thinking about leadership, some defensiveness that can sneak into our thinking:

I cannot tell you everything or show you everything I know – Because I will not have value.

I cannot approve of you to take a class I do not have – Because I will not have value.

I cannot let you attain a certification I do not have – Because I will not have value.

I cannot give you all the credit for an accomplishment – Because I will not have value.

I do not micromanage but I have to monitor what you do closely – or I will not have value.

I cannot let you take an assignment and do it your way with no oversight – or I will not have value.

I cannot let you make a command decision – or I will not have value.

I cannot let you have an idea and it be brought to fruition – or I will not have value.

Equipment on the truck, hose loads, and tools are placed in a way that can never be changed. This is how it must be, as a Chief Officer I may never use any of it, but that is how I want it to be – Because I have value.

I am sorry we do not have the money in the budget for anyone to go to any training conferences other than the Chiefs conference I attend – Because I have value.

I know we need to replace some bunker gear, but the money in the budget is tight and I need a new Chiefs unit this year – Because I have value.

I know there are maintenance issues with the apparatus, but the money in the budget is tight and we need iPads in all the Chiefs units – Because we have value.

Now that your attention has been captured and the wheels are turning either in one direction or another let us discuss what valued leadership is actually about. One direction

of the thought process might be that you know someone who this applies to, you are currently living in an analogous situation, or thinking this is specifically about you. The other direction might be, this is hilarious, nobody thinks or acts this way, each of those statements can be explained. Neither of those thought processes should ever be happening, if none of that applies to you or situation then great! If you are not a Chief Officer then make sure you learn that those thought processes do not give you value! If you are a Chief Officer and even one of those statements are true or remotely close to true then please understand you may not have the value you think that you do.

Valued Leadership is not about **YOUR** value, its about bringing value to your management style, it is about bringing value to your self-worth, it is about bringing value to your agency, it is about bringing value to your team, it is about bringing value to everyone in your charge. As firefighters it is our job to take care of the community, as Chief Officers it is our job to take care of our firefighters. The thought process of it being the job of the firefighters to take care of the Chief is incorrect. If the Chief takes care of the firefighters, then you can rest assured they will take care of the Chief.

In today's climate many things have changed over the past thirty years. Comments such as this is not the Fire Service I came up as part of, the newer generations are different both statements hold truth. Just because they are true does not mean they are incorrect. The one thing that has not changed, however, is the fact that without firefighters we do not have a fire department – but without a Chief a fire department does not stop operating. You can do an internet search and find numerous departments with a title of "Interim Chief," a challenge however would be to find a station full of "interim firefighters." That does not exist or is not realistic.

It is also true that it is more difficult now to find people who want a career in the fire service. It is also true that today's generation will move from job to job, or department to department more so than those of us who started in the fire service many years ago. Since those are true statements, it would seem that priority should be placed on investing and keeping those who we have in our ranks. Since the climate is what it is and maybe we cannot control budgetary issues, why would we want to contribute to the attrition of our ranks by having internal morale issues. Do firefighters leave the ranks because of money or promotional opportunities elsewhere? Yes, sometimes that of course does happen, but the reality is the majority of firefighters leave their departments because of morale issues. They become disgruntled by how things are being done, the failure to be heard the inability to feel **valued**.

So, how do we change our mindset? Valued leadership is not necessarily about changing the mindset of firefighters but changing the mindset of the leadership. If, as leaders any of those comments at the beginning are true then we are not participating in valued leadership, what we are doing is contributing to the morale issues within our departments. Let us look at each of those statements again in a different context.

I cannot tell you everything or show you everything I know – Because I will not have value.

As leaders it is your responsibility to show your crew or department everything you know, train them to be not only great firefighters, but great leaders. Inspire them to learn all you can teach them and to seek more. It is okay if they know more than you do, having an effective team of knowledgeable individuals is what gives you value!

I cannot approve of you to take a class I do not have – Because I will not have value.

If this is your thought process the problem is much deeper than something this article can help you adjust. Now, is it possible there are legitimate reasons a course cannot be approved? Of course, there are reasons, but as the leader how about practicing some transparency and having a conversation explaining the reasons. This gives you value.

I cannot let you attain a certification I do not have – Because I will not have value.

Similar response to the previous statement; never hold back a firefighter from attaining a certification that will or would benefit your department. Could there be times when a firefighter may have an interest in becoming certified within a discipline that perhaps your department does not practice or offer? For example, you may have firefighters interested in rope rescue but your department does not have the equipment or provide any type of high angle response. Never just say no, explain this to your firefighters and how you cannot pull money from the budget if other certifications have priority. However, can you work with the firefighters, could you offer time off if they pay their own way, could you offer compensation to the firefighter in lieu of paying for the course. Simply trying as opposed to just saying no has value.

I cannot give you all the credit for an accomplishment – Because I will not have value.

As a leader you should always give the credit to your crew or department and you should always take the blame and responsibility – that is what gives you value.

I do not micromanage but I have to monitor what you do closely – or I will not have value.

No one enjoys being micromanaged; the adage of trust your people, if you cannot trust your people you need different people is absolutely true. Allow your crew and your people to do the job you hired them to do. This does not mean you cannot provide guidance and training. Be a mentor, be a coach and be supportive, that is what gives you value.

I cannot let you take an assignment and do it your way with no oversight – or I will not have value.

Similar to being a micromanager, it is not to say however that an assignment should have parameters or directions they should. However, once you have given the directions and set the parameters allow your crew or personnel to accomplish the task. Just because they may have taken a different route than you would have does not mean they did it incorrectly. This could also be a great learning opportunity, once they have completed the task acknowledge that it was complete and all is satisfactory then maybe show them a separate way they could have accomplished the task. Be open-minded, you may be able to show them a unique way that is more effective or efficient, but if you are open-minded they may have just shown you a new way to accomplish the task. This is what adds value.

I cannot let you make a command decision – or I will not have value.

This can be tricky, in some instances of a life safety issue yes you have to override a command decision. If this happens, be sure to explain after control of the incident takes place why. Applaud the willingness to make decisions, use it as a learning opportunity to train, educate, mentor and coach those people. Making a mistake is not always to be a reprimand, making mistakes is the first step in learning how to command. This adds value.

I cannot let you have an idea and it be brought to fruition – or I will not have value.

Holding your people back is one way to for sure kill morale within your agency. Firefighters have ideas, your job as leaders is not to kill the idea, if you do this consistently what your

killing is the ability of your department to grow. This does not mean every idea has merit, nor does it mean every idea should be acted upon. What it means is that every idea should be listened to, listening to your crew or personnel do not cost anything, but time. Find the time to discuss ideas, do not kill the creative thinking. If something may not work, or it is not in a direction the department can go then explain that to the individual. If it is something worth trying then you should allow them to move forward. Give them some direction and parameters to work with and set goals and deadlines. Ensure there is feedback and follow-up and that deadlines are adhered to; if something is not working then offer suggestions for improvement this is what gives value.

Equipment on the truck, hose loads, and tools are placed in a way that can never be changed. This is how it must be, as a Chief Officer I may never use any of it, but that is how I want it to be – Because I have value.

Trust the people on your trucks, just because the flat load is your favorite remember your no longer pulling the hose. I think we can all agree that having consistency among our units has a degree of importance. However, if something at a different station on the opposite side of town works better than at the other stations what is more important, unit consistency or crew efficiency? As a leader listen to your crews, they know what works in their areas. What is more important that all units have a flat load or that all loads regardless of style is loaded correctly? Rather than saying no, how about allowing a crew or truck to try the changes with parameters? For example, allow that crew or engine to try the triple layer load, with the stipulation that the crew takes on the responsibility to train everyone on properly packing and loading the hose. The worst thing that will happen is department training and the ability of your personnel to know and understand the abilities of more than one hose load. This adds value.

I am sorry we do not have the money in the budget for anyone to go to any training conferences other than the Chiefs conference I attend – Because I have value.

Perception is reality and there could be many legitimate reasons as to why firefighters cannot be sent to conferences around the world. Firefighters see and know only that they were denied but the Chiefs went to the Chief conference. Find a way to use conference attendance as a reward, maybe for your firefighter or fire officer of the year. Attempt to get money in the budget to add a few more the opportunity to attend. Do not place your attendance and desire to attend over rewarding your people. This adds value.

I know we need to replace some bunker gear, but the money in the budget is tight and I need a new Chiefs unit this year – Because I have value.

It does not have to be a Chief's unit it can be anything where the perception is that items for the Chief always comes first. Remember perception is reality, this is not to say that there is not a time to replace a Chiefs unit or items needed by Chief Officers. However, have you done a true needs analysis, have you shared this with your crew and personnel, have you involved them in the needs analysis process?

Conducting a needs analysis, allowing involvement of your personnel and being transparent are important. This adds value.

I know there are maintenance issues with the apparatus, but the money in the budget is tight and we need iPads in all the Chiefs units – Because we have value.

The answer is the same as the statement above, conducting a needs analysis is the first step. This is not to say that things like MDT's are not needed but remember yet again perception is reality. Morale in your department needs to be positive and having firefighters riding in trucks that are falling apart while the Chief units have all the bells and whistles is a morale killer. Transparency is also a critical factor in stopping rumors. Communicate with your personnel, keep them in the loop, do not make excuses and let them see you working to ensure the equipment they use is well maintained. Everyone knows that sometimes the budget issues is out of everyone's hands; however, this does not mean you cannot communicate the obstacles you must overcome to your personnel. This adds value.

In summary valued leadership is not about a leadership style, it is not about how you manage, it is not about your opinion of how well you are doing. Valued leadership is the perception of your personnel as to what kind of leader you are which translates to morale of the department. The better the morale the less attrition you will have in your ranks.

Valued leadership is about understanding where the value in your department resides, and that value is in your firefighters.



Over the past 36 years Dr. Ken Fowler has been involved in fire suppression, technical rescue operations, hazardous materials response and training and education throughout the fire service. Dr. Fowler has served on various NFPA committees and been a member of many national response and training organizations. Dr. Fowler is a Certified Fire Officer (CFO) with a doctorate in Educational Leadership and is currently the Assistant Director of Operations & Accreditation for the University of Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute. He can be contacted at kenfowler@ku.edu

Governor's Fire Service Awards **VOTE NOW!**

Nominations for the 2024 Governors Fire Service Awards are OPEN. Submit your nominations today!

The **Governor's Fire Service Awards** were established in 2002 as a formal recognition of excellence in Virginia's Fire Services.

The awards are presented annually to recipients in eight categories. Each category, save the Private Sector Excellence and Civilian Excellence in Fire Service Support, includes a volunteer and career recipient.

Awards are presented annually at the **Virginia Fire Rescue Conference** in Virginia Beach, Virginia

MEET THE CHIEF



Getting to know Christopher Payne.

In this issue we will meet one of the many fire chiefs who will be spotlighted in Commonwealth Chief this year. Here we take a look at Chris Payne, Chief of Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire and Emergency Services.

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

CP: I have over 22 years in the fire service.

CC: Please describe your career journey...

CP: In 1990, I embarked on my journey in fire and emergency services as a volunteer in Virginia. At 15 years old, I joined the Sperryville Volunteer Rescue Squad and earned my Emergency Medical Technician certification by 17. I furthered my education at Northern Virginia Community College, where I received my Virginia Cardiac Technician certification in 1995.

In January 1996, I enlisted in the U.S. Army as a Combat Medic. My service included

deployments to Bosnia and the Middle East with HHB 6-52 Air Defense Artillery, followed by a stint at Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty), NC, with the 28th Combat Support Hospital. After completing my active duty service, I began my civilian professional career with Madison County EMS.

Subsequently, I joined Loudoun County Fire and Rescue, VA, where I graduated from the fire academy as part of Recruit Class 6 in 2002. In January 2005, I left Loudoun County and became a Captain for the County of Orange Fire & EMS before transitioning to the Department of Defense in 2007. For ten years, I served as a Firefighter/Paramedic at Quantico Fire & Emergency Services. During my time at Quantico, I contributed to the Rappahannock EMS Council Protocol Committee, was a member of the Quantico Rescue Task Force, and completed Tactical Medic Training in Niagara, New York. As one of the team leaders, I was responsible for training personnel for active shooter events and establishing the installation's STOP THE BLEED program.

In 2017, I accepted the position of Assistant Chief of Emergency Medical Services at Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire & Emergency Services (NRMA F&ES), where I managed the EMS program across a 10-state operating area. With the support of the agency personnel, NRMA F&ES became the first DoD Fire Service recognized by the American Heart Association with the Mission Lifeline - Bronze Award. At NRMA F&ES Fire Headquarters, I also served as the Acting Deputy Chief of Operations and Division Chief of Technical Services.

In late 2019, I was promoted to NRMA F&ES District Fire Chief for Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Weapons Station Yorktown, and Cheatham Annex, NRMA Fire District 2. In June 2023, I was appointed Deputy Fire Chief of Administration at NRMA Fire Headquarters, and in September 2023, I was selected as Fire Chief.

I received an Associate's Degree in Emergency Medical Services Technology (Paramedicine) from Northern Virginia Community College and became a Nationally Registered Paramedic in 2000. I continued my education by receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Emergency Management in 2017 and my Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership with a concentration in Public Administration in 2018, both from Waldorf University. Additionally, I am pursuing post graduate studies in Public Administration at Liberty University, part-time.

Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to have many mentors. My parents, Geraldine Baily and Francis Payne, instilled strong moral values in me. My grandfather, Larry Sheppard, taught me the importance of a solid work ethic. Professionally, retired Captain Daniel Corder from Loudoun County Fire Rescue, retired Captain Gary Lewis from Quantico Fire & Emergency Services, retired Deputy Chief Monty Willaford and retired Fire Chief Kevin Janney from CNRMA F&ES dedicated their time to help me grow as a firefighter and supervisor.

Lastly, I owe much of my success to the unwavering support of my children, Dustin Wright, Julia Wright, and Christopher Seth Payne, and my late wife, Jennifer Payne. Jennifer was my lighthouse throughout my career, always providing support and guidance. We were together for over 20 years before she passed away in August 2022 due to complications from COVID-19.

CC: Please describe your Form of Government...

CP: Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire & Emergency Services is a Department of Defense Federal Fire Department with both civilian and military firefighters.

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

CP: Federal fire departments in the United States, such as those operated by the

Department of Defense (DoD) on military bases or by other federal agencies like the National Park Service, receive their funding through the federal budget. In cases of significant emergencies or natural disasters, Congress may approve supplemental funding to address immediate needs. This can include additional resources for federal fire departments responding to large-scale incidents.

CC: What population does you department serve...

CP: Over 600,000 civilians and military

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

CP: Navy Region Mid-Atlantic (NRMA) encompasses a vast geographical area, providing support and oversight for numerous installations and activities within its jurisdiction. The exact square mileage covered by NRMA can be challenging to pinpoint due to the nature of its operational scope. NRMA encompasses 20 states, 14 installations, and 50 Naval Operational Support Centers (NOSCs). These areas consist of NAVSTA Newport RI, NSA Hampton Roads VA, NSA Northwest Annex VA, WPNSTA Yorktown VA, Cheatham Annex VA, NAS Oceana VA, Dam Neck Annex VA, SUBASE New London CT, WPNSTA Earle/Colts Neck NJ, NAVSTA Great Lakes IL, JEB Little Creek-Fort Story VA, NSA Mechanicsburg PA, NSA Philadelphia PA, Norfolk Naval Shipyard VA, NAVSTA Norfolk VA, NSY BOS Portsmouth NH, NSA Crane IN.

CC: Describe the department composition...

CP: Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire & Emergency Services currently has 619 civilian firefighters and 12 active duty Navy firefighters. We are anticipating adding an addition 44 firefighters in FY25 and another 32 firefighters in FY26. Bring our total to 707. We staff 24/7/365. I report directly to the Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic (CNRMA) Deputy Director of Public Safety Ms. Linda Vacca. The overall Navy Fire & Emergency Services program is managed by Commander Navy Installation Command (CNIC) Director Carl Glover.

CC: Describe the department equipment...

CP: Within these installations listed above, there are 31 Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Stations. The Department provides structural, shipboard, and aircraft fire protection, emergency medical services, hazardous material response, technical rescue, hazardous condition standby, disaster response support, emergency de-watering, fire risk management, courtesy support, special event standby, fire investigation, fire inspection, public fire education services and mutual aid to the jurisdictions surrounding our installations. The department operates 30 engine companies, including 9 quint apparatus, 10 aircraft rescue firefighting companies, and 7 ladder companies. Additionally, NRMAFES staffs and cross staffs a combination of 22 basic and advanced life support ambulances and numerous other specialty command, rescue, foam, water supply, and hazardous material response vehicles.

CC: Describe your call summary...

CP:

Incident Group	Total call volume region wide (CY2023)
False Alarm and False Call	3296
Fires	287
Good Intent Call	1335
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	3356

Overpressure, Rupture, Explosion Incidents	19
Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Incidents	6169
Service Call	1543
Severe Weather and Natural Disaster	4
Special Incident Type	5
Total	16014

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

CP: Funding is the most challenging issue facing our department. The need to transition to non-fluorinated or PFAS-free gear, update SCBA, and cover day-to-day operational needs has made funding a significant concern. Due to increased manufacturing costs and inflation, items now cost 50% more than they did prior to COVID.

CC: How would you describe your management style?

CP: I would say I have a consultative management style. I ask for input from headquarters staff, district chiefs, and work groups for major decisions that will impact the agency in the long term. I like to include bargaining union members in working groups because they have a better understanding of the impact on operations. However, I retain final administrative authority over items that impact the agency as a whole.

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

CP: As the new Fire Chief for our agency, completing this task is at the top of my list. We are currently working on phased replacement plans and succession planning development for our personnel.

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

CP: Yes, the economy has made us look at how to do more with less. The Navy and the Fire Department missions continue to evolve to meet an ever-changing world and advancing technology. We are having to find more creative and cost-effective measures to purchase equipment, provide training, and deliver services.

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

CP: I see many challenges facing the fire service today. The first is the ability to find applicants willing to meet the mental and physical demands of being a firefighter. In my opinion, being a firefighter is one of the most rewarding jobs in the world. We are there to help people during some of the scariest moments of their lives. However, the pay for entry-level firefighters is not always sufficient for those looking to become financially wealthy. Another challenge is for the fire service to reduce its environmental impact. We are constantly reviewing new technology and processes to help us meet that goal.

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

CP: We look for individuals who are physically and mentally capable of meeting the demands of being a firefighter. They should be dependable, honest, have a good work ethic, and be able to obtain and maintain a security clearance.

CC: How do you view training?

CP: With the ever-changing trends in the industry, training helps us stay ahead of those demands. It also teaches personnel new skills and prepares them for new opportunities. Training not only keeps firefighters safe but also aids in career advancement, professional development, and personal growth. I have been an avid supporter of training at all levels

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

CP: Some more than others. Our agency is spread across 20 different states. We have interactions with over 70 different departments. We continue to work on improving our working relationships with the state, county and municipal career and volunteer agencies within our areas of responsibility.

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

CP: I see the fire department continuing to evolve into an all-hazards service. I believe we will adopt a more community risk-based approach, combining personnel and types of apparatus to meet job expectations with fewer people and less equipment, but with higher training and better technology.

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

CP: The VFCA has help me network with other Virginia Fire Chiefs. It has provided me with exceptional training and the opportunities to provide training for our agency personnel. Our personnel annually submit applications to the Virginia Fire Chiefs and the Virginia Fire Officers Academy. This training is invaluable. By helping to make our department's officers and chief better leaders it ultimately improves services to the military and surrounding communities we serve. "Protecting those who defend America"

ON THE MOVE & ODDS AND ENDS

Harrisonburg Fire Battalion Chief Mike Armstrong named president of Virginia Fire Prevention Association

Harrisonburg Fire Department Battalion Chief Mike Armstrong has been named President of the Virginia Fire Prevention Association, the City of Harrisonburg announced recently. According to the release from City Communications Director Mike Parks, Armstrong has more than 25 years of experience in firefighting and fire prevention at the state and local level. He serves as HFD's Deputy Fire Marshal and oversees the department's Community Risk Reduction Division. As president of the Virginia Fire Prevention Association, will help to lead an organization representing professional involved in enforcing and developing fire safety regulations. Among them are state and local fire marshals, fire officials, fire inspectors, fire investigators, fire fighters, building officials and building inspectors.

Alexandria appoints new fire chief

Following a competitive nationwide search, Alexandria has appointed Felipe Hernandez as its next Fire/EMS Chief. Chief Hernandez comes from Rochester, NY where he served as chief of department and more recently as the head of the New York State Fire Academy. His official start date is July 8.

Hernandez will be the first Latino to serve as Alexandria's permanent fire chief. He has been in the fire service for over 25 years. He began as a firefighter and rose through the ranks, eventually holding leadership positions in the department's administrative, operations, training and emergency management divisions.

During his time in Rochester, Hernandez oversaw a department of 482 sworn and 24 civilian personnel, according to officials.

He is a Chief Fire Officer (CFO) designated by the Commission on Professional Credentialing and a National Emergency Medical Technician with additional certifications in fire officer instruction, health and incident safety.

Hernandez will take over for James Schwartz who served as Interim Chief since January.

"We cannot thank Chief Schwartz enough for his unwavering commitment to Alexandria," said City Manager Parajon. "Chief Schwartz came out of retirement to assist us because he loves the city, the fire and emergency medical services and the department. We are extremely grateful to him for his guidance, wisdom, and support as we continue to move forward."

Norfolk Fire-Rescue names first Black fire chief in its 150 year history.

The City of Norfolk will hold the swearing-in ceremony for its new Fire Chief on Friday, June 28.

Sidney Carroll was tapped to become Norfolk's fire chief in April. The Norfolk native joined Norfolk Fire-Rescue in January of 1982. He has served as a supervisor in all three operational battalions within the city.

Carroll is the first African American chief in the department's 150 year history.

The ceremony takes place at 10 a.m. at the MacArthur Memorial Theater, 198 Bank St. in Norfolk.

Pulaski County hires fire chief for county's first paid fire department



The County of Pulaski has announced the hiring of the fire chief for its first paid fire department. According to the county, Brandon Hamblin will take office July 16. Hamblin will serve as the department head and oversee the county's six volunteer fire and rescue departments. Hamblin has served the Town of Pulaski Fire

Department since 2005 as a firefighter, fire lieutenant, EMT, training officer, and captain. Additionally, he served as the deputy emergency services coordinator for the County of Pulaski, a wildland firefighter for the Virginia Department of Forestry, and is currently the chief of the Newbern Volunteer Fire Department. "I am honored to have been selected for this position and to serve my community in a different but perhaps more impactful and universal way," expressed Chief Brandon Hamblin.

Former Salem Fire and EMS chief Pat Counts passes

Former Salem Fire and EMS Chief Pat Counts passed away Thursday night at the age of 72. Counts served the citizens of Salem for 40 years before retiring in 2014.

He began as a Salem firefighter in December 1974 and he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the Fire Prevention Division in 1990. In 1996, Counts became Salem's assistant fire chief and in 2001 he replaced Danny Hall as Salem's fire chief. Ironically, Counts officially took over as chief on Sept. 11, 2001.

Services were held on July 18th at 11 a.m. Salem Church of Christ

Carl N. Cimino, Sr., former DFP Executive Director passes

Carl Nicholas Cimino, Sr., 98, died June 15, 2024, having lived a long and fulfilled life.

Carl was born in Richmond, graduated from Benedictine High School. He served his country as a Marine in World War II and the Korean War. He graduated from Hampton Sydney College and later obtained his master's degree from what is now Virginia Commonwealth University.

Carl, a dedicated public servant, for both Chesterfield County and the Commonwealth of Virginia became the first Juvenile Court Service Unit Director in Chesterfield County.

He later switched professions to fire safety and prevention and finished his career as the Executive Director of Virginia Department of Fire Programs. He also spent uncountable hours as a volunteer fire fighter at both Manchester Volunteer Fire Department and in Goochland County.

A gathering of friends and family took place on Friday, June 21, 2024, at Bliley's Funeral Home, 3801 Augusta Ave, Richmond, VA 23230, where a Funeral Service was held Saturday, June 22, 2024 at 11 a.m. A reception for guests followed the service. Interment took place at Mt. Calvary Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please donate to a local fire department, Tuckahoe Volunteer Rescue Squad, or other community service organization.

Joe Adrian Mellender passes

Long time VFCA member, Joe Mellender passes away. Please see the obituary below. No services shown.

In loving memory of Joe Adrian Mellender (Fairfax, Virginia), who departed this world on July 20, 2024 at the age of 89. Joe Adrian leaves behind a legacy remembered by family and friends. Family and friends are welcome to leave their condolences on this memorial page and share them with the family.

As we bid Joe farewell, let us not mourn the absence of his physical form, but rather celebrate the essence of his spirit that lingers in the spaces between moments. For Joe Adrian is not truly gone, but merely transformed, his energy intertwined with the fabric of the universe itself, forever dancing among the stars.

Services were held Tuesday, August 6, 2024 at Jerusalem Baptist Church 5424 Ox Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039.

Governor Glenn Youngkin Announces Additional Administration and Board Appointments

VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES BOARD

Kevin Duck, President, of Chesterfield Insurers was named Commissioner. He is also with the Carrsville Volunteer Fire Department in Isle of Wight.

New VFCA Administrative Assistant Hired

My name is Dione Facka and I am a seasoned marketing and administrative professional with over 20 years' experience in the industry. Born and raised in Chesterfield County, I hold a BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University and recently graduated with an MBA in Marketing from Longwood University. Outside

of work, I love to spend time with my family, baking sweet treats and doing my best to successfully grow a garden. I'm honored to be a part of this amazing organization and look forward to working with all of you to further the VFCA's mission.

Petersburg appoints new fire chief with 35 years of experience

Wayne Hoover, a man with 35 years of experience working with fire and EMS departments in Virginia, will soon step into the role of Chief of Petersburg Fire and Emergency Services. On Thursday, Aug. 8, the City of Petersburg announced Hoover's appointment to the role of city fire chief. According to a press release, Hoover began his 35-year-long career as a Petersburg firefighter. Since then, he had filled multiple different roles, including serving as the fire chief and emergency management coordinator for Colonial Heights. Hoover retired from his role as fire chief after 31 years with Colonial Heights this past June. In addition to his time with fire and EMS, Hoover was elected to and previously served on the Lunenburg County Board of Supervisors.

Dinwiddie County Announces Chief of Fire & Emergency Management Services

The Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors is pleased to announce David Y. Kissner, II as the County's new Chief of Fire and EMS.

Chief Kissner brings more than 32 years of public safety experience. He is a team-oriented and personnel-focused firefighting professional. Chief Kissner served the citizens of Colonial Heights, Virginia as Firefighter/EMT/Paramedic, Lieutenant/Paramedic, Battalion Chief, and most recently, Deputy Fire Chief. He holds an extensive list of certifications through the Department of Fire Programs and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. He is certified in the National Fire Academy Incident Command System and is a Nationally Registered Paramedic.

"David Kissner's vast experience and proven leadership ability make him the ideal choice as our new Chief of Fire and EMS, said W. Kevin Massengill, County Administrator. "I am confident that under his direction, Fire and EMS, Emergency Communications, and Animal Control will continue to excel in providing top-tier services to our community. Chief Kissner has an impressive track record and his professional expertise ensures that Dinwiddie County is in capable hands as we further enhance these vital services."

"David Kissner's selection as the new Chief of Fire and EMS for Dinwiddie County is truly exciting for our department and community", said Interim Chief Dawn Titmus. "I have known Chief Kissner for as long as I've been involved in Fire & EMS. His extensive experience and leadership in emergency services make him an invaluable addition to our team. We look forward to working alongside him to continue providing the highest level of service to the citizens of Dinwiddie County."

Chief David Kissner and his wife are residents of Dinwiddie County, where he has volunteered with the Ford Volunteer Fire Department (Company 2). Chief Kissner will officially begin employment with Dinwiddie County on September 16, 2024.

Dale City Assistant Chief passes

Major Stephen Todd Chappell "Todd/Steve", 61 of Stanardsville, VA departed this life on Friday, August 23, 2024 at the University of Virginia Hospital surrounded by

family and friends. Born April 6, 1963 in Radford, Virginia and was the son of the late John Hanson Chappell, Sr. and "Sylvia" Meador Hughes.

He is survived by his wife Dinah/Doodah W. Williamson, daughters Merrie and Emily Chappell; stepmother Mrs. John Chappell, "Doroyjy", stepfather Phillip Hughes, brother John Hanson Chappell, Jr.; sister Laura Chappell Arnold (Baron) and his precious little niece Maren, and nephew Emmet, brother-in-law, Ted Haskins (Pam), sisters-in-law. Jeanette Meade, Darlene Meade (Calvin), Cheryl Evans (Pic), Susan Jones (Zonya), Temple Coates, (Kenneth), cousin David Chappell (Joan) and Robbie. Nephew Jim, nieces Logan and Tylee), many, many extended nephews, nieces and great, great nephew and his precious love, our dog Bella.

A funeral service was held at 11:00 am on Saturday, September 7, 2024 at Preddy Funeral Home Chapel in Madison, Va. with David H. Zimmerman officiating. A visitation for family and friends was on Friday, September 6, 2024 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at the funeral home. Following the service there was a Celebration of Life at 4:00 pm at Dale City Volunteer Fire Department, 1355 Hillendale Dr., Dale City, VA. 22193, at the Desanto Community Hall, Dress casual.

Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal passes

We have just learned about the passing of Steven Phillips who served as the Chief Deputy of the VA State FM Office and was in charge of the VA Fire Marshal Academy. As additional details become available, we will be sharing these with the full board. Please keep the Phillips family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Paul Mauger named Interim Chief of Colonial Heights Fire & EMS

On Tuesday September 3rd Chief Paul Mauger was named interim chief of Colonial Heights Fire & EMS. He expects to serve in that role for approximately 3-6 months.





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FEBRUARY 17, 2025 - FEBRUARY 22, 2025

Monday, February 17, 2025



Mike Daley
Fireground Strategies: Size-Up for Suppression,
Survivability and Stabilization



Nick Peppard
Firehouse Culture: Ideas Over Egos



George Lindbeck, MD
Managing the Patient in Shock



Edward Landgrover
Transformation and Innovation:
Being a Champion for Change in Your Department



Joseph R. Polenzani
Leadership Lessons from "Band of Brothers"



Lee Watson
High Speed, High Energy Trauma 2.0



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2025 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 17, 2025 - FEBRUARY 22, 2025

Tuesday, February 18, 2025



Scott Russell & Ben Bosley
"When Meters Matter"
Air Monitoring for First Responders



Vickie Taylor & Lisa Demarco Tilley
The Power of Five:
Stress First Aid Leading Actions



Matthew Tobia & Michelle Albert
Inside the Firehouse: Understanding the
Injuries We Inflict on Each Other



Dr. Denis Onieal
Leadership - Lessons from the Line



LeRoy Smith
"The Drift to Failure: Uncovering the Hidden Factors
Negatively Affecting Fire Department Performance."



Michelle Albert
Chill Out: Calming the Trauma Brain



REGISTRATION IS OPEN
FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO
WWW.VFCA.US



Help keep residents safe during a natural gas emergency

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

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

How to recognize a pipeline leak

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

Note: Be aware that "odorant fade," while uncommon, can occur. Odorant fade occurs when a physical or chemical process causes the level of odorant in the gas to be reduced. This can happen in both existing gas pipe and new installations. Be aware that some individuals may not be able to detect the smell of the natural gas odorant because they have a diminished sense of smell, because the scent is being masked by other odors in the area or because the odorant has diminished so that it is not detectable. Some gas lines, due to their unique function, may not have odor at all.

Learn more

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

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

Complete your training today!

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

virginiannaturalgas.com/respondertraining
(Use password: virginia)

Help keep everyone safe during a natural gas emergency

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

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

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

How we respond

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

Prevention – the best defense against leaks

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

- Understand that natural gas is lighter than air and displaces oxygen. Although natural gas is non-toxic, in extreme cases of oxygen displacement, it may lead to asphyxiation. Natural gas has a risk of ignition near a spark or open flame.
- Know where the pipelines are in your jurisdiction. If you notice any missing or damaged pipeline markers, contact Virginia Natural Gas at **1.877.572.3342** so they can be replaced.
- Virginia law requires all underground utilities be marked before any type of digging or excavation. Be on the lookout for any suspicious activity or unauthorized digging. If the excavator has not notified the state of their intent to dig, they must stop all activity immediately. The excavator is required to present a valid dig ticket number when requested by first responders. Also, no one, including homeowners, should be digging, ditching, drilling, leveling or plowing without having first contacted our state's One-Call number (**811**) to locate underground utilities.
- Remember, pipeline markers, like the sample pictured, indicate only the general area of the pipeline and not the exact location or depth. Pipeline markers may not be present in all areas.
- Information about transmission pipelines operating in your community is available through the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) and online at: npms.phmsa.dot.gov.



 **Virginia Natural Gas**



Online Survey

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

2025 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 17, 2025 - FEBRUARY 22, 2025

Wednesday, February 19, 2025



Kerry Henderson and Kyle Matousek
To Infinity and Beyond!

Harnessing the Power of Soft Skills for Success
Both Inside & Outside the Four Walls of the Firehouse



Amber Moore and Kari Magner

Can't We All Just Get Along?
The Comm vs The Field



Bobby Drake & Eddie Buchanan

Creating and Refining a Fire Academy:
The Role of the Training Officer



Nick Peppard

Running Scared:
Risk Management NOT Risk Aversion



Joseph Polenzani

Fire Officer Decision-Making:
From Theory to Practice



Megan Vaughan, MSN, RN

EHAC & STEMI Metrics:
How Pre-Arrival Care Affects Patient Outcomes



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AMBULANCES



Roanoke County Fire & Rescue Vinton First Aid Crew

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2025 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 17, 2025 - FEBRUARY 22, 2025

Thursday, February 20, 2025



Kelly Rumsey & Tracey Taylor
The Virginia Trauma System and Trauma Triage



Greg Wormser and Nestor Mangubat
Your Leadership Compass:
Using it to Manage Crises and Navigate Change



Nikki Charles & Sabrina Zambito
Incorporating Facility Dogs to
Enhance Fire Rescue Programs



Phil A Jose
The Art of Reading Smoke: The Next Generation



Scott Medlin
The 10 Code Mindset:
Stay alive and thriving even amidst stress, demands, and
trauma experienced in the career and in life.



Michael Barakey
Six Steps to Becoming a Critical Decision Maker:
Leadership 101



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2025 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 17, 2025 - FEBRUARY 22, 2025

Friday, February 21, 2025



Michael Carter

Leadership Expectations:
What does your team expect?



Nicholas Higgins

The 5-Tool Firefighter:
Five Key Attributes to a Well-Rounded Firefighter



Wayne Bailey

Leading with Drones in the Fire Service



Jonah Smith

Engine Company Operations and Victims:
A Real Life Hat Dance



Bob Page

Simulation Escape Rooms



Dr. William Brady

Management of Cardiac Arrest



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Virginia Department of Forestry

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2025 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 17, 2025 - FEBRUARY 22, 2025

Saturday, February 22, 2025



Matthew Tobia & Timothy McKay

Unplugged Round II: Perspectives on the Fire Service... Ask Anything - No Holds Barred!



Jonah Smith & Benjamin Martin

Leveraging Your Why:
The Power of Purpose Driven Leadership



Melvin Carter

From Tradition to Transformation



Kevin Manhardt

The Ace in the Hole: The Squad Company



Richard Ray

Small Fire Depts:
Tips for Winning Big on the Fireground



Jenny Bragiel

Leveraging Social Media Workshop for
Retention, Recruitment and Education



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- Hale Qmax 1500 GPM pump
- Lowered crosslays
- Four 2-½" discharges
(One DS, One OS, Two DS rear)
- One 1-½" front bumper discharge
- One 3" - 5" OS LDH discharge
- Two 1-¾" preconnects
- One 3" deck gun plumbing
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- 172" aluminum rescue body
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2025 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 17, 2025 - FEBRUARY 22, 2025

“The Beach is Burning” VFRC Hands-On-Training Program



Can Confidence

February 17, 2025

Dynamic Fire Behavior

February 17, 2025

Chief Officer School

February 18-19, 2025

Engine Operations School

February 18-19, 2025

Company Officer School

February 18-19, 2025

Truck Fundamentals School

February 18-19, 2025

EMS Operations

February 18-19, 2025

Women of Fire & EMS Tactical Day

February 20, 2025

RIT: It Goes Beyond the Drills

February 20-21, 2025

DPO Rural Water Supply

February 20, 2025

Chief Officer Mayday Response

February 21, 2025

EMS Firefighter Treatment

February 21, 2025



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2025 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE

FEBRUARY 17, 2025 - FEBRUARY 22, 2025

EMS Training Preview

February 17, 2025

- "All Choked Up!" Managing Strangulation in the Pre-Hospital Setting (Cat. 1 BLS-13/ALS-18)
- Don't Make it Awkward: Providing Culturally Competent Prehospital Care (Cat. 1 BLS-15/ALS-20)
- Hats Off! Helmets & Airway Management (Cat. 1 BLS-11/ALS-16)
- ACE-ing Angioedema: Navigating the Challenges for EMS Providers (Cat. 1 BLS-14/ALS-19)

February 18, 2025

- Trauma Happens! A Closer Look at Mechanism of Injury (Cat. 1 BLS-13/ALS-18)
- Understanding Stroke: Causes, Mimics, Chameleons, and Treatments (Cat. 1 BLS-12/ALS-17)
- Managing Respiratory Distress in Infants in Children (Cat. 1 BLS-14/ALS-19)
- Usual and Unusual Neurological Conditions (Cat. 1 BLS-14/ALS-19)

February 19, 2025

- Guidelines for Prehospital Airway Management (Cat. 1 BLS-11/ALS-16)
- We are Gonna Pump You Up! VAD Devices and Artificial Hearts (Cat. 1 BLS-12/ALS-17)
- Dive! Dive! Dive! (Cat. 1 BLS-13/ALS-18)
- Playing With Fire (Cat. 1 BLS-14/ALS-19)

February 20, 2025

- Slap the Cap: The Comprehensive Capnography Course (Cat. 1 BLS-11/ALS-16)
- The Virginia Trauma System and Trauma Triage (Cat. 1 BLS-13/ALS-18)
- One Last Breath? The Critical Asthma Patient (Cat. 1 BLS-14/ALS-19)
- Saving the Super-Utilizers (Cat. 1 BLS-15/ALS-20)

February 21, 2025

- Introduction to Mechanical Ventilation (Cat. 1 BLS-11/ALS-16)
- A Rational Approach to Cardiac Arrest Management (Cat. 1 BLS-12/ALS-17)
- MCS Education for EMS and First Responders (Cat. 1 BLS-12/ALS-17)
- A Comprehensive Look at Recruit Wellness (Cat. 1 BLS-15/ALS-20)

February 22, 2025

- Crisis De-Escalation and Self Defense Tactics (Cat. 1 BLS-14/ALS-19)
- The Virginia Ventilation Trial (Cat. 1 BLS-11/ALS-16)
- Welcome to the Main Event! Medical Planning for Mass Gathering Events (Cat. 1 BLS-15/ALS-20)
- TBI and ICP: The Pressure is on! (Cat. 1 BLS-13/ALS-18)



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VFCA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

2-4	VFCA Annual Retreat/BOD Meeting 0900 Hours	Harrisonburg
7 CC	9th Annual VFCF Golf Tournament	Blacksburg 0800 Hours

November

14-15	Company Officers Summit East Rivanna Volunteer Fire 0800 Hours	Keswick
19	Executive Officers Meeting 1000 Hours	Virtual

December

17	VFCA Full Board Meeting 1000 Hours	Glen Allen - VDFP
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Tentative 2025 Dates

January

21	Executive Officers Meeting 1000 Hours	Virtual
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February

17-22	Virginia Fire Rescue Conference	VA Beach
19	VFCA Full Board Meeting 1300 hours	VA Beach
21	Fire Board 1000 Hours	VA Beach

March

17	Executive Officers Meeting 1000 Hours	Virtual
22	5th Annual Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation 5K Run/Walk	Williamsburg

AFG, SAFER, AND USFA REAUTHORIZATION BILL SIGNED INTO LAW

On July 9, 2024, President Biden signed into law the Fire Grants and Safety Act (S.870). After two years of advocacy by CFSI and our National Advisory Committee members, the AFG and SAFER grant programs will continue to be able to deliver vital federal support to fire departments across the nation and enable them to address their baseline needs. Specifically, this bill:

- **Reauthorizes the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant programs through fiscal year 2028,**
- **Reauthorizes the U.S. Fire Administration through fiscal year 2028, and**
- **Extends the sunset date for AFG and SAFER to September 30, 2030.**

The path to reauthorization adds new meaning to the quote, "United we stand, divided we fall." Working together, CFSI, our National Advisory Committee members, leaders of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus and committees of jurisdiction, and other members of Congress built support for the legislation, which is why the measure achieved strong bipartisan support in both chambers.

While the legislative path for a bill to become a law can appear relatively straightforward, it is never smooth and requires constant, sustained, and coordinated effort. In this instance, the fire service remained persistent, staying the course and never relenting until the bill became law. The collaboration between the national organizations and many members of Congress cannot be understated and was essential in moving this bill forward, despite a series of hurdles.



Credit for passage extends to a large group of congressional leaders, including the following:

Congressional Fire Services Caucus Co-Chairs who demonstrate their strong support for the fire and emergency services every day and played vital roles in supporting this legislation:

- **Senator Susan Collins* - Lead Republican on the Senate version of the Fire Grants and Safety Act**
- **Senator Tom Carper* - original cosponsor of the Fire Grants and Safety**

Act and a negotiator on the bill

- **Senator Jon Tester*** - original cosponsor of the Fire Grants and Safety Act and Chair of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus in the 118th Congress
- **Senator Lisa Murkowski*** - original cosponsor of the Fire Grants and Safety Act
- **Congressman Bill Pascrell*** - Lead Democrat on the House version of the Fire Grants and Safety Act
- **Congressman Steny Hoyer*** - original cosponsor of the Fire Grants and Safety Act
- **Congressman Mike Bost*** - original cosponsor of the Fire Grants and Safety Act
- **Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick*** - original cosponsor of the Fire Grants and Safety Act

House and Senate Leadership:

- **Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer***
- **Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell***
- **Speaker of the House Mike Johnson***
- **House Majority Leader Steve Scalise***
- **House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries**

Committee Leadership who were original cosponsors of the bill and ensured that the legislation was able to successfully move through the House and Senate committee processes:

- **Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Gary Peters***
- **House Committee on Science, Space and Technology Chairman Frank Lucas***
- **House Committee on Science, Space and Technology Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren***

Lead sponsor of the House version of the Fire Grants and Safety Act:

- **Congressman Tom Kean***

** indicates that the member is part of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus*

Additionally, CFSI would like to offer a special thanks to the staff of the above offices who understand the needs and challenges of America's fire and emergency services and worked hard every day (and many nights) to move this legislation forward.

Finally, CFSI would like to thank those members of Congress who supported and voted for the bill during the committee and floor processes. We appreciate your understanding of the need to support America's fire and EMS personnel.

Next Steps

CFSI will continue to work to support robust funding for these programs and USFA. Most recently, CFSI worked with Reps. Bill Pascrell, Mike Bost, and Brian Fitzpatrick – House co-chairs of the Fire Caucus – to add \$7.5 million to the AFG and SAFER funding lines in the House FY2025 DHS Appropriations Bill. This amendment was accepted and the bill passed the House at the end of June. We will continue to advocate for funding for these programs and USFA as the FY25 process moves forward.

MANDATORY ONLINE ELECTRIC VEHICLE AND LITHIUM-ION BATTERY FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS COURSE HAS BEEN RELEASED...



The Electric Vehicle and Lithium-Ion Battery Fire Safety Awareness course has now been released.

HB2451 directed VDFP to develop this training and mandates every person engaged in firefighting activities, including volunteer firefighters, to complete the training program by December 1, 2025. Please encourage all personnel to complete the training as soon as possible.

This course is mandatory and must be completed individually. Everyone engaged in firefighting activities must complete this curriculum individually through Cornerstone. The training cannot be completed in groups.

While departments can link to the training in their Learning Management System, Cornerstone OnDemand is the system that will be used to track completions. No other learning management system will be consulted for this data. VDFP can provide a roster of completion from Cornerstone OnDemand upon request.

If any student has trouble logging in to CSOD, they should NOT attempt to create another CSOD account – this will create a problem for them in the future when they try to take another VDFP course. They should try to reset their password and if they are still having trouble accessing the system, they can contact their respective Division Office for assistance.

THREE MAYDAY FF COURSES REVISED

As many of you are aware, the current three MayDay Programs – Awareness (4 Hours), Operations (16 Hours) & Technician (16 Hours) – have been under revision. The MayDay Awareness Course, MayDay OPS TTT, and MayDay Tech TTT programs can no longer be requested. The predicted shut down of MayDay Operations and Technician Classes is January 1, 2025. This means, if you are requesting these two programs, the course will need to be completed by December 31, 2024.

The revised program will now be Firefighter Rescue & Survival, and will be 32 hours, consisting of 8 hours lecture and 24 hours for practical's. We have completed two full pilot Firefighter Rescue & Survival Program classes and one pilot instructor update since April 5, 2024. The program can be requested, as of now, if you have sufficient updated instructors to teach the course. The prerequisite for Firefighter Rescue & Survival is minimum age of 16 (with parent/guardian consent form signed) & Firefighter I Certified. For academies that include this program, it will need to be scheduled in such a way that your students are Firefighter I certified, when the course starts.

In order to take the instructor update, the instructor must be currently released at minimum of MayDay Operations TTT. The instructor updates will be in person sessions delivered across the Commonwealth in geographical locations and will be over two days. The first day will be a lecture review day, with some teach backs for the students. The second day will be a practical day, where the instructors undergoing the update will be physically performing the new/revised skills as part of their update. Some of the skills have not changed and will just be reviewed. What this means to your current instructors, is that they will have to travel to one of the locations to complete this update. We are working to do at least two updates per division, before the end of the calendar year. Each session will be able to accommodate up to 20 Students per session. Please ensure your MayDay Ops & Tech Instructors complete these updates as they are scheduled.

If you have any questions, contact Division 2 Chief Stewart at david.stewart@vdfp.virginia.gov.

VPSF MEMORIAL REALIZED ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY IN SEPTEMBER... SPECIAL SERVICE HELD

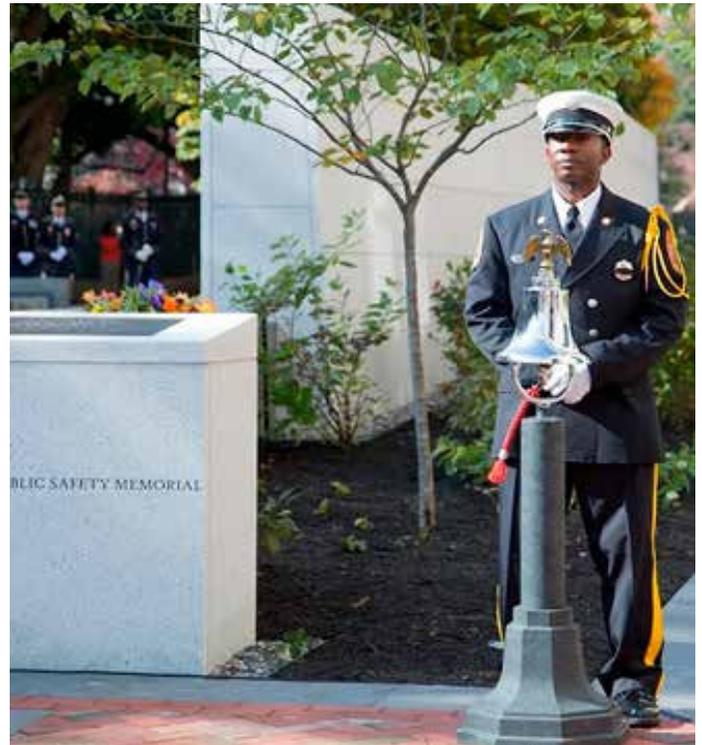
The Virginia Public Safety Foundation commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Commonwealth Public Safety Memorial on September 14, 2024, at 1:00 pm. Each of the names of the nearly 1,000 fallen heroes was read aloud during the service. These individuals died in the line of duty while serving as firefighters, police officers, deputy sheriffs, corrections officers, emergency medical service providers and serving in the Virginia Air National Guard.

Many gathered at the memorial, located in Capitol Square, Richmond, Virginia, on this special day and helped to pay homage to the men and women who gave it all for us.

The Memorial is located in a 150ft x 40ft area in front of the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond, Virginia. On the north side of the Memorial, the wall of names runs east/west, slightly elevated from the plaza, a subtle gesture that begins to create a more private space to experience the name of a loved one. A wide walkway runs adjacent to the memorial wall. Along the south side of

the walkway is a low water feature that allows for a visual connection to the Capitol. The space and sound of the water maintains the individual's privacy to contemplate the name on the wall. A bench along the fountain allows one to experience the entire wall of names, acknowledging as a group those who have sacrificed their lives to protect citizens of the Commonwealth.

A request was made to the VFCA/VFCF to help support the service with a donation. After meeting, the VFCA Foundation BOT approved a \$15K donation to help support the September event. Both the VFCA and VFCF were recognized for the donation.



2023 ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE



The 2023 VDFP Annual Report is available for review on the VDFP website.

The report includes an update from Executive Director Brad Creasy along with branch-specific reports from Training and Operations, Safety, Community Risk Reduction, the State Fire Marshal's Office, and Administration (Grants).

VFCA BOD TAKES A LOOK INTERNALLY...

Let me ask, "Have you ever been in a reflective mood and wondered if you are so close to something that you perceive you're not being objective?" That happened recently when the VFCA's President, Vance Cooper, was conversing with former Chief Cecil V. "Buddy" Martinette Jr. about his latest book. *Creating and Leading High-Performance Organizations* and his consulting firm, PB/T Consulting. Buddy offered to conduct an organizational assessment of the VFCA. The Board desires to take this already great organization to the next level. But what is that level? After more conversations with Buddy, we partnered with PB/T Consulting to develop and create a year-to-year organizational business plan to ensure the continuity of the organization's business while the members of the Board change.



Over the last three months, all VFCA Board of Directors, the VFCA Executive Director, and PB/T Consulting representatives have been meeting individually to create focus areas of effort and identify common themes in Board members' perceptions of organizational operations.

PB/T Consulting and the Board are currently focused on combining the feedback from honest and forthright conversations regarding organizational expectations into a comprehensive assessment of the organization's current reality. PB/T's partnership allows a deep dive into exploring organizational performance to get to the root of "why" we are exploring the need for organizational changes while also outlining the commitment leadership must have to make those changes. This introductory process means your Board of Directors is answering some tough questions.

Your VFCA recognizes the consistency of the effort and is committed to achieving a long-term plan for the organization's success. The goal is to ensure our partnership decisions, and the developed recommendations align with the established VFCA mission, purpose, and values. This "All-In" Board of Directors' strategic effort will define our organization's expected behavior to sustain leadership, advocacy, and educational excellence for Virginia.

If you want more information on this effort or the services supplied by PB/T Consulting, you can contact any of your Board members or visit www.PBT-Consulting.com.

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Please Contact: Matt H. Astrin, Principal | Director of Municipal & Public Safety Studio | mastrin@rrmm.com | 757.717.2788 | www.RRMM.com
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DHS ROLLS OUT NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR FIREFIGHTERS

THE TECHNOLOGY WOULD ALLOW FOR FIREFIGHTERS TO SEE THROUGH SMOKE.

Luke Barr

A helmet-mounted indoor visualization and navigation device that allows first responders to see through dark smoke could soon be available to fire departments around the country, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

The Department's Science and Technology Directorate is opening applications for fire departments around the country to apply for the technology developed by an Austin, Texas, startup Qwake Technologies. The technology was developed by Qwake along with the DHS through a 2020 contract to develop fire safety technology.

The device is called C-THRU, according to the Department.



An example of a thermal image from a C-THRU device.

DHS

"We know improved equipment and technology for first responders will help save lives and protect firefighters," said Dr. Dimitri Kusnezov, DHS Under Secretary for Science and Technology. "Through collaborative partnerships with industry, S&T supports the development of devices like C-THRU that address challenges we know exist for first responders, and we're leveraging emerging technology to meet their most urgent need.

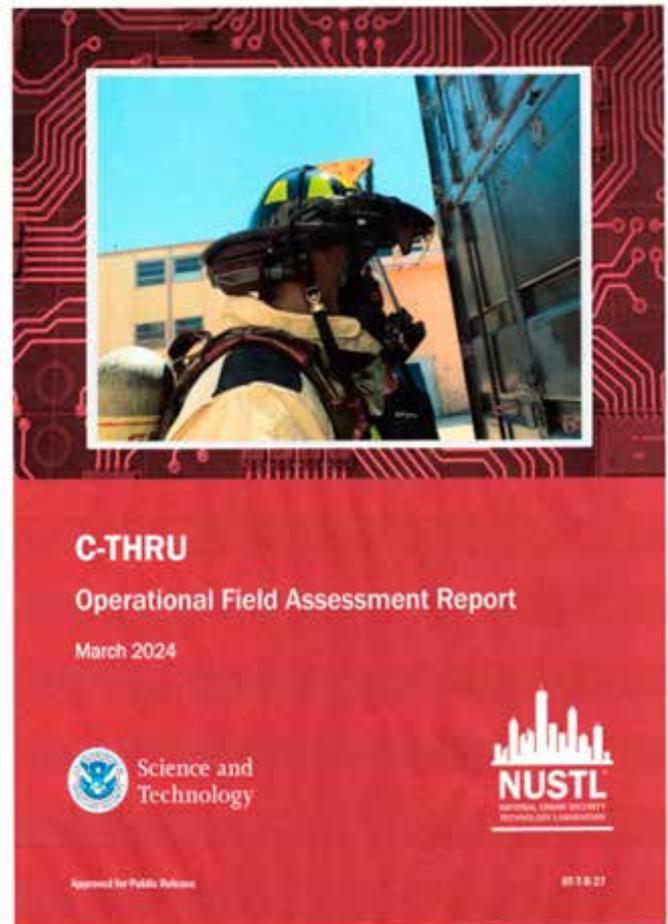
There are 400 prototype devices available for fire departments to apply for.

The device is hands-free, light-weight and has a high-speed thermal camera, mounted to the device and similar to those firefighters currently use, which captures surroundings.

"Along with providing a clearer, real-time view of an environment, C-THRU also helps reorient firefighters with navigation for backtracking that provides turn-by-

turn guidance," according to a press release from the department.

"If a firefighter does become lost in a burning building, a mayday function can be activated, which alerts other C-THRU wearers in the area to find the distressed first responder. Similar to a smartphone, the system will continuously improve with over-the-air software updates."



To learn more about the evaluator's findings and suggestions for improvement of the C-THRU technology, the C-THRU OFA report is available on the DHS website at: <https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/publication/c-thru-ofa-report>



KING GEORGE GRADUATES NINE FROM FIRST 28- WEEK RECRUIT ACADEMY

M. Passera, Division Chief of Training

On Friday, August 16th, 2024, King George Fire Rescue & Emergency Services held a graduation ceremony for nine graduates of their first 28-week Recruit Academy. These nine new firefighter/EMTs will be a huge help in filling their current vacancies in the field.

This is the first time in the department's history that they hired non-certified individuals and put them through a recruit school. In the past, King George would hire pre-certified candidates and put them through a two-, four-, or six-week orientation to get them ready to service the county. Included in the orientations were general overviews of department equipment, procedures, and guidelines. There would be two days of administrative procedures, one week of fire ground operations, and one week of EMS operations. Struggling with finding pre-certified firefighter/EMTs, the department leadership decided it was time to fund and deliver a full-time Recruit School.

Starting from the beginning, was a project that began over six months before the first day of the academy. The first part was to build the Training Cadre. This team consisted of Battalion Chief Ryan Passera, Lieutenant Carolyn McGee, and Lieutenant William Taylor. Next was to identify the curriculum. As with most localities, the 28-week Recruit Academy had the following courses: Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2, EVOC 1,2,3, Mayday Awareness and Operations, Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations, Emergency Medical Technician Basic, CPR, and NIMS courses. Chief Passera and Lieutenant Taylor are no strangers to delivering the fire-related topics of the Recruit School. They both have taught for many years in other localities and Chief Passera is on VDFP's Firefighter 1 and 2 curriculum committee. Lieutenant McGee has been teaching the EMT-B program for many years and has been a VOEMS Education Coordinator since 2018. Along with these three main instructors, there were many assistant instructors, subject matter

experts, support staff from the department, and external contract instructors who made the program successful. One of the hurdles that the training cadre met head-on was site logistics. Classroom, practical, and storage facilities were a main concern. Fire & Rescue Headquarters, which is housed at their Company 1 location, met the requirements for a majority of the curriculum. There is a large training room and a three-story training tower that was built in 2020 on-site which was beneficial to the program. The Recruit Academy then needed to travel to a separate location to perform multi-company operations, in-depth practical evolutions, and their live fire evolutions. The department partners with King George Parks and Recreation Department to utilize one of their 15-passenger vans to assist with traveling to and from training sites. King George County is one of the three partners of the Rappahannock Regional Training Center which is located in Spotsylvania County. This partnership proved to be beneficial in delivering the department's first academy.

Now the Training Division is taking a deep look into the entire program and conducting an after-action review with input from all parties. This will identify what areas can be improved on to make necessary changes in the preparation of Recruit Academy 6.

The department thanks all the recruits, staff, instructors, and support personnel who made this academy a success.

Testimonies:

- Recruit Charles Bullock, Academy President

- "It has been an honor to have participated in King George Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services Recruit Class 5. With all the rigorous training through the academy, I can't wait to continue my career with KGFRES and see what the future holds.

- Recruit Haley Zappas

- "My experience as a recruit in the King George Recruit Academy was incredible. I started the academy with no prior experience with Fire or EMS but with all of the knowledgeable instructors who helped provide us with the best training, at the end of our 28-week academy I felt more than ready to get out on the street and start working. The academy was definitely an experience of a lifetime."



Graduates: Charles Bullock, Cory Daniel, Harvey Goldsmith, Lydia Hansen, Jordan Jackson, Mya Outlaw, Derrick Shaw, Bentley Strickland, Haley Zappas

2024 MEMORIAL SERVICE TO BE HELD

The Annual VFCA Memorial Service for those we have lost during 2024 will be held once again during the 2025 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference held in Virginia Beach on February 19, 2025. If your department has lost a member during 2024, you are asked to pass that information on to us. On-line electronic submittal of nominations is preferred and the appropriate information can be found on the VFCA web site at www.vfca.us. 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, email executivedirector@vfca.us

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: _____





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 2025. 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 2025**.

WE NEED YOU!

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 Allen Baldwin) 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 2024 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 in February 2025.

All interested parties should contact the VFCA Executive Director, Chris Eudailey no later than November 1, 2024. You may reach him by phone at (540) 809-9397 or executivedirector@vfca.us



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**MORE INFORMATION TO COME
SOON.**

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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 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, 2024. Programs/practices etc. implemented within the current and two prior years (2024, 2023 and 2022) will be considered.

Recognition for the latest awards will occur at the 2025 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 2025. 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

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, 2024:

On-line electronic submittal of nominations is preferred and the appropriate information can be found on the VFCA web site at 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, email 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 2025. 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

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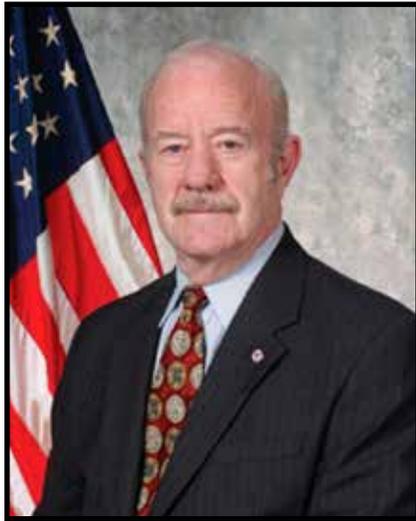
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Glenn A. Gaines

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 31st.
- 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 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.

Questions: ceudailey@vfca.us





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To view Public Safety contracts available through Sourcewell, click [HERE](#).

To check your Sourcewell member status or to view all contracts available to you through Sourcewell, visit the Sourcewell website, email service@sourcewell-mn.gov or call 877-585-9706.

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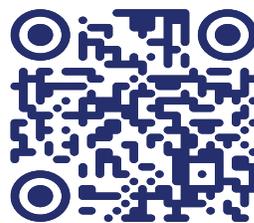


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Sponsor acknowledgment in tournament program

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Sponsor acknowledgment in tournament program

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

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Signage on driving range during event
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Hole Sponsor - \$125

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IN 2024: SMOKEY BEAR TURNED 80

Robert Hudson Westover
USDA Forest Service
December 14, 2023

A fire prevention legacy unmatched



Smokey on Airplane Cowling 1950 (USDA Forest Service image)

80 years is a tremendous milestone—for anyone. To make it to 80 means you have overcome life's greatest challenges and you truly become the elder, the sage, the one who knows a thing or two and should be listened to. Being the spokes-bear, if you will, of the longest running and most successful advertising campaign in American history, at 80 years old, I think Smokey Bear would agree.



And so does the USDA Forest Service.

Smokey Bear's official 80th birthday was August 9, 2024, but the Forest Service has been celebrating all year! (USDA Forest Service and Ad Council art)

Smokey's actual birthday is August 9. However, starting back in January, the Forest Service which has, in cooperation with the Ad Council and the National Association of State Foresters, managed the image of Smokey Bear since the 1940s launched a yearlong celebration. The kickoff started with Smokey sharing his iconic phrase of Only You Can Prevent Wildfires in the Tournament of Roses Parade on January 1.

In fact, across the country all sorts of activities have been planned from guest appearances at local events, a Facebook live stream from the California State Fair in July with Darley Newman, host of the PBS show Travels with Darley, and a social media campaign where the Forest Service is asking folks to sing Happy Birthday to Smokey with the hashtag #SingForSmokey.

Some of the #SingForSmokey videos have been streamed across numerous social media platforms on August 9 so get your vocal cords ready to belt for the bear when you see one! And the fun continues through the year with the Smokey Bear balloon appearing the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the lighting of the US Capital Christmas Tree!



Up, up and away in a beautiful balloon of Smokey Bear. (USDA Forest Service image)

To keep up on national events surrounding Smokey's 80th, follow the Forest Service social media sites as well as the Ad Council's Smokey Bear website www.smokeybear.com and social media sites.

Despite the success of Smokey Bear's campaign over the years, wildfire prevention remains one of the most critical issues affecting our country's forests and grasslands. With over 80 percent of wildfires being started accidentally or by careless or bad behavior, Smokey's message is as relevant and urgent today as it was in 1944.

Help us get the word out about Smokey's 80th by reposting official Forest Service or Ad Council social media posts or by telling all your friends and family that only they can help prevent wild fires by spreading Smokey's messaging far and wide.

To us, it's about Family,

we have your back!

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VIRGINIA'S FALL FIRE SEASON BEGINS

DRY SUMMER ACROSS VIRGINIA MAY PRODUCE BUSY FIRE SEASON

The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) reminds everyone that the fall fire season has arrived. From now through November, be extra careful when burning yard debris, or enjoying a campfire or backyard fire pit.

Low humidity and windy conditions, along with dry grasses and fallen leaves, combine this time of year to create favorable conditions for wildfires to spark and spread quickly. During years of dry summers – such as this one – wildfires are even more common.

“Most of Virginia had a very dry summer which causes leaves to fall earlier,” said DOF Chief of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. “Unfortunately, these factors only improve conditions for wildfires to occur. However, with basic fire safety measures, we can stop most wildfires before they start. It’s just like Smokey Bear says, ‘Only You Can Prevent Wildfires.’”

In Virginia, more than 75% of wildfires are human caused, with escaped debris burns being the leading cause. DOF has wildland firefighters assigned to every county across the Commonwealth who work with local fire departments to protect people, property and our natural resources. While the statewide 4 p.m. burn law is only in effect in the spring, be sure to always check with local fire officials in your area for possible regional restrictions or bans.

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TWO CAPITOLS CONSULTING LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM (VMSDEP)

The General Assembly has spent much of their summer working to find consensus on how to address the sustainability of the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP). In the early months of summer, the legislature convened in Richmond and passed a biennial budget that included new parameters and guidelines to tighten eligibility for survivors and dependents. These changes were intended to address the long-term sustainability of the program as the cost has increased 445% in just 5 years. However, the changes were made too quickly and left a lot of families around the Commonwealth in a state of uncertainty regarding how their benefits would be affected, especially for those students who were already committed to attend university in the fall.

Subsequently, General Assembly leadership and the Governor worked out a compromise, so the legislature came back to the Capitol in July to pass legislation that repealed changes to the VMSDEP, with one exception. The program now requires "satisfactory academic progress as defined by the institution for the purposes of eligibility under Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act". As a part of the compromise, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) has prioritized a study to make recommendations to the legislature regarding sustainability of the program, prior to the start of the 2025 legislative session. The legislature also provided an additional \$90M in the current budget to go towards the VMSDEP, totaling \$65M per fiscal year of the biennium. This amount covers approx 60-70% of the total program cost next year. As we move closer to the 2025 legislative session, we expect further discussion on the program and plan to keep you informed on those conversations.

In other news, there has been a change in Governor Youngkin's top leadership. Secretary John Littel was promoted to Chief of Staff, leaving a vacancy for the Secretary of Health and Human Resources. As we recognize the vital role of this secretariat regarding issues of importance to the VFCA membership, including the Office of Emergency Medical Service (OEMS) and the Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA), we have been working to schedule an introductory meeting with the new Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Ms. Janet Kelly. Secretary Kelly comes from an extensive background in State government to include working in various Governor's administrations and for members of the General Assembly.

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If you have any questions for your legislative team in Richmond, please feel free to contact Devon Cabot (devon@2capconsulting.com) or Maddy Busse (maddy@2capconsulting.com).

Virginia Fire Chiefs Association 2024 Volunteer Summit Series

JOIN VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE LEADERS AND FIREFIGHTERS FOR THESE **FREE** OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS ISSUES AND RECEIVE TRAINING PROVIDED BY THE VFCA AND THE SAFER GRANT PROGRAM.



APRIL 20, 2024
ABINGDON FIRE DEPARTMENT
ABINGDON, VIRGINIA



JUNE 8, 2024
HUGUENOT PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
POWHATAN, VIRGINIA



AUGUST 24, 2024
FIREMANS SPORTS ARENA
FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA



SEPTEMBER 21, 2024
THE OLIVER ROBERT DUBE
FIRE & RESCUE TRAINING ACADEMY
LOUDOUN, VIRGINIA



SEPTEMBER 28, 2024
CVCC BEDFORD CAMPUS
BEDFORD, VIRGINIA



OCTOBER 12, 2024
ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
ORANGE, VIRGINIA



OCTOBER 19, 2024
CARRSVILLE FIRE & RESCUE
CARRSVILLE, VIRGINIA



FOR MORE INFORMATION
GO TO VFCA.US



SKEET -N- EAT



**Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation
Inaugural
Skeet N Eat fundraiser
Rain or Shine**

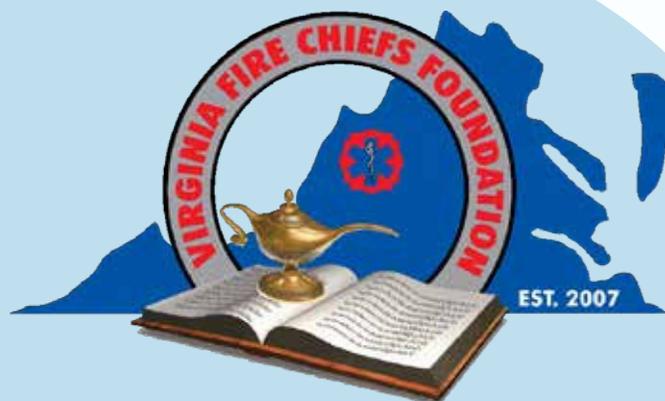
PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT
VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS
FOUNDATION

FLYING RABBIT SPORTING CLAYS

Friday, October 25, 2024

09.00 AM - 02.00 PM

SIGN IN BEGINS AT 7:30AM



**Sponsorship Opportunities
Available:**

**\$5000 Diamond Event Sponsor
(includes 12 shooters)**

**\$2500 Chief Sponsor
(includes 8 shooters)**

**\$1250 Deputy Chief Sponsor
(includes 4 shooters)**

**\$1000 Battalion Chief Sponsor
(includes 2 shooters)**

**\$500 Captain Sponsor
(no shooters)**

**\$250 Lieutenant Sponsor
(no shooters)**

**\$150 Firefighter Sponsor
(no shooters)**

PRIZES :

1st Place : \$

2nd Place : \$

3rd Place : \$

**\$115
lunch included**

Information & Registration
Chris Eudailey
dewdrinkers@verszon.net
Phone : (540) 809-9397



SKEET -N- EAT

October 25, 2024

9:00am-2:00pm

Sponsorship
Opportunities
Available



SAVE THE DATE

Additional information will
be available at
www.vfca.us

Location:

Flying Rabbit Sporting Clays

5537 S Valley Pike
Mt. Crawford, VA



1st Annual

Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation

Skeet-N-Eat

October 25, 2024

Rain or Shine



Flying Rabbit Sporting Clays 5537 S Valley Pike Mount Crawford, VA 22841

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

Sponsorship and Support Opportunities :

All Sponsors will be Acknowledged in the Commonwealth Chief Magazine

Diamond Event Sponsor - \$5,000

Registration includes:

12 shooters, 2'x10' Corporate banner placed on site and at the award ceremony

Chief Sponsor - \$2,500

Registration Includes:

8 Shooters, corporate banner 2'x8' placed onsite and at the awards ceremony

Deputy Chief Sponsor - \$1,250

Registration Includes:

4 Shooters, corporate banner 2'x6' placed onsite and at the awards ceremony

Battalion Chief Sponsor - \$1000

Registration includes:

2 Shooters

Sign on shooting sight

Captain Sponsor - \$500

No Shooters

Sign on shooting site

Lieutenant Sponsor - \$250

No Shooters

Sponsorship listed in event program

Firefighter Sponsor - \$150

No Shooters

Sponsorship listed in event program

Donation Only \$

Make check payable to: VFCA

Select your support or sponsorship from above:

Total Amount Enclosed: \$

Shoot Information

Registration Opens at: 7:30 AM

Start at: 9:00 AM

50/50 Raffle

Sponsor and Player Information:

Sponsor Contact:	Player 1: Email:
Sponsor Name & Address	Player 2: Email:
Phone:	Player 3: Email:
Email Address	Player 4: Email:

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation is a 501© 3 Organization – TIN 26-0694551

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

Chris Eudailey

10249 Kimlynn Trail, Chesterfield, VA 23838

(540) 809-9397 or ceudailey@vfca.us



Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation
2024 SKEET-N-EAT ENTRY FORM
OCTOBER 25, 2024

TEAM: _____

NAME: _____

STREET: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ Zip: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

ENTRY FEE: \$115.00 in advance, \$150.00 at the event if space is available. Limited to 120 shooters (Includes 1 round of skeet and lunch) Shooters are responsible for supplying hearing protection, eye protection, gun and shells. (We will be shooting 7 ½ , 8, or 9 bird shells) Hearing protection, eye protection, gun and shells are all available for purchase or rent for an additional fee at the event. The event will occur rain or shine.

Fee	Quantity	Amount
Registration		
Additional Lunch		
TOTAL	-----	

Additional lunch \$15.00
(1 lunch included with each entry)

I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge and agree to the following for and on behalf of myself and each person or party who is or may be accompanying me:

I hereby personally assume all risk in connection with shooting and other activities which may be conducted upon the premises of or in connection with Flying Rabbit Sporting Clays and further release Flying Rabbit Sporting Clays and the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation and their personnel for any injury or damage which may befall me or any person in my party or my dog(s) while on or about the premises of Flying Rabbit Sporting Clays including all risk connected therewith from shooting or otherwise, whether foreseen or unforeseen, and further agree to save and hold harmless Flying Rabbit Sporting Clays and the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation and their personnel from any claim by me, or my family, estate, heirs, other persons in my party, or assigns, arising out of or in connection with any activity which I or any party accompanying me may engage in upon the premises of Flying Rabbit Sporting Clays or in relation thereto. Flying Rabbit Sporting Clays and the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation are not responsible for loss or damage to any equipment, property, vehicle, or articles left therein or on the premises of Flying Rabbit Sporting Clays in case of fire, theft, vandalism or accident or any other cause.

I have read the range rules posted on the outside of the pro shop and I both understand them and agree to abide by them. I will report to management anyone I see violating any of these rules and I understand that I will be asked to leave the premises without a refund if I violate any of these rules.

I have read and agree to abide by the rules of this tournament.

Signed _____

Date _____

Make checks payable to: **VFCF**
Mail the entry form with your payment to:
Chris Eudailey
10249 Kimlynn Trail
Chesterfield, VA 23838

Mail entries must be received by October 11

WILL A FIRE TRUCK FIT DOWN YOUR DRIVEWAY?

In the event of a wildfire in your area, firefighters may need to reach your home. If firefighters cannot safely access your home, they will find an alternative way to get to you that may take longer – and when fighting fire, every second counts.

Help Firefighters Reach You

To enable firefighters and other emergency vehicles to locate and reach your home quickly it's important to establish a safe route with adequate driveway access.

Here are a few steps to prepare your driveway for emergency access that could make all the difference in reducing damage to your property during a wildfire or other emergency event.

Step 1: Position your address sign to be visible from the road from either direction.



Step 2: Make your home visible from the road so firefighters can tell if it's safe to enter.

Step 3: Clear trees, branches or brush from your driveway so it is at least 12 feet wide and that there is at least 13.5 feet of clearance to allow fire trucks access.



Step 5: Check that your driveway is free of gates, fence posts or other obstructions that could restrict access.

Step 6: Create a space at the end of your driveway with adequate room for an emergency vehicle to turn around once it reaches your home.

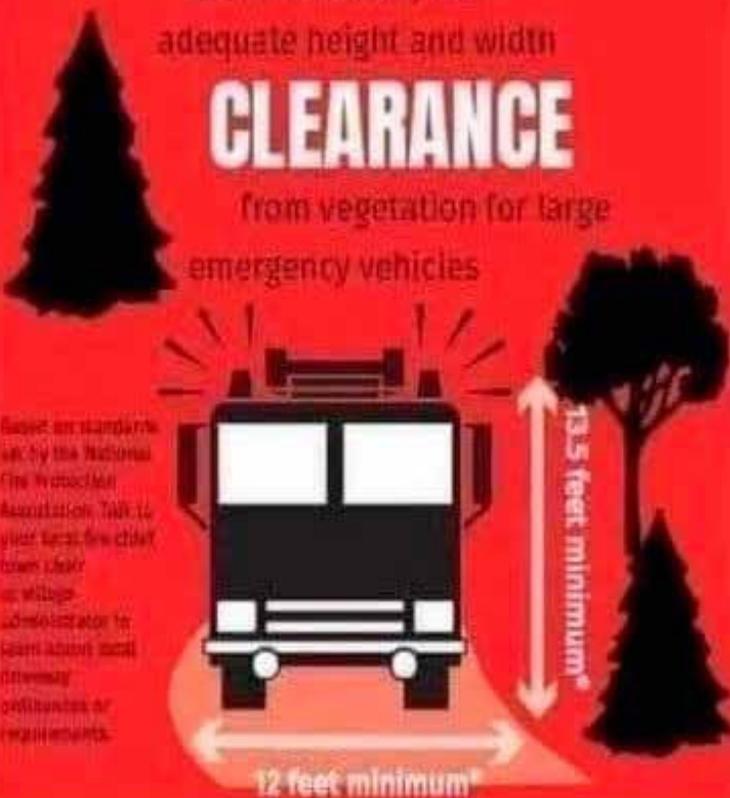
Step 4: Be sure your driveway's surface is firmly packed and is able to support the weight of emergency vehicles even in the spring when the ground is soft.



Ensure driveway has adequate height and width

CLEARANCE

from vegetation for large emergency vehicles



Based on standards set by the National Fire Protection Association. Talk to your local fire chief or village administrator to learn about local driveway clearance or requirements.

13.5 feet minimum*

12 feet minimum*

COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION UPDATES

The fire safety message below is written to be shared with educators and community members by fire departments across the Commonwealth.



ALCOHOL AND FIRE ARE A LETHAL MIXTURE

Alcohol and Fire Safety Tips

- After a party or get-together where alcohol was consumed, check for smoking materials, especially under cushions. Chairs and sofas catch on fire easily and burn fast.
- Don't consume alcohol and cook — you could fall asleep and cause a devastating fire.
- Make sure a working smoke alarm is installed; it significantly increases your chances of escaping and surviving a deadly fire.



DID YOU KNOW?

In most cases where fire fatalities have occurred on college campuses, alcohol was a factor. Approximately 25 percent of all campus fire fatalities follow a party.

There is a strong link between alcohol and fire deaths. Intoxication impairs judgment and hampers evacuation efforts — you may sleep through a smoke alarm or not react quickly enough to escape.

Fires often start because people who are drinking fall asleep or are not careful while smoking. Smoking combined with alcohol abuse exacerbates the risk of fires, fire injuries and fire deaths.

Visit www.usfa.fema.gov/college to learn more.

HOME FIRE PREVENTION

STAY SAFE, STAY PREPARED WITH FIRE ESCAPE PLANNING

The ability to escape quickly and safely during a home fire is critically dependent on early warning systems, such as smoke alarms, and thorough pre-planning escape paths. Fire can spread with alarming speed, often leaving as little as one or two minutes to evacuate once the alarm sounds.

Developing a Family Escape Plan

Creating a comprehensive fire escape plan is the cornerstone of ensuring safety during a fire. Draw a map of each level of the home. Show all doors and windows. Go to each room and point to the two ways out. Practice the plan with everyone in your household, including visitors.

Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Make sure that someone will help them.

Teach your children how to escape on their own in case you cannot help them. Make sure they can open windows, remove screens, and unlock doors.

If There is a Fire

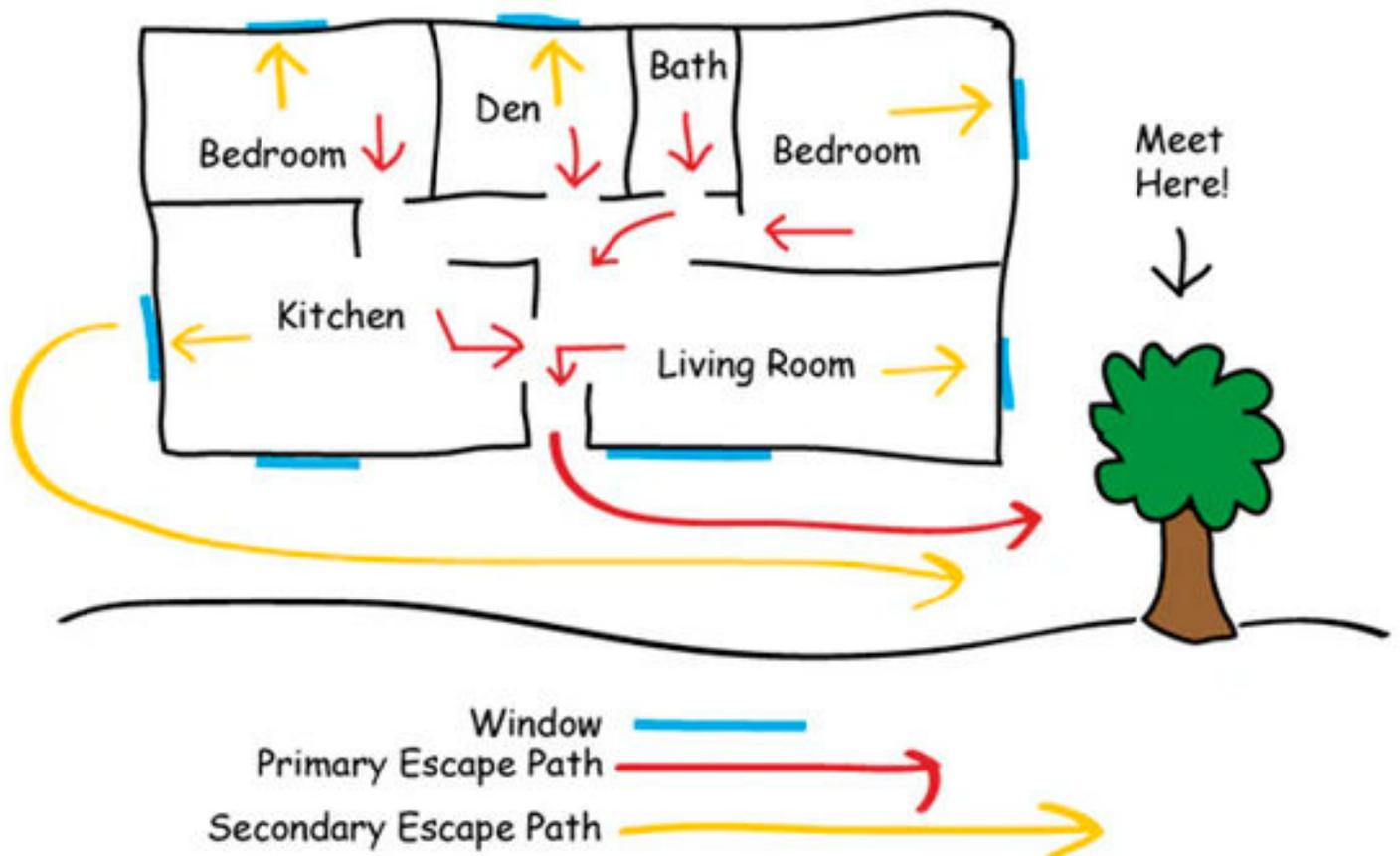
When the smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out. Go to the outside meeting place. Call 9-1-1 or the fire department.

If smoke is blocking your first way out, use your second way out. Smoke is poisonous. If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke to your way out.

Before opening a door, feel the doorknob and then the door. If either is hot, leave the door closed and use your second way out. If you open a door, open it in a slow manner. Be ready to shut it if heavy smoke or fire is present.

If you cannot get out, close the door and cover vents and cracks around the door with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call 9-1-1 or your fire department. Say where you are and then signal for help at the window with a flashlight or a light-colored cloth.

Fire escape planning is an indispensable aspect of home safety. By developing a detailed escape plan, ensuring clear and accessible routes, memorizing emergency procedures, and conducting regular drills, families can significantly increase their chances of escaping safely during a fire. Stay safe, stay prepared, and make fire escape planning a priority in your home.



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MBRACE ADVANCED AIRBAG SAFETY SYSTEM

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EXT BODY; 109 FOOT 4-SECTION REAR-MOUNT;
HOT-DIP GALVANIZED; WIRELESS REMOTE OPERATION



STAFFORD COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE 2024 EVI REHAB UNIT INTERNATIONAL MV

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INCIDENT RECOVERY; ALL ALUMINUM MODULAR BODY



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PO Box 699

Blackstone, VA 23824

COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - October 2024

Chief

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