

# COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - April 2024

*Chief*

## **VIRGINIA BEACH CHIEF VANCE COOPER INSTALLED AS PRESIDENT**



**VFCA'S CHIEF CHRIS EUDAILEY HONORED WITH THE GLENN A. GAINES LEADERSHIP LEGACY AWARD**

**ATLANTIC EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS JOE PACK PRESENTED THE 2024  
W. C. "BILL" SMITH PRESIDENT'S AWARD**

**RECIPIENTS OF THE 2023 GOVERNOR'S FIRE SERVICE AWARDS ANNOUNCED**

**2024 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE A HUGE SUCCESS!**



**NEW DELIVERY**  
**STEPHENS CITY FIRE & RESCUE**  
PIERCE VELOCITY ASCENDANT 100' HD AERIAL TOWER  
Sold by Jim Darr



**NEW DELIVERY**  
**BLACKSTONE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
PIERCE ENFORCER ASCENDANT 100' HD AERIAL TOWER  
Sold by Randy Smith



**NEW DELIVERY**  
**HAMPTON FIRE-RESCUE**  
PIERCE ENFORCER ASCENDANT 107' HD AERIAL LADDER  
Sold by Mike Yancey



**NEW DELIVERY**  
**RINGGOLD VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE**  
PIERCE ENFORCER HD RESCUE PUMPER  
Sold by Randy Smith



**NEW DELIVERY**  
**CITY OF DANVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
PIERCE ENFORCER HD RESCUE PUMPER  
Sold by Randy Smith



**NEW DELIVERY**  
**PAMPLIN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
PIERCE SABER PUMPER  
Sold by Randy Smith

## NEW ORDERS

- BLAIRS VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE • PIERCE ENFORCER HEAVY DUTY RESCUE PUMPER • Sold by Randy Smith
- BOONSBORO VOLUNTEER FIRE & RESCUE • PIERCE VELOCITY HEAVY DUTY RESCUE • Sold by Randy Smith
- CHARLOTTESVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT • PIERCE ENFORCER PUMPER • Sold by Kevin Sandridge
- CITY OF FAIRFAX FIRE & RESCUE • PIERCE VELOCITY PUC PUMPER • Sold by John Thompson
- CITY OF SUFFOLK FIRE DEPARTMENT • PIERCE ENFORCER PUMPER • Sold by Mike Yancey
- FREDERICK COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE • PIERCE ENFORCER PUMPER • Sold by Jim Darr
- HANOVER COUNTY FIRE / EMS • PIERCE SABER PUMPER • Sold by Mike Yancey
- LYNCHBURG FIRE DEPARTMENT • PIERCE ENFORCER 107' ASCENDANT TILLER • Sold by Kevin Sandridge
- MECHANICSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT • PIERCE COMMERCIAL TANKER • Sold by Randy Schwartz
- NEWARK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT • PIERCE SABER PUMPER • Sold by Doug Parker
- OAK LEVEL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT • PIERCE COMMERCIAL PUMPER • Sold by Randy Smith
- ORANGE COUNTY FIRE & EMS • PIERCE ENFORCER HEAVY DUTY RESCUE • Sold by Mike Yancey
- ORANGE COUNTY FIRE & EMS • PIERCE ENFORCER TANKER • Sold by Mike Yancey
- PALMER SPRINGS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT • PIERCE ENFORCER PUMPER • Sold by Randy Smith
- TOWN OF ABINGDON FIRE DEPARTMENT • PIERCE SABER PUMPER • Sold by Bobby St. Clair



**NEW DELIVERY**  
**VIRGINIA PORT AUTHORITY**  
PIERCE COMMERCIAL RESCUE  
Sold by Mike Yancey



**ALL DELIVERIES**

**ALL STOCK UNITS**



# COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - April 2024

# Chief

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***“Leadership,  
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Leaders”***



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**FIRE**   
**+ RESCUE**  
CONFERENCE

**SAVE THE DATE**

February 17-22, 2025

Virginia Beach Convention Center

Pre-Conference Sessions begin Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>st</sup>

Sponsored by the  
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Visit [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us) for info

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Vance Cooper**  
2024 VFCA President  
Virginia Beach Fire Department

Welcome everyone to the 96th year of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association. I am excited to serve as the 75th president and alongside the association's staff and board of directors that use their time and talents towards making the Commonwealth's Fire Service better each day. Along with each of them and our ambitious membership, we stay well informed and mission ready.

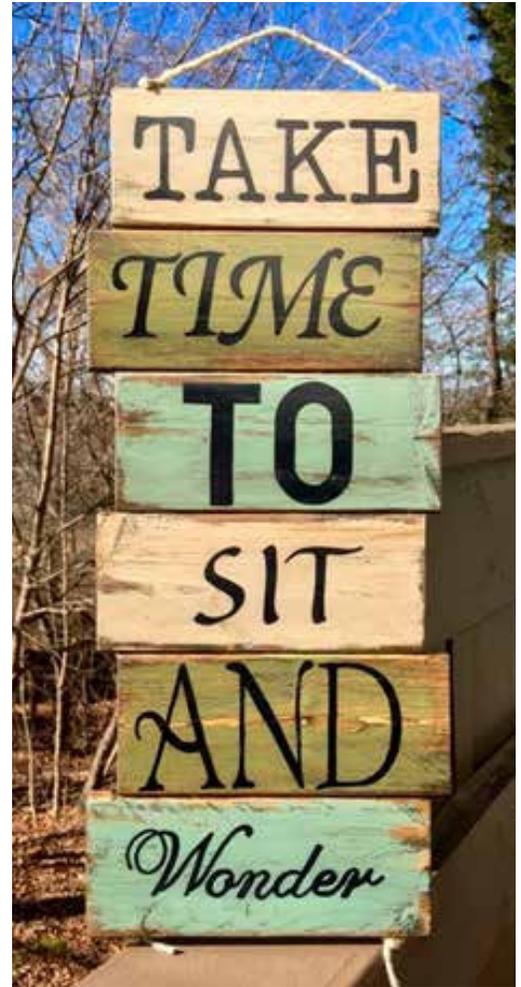
The year started by representing your needs during the general assembly's legislative sessions. Our focus was staffing, facilities, apparatus, personal protective equipment, and training, which were all identified through an 87% response rate to the Fire & EMS Needs Survey. We joined Virginia Professional Fire Fighters on January 18th during Lobby Day to advocate for these in addition to demonstrating our collective support related to cancer testing, prevention, treatment, and associated benefits for those impacted. Additionally, the relationships we recently established with Public Safety & Homeland Security Secretary Terrance Cole and his staff will continue throughout this next year as we travel to your region and learn even more about your specific needs.

2024's Virginia Fire Rescue Conference delivered multiple career tracks course work through seminars, sponsors, partnerships, and practical training via 200+ educational sessions to well over 2,000 attendees including day passes alongside 155 vendors. These different deliveries helped expand our cognitive ability, reasoning skills as well as pattern recognition which are essential elements for each of us to be successful in life and work. Some ideas that could expand next year's delivery include additional emergency medical tracks as well as rural and high rise fire ground hands on training. If you are interested and want to help us prepare the fire service during next year's Fire Rescue Conference, we want to hear from you.

As you plan for your organization's professional development, please remember the VFCA hosts regional summits as well as modular & residential programs designed to address both technical and adaptive problems. You can find more details on our new website at <https://vfca.us>

During the Virginia Fire & Rescue Conference opening ceremony I referenced the poem "Man in the Arena". It challenges all of us to be servants of action and worthy

goals, instead of idle criticism, laziness, and inaction. My promise to you is we will continue meeting our worthy goals of educating, advocating, and leading so we all can navigate the priorities of our departments, communities, and Virginia's Fire Service.



"There are hundreds of paths leading up the mountain, all leading to the same place, so it doesn't matter which path you take. The only person wasting time is the one who runs around the mountain, telling everyone his or her path is wrong."

~ Hindu proverb ~



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**MARCH 2024 DELIVERY**

**E-ONE AFT1003 1500 GPM Rescue Pumper**  
SO #146512



**AVAILABLE SUMMER 2024**

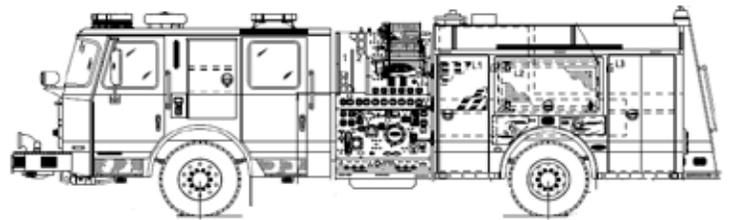
**Freightliner M2-112 3000 Gallon Tanker**  
SO #146304

**PENDING DELIVERY / NEW ORDER**



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## IT JUST KEEPS ON GETTING BETTER

Steve Lesinski Conference Co-Chair

Every year at the end of the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference our planning team begins going through the after-action notes with the goal of making improvements for next year's conference. Once again, our team is challenged, how do you improve when this was the best conference ever? Attendance was at an all-time high, the exhibit floor sold out again, booths were offered in the pre-function area, classrooms were filled, the Virginia Beach Fire Department Training Center filled. All great problems to have right? Our 2024 conference set records in all major areas of the conference, education and hands on training, the exhibits/trade show with all the most modern apparatus and equipment the fire service has to offer, and social programs tailored to promote networking and fellowship.

The educational program is led by VFCA Professional Development Coordinator Eugene Durham (Chesterfield County Fire and EMS.) Eugene has assembled a team which focuses on offering cutting edge topics to ensure Virginia's fire service is prepared for any "All Hazards" responses. This year's conference included 204 different educational sessions with 10,665 hours of student training and boasted over 7,500 hours of EMS CEU's. The "Hot Classes" in their second year of the current format were once again well attended and well received by students. This year's program was a combined effort of Fairfax County Fire Rescue, Henrico County Division of Fire and Virginia Beach Fire Rescue training divisions. Henrico County, after witnessing last year's success, stepped up immediately to be part of the training. All the departments supplied apparatus, instructors, and support vehicles. Fairfax Deputy Chief Greg Hunter, Virginia Beach Assistant Chief Mike Brashear, and Henrico Battalion Chief Kevin Barta took the lead for their respective departments. Atlantic Emergency Solutions Regional Account Manager Tom Harp coordinated with several companies which supplied breathing apparatus, hose, nozzles, thermal imaging cameras, and a stationary drone for documentation. Many thanks go out to Atlantic Emergency Solutions, 3M/Scott, Snap Tite Hose, Task Force Tips, Bullard, and Photokike. If you missed "Hot Classes" this year, be sure to plan on attending the 2025 conference. Thanks to the education staff for all their efforts during the week.

The exhibits floor, all 150,000 square feet, the foyer area outside the halls, and outside of the convention center were packed with fire service history, Life Safety displays, and the latest and greatest apparatus and equipment the fire service has to offer. At the 2024 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference there were: 36 expanded Floor Spaces, 117 Exhibitor Booths, the Virginia Beach Fire Department's Monster Fire Truck, displays provided by the Old Dominion Historical Fire Society, a display of World Trade Center steel, and a display from South Hill VFD's MOVE OVER prop. The Exhibits Chair, Floyd Green (Retired Henrico Battalion Chief and a VFCA Past President,) works tirelessly all year configuring the exhibits. He is assisted by Scott Perry (Virginia Beach Fire Captain) and their staff to safely load in and out the 150 vendors and their support staff of 420 personnel. The Exhibits Team was ever present to meet the needs of attendees and exhibitors.

Our social programs are intended to bring everyone together to create new friendships and networking opportunities. The Award and Recognition Ceremony is one of the many traditions we have at the conference to bring folks together. It was held on Wednesday and is commonly referred to as the "Opening Ceremony." The ceremony was opened with

the Presentation of Colors by the VFCA Honor Guard. Departments represented included Dale City, Goochland County, Loudoun County, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Roanoke County, and Virginia Beach. The honor guard was escorted in by the Southeastern Virginia Firefighters Pipe and Drum Corps. Highlights of the ceremony include the Governor's Fire Service Awards, VFCA Health and Safety Awards, NFA's Executive Fire Officer Graduates, Sponsor Recognition, the swearing in of the new VFCA board members, and the Memorial Service which remembers Virginia Fire Service members who have passed over the last year. The conference team hosted a hospitality suite on Thursday at the conference hotel and on Saturday held a casino night. Both events had a several hundred folks in attendance. Many of the Casino Night prizes were donated by our exhibitors and the gamblers enjoyed a wide selection of gifts. During the week, many of our sponsors hosted private events which were also well attended.

The success of the conference is partly due to the support provided by our sponsors. Their participation allows the conference team the ability to implement improvements. The Chief Level Sponsor, Atlantic Emergency Solutions (AES,) has been a friend of the Virginia Fire Chief's Association for many years. Our Deputy Chief level sponsor is Matheny Fire and Emergency who has been a faithful sponsor for several years now. We were fortunate this year to have had four Assistant Chief level sponsors. They are CSX, Virginia Public Safety Innovation Center, Pacific Helmets, and First Due. A big thanks to all our sponsors.

The 2024 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference would not be possible without the expertise and dedication of the conference planning team and staff. The members of the core planning team are VFCA Executive Director Chris Eudailey, Co-Conference Chair David Hutcheson (VBFD), Co-Conference Chair Steve Lesinski (VBFD), Monarch Meeting's Peggy Tucker, Exhibits Chair Floyd Green, Assistant Exhibits Chair Scott Perry (VBFD), Education Section Eugene Durham, VBFD Training Liaison Mike Brashear (VBFD), Plans Section Mike Carter (VBFD), Logistics Section Scott Springer (VBFD), and VFCA Board Member Kevin Duck.

Don't forget to follow Virginia Fire Rescue Conference on Facebook and Instagram. The 2025 conference is February 17-22, 2025. Remember, "It Just Keeps Getting Better" so mark your calendars!



"Conference Team"

Photo: Ray Smith

## PACK HONORED WITH 2023 PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Allen Baldwin



L to R: President Baldwin, Joe Pack & Vance Cooper

On Wednesday, February 21st at the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Awards and Recognition Ceremony, outgoing VFCA President, Allen Baldwin, named Joe Pack of Atlantic Emergency Solutions (AES), as the recipient of the 2023 VFCA President's Award. Mr. Pack was selected based on his incredible commitment to Virginia's fire service.

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association W.C. "Bill" Smith President's Award has been awarded by the VFCA President since 2009. This award is chosen by the president for an individual who has provided some type of influence and support to the president during his term in office.

It gives me great pride to announce Joe Pack of Atlantic Emergency Solutions as the recipient of this year's VFCA Presidents Award.

Joe is, a York County Virginia native, has dedicated his career to serving and protecting communities.

His public safety professional journey began as a Sheriff's Deputy in York County, Virginia, in 1984.

Then in 2000 Joe jumped into the fire industry, joining Singer Associates Fire Equipment as a Regional Account Manager selling fire apparatus. His exceptional performance led to him being recognized as the Top Sales Representative by Pierce Manufacturing in 2009.

This success led Joe to an opportunity with Pierce Manufacturing as Regional Vice President of Sales.

Shortly thereafter, Joe was approached with an opportunity to acquire a Pierce dealership, ultimately establishing Atlantic

Emergency Solutions in 2010 and beginning a new journey for Joe and Atlantic's 79 employees.

Under Joe's leadership, Atlantic Emergency Solutions expanded its reach and influence by acquiring several other dealerships, solidifying its position as one of the largest and leading providers of fire and emergency equipment in North America. Currently Atlantic has nearly 450 employees supporting fire departments and municipalities across nine states and the

District of Columbia and has built a network of 24 locations comprised of Regional Service Centers and Paint & Collision Centers.

Additionally, in 2016, Joe was awarded EY Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst & Young - one of the most prestigious business awards for entrepreneurs, which recognize contributions of people who inspire others with their vision, leadership and achievements.

Joe's unwavering dedication and strategic leadership have been instrumental in the success and growth of Atlantic Emergency Solutions and a testament to his commitment to the safety and well-being of others.

Joe has never forgotten his humble beginnings in York County and it's not uncommon to see him around "Town" and for him to take time out of his schedule to chat and ask about the family etc., it's a trait that he has instilled in his employees also. He and his staff continue to support responders across the commonwealth and the nation.

But it is truly his dedication and continued commitment along with that of his staff to the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association that shines through every day. His generosity, physical presence and efforts along with those of his staff in supporting the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference on numerous levels, our educational programs, meetings, training events, fundraising events and our scholarship programs that sets Joe and AES apart from others. Joe can always be seen or takes the time out to visit at these functions, he can even be found helping to serve and clean tables at events that AES is sponsoring or hosting. It is because of these acts, his leadership and his continued commitment to help this Association remain the premier lead Fire Services Association in the Commonwealth and beyond that has earned him the 2023 Virginia Fire Chiefs Association's Presidents Award. Joe and Atlantic Emergency Solutions are always there for the VFCA and never say no. More importantly Joe and the staff are always asking what they can do to help the association reach its goals. To Joe and everyone at AES thank you for your friendship and unwavering support.

## Six Virginia EFO Graduates Honored during conference

Six Virginia Fire Officers were honored during the 2024 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference in Virginia Beach for completing their Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) during 2023.

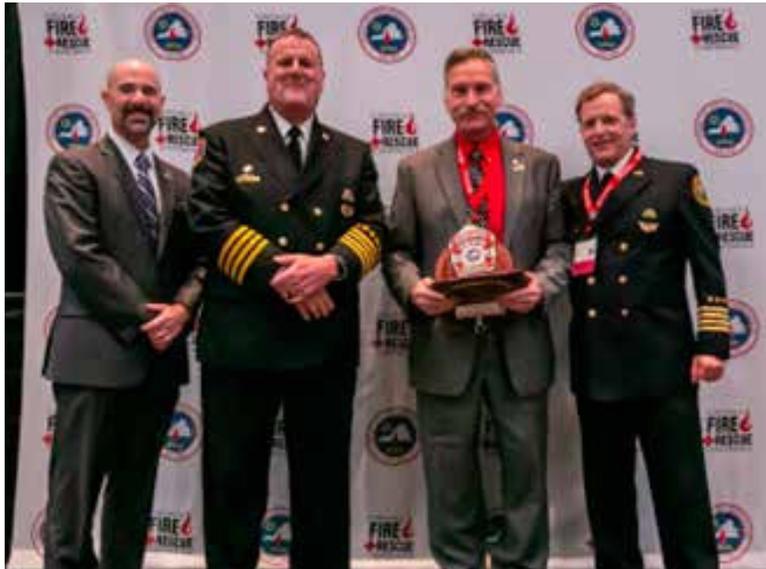
Each graduate present was invited to the podium where they were presented with an American flag that had been flown over the U.S. Capitol in their honor. The new graduates include:

Joel "Jake" Britt, Battalion Chief, Chesterfield Fire and EMS; Ben Coffman, Captain, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Brian Edward Heinsman, Captain, James City County Fire Department; Lawrence R. Matthews, Battalion Chief, Chesapeake Fire Department; Kevin Moran, Battalion Chief of Training and Education Division, Chesterfield Fire and EMS; Carl F. Roberts, Assistant Chief of Training, Spotsylvania County Fire Rescue Emergency Management.

## Congratulations to all!

## ASSOCIATION HONORS VFCA'S CHIEF CHRIS EUDAILEY WITH THE GLENN A. GAINES LEADERSHIP LEGACY AWARD LEADERSHIP LEGACY AWARD

Kevin Good and Jay Cullinan



L to R: Brad Creasy, President Baldwin, Executive Director Chris Eudailey and incoming President Vance Cooper/

After being nominated by Chief's Kevin Good and Jay Cullinan, and with Board confirmation, Chief Eudailey was selected for this year's prestigious VFCA Chief Glenn A. Gaines Leadership Award. The chief's nomination is shown below:

### 1. Accomplishments (in mentoring & professional development)

Chief Eudailey has been in public safety for 43 years and is currently the Executive Director of the Virginia Fire Chief's Association a position he has held since January 2014. He retired as Fire Chief from Spotsylvania County Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management after serving that department for 25 years.

Chief Eudailey oversaw Spotsylvania County's implementation of multiple programs and system-wide developments that set the foundation for many of the successful outcomes seen in the department to this day. Putting a focus on the county-wide provision of advanced life support services, the development of a highly active training division, and efforts to employ a combination system in a way that provides high quality 24/7 services to the residents and visitors of Spotsylvania County, set the course for the system to grow and pursue a mindset of continuous improvement. These efforts, along with his continued efforts to develop future leaders has, enabled a dramatic increase in the level of service and care they can provide to the community.

### 2. Initiative (including helping others beyond their own agency through mentoring and professional development, including advocacy)

Chief Eudailey continues in various forms of statewide leadership but is most notably known for his tireless efforts behind the scenes to assure the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association continues to provide the highest level of leadership, education, and advocacy for its members and the Commonwealth's fire service as a whole. He continues to advocate legislation to benefit career employees, volunteers, and, most importantly, the civilians that they serve. His vision to improve the fire service is never ending and his personal commitment and adaptive leadership benefits the Nation.

In his various leadership roles, he personally advocates for all fire and EMS leaders in the Commonwealth of Virginia to be involved, that being a part of state and local associations

such as the VFCA is a vital resource that will allow us to work as a team to tackle challenges we face in our own communities. His leadership is contagious to drawing in Fire and EMS stakeholder organizations from across the Commonwealth of Virginia to discuss not only their specific legislative needs, but the key issues concerning the organizations and the fire service.

### 3. Technical Competence (including serving as an instructor)

His direct engagement in multiple legislative topics varying from public safety mental health to cancer prevention, to fire code development and enforcement, or to state government financial support of fire and EMS in localities continues to be influential to elected officials throughout the Commonwealth. Chief Eudailey's impact over decision makers locally and across the state continues to advance the health and welfare of fire and EMS personnel, while also working to assure much needed resources are available at the local level to provide the services needed to the residents of the Commonwealth.

Chief Eudailey is a graduate of the University of Maryland and the Executive Fire Officer Program. He is a Certified Emergency Manager (CEM), Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and holds numerous state certifications. He has also served as past president of the Virginia Emergency Management Association and the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association. Chief Eudailey proudly got his start in the fire service as a volunteer in Chesterfield County in the 1970s. He then was hired as a career firefighter with the City of Petersburg in November 1980, before transitioning to serve in James City County for 7 years. In 1989, Chief Eudailey was hired as the Fire Marshal in Spotsylvania County, a position that would later develop into the role of the County's first career Fire Chief.

### 4. Demonstrated Leadership and Mentoring Ability

Since 2014, Executive Director Chris Eudailey helms an organization of over 1,000 fire and emergency services leaders. As Executive Director, he oversees all administrative aspects of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association to include preparing agendas, ensuring adequate meeting space, calendar and quest invitations, logistical support, and assistance to all the Board of Directors. In addition, Chris supervises two part-time staff to include an administrative assistant and association treasurer. Chris oversees a contractor for the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Magazine, the Commonwealth Chief and ensures a high-quality product is put out by the association. As Executive Director, Chris can be counted upon to assist with any task and routinely rolls up his sleeves to get the job done. He is passionate about the association and assists all those that are part of it. He is the biggest recruiter of not only board members, but association members in general. He consistently looks to grow the organization with members and financial sponsors to keep the costs down, as he considers himself a guardian of the association funds. Chris maintains a high ethical standard for the staff and the board members.

### 5. Additional Information

Chris is a friend to all in the fire service and has dedicated his life to serving the public at various levels of purposeful leadership. I cannot think of a person who is more deserving of recognition for their superior leadership as this is only a small glimpse of actions that have elevated the fire service profession within the Commonwealth of Virginia through Chief Chris Eudailey's mentoring, teaching & sharing outstanding contributions to all.

## Congratulations Chief Eudailey!

## GOVERNOR YOUNGKIN RECOGNIZES RECIPIENTS OF 2023 GOVERNOR'S FIRE SERVICE AWARDS

As part of the Annual Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Expo and Symposium in Virginia Beach, Governor Glenn Youngkin announced the recipients of the 2023 Governor's Fire Service Awards. The Awards were established in 2002, the Governor's Fire Service Awards honor excellence in Virginia's fire service and are facilitated by the Virginia Department of Fire Programs in collaboration with the Virginia Fire Services Board.

"We join together in celebration and gratitude for the incredible contributions made by these first responders and support staff. In the midst of recent tragedy, we are grateful for these fearless heroes who run towards danger to protect and serve their fellow Virginians every day, said Governor Glenn Youngkin. "In collaboration with Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Terry Cole, we thank these personnel for their dedication and commitment to protecting our Commonwealth."

"It is vital that we acknowledge and appreciate these dedicated individuals who have a deep commitment to serving others," said Virginia Department of Fire Programs Executive Director Brad Creasy. "These remarkable men and women routinely exhibit acts of bravery, often putting their own lives on the line to save others. I am proud to recognize these courageous first responders."

### 2023 Governor's Fire Service Awards Recipients

#### **VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEF OF THE YEAR**

Melvin Carter, City of Richmond Fire and Emergency Services

Melvin Carter became the 21st Chief of Fire and Emergency Services for the City of Richmond in 2017. He began his career as a volunteer firefighter for Henrico County Division of Fire in 1983. Chief Carter has overseen the hiring of an additional 72 personnel secured through a federal grant, the purchase and updating of equipment, and replacement of aging fire stations throughout the city. His community approach to fire protection has led to a significant decrease in fire deaths within the city. Chief Carter has also fostered a collaborative and innovative work environment by creating new job opportunities such as the Driver Pump Operator program.

#### **Monty Coleman, Forest Volunteer Fire Department**

Monty Coleman has been a member of the Forest Volunteer Fire Department for 35 years. The community is changing from a farming community to an urban area with accompanying challenges for the all-volunteer department. Under Chief Coleman's leadership, the department recognized the need to make changes to better protect their response area. Programs were needed to prepare responders to perform victim searches, complete vent-enter-search operations, forcible entry, power tool operations, and ventilation techniques. Chief Coleman attended numerous classes to share information and implemented several changes to position the department to adapt to the changing landscape.

#### **VIRGINIA FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR**

#### **Henry Spencer, Arlington County Fire Department**

Henry Spencer has shown compassion in mentorship, strength being a firefighter, and passion for the community. He is actively involved in the department and spends much of his free time giving back to the community. In 2023, he was a co-chair for the department's

mentorship program and an orchestrator for the leadership development program. He also completed Instructor II and Firefighter I/II train-the-trainer and was an instructor at the training academy, developing the future of the department and implanting the skills and traits that will help them throughout their career. Outside of work, Henry participated in the World's Strongest Firefighter, a competition of vigorous strength skills with firefighters around the world. In the community, Henry regularly teaches the department's hands-only CPR program called Hands2Hearts and volunteers at a local food bank.

#### **EXCELLENCE IN VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICES**

#### **Micah Kiger, Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue**

In 2017, an incendiary fire occurred in Loudoun County where gasoline was used to burn the exterior of a structure. Investigative leads were exhausted by members of the Loudoun County Fire Marshal's Office under the direction of Deputy Chief Micah Kiger. A piece of evidence was discarded by the perpetrator on a nearby walking trail. Due to a thorough canvass of surrounding areas, a well-documented scene, and proper evidence collection techniques, a DNA profile was retrieved from a glove. At the time of the crime, no matching DNA profile was in the national database. In September 2022, the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Fire Marshal's Office was notified of a possible DNA match to an adult male arrested for arson in Norfolk. Through strong investigative work, the case was presented to a grand jury where an indictment for felony arson was issued.

#### **EXCELLENCE IN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION**

#### **City of Lynchburg Fire Department**

Lynchburg Fire Department's "Walk-About Wednesday" is a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) initiative collaboratively created by the CRR team in the Lynchburg Fire Marshal's Office and the University of Lynchburg Bonner Program aimed at enhancing community safety and well-being. Key features of the program include going door-to-door with CRR and fire department staff in targeted neighborhoods to provide emergency preparedness information along with installing smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, and changing alarm batteries. It should be noted that there was no fiscal impact to the citizens as all materials used were supplied by local business partners. In addition, the program organically created opportunities for stakeholder support as the program grew in popularity. This initiative is a forward-thinking, proactive approach to a traditional challenge. It combines community engagement, data-driven risk assessment, and education to create a safer and more resilient community.

#### **EXCELLENCE IN VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICE TRAINING**

#### **Adam Still, Winchester Fire and Rescue**

Over the past five years, Winchester Fire and Rescue has seen a decrease in experienced hires, leading to the hiring of personnel with no previous experience and facilitating an in-house recruit class for all certifications. Adam Still is now responsible for facilitating a recruit

class, overseeing the incumbent training, and managing the transition of recruits to field operations for release through the field training program. He manages all these tasks daily by himself. Adam is heavily involved with development of the active assailant program, mass casualty incident training, and first aid/CPR courses for all city employees and some private businesses. Over the past year, Adam has continued to develop as a fire instructor by completing Instructor I and vehicle operator courses. He is actively involved with the high school Firefighter I program. When he is not in the classroom teaching, he is behind the scenes supporting the lead instructor with the program due to his expertise with fire training. He is a selfless individual that can manage the completion of mounting tasks, keep the training division moving forward, and find time to facilitate classes.

#### **Mike Musser, Hillsville Volunteer Fire Department**

For many years, Mike Musser's name has been synonymous with training and mentoring many of the firefighters in southwest Virginia. Mike retired several years ago from the Virginia State Police, but his emergency services career did not end there. He has remained active in the fire service, not only as a volunteer member answering emergency calls, but also as a fire service instructor. He has instructed much of the leadership staff in southwest Virginia in various fire service courses and mentored many others along the way. He is a professional volunteer and applies what he teaches on the fire ground. He brings his experience into the classroom and gives realistic examples to match the course materials. In a recent example of Mike's dedication to training, he is assisting the Department of Fire Programs on a pilot project for aerial training that would allow more volunteer departments to obtain aerial training.

### **CIVILIAN EXCELLENCE IN VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICE SUPPORT**

#### **Metro Richmond Flying Squad**

The Metro Richmond Flying Squad is an all-volunteer organization specializing in delivering National Fire Protection Association 1584-compliant rehabilitation services for firefighters in the Richmond area. This dedicated team of volunteers has consistently demonstrated exceptional commitment and expertise in supporting the health and well-being of the firefighting community. Established as an all-volunteer entity, the Metro Richmond Flying Squad has become an indispensable resource by providing rehabilitation services tailored to the unique needs of firefighters. Their commitment to adhering to nationally recognized standards underscores their vital contribution to the emergency services landscape.

### **PRIVATE SECTOR EXCELLENCE IN VIRGINIA FIRE SERVICE SUPPORT**

#### **Joe Pack, Atlantic Emergency Solutions**

Joe Pack is the CEO of Atlantic Emergency Solutions, a dealer of emergency equipment. Atlantic Emergency Solutions has been a significant supporter of many state associations and fire departments in Virginia through their active participation at annual conferences and events. The company also financially supports the Virginia Fire Officer Academy and the Virginia Chief Officer Academy. These two educational programs have been delivered to more than 1,800 fire and EMS providers across the commonwealth.

### **OUTSTANDING FIRE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE**

#### **Engine Company 17, Virginia Beach Fire Department**

In the early morning of July 5, 2023, Retired Virginia Beach Fire Department Captain Rob Valentine identified a nearby home was on fire. As he ran to assist, one of his neighbors stated that there were two people on the back side on the balcony. Captain Valentine quickly moved to the rear of the house where he found two adults on a third story balcony. Virginia Beach Fire Department Engine 17 arrived on scene and were notified of the immediate

need for a rescue operation. Firefighters simultaneously deployed a hose line to protect the trapped residents while raising a 28-foot extension ladder to reach them. As firefighters reached the third story, they quickly assisted one of the occupants onto the ladder and began descending. The smoke from the fire ignited around the building and on the balcony. The second occupant had no choice but to climb over the railing to escape the heat. Firefighters positioned themselves to help break the fall from the burning balcony. The victims were transferred to EMS care with minor injuries. Retired Captain Valentine remained on scene and assisted with hose movement and logistics throughout the incident. Without the quick and calm actions of all parties involved, the outcome of this incident may have been vastly different.

#### **Blairs Fire and Rescue**

In November 2023, Blairs Volunteer Fire and Rescue, along with mutual aid agencies from both Pittsylvania County and the City of Danville, responded to a structure fire at an apartment complex. The first arriving member reported the front of the occupied apartment building to be heavily involved in fire and several reports of people trapped. With this information, along with as many as nine simultaneous emergency calls from subjects reporting themselves trapped by the fire, dispatchers initiated an all-county alert, dispatching all 21 fire departments in Pittsylvania County and mutual aid from Danville to the incident. Several of the trapped occupants began to jump from their windows before fire apparatus arrived due to deteriorating conditions. Immediately after the arrival of apparatus from Blairs Fire and Rescue, ground ladders were placed on the structure, and the last five people were rescued from the building. Within ten minutes of the last victim being rescued by fire department members, the building experienced a catastrophic collapse. Without the actions of the dispatchers, the firefighters from Blairs Fire and Rescue, assistance from various members of law enforcement, and coordination of treatment and transport of the victims, this incident would have had a much different outcome. Despite the challenges of low staffing, an inadequate water supply, and a fully occupied dwelling that was heavily involved in fire, this incident concluded with no serious injuries or fatalities.



## HENRICO COUNTY FIRE & CITY OF MANASSAS FIRE & RESCUE RECOGNIZED AS RECIPIENTS OF THE VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION/ VIRGINIA FIRE CHIEFS FOUNDATION "BEST PRACTICES IN FIRE SERVICE HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARD"

On Wednesday, February 21, 2024, during the opening ceremony of the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association's Virginia Fire-Rescue Conference, the Henrico County Fire Department and the City of Manassas Fire and Rescue Departments were recognized as the recipients of the Virginia Fire Chiefs "Best Practices in Fire Services Health and Safety Award."

This award program seeks to recognize departments that demonstrate best practices in providing for the health, safety and wellness of their members. It is managed by the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Health and Safety Committee, and is monetarily supported by the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation. Departments selected as recipients of the award receive a \$500 contribution from the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association /Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation.

As in the past, this year's award winners demonstrated a strong organizational commitment to the health, safety, wellness and welfare of their members.



Henrico staff accepts their Health & Safety Award at VFRC

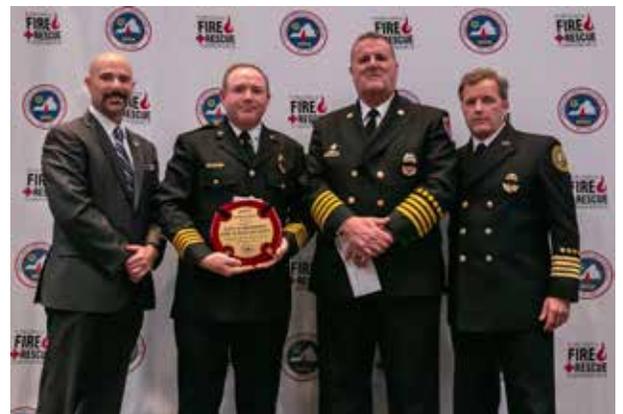
The Henrico County Fire Department was chosen as one of the award recipients. The department collaborated with County Purchasing to complete the RFP process with a vendor that can provide cancer screening. Specifically, DOF identified an organization that provides ultrasound testing for early detection of possible cancer and cardiovascular abnormalities with a goal of providing personnel with the opportunity to identify chronic diseases in the early stages when they are more treatable.

The cancer and cardiovascular screenings are comprehensive. The screenings evaluate the carotid circulation, abdominal aorta for aneurysms, heart and valve function, thyroid,

abdominal organs (liver, gall bladder, kidneys and spleen) bladder, testicles and pelvic contents to accurately find and document the presence or absence of tumors and cardiovascular disease.

Henrico Fire is grateful for the opportunity to partner with a vendor that not only performs outstanding cancer and cardiovascular screenings, but that also provides members with confidential results and counseling when necessary.

The City of Manassas was chosen as the other award recipient. In this case, the department sought to enhance an already successful gear washing program that occurred after every significant fire and per a regular schedule. Each firefighter has two sets of gear. If one is being washed they still have protection with the second set.



Manassas staff accepts their Health & Safety Award at VFRC

Lastly, we have implemented a hood replacement program. After a significant fire, firefighters are wearing the same gear during overhaul as they did during suppression operations. The face and neck are well known areas for absorption of harmful materials. If we can have firefighters discard contaminated hoods and replace it with a clean hood for overhaul, in addition to the wipes, we are potentially removing a significant amount of harmful materials from absorbing into their skin. Soiled hoods are then taken back to the station and cleaned thoroughly and put back into rotation.

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association congratulates Henrico County Fire and the City of Manassas Fire & Rescue for their innovative steps to protect their personnel. To learn more about the specifics of each program, you are encouraged to contact the respective departments.

The VFCA encourages all departments (volunteer, combination, and career) to submit nominations next year for the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association "Best Practices in Fire Service Health and Safety Award." Please look for nomination information in the future issues of the Commonwealth Chief, as well as on the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association website.

## 2024 VIRGINIA FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE

Eugene Durham, VFCA Professional Development Committee, Chair

The 2024 Virginia Fire Rescue Conference was held from February 19th through February 24th at the Virginia Beach Convention Center and Virginia Beach Fire Department Training Center.

Over the course of six days over two hundred educational sessions were held, including Hands-on-Training, NIMS, EMS, Leadership, Strategy and Tactics, Safety, Human Resources and many others. The VFCA Professional Development Committee through the conference education team delivered over 10,000 hours of student education, along with over 7,500 hours of EMS CEU credit being awarded by the Virginia Office of EMS.

The 2024 Hands-On-Training Program, “The Beach is Burning”, returned to the conference this year. Virginia Beach Fire Department, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department, and the Henrico County Division of Fire, delivered another top notch educational program, with over 100 attendees from across the commonwealth and every rank from firefighter to fire chief participating. Special thanks to Atlantic Emergency Solutions and 3M Scott for their support of the program.

The conference education sessions included an all-star line-up of instructors from across the commonwealth and the country. Chief John Butler, Fairfax County Fire Chief and President of the IAFC, delivered a presentation on the art of building a public safety team through leadership and collaborative relationships with both internal and external stakeholders. Dr. Denis Onieal imparted his wisdom from decades in the fire service through multiple presentations on professional development, the future of fire and emergency services, and insight on the short and long term impacts from being in the role of the incident commander at a line-of-duty-death incident. Chief Matthew Tobia and Chief Timothy McKay teamed up to deliver an unplugged session that allowed attendees the opportunity to ask any question related to the fire service today. Michelle Oblinsky, VDEM Deputy State Coordinator, gave a presentation on navigating the challenges and opportunities for fire officers in the field of emergency management.

The successful forum series returned this year with sessions in the Women of Fire and EMS, Fire Chiefs, Human Resources, and Health & Safety. Each of these sessions allowed attendees and facilitators to discuss issues and work together to identify solutions. Leadership classes to benefit every rank from firefighter to fire chief were delivered throughout the week. For attendees looking to develop on incident based operations, multiple presentations on strategy and tactics, vehicle extrication, residential search, and firefighting were offered.

The VFCA Professional Development Committee would like to thank all of the instructors and presenters who made the 2024 Virginia Fire & Rescue Conference a great success. The VFCA would also like to recognize the following educational partners for their support; Virginia Department of Fire Programs, Virginia Office of EMS, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, Virginia Fire Marshal Academy and the VFCA Women of Fire and EMS.

For those interested in presenting next year, the 2025 VFRC “Call for Presentations” will go out in May, look for more information on the VFCA website at [vfca.us](http://vfca.us) in the coming months.



Lots of new equipment to see and checkout



Getting organized



One of many educational opportunities

## IGNITING THE PASSION: THE THRILL OF HANDS- ON TRAINING CLASSES AT THE VIRGINIA FIRE & RESCUE CONFERENCE

Mike Brashear

Each year, the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference (VFCA) sets the stage for an electrifying gathering of firefighting professionals from across the state and beyond. Amidst the symphony of sirens and the crackle of camaraderie, one event stands out as the epitome of excitement: the Hands-On Training (HOT) classes. As dawn breaks over the horizon, anticipation hangs heavy in the air as firefighters, both seasoned veterans and eager newcomers, converge upon the training grounds. The allure of the HOT classes is irresistible, promising an immersive experience that transcends the confines of traditional classroom learning. Here, amidst the backdrop of the Harry E. Diezel Virginia Beach Fire Training Center, attendees are invited to dive headfirst into the heart of the action.

The VFCA spares no expense in curating a lineup of HOT classes that cater to every facet of the firefighting profession. This year, Virginia Beach and Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Departments joined forces again to bring the best instructors in the business to one place, the VFCA HOT Classes. In addition, the Henrico Fire Department jumped into the action with instructors, apparatus, and logistical support. We also had instructors from the Norfolk and Lynchburg Fire Departments. The success of the HOT classes comes from the support from these departments. This year we offered Engine, Truck, Company Officer, Chief Officer, RIT/MayDay, Dynamic Fire Behavior/Flashover Simulator, Driver Pump Operator (DPO), and EMS classes. The hands-on EMS class was a new addition and was very successful. Thanks to our partners from Virginia Beach EMS for assisting with instructors! The excitement was palpable as instructors, revered experts in their field, guided eager learners through a series of hands-on exercises designed to replicate real-world scenarios on the fire ground.

For many attendees, the HOT classes represent a chance to put theory into practice, to feel the heat of the flames, and the weight of responsibility that comes with donning the firefighter's gear. In fact, these classes allow firefighters to train with props and instructors that they normally wouldn't have access to in their area, like the water mapping structure, command simulations, and the flashover simulator. The adrenaline rush is intoxicating as participants immerse themselves in simulated emergencies, forced to think on their feet and collaborate with their peers to overcome obstacles and achieve their objectives. It is a celebration of teamwork, shared passion, and the unbreakable bond that unites firefighters in their mission to serve and protect. In the crucible of the training ground, friendships are forged, and lessons learned transcend the realm of firefighting, instilling within each participant a renewed sense of purpose and determination.

As the sun sets on another exhilarating day of training, and the echoes of laughter and camaraderie fade into the night, one thing remains abundantly clear: the HOT classes at the VFCA are more than just an educational opportunity; they are a testament to the indomitable spirit of the firefighting community. So, next year, come join us and be a part of the lessons learned on the training grounds and let the passion of the HOT classes drive you to another level of firefighting.



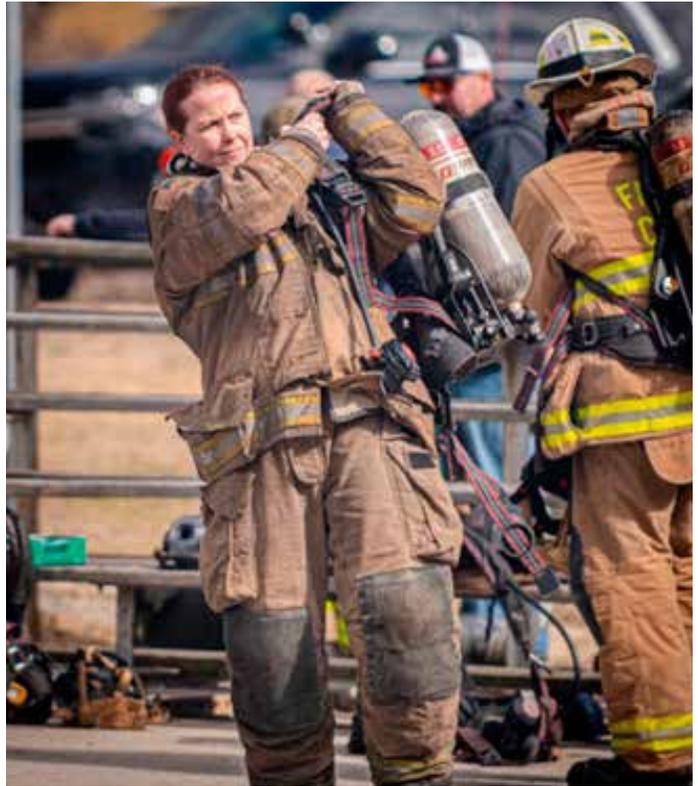
Some door work



Hose/Nozzle lesson



Planning the problem



Getting tanked up



Waiting to make entry



Preparing to begin CPR



Putting a ladder in place

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS | LEARNING AND FUN



Making it happen again!

Highlights Photos: VBFD



One of many training sessions



Hole in one!!!



New Chief!!!



Having fun!



The willing ticket!



All sizes welcome!



Hanging out!



My...what a big wheel!



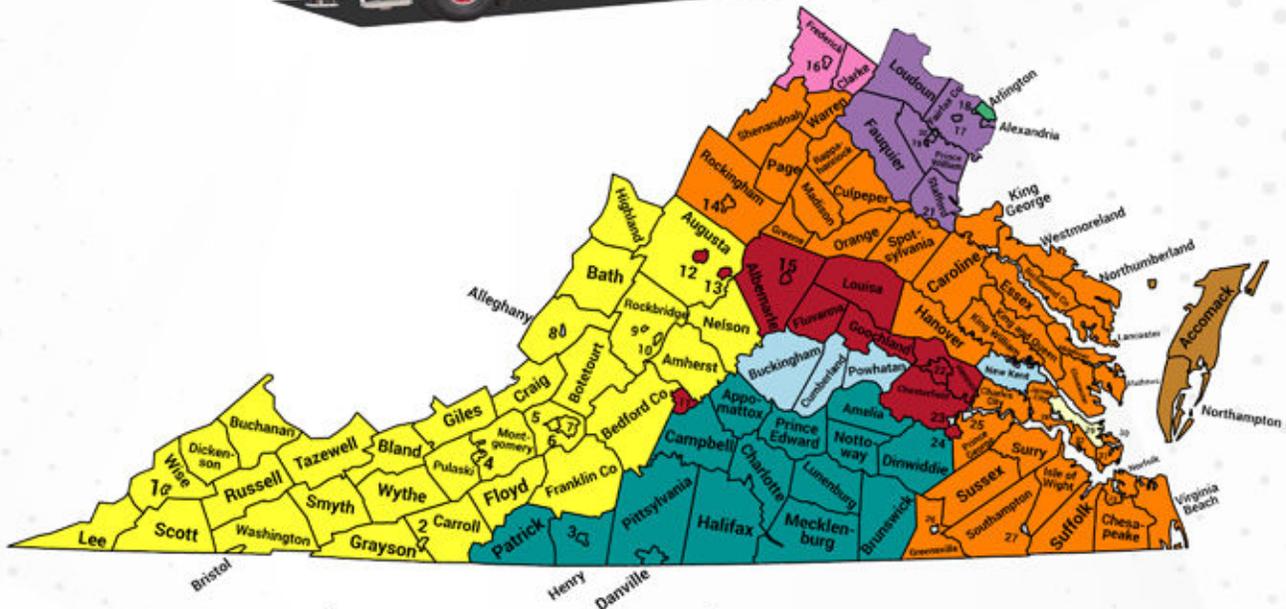
EMS world



# MEET THE TEAM

## VIRGINIA APPARATUS SALES

Atlantic Emergency Solutions is committed to supporting the many needs and challenges of our customers while striving to exceed expectations. Our dedication has earned us dozens of industry awards and have maintained our Pierce Platinum Dealer status, the highest standard from Pierce. As your needs arise, our Virginia Apparatus Sales Team is here to provide exceptional support.



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# FIREFIIGHTERS & GAS DIFFERENCES (THE SECRET LIST)



**Los Angeles CNG Vehicle Explosion - CDF Photo Shows Just Prior to Explosion**  
 This image shows an explosion occurred while maintenance of the Los Angeles Fire Department's fleet of compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles. According to the LAFD, firefighters arrived to find a CNG vehicle parked in a lot. The driver of the CNG vehicle had attempted to fill the gas tank, but the tank was full. The driver was being escorted to the street and another vehicle was being towed. The explosion occurred while the driver was being escorted. The explosion occurred via minutes after units arrived on scene. More firefighters responded to the scene, including fire and medical units. CDF's fleet vehicles can be found throughout LAFD. Contact LAFD's fleet manager for more information on CNG vehicle fleet. (Taken from [Fire Man 1 - Alternative Fuels](#)) - all members are urged to review this document.

- 1. **Investigate a fire by stopping the flow of gas.**
  - 2. If the flow of gas cannot be stopped do not extinguish the fire - let it burn.
  - 3. **DO NOT apply water to CNG cylinders exposed to fire because this may send the pressure relief device (PRD) resulting in a tank rupture. This can result in a catastrophic rupture. Always keep pressure on cylinders, keeping cylinders and tanks.**
  - 4. When a PRD activates, it will not reseat. The gas in the cylinder will shut off. This event is often what the vehicle fire goes out and extinguish several times.
  - 5. It may take 10-15 minutes for the high pressure-relief to subside and up to 30 minutes to fully discharge. Depending on the size of the tank involved.
  - 6. **Exhaustion & protection with perimeter of 100 ft around the vehicle.**
  - 7. PRDs are located on both ends of the cylinder. They may be covered or not when exposed. PRDs may be located in the bottom of a vehicle or the regulator. Always approach from 45° angle.
  - 8. If the CNG cylinders are not involved in the fire, proceed with normal extinguishment tactics.
- CNG fueled vehicles are identified with a blue diamond color with white "CNG" lettering. These cylinders are small and may not be easily seen.**
- WFA of 2024 - 22002214



Both liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueled vehicles can be found in cars, homes, buildings, and other applications. It is very important that all emergency responders understand these differences and recognize the hazards to each type of fuel. The following points are listed from [Fire Man 1 - Alternative Fuels](#).

- LPG:**
- 1. LPG cylinders are a liquid gas under pressure in a temperature range in being open and release under pressure and it flows from only on being at the bottom release (flow) to the atmosphere. When applied to the cylinder with some restriction to leak air to the cylinder opening the relief valve.
  - 2. There is a great possibility that a cylinder involved in a fire will "BLEED" (leak) liquid Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) on a leak in a cylinder. It is absolutely imperative of a relief valve, turned pressure (PRD). When a BLEED occurs in a cylinder cylinder it will usually result in an explosion and be hot with the cylinder containing a long pressure.
  - 3. Many vehicles are fuel fueled and use both propane and gasoline alternately. If the car engine and a gasoline fuel tank may eventually rupture and leak. It is best to use a "HOT" or "PROpane" fire extinguisher to extinguish a BLEED or SHUTTING OFF THE FLOW OF FUELING. PROpane is a substance that will extinguish the cylinder. The fire will burn and then in some cases, not of the same fire. EXTINGUISH THE PROpane CYLINDER WITH WATER. EXTINGUISH TO PREVENT A BLEED.
- CNG:**
- 1. CNG is contained in cylinders and is a pressure 2000 PSI. CNG cylinders are contained within a fueling plug pressure relief device which will open when a cylinder is exposed to heat or fire. The CNG cylinders are subject to BLEED, but not to BLEED's (leak) liquid Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) because they do not contain liquid.
  - 2. Extinguish a fire by stopping the flow of gas.
  - 3. If the flow of gas cannot be stopped do not extinguish the fire - let it burn.
  - 4. **DO NOT apply water to CNG cylinders exposed to fire because this may send the pressure relief device (PRD) resulting in a tank rupture. This can result in a catastrophic rupture before the pressure gas is fully extinguished. Keeping cylinders and tanks.**

**LPG - Cool the cylinder with water.**  
**CNG - Do not apply water to the cylinder.**

WFA of 2024 - 22002214

As alternative fueled vehicles become more common on the road, firefighters must be prepared to respond safely and efficiently.

The New York City Fire Department has developed a series of tip sheets which discuss fighting fires in an LPG-fueled vehicle vs. a CNG-fueled vehicle. It is vitally important for every firefighter to recognize the difference in tactics - this information can save your life.

Click on the two sheets distributed by FirefighterCloseCalls.com to learn more.

## VFCA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### April

- 16 VFCA Full Board Meeting Glen Allen - VDFF  
1000 Hours
- 29-30 2024 National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner & Symposium **(Date Change)**

### May

- 4-5 NFFF Memorial Weekend
- 16-17 10th Annual Chiefs Summit **(Date Change)** Glen Allen  
0800 Hours
- 21 Executive Officers Meeting Virtual  
1000 Hours
- 31 14th VFCA Spotsylvania Golf Tournament Spotsylvania  
1100 Hours **(New Start Time)**

### June

- 17 - 23 International Fire/EMS Health & Safety Week
- 18 VFCA Full Board Meeting VDFF  
1000 Hours
- 23-28 VFOA/VCOA U of R  
1500

### July

- 16 Executive Officers Meeting Virtual  
1000 Hours



HOT Class Team members

**Save the Date!**  
**APRIL 24-25, 2024 | WASHINGTON, DC**

The 34th Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner is expected to draw over 1,500 fire and emergency services leaders from across the country.

Participants will attend seminars, conduct meetings with their members of Congress and network with their colleagues. Registration will open on January 2, 2024.



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# CHIEF'S HOST 5TH ANNUAL "NEW CHIEF" RECEPTION

Kevin Good

The Virginia Fire Chief's Association Board of Directors was proud to host the 5th Annual "1st Year Fire Chiefs of Virginia" reception. On Thursday evening during the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference, a reception for new Fire Chiefs / Interim Chiefs that have assumed their role during CY23 was held at Rockafeller's Restaurant in Virginia Beach.

The annual event continues to be a phenomenal opportunity for new Fire Chiefs to meet and network with their colleagues and the VFCA Board of Directors



We are thankful to Joe Pack and the entire Atlantic Emergency Solutions staff for their support of this relationship building opportunity that yields positive collaboration for Virginia's newest Fire & Emergency Services' Executive Leaders.

Photo: Ray Smith

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**MAY 16-17, 2024**

# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Fire Chief's Summit



**Courtyard Marriott**  
**Richmond North/Glen Allen**  
**10077 Brook Rd.**  
**Glen Allen, VA 23059**

Plans are being finalized for the 10th Annual VFCA Chiefs Summit. The event is specifically designated for the Fire Chief and his second in command.

Registration will be done online and additional information is available by early March on the VFCA website at [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us)



## Center for Public Safety Excellence

CPC Credentialing is a professional designation model that recognizes career excellence and offers strategies for continuous personal improvement.

The Commission on Professional Credentialing (CPC) offers five distinct designations covering the various levels and specialties of fire officers. They include: Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Chief EMS Officer (CEMSO), Chief Training Officer (CTO), Fire Marshal (FM) and Fire Officer (FO).

CPC provides an application process that officers use to develop their portfolio, training and support while developing their portfolio, and access to experienced peer reviewers. While it can be a bit of work to develop your portfolio; we promise it's worth it.

This year designations and renewals include:

### CFO's

Michael Thomas, Charlottesville Fire; Scott Schermerhorn, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Michael Player, Peninsulas EMS Council; Daniel Neal, Loudoun County Dept. of Fire, Rescue & Emergency Management; John Morrison, Vienna Vol. Fire; Gregory Hunter, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Blaine Holland, JBLE Langley; William Hock, DLA Richmond, Fire & Emergency Services; David Harrell Suffolk Department of Fire & Rescue; Steve Hall, Richmond Fire & Emergence Services; Brian Edmonston, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Jeremy Bayse, 633 CES/CEF Langley Fire Emergency Services; Rocco Alvaro, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Jonathan Yeaman, Danville Fire; Matthew Tobia, Harrisonburg Fire; Marci Stone, Roanoke Fire & EMS; John Smithgail, CNIC Fire & Emergency Services; Joe Powers, ESCI; Andrew Milliken, Stafford County Fire & Rescue; Shawn Maddox, Albemarle County Fire Rescue; Jason, Kinlaw, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire & Emergency Services; Jason Jenkins, Arlington County Fire & Rescue; Aaron Jacobs, Loudoun County Fire & Rescue; Jay Hynson, King George Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services; (Ronald) Scott Garber, Staunton Fire & Rescue.

### CEMSO

Scott Schermerhorn, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Gregory Hunter, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; John Flynn, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Brian Edmonston, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Michael Player, Peninsulas EMS Council; Daniel Neal, Loudoun County Fire, Rescue & Emergency Management; Jason Kinlaw, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire & Emergency Services; Travis Karicofe, Harrisonburg Fire; Jason Jenkins, Arlington County Fire & Rescue; Allen Baldwin, York County Fire & Life Safety.

### CTO

Jason Jenkins, Arlington County Fire & Rescue; Gregory Hunter, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Rocco Alvaro, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Jason Kinlaw, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic Fire & Emergency Services; Shawn Dunstan, City of Fairfax Fire.

### FM

Christopher Sampl, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Gregory Hunter, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Rocco Alvaro, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue; Andrew Milliken, Stafford County Fire & Rescue; Jason Jenkins, Arlington County Fire & Rescue.

### FO

Daniel Hinkle, Staunton Fire & Rescue; Nicholas Burmood, Langley AFB Fire; Samuel

Bohus, Winchester Fire & Rescue; Jeremy Wampler, Wintergreen Fire & Rescue, James Soaper, Manassas Park Fire Rescue; James Satterfield, Danville Fire; Andrew Pribush, Newport News Fire; Shawn Dunstan, City of Fairfax Fire.

### PIO

R. Jason Elmore, Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

## NATIONAL EMS WEEK



National EMS week honors the contributions of those who work on the medical front line. This year, it's celebrated from **May 19 to May 25**. The week gives Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and those who would like to credit them, a chance to recognize their hard work in potentially fatal situations daily. Whether an accident, a national emergency, or a terrorist act, the EMS work quickly and efficiently to save lives. This week is the perfect time to create daily themes, teach and learn something, team build and most importantly understand the magnitude of how much the EMS do. EMS this week will more than likely do special trainings to ensure up to date effective life saving treatments. Whether celebrated together or alone, across the nation a lot is going on during this week.

## ARSON AWARENESS WEEK

Arson Awareness Week is **May 5 11, 2024**. This year's theme is "Understanding and Mitigating Youth Fire setting Issues – A Guide to

The U.S. Fire Administration has designated the week of May 5-11 as Arson Awareness Week (AAW). The goal of this year's campaign is to provide residents with strategies to combat arson in their neighborhoods.

The U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Incident Reporting System reports an estimated 16,800 intentionally set fires in residential buildings occur annually in the United States. These fires result in an estimated 280 deaths, 775 injuries and \$593 million in property loss each year.

What makes someone want to burn down a house? The motivations behind the burning of homes are curiosity, vandalism, concealing another crime, excitement, revenge and insurance fraud or arson for profit.

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# CHIEFS FOUNDATION AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

This year, as a part of its Scholarship Program, the Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation presented thirty four, Robert E. White Memorial Scholarships to Virginia students who have been accepted into a post-high school educational institution or other program. The awards were presented during the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference held in Virginia Beach in February. This year's awards total \$56,500!!! Also, the VFCA received \$6,500 in additional donations in honor of or the memory of loved ones. Those donations were awarded to individuals in the form of grants. The individuals that were selected to receive the additional award/grant also received a brief summary of the person that the donation was made in honor/memory of, so they know a bit about them.

This year, there were two \$1,000 scholarships awarded to individuals. They went to: **Nick Baskerville and Michelle Jones** to attend the 2024 VFRC.

Additionally, one individual received a \$1,250 scholarship. Shane Hudson to attend Rappahannock Community College.

There were thirteen \$1,500 scholarships awarded to individuals. Included were: **Sejal Ahluwalia** to attend University of Virginia; **Emma Bradbury**, Roanoke College; **Ty Burch**, Liberty University; **Miranda Gillespie**, Assoc. In Emergency Care-Paramedic; **Samantha Green**, Columbia Southern; **Andrew Lam**, VA Peninsula CC; **Cadence Lagow**, Univ. of VA – Wise; **Logan Lagow**, VA Highlands CC; **Emma Leach**, Rappahannock CC; **Jenna Pugh**, Roanoke College; **Baileigh Ramsey**, Mount Gateway CC; **Matthew Stafford**, Assoc. In Emergency Care-Paramedic and **Kamyrm Stone**, TBD.

There were ten \$1,750 awards made They included: **Kenneth Hudgins** to attend UVA; **Marek Moomey** to attend Emory & Henry; **Taylor Moran**, Virginia Tech; **Adam Nulty**, Faulkner University; **William Raftery**, TBD; **Kameron Samuel**, VCU; **Cody Stephenson**, Columbia Southern; **William Streett, Jr.** UNC; Stacey Willis, Purdue University Global and **Tyler Wyks**, VA Tech.

Additionally, there were seven \$2,000 awards that went to **Kristen Berry**, to attend William & Mary; **Colton Chandler**, Radford University; **Eston Garber**, Auburn University; **John Jacobson**, Waldorf University, **Evan Leach**, U of R; **Julia Waitman**, Laurel Ridge CC; **Todd Whalen**, Liberty.

Finally, there was one \$2,250 award made to **William Drewery**, to attend VCU.

In all our recipients will be attending 23 different colleges and universities across the country.

Selection of the award recipients was based on being an active Virginia fire, EMS or emergency management provider, demonstrated need, desire, initiative and potential benefits of the educational opportunity.

The scholarship program was first established a number of years ago in memory of Mr. Robert E. White, a citizen of the Commonwealth of Virginia who donated his money towards the betterment of the Fire Service throughout the state.

The objective of the program is to assist individuals desiring to further their education through a variety of opportunities such as college classes, National Fire Academy classes, Virginia Fire Chief Association events such as the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference, the Virginia Fire Officer Academy, certificate programs, and other fire & EMS programs or conferences. Individual scholarship awards are made up to \$2,500 and can be utilized for any direct expenses such as registration, tuition, books, meals, lodging and/or transportation.

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation began awarding scholarships in 2003. Since that time, 399 scholarships have been awarded totaling \$363,715.00!!!

## Application Information

1. Applications will be accepted between September 1 and December 1 annually.
2. Successful applicants will be notified by January 1 of awards.
3. Scholarship awardees will be invited to Annual Virginia Fire Rescue Conference to be recognized and presented their scholarship. Attendance is not mandatory.

Applications and eligibility information may be obtained by visiting the VFCA website at [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us), or by calling or writing the Association or Foundation. You may reach us by phone at (888) 818-0983.

# Save The Date



## 2024

## Virginia Fire Chiefs Association Administrative Professionals Retreat

### September 19 & 20, 2024

### Harrisonburg, VA

Details will be sent out no later than August 1, 2024

For More Information  
Contact:

Mandy Waybright

Harrisonburg Fire Department

[mandy.waybright@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:mandy.waybright@harrisonburgva.gov)

540-432-7703 office





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# Virginia Fire Chiefs Association

## Administrative Professionals Section

The VFCA consists of several sections that members can get involved in: Company Officer Section, **Administrative Professionals Section**, Federal/Military Section, Life Safety/Community Risk Reduction Section and VA Women in Fire-EMS.

The VFCA Administrative Professionals Section (APS) holds quarterly meetings, and a yearly retreat, with rotating meeting locations. The section also supports fundraising for the VFCA Foundation to assist with raising funds for scholarships. You may have seen us at the Virginia Fire Rescue Conference selling raffle tickets and helping with the silent auction, we can also be seen at other events throughout the year such as golf tournaments. This section allows members to make personal connections and utilize each other throughout the year when they encounter something that is new to them or a challenge. Do you know an Administrative Professional that wants to meet new individuals and collaborate to improve the Virginia fire service? If so, we would like the opportunity to discuss the opportunities within the APS with them, and we are always looking for new members! For more information on the section or for a chance to attend a quarterly meeting please contact Mandy Waybright at 540-481-0670 or by email at: [mandy.waybright@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:mandy.waybright@harrisonburgva.gov)

**Save The Date!!!** The VFCA Administrative Professionals Retreat will be held September 19th-20th, 2024 in Harrisonburg. Be on the lookout in the next issue of the Commonwealth Chief Magazine for more information.

### Meet the 2024 Administrative Professionals Section Board



**Mandy Waybright**  
Harrisonburg Fire  
Department



**Michelle Murphy**  
Chesapeake Fire  
Department



**Tracey Chewing**  
Spotsylvania County Fire,  
Rescue, and Emergency  
Management

# FEBRUARY 20TH 2024 FIRE RESCUE CONFERENCE

## WOMEN OF FIRE & EMS DAY!!

Samantha Green



On February 20th, 2024, at the Fire Rescue Conference held in Virginia Beach, the Women of Fire and EMS section orchestrated a day filled with exceptional training sessions, leaving attendees enlightened and motivated. The event began with a thought-provoking Shakers Forum, addressing pertinent issues within the fire service, setting the stage for an enriching day ahead.

The forum buzzed with vibrant discussions, igniting enthusiasm among participants and preparing them for the insightful sessions to follow.

Among the highlights was the captivating search class led by the remarkable instructor, Ben Wilson. Notably, Ben's distinctive mustache may have initially caught attention, but it was his expertise and teaching prowess that truly stole the show.



Throughout the search class, attendees dove into various house layouts and learned an array of search techniques, enhancing their skill set and proficiency in critical operations. Ben's dedication to imparting invaluable knowledge earned him heartfelt appreciation from the group, who left the session equipped with invaluable "training nuggets" to apply in their respective roles.

Post-lunch, the momentum of inspiration continued as Kerry and Kyle took the stage to get into the realm of authentic leadership. Their session was phenomenal, resonated deeply with every individual present, striking chords of relevance and significance. Kerry and Kyle's dynamic delivery and engaging style fostered an atmosphere of interaction, showcasing the profound impact of their message on the audience.



The success of the Women of Fire and EMS section's event serves as a testament to the importance of creating spaces for learning, collaboration, and empowerment within the fire service community. By providing platforms for individuals to engage, learn, and grow, initiatives like these pave the way for a stronger, more resilient workforce capable of meeting the evolving challenges of the field.





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#### ECONOMICAL

The Fouts FOUR can help you control maintenance costs. Dispatch this multipurpose unit on calls that don't require your big rigs, reducing maintenance and wear-and-tear on large apparatus. This truck can also operate with a smaller crew and still be able to perform multiple tasks.

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# ON THE MOVE & ODDS AND ENDS

**Chesapeake Fire Chief Edmund Elliott retires at after nearly five decades of service.**



## **Elliott named Life Member of VFCA**

On January 1, Simone "Sam" Gulisano stepped into his new role as Fire Chief.

Chesapeake will welcome Simone "Sam" Gulisano as its new Fire Chief in the New Year as the current chief, Edmund Elliott, will be retiring following nearly 50 years with the department.

Elliott, who began his firefighting career at the Deep Creek Station in 1974, is described as "the true definition of a 'servant-leader,'" according to a release from the fire department.

"He has been a driving force in terms of diversifying the department and implementing safety, health, and well-being programs, as well as the introduction of new Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) technology and training. Elliott helped begin Chesapeake's Hazardous Materials unit, as well as a number of specialty units following the events of September 11, 2001."

Over the course of his career, Elliott advanced through the ranks and was eventually promoted to Deputy Fire Chief in 1996 and served in that position until late 2009. He was officially appointed as Fire Chief and Coordinator of Emergency Management in 2010.

Incoming Fire Chief Gulisano has had a similar career journey, starting with the Chesapeake Fire Department in 1995 and stepping into the role of Deputy Fire Chief in the spring of 2019. For a period between 2020 and 2021, while Elliott was away on assignment, Gulisano served as Chesapeake's Acting Fire Chief.

Among the professional training programs Gulisano has completed are FEMA, the National Fire Academy, and the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

## **NEW CHIEFS FOR 2023**

Michael Bowling – Fort Lee  
Chris MaGann - Petersburg Fire (Interim)  
Thomas LaBelle - Prince William County  
Kalvyn Smith – Fauquier Co

Kyle Durham – Essex County  
Michael Bryant - Poquoson  
Mike Thomas – Charlottesville  
Gary Winley – Isle of Wight  
Chris Anderson – Hanover County - Interim  
Ken Cato – DLA (Richmond)  
Christopher Payne – Navy Region Mid-Atlantic  
Simone "Sam" Gulisano – Chesapeake  
Nick Sheffield – Sussex County  
Ed Mills – City of Manassas  
Sidney Carroll – Norfolk (Interim)  
Wesley Rogers- Newport News (Interim)  
David English – Blacksburg  
Jason Stroud – VA Beach EMS

## **Governor Glenn Youngkin Announces Additional Administration and Board Appointments**

STATE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

- **Brian Frankel** of Fredericksburg, Deputy Chief of EMS, Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department
- **Robert E. Lipscomb, Jr.**, of Lynchburg, Retired Deputy Fire Chief, Lynchburg Fire Department
- **Matthew Rickman** of Roanoke, Deputy Chief, City of Salem Fire-EMS Department

## **Former Williamsburg Chief T. K. "Buz" Weiler passes away**

We are sad to announce that on January 23, 2024, at the age of 83, Fire Chief T. K. "Buz" Weiler (Williamsburg, Virginia) has answered his final call and has returned to quarters for the last time.

Left to honor his memory are his loving wife Margie, his children Heather (Mauri), Steve (Lizzy), and son-in-law Dale (Tami) and numerous grandchildren, his daughter Hollie and many other extended family members.

Visitation was held on Wednesday, January 31st 2024 from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM at the Nelsen Funeral Home. The funeral service with Fire Department Honors was held on Thursday, February 1st 2024 at 11:00 AM at Saint Bede Catholic Church, Williamsburg, VA.

## **James "Mo" Stokely passes**

We have recently learned that Past VFFA President (2001-2002) Jim "Mo" Stokely passed away on Tuesday, January 23, 2024 following a brief illness.

Mo will be remembered for his dedication and his many contributions to the Virginia Fire Service.

He leaves to cherish his memory his wife Mary Delia Beard Stokely; daughter Kathryn Stokely Powell and her husband, G. Brooks Powell III, and John Matthews Stokely and his wife, Sarah Cleary Stokely; loving grandfather of Gordon Brooks Powell IV, Virginia Louise Powell and Samuel Woods Stokely. He was a nephew, cousin, classmate, coworker, neighbor, fellow firefighter, and friend to so many people who are dear to the family.

A funeral service for Jim was held on February 12, 2024 in Manassas.

## Burkeville Volunteer Fire & EMS Chief passes

In late January Burkesville Volunteer FD posted the following notice:

It is with the greatest sadness that we announce the passing of our leader, our mentor, and our greatest friend, Chief Paul Bennett. Chief Bennett served as Chief of the department for over 30 years and was a dedicated and active member up until his passing for over 63 years. In addition to his roles within the department over the years, Chief gave decades of service on the Burkeville Town Council. He spent his entire life in servitude to his community, his friends, and his family. We are forever grateful to have been a part of his most honorable life!

A memorial was setup in front of their station located at 503 Namozine St. in Burkeville for those who would like to place flowers, memorials, or pay respects in honor of Chief Bennett. Any arrangements or further details will be posted only at the family's request.

## Gas explosion kills Loudoun firefighter

Firefighters locally and across the Commonwealth are standing united, offering



condolences, assistance, and support to their colleagues in Loudoun County after a firefighter died in a house explosion.

The aftermath has left an entire community in mourning, grieving the loss of Sterling Volunteer Firefighter Trevor Brown. Described as a family member to fellow firefighters, Brown lost his life in the line of duty, highlighting the inherent dangers faced by those who dedicate their lives to protecting others.

The incident unfolded just after 7:30 p.m. Friday, when fire crews responded to reports of a gas odor. As they were investigating, the house exploded at 8:25 p.m., resulting in the death of Brown on the scene. Ten other firefighters were injured and taken to hospitals, with three remaining hospitalized.

Local first responders are grappling with the devastation. In a show of solidarity and support, fire departments across Virginia are rallying together to offer assistance to during this challenging time.

"I think it's just concerned and wanting to help out our brothers and sisters in Loudoun County as best we can," said Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Community Outreach Coordinator Brian Clingenpeel.

Clingenpeel says the incident serves as a reminder of the risks first responders face each day.

"The type of call that they were on, was for a gas leak, and we run gas leak calls... every day, it seems like I mean, it's a very common call type for us,"

# VFCA SAFER GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association (VFCA) has SAFER grant funds available to assist volunteer and combination departments in the delivery of basic and advanced firefighter training, leadership training, and other training related to the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

Funds may be used for the following classes provided they are not currently funded in your department's current budgets: Firefighter I, Firefighter II, Hazmat Awareness, Hazmat Operations, Emergency Vehicle Operators Course, Basic Pump Operator, Driver Pump Operator, and Vehicle Rescue Awareness and Operations. Other course offerings may be considered on request. Training funds are issued on a reimbursement basis and all classes must be delivered and completed by November 19, 2024.

Scholarship funds are also available to attend the Virginia Fire and Rescue Conference, Virginia Fire Officer Academy (VFOA) Residential or Modular Programs, Virginia Chief Officer Academy (VCOA), VFCA Company Officer Summit, VFCA Chief Officer Summit, First Responder Virginia 5 Conference/Expo, Southwest Virginia Firefighters Association Convention/Conference, Fire Rescue International, VCOS Symposium in the Sun, NVFC conferences, etc. Scholarships cover travel, lodging and registrations for events focusing on volunteer firefighter recruitment, retention, and leadership. Funds are limited per person and only available to volunteer firefighters. Scholarships are issued on a reimbursement basis.

If your agency would like to be considered for training assistance, please submit an **Expression of Interest Form. For the form Click Here.** If you submitted an expression of interest form in the past, please do so again for additional consideration.

If you are interested in applying for scholarship funds, please submit a **Scholarship Application Form. For the form Click Here.**

Please send completed forms to Nick Caputo at [njcaputo@aol.com](mailto:njcaputo@aol.com). Questions? Call Nick at 814.404.3282.

## Statewide Cancer Survey

Steve Weissman, Virginia State Director  
Cancer Survivor

### Firefighter Cancer Support Network

Did you know that occupational cancer is the leading cause of firefighter line of duty deaths? According to the CDC, firefighters have a 9% higher rate of a cancer and a 14% higher mortality rate than the general population of the United States.

The Virginia Firefighters for Lifelong Health (VFLH) was established to study and generate data to identify cancer prevention strategies among Virginia Firefighters. The VFLH is a cohort and collaboration between the Virginia Chapter of the Firefighter Cancer Support Network, the Virginia Commonwealth University Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center and Richmond Firefighters IAFF Local 995.



Virginia Department of Forestry

# Partnerships Builds Success

It takes dedicated individuals and agency support to achieve goals and successes that to many seem impossible.



# FOUR VIRGINIA CHIEFS SELECTED FOR THE FIRE SERVICE EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) announced the names of the individuals who have been accepted into the Fire Service Executive Development Institute (FSEDI). This is the 12th year that the Motorola Solutions Foundation has provided the IAFC with a grant to fund the program. The FSEDI program is considered one of the premier educational programs to prepare individuals to be successful chiefs and develop the next generation of national/international fire service leaders.

We had a record number of applications, so please join us in congratulating those accepted into this highly competitive program in 2024!

- Deputy Chief Melvin Carter, Dekalb County (GA) Fire & Rescue
- Chief Michael Caven, Eugene-Springfield (OR) Fire Dept.
- Chief Frederick Cephas, Gwinnett Fire & Emergency Services (GA)
- Deputy Chief Tavon Claggett, Howard County Fire & Rescue (MD)
- Chief Nick Clark, St. Matthew Fire & EMS (KY)
- Deputy Chief John Curtis, South Metro Fire & Rescue (CO)
- Chief Shane Dobson, Woodstock Fire (GA)
- Asst. Chief David Gerboth, San Diego Fire Dept. (CA)
- Deputy Chief Andrea Glass, Tempe Fire , Medical & Rescue Dept. (AZ)
- Chief Robb Gottsch, Pappillion Fire Dept. (NE)
- Division Chief Sean Jewell, West Metro Fire Rescue (CO)
- Division Chief Kevin Jones, Indianapolis Fire Dept. (IN)
- Deputy Chief Jason Krusen, Charleston Fire Dept. (SC)
- Deputy Chief Jayme McConnellogue, Colorado Springs Fire Dept. (CO)
- Deputy Chief Timothy McKay, Chesterfield County Fire & EMS (VA)**
- Deputy Chief Michael Mire, Houston Fire Dept. (TX)
- Deputy Chief Heather Mozdean, Fremont Fire Dept. (CA)
- Deputy Chief Paul Radford, Idaho Falls Fire Dept.
- Asst. Chief Tracey Reed, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue (VA)**
- Asst. Chief Craig Rollins, Castle Rock Fire & Rescue Dept. (CO)
- Deputy Chief Timothy Sell, Pasadena Fire Dept. (CA)
- Batt. Chief James Short, Bozeman Fire Dept. (MT)
- Deputy Chief Kim Stewart, Prince William County Fire & Rescue System, (VA)**
- Asst. Chief Lorna Trent, Virginia Beach Fire Dept. (VA)**
- Div. Chief Randall West, Alameda County Fire Dept. (CA)

# WHAT IS THE "EMS FUND" AND HOW IT IS UTILIZED TO SUPPORT FIRE AND EMS IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Scott Winston  
 Assistant Director  
 Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services

Annually, approximately \$50M is appropriated by the General Assembly to a special EMS fund for EMS planning and development, training, recruitment and retention, grants, return to localities, regional EMS councils, etc.

The use of these funds is prescribed by statute and apportioned for use in the system by percentages. 32% goes to the Rescue Squad Assistance Fund, 30% goes to planning and development (regional EMS Councils, hybrid regional offices, recruitment and retention, training, emergency operations, communications, etc.), 26% goes to return to localities funding for equipment, training and supplies, 10% goes to OEMS administration, and 2% goes to VAVRS. There is \$0.25 that goes to pay for National Registry testing fees, fingerprint based criminal background checks, EMS scholarships, etc. And finally, designated trauma centers are funded from fees paid by habitual DUI offenders and reinstatement fees for suspended or revoked drivers licenses.

The "4 for life" aka "EMS Fund" is actually now \$6.25 of every annual vehicle registration in the Commonwealth. "4 for life" refers to the original \$4 that is transferred to OEMS from the Virginia Dept. of Motor Vehicles to fund the majority of functions. This amount was increased by \$0.25 in 2008 as a result of a study conducted on the cost of education and training in VA, and in 2011, \$2.00 was added.

Looking at the numbers more closely, language in the budget bill further directs how this \$6.25 is utilized:

The Virginia State Police (VSP) receives \$1,045,375 each year from RSAF to fund their MedFlight program. In addition, out of the additional \$2 increase that occurred in 2011, \$2,052,723 is transferred to the VSP for their MedFlight program. This totals \$3,098,098 annually that is transferred to VSP from the "EMS Fund."

Additionally, \$12,518,587 from the additional \$2 increase is transferred annually to the General Fund from the Special EMS Fund contained in VDH, EMS program. These amounts total \$15,616,685 and represents 31.235% of the "EMS Fund" that must be transferred annually to VSP and the General Fund.

I thought it might be easier to follow if I sent you all an email. I hope this helps answer some of your questions about what is the "EMS Fund" and how it is utilized to support Fire and EMS in the Commonwealth.

We appreciate your support, patience and understanding, while we go through a very difficult time in the life of the EMS system in VA.

Should you have further questions or desire additional information, please do not hesitate to contact 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](https://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](https://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](https://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](https://surveyMonkey.com/r/FV2MQPB) to help us make sure we are keeping our communities safe.

# CHANGE IS NOT EASY!

Michael P. Carter

In a post pandemic world, society is dealing with an entire new set of dynamics, including significant cultural shifts and the lingering question of how to lead and train for the future. Public Safety is no exception to this alteration. The same challenges are impacting departments every day-staffing and deployment, hiring practices, training, and lack of funding to name a few.

Most departments are facing trials and tribulations not only with the need for funding and more personnel, but also the impacts of turnover. In fact, the amount and speed of turnover has highlighted the need for more of every type of training and officer development imaginable. For example, the Virginia Beach Fire Department has seen a shift from more experienced personnel to approximately forty six percent (46%) of the firefighters having less than five (5) years of experience. This has also impacted the officer core with about 1/2 of the current officers with around two (2) years or less in their current role. In discussions with many of my department's surrounding agencies, we are not alone with similar statistics impacting the entire Commonwealth.

These changes, coupled with the impacts of COVID-19 and the absence of "in person" training, make leadership/officer development and training imperative to continue to have high performing organizations. This is why a return and refocus to all training, but specifically practical, in person training, is so important. This is not only true at the department level, but perhaps even more vital at the station and company level.

## Getting Comfortable?

There is another challenge that parallels this shift in personnel: changing habits and culture. I can take anywhere from eighteen (18) to over ninety (254) days for it to become a habit that you will repeat and maintain, good or bad. Andrew Huberman PhD, found that "Variability in habit formation duration is discussed, with a study suggesting it can range from 18 to 254 days depending on the habit and individual."

Examples include developing a consistent workout routine, walking, sticking with a diet, journaling, studying, pulling a handline, forcing a door, starting an IV, or a variety of other cognitive or practical skills.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 pushed a lot of people into habits of comfort and made it easier to stay in that comfort zone. This impacted our culture and allowed for things not normally acceptable to become more of a norm. In the book Atomic Habits, author James Clear writes, "Conventional wisdom holds that motivation is the key to habit change. Maybe if you really wanted it, you'd actually do it. But the truth is, our real motivation is to be lazy and to do what is convenient."

Fast forward to today. The pandemic is over, and we are still dealing with firefighters that believe they can still deploy a ladder efficiently and timely or can pull a hose line as efficiently as they could without practicing with the same intensity or frequency of reps and sets. Officers believe their initial size ups and command and control are still optimal. However, if they have not been frequently practicing their craft, reading, and studying the latest and greatest information, they will likely not be as great as they imagine or at the department and more importantly citizens expected high level of service delivery.

## Document it.

If you did not write it down it did not happen! It is never the fun part of the job to document or complete the "paperwork". To facilitate improved data, most departments are changing to a digital form of paperwork. These digital platforms range from Learning Management System (LMS) for tracking, recording, and deploying training to digital logbooks, truck check offs, inventory and Records Management Systems (RMS) for tracking fire and EMS calls. Yet, there still seems to be a stigma and aversion to timely and accurately capture this information.

However, the need to track training and capture data is crucial for so many reasons in today's public safety world. Local funding, state and federal grant funding, resource requests, ISO ratings, accreditation standards, all encompass major areas that tracking data and specifically training information is imperative to a department's success. Moreover, without knowing areas that you have trained in, it is hard to plan for areas that may need more attention. With the advancements in technology, it has never been easier to document these areas and just takes a few minutes.

## Make the change!

How do we make change? First, we need to explain the need of the proposed change and share the vision of why. In this case, a return to training is important and imperative to all levels of the organization. Next, offer the training from a variety of aspects. This can be through in station, online, or at the local or regional training facility. Perhaps a combination of all of this and in shorter durations to not lose the audience.

Additionally, encourage your personnel to attend conferences to see what other departments are doing to improve their organizations. Take a look at the hands-on training (HOT) classes and/or take other classes on the latest extrication or nozzle technology, or perhaps the best techniques on recruitment and retention being offered. Next, engage the members of your department, system, or organization to return to pre-pandemic levels of training and take the company, shift, department, or organization to the next level. Get your firefighters excited and competitive! Organizations should update policies, guidelines, and manuals and ensure that folks are conducting the training and following the developed language-and yes, make it even better. This accountability is imperative to success for the individuals, companies, and the organization.

## People are our Product!

There is an adage: Firefighters hate two things; the way things are and change! Any transformation is not easy, but it can be worth the work when you see progressive and influential changes that positively impact your internal and external customers! Moreover, change takes hard work, dedication, and, at times, failure to try and develop the best opportunities for your people. Because in the public safety and service industry, people are our product! We must continue to support, develop, and improve ourselves to provide the best to those we serve. What training are you doing today?

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# Mandatory Online Electric Vehicle/Lithium-Ion Battery Training In Development



House Bill 2451 directed the Virginia Department of Fire Programs to develop training regarding electric vehicle fires and mandated every person engaged in firefighting activities, including volunteer firefighters, to **complete the training program by December 1, 2025.**

The Electric Vehicle and Lithium-Ion Battery Fire Safety Awareness course will be an online course and will need to be completed individually so it appears on your transcript in Cornerstone OnDemand.

This course will be released later this year.

## Community Risk Reduction Smoke Alarm Distribution

The Community Risk Reduction division of VDFP is excited to announce its Smoke Alarm Distribution Program. We will be awarding up to 30 smoke alarms to at least four departments from each VDFP Division.



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# UPDATES FROM THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Submitted by: Lauren Opett, Director of Communications & Senior Advisor, VDEM

## KING GEORGE FIRE AND RESCUE AND VDEM SIGN MOU FOR SWIFT WATER TEAM

VDEM and the King George Fire and Rescue Department held a ceremonial signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) recognizing King George Fire, Rescue & Emergency Service's water rescue team into the fold of state recognized type 3 swift & flood water response teams. The process began in 2016 with the hazard identification of how flooding and water rescue events could be mitigated by the King George department.

Geographically, on the Northern Neck peninsula, King George County is surrounded by many waterways that pose hazards to citizens and visitors, especially during significant weather events such as tropical storms and hurricanes. The agreement is set to enhance King George County's and the Commonwealth of Virginia's capabilities to protect the environment and the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Commonwealth from water related emergencies and disasters.



Pictured: King George County Fire-Rescue Chief, David Moody, and VDEM State Coordinator, Shawn Talmadge

## NEW FLOOD MONITORING TOOLS TO INCREASE AWARENESS AND IMPROVE FORECASTING

This year, VDEM will be installing 109 new flood monitoring sites (both water-level and precipitation gauges) across the Commonwealth to fill in critical observation gaps, especially those in underserved and under-resourced communities. The modernized network will provide accessible and dependable real-time rain and water-level data to support planning and risk-based decisions at both the state and community level to prevent and reduce the loss of life and property. To accomplish that, all site data will be shared directly to the National Weather Service to enhance their situational awareness, and their watch and warning capabilities. Site installations will be phased in over the course of the project with a target completion of Summer 2024.

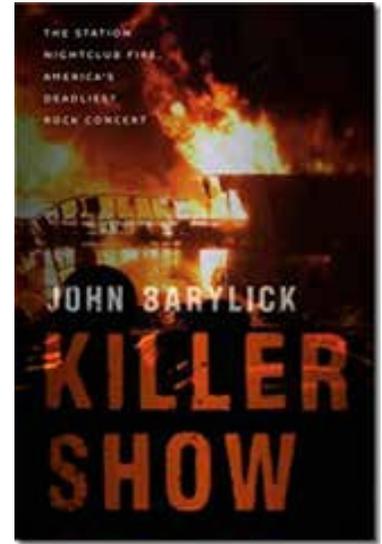


# BOOK REVIEW

A BOOK THAT SHOULD BE READ BY EVERY FIREFIGHTER AND FIRE OFFICER IN THE SERVICE

## KILLER SHOW: THE STATION NIGHTCLUB FIRE, AMERICA'S DEADLIEST ROCK CONCERT

John Barylick



On February 20, 2003, the deadliest rock concert in U.S. history took place at a roadhouse called The Station in West Warwick, Rhode Island. That night, in the few minutes it takes to play a hard-rock standard, the fate of many of the unsuspecting nightclub patrons was determined with awful certainty. The blaze was ignited when pyrotechnics set off by Great White, a 1980s heavy-metal band, lit flammable polyurethane egg crate foam sound insulation on the club's walls. In less than 10 minutes, 96 people were dead and 200 more were injured, many catastrophically. The final death toll topped out, three months later, at the eerily unlikely round number of 100.

The story of the fire, its causes, and its legal and human aftermath is one of lives put at risk by petty economic decisions--by a band, club owners, promoters, building inspectors, and product manufacturers. Any one of those decisions, made differently, might have averted the tragedy. Together, however, they reached a fatal critical mass.

Killer Show is the first comprehensive exploration of the chain of events leading up to the fire, the conflagration itself, and the painstaking search for evidence to hold the guilty to account and obtain justice for the victims.

Anyone who has entered an entertainment venue and wondered, Could I get out of here in a hurry? will identify with concertgoers at The Station. Fans of disaster nonfiction and forensic thrillers will find ample elements of both genres in Killer Show.

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## Training on the Rapid Removal of an Unresponsive Firefighter from Turnout Gear and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends fire departments and fire training facilities ensure all firefighters, fire officers, and fire instructors:

- ❑ Are aware of the common causes of a firefighter becoming unresponsive while wearing turnout gear and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)
- ❑ Know why the rapid removal of an unresponsive firefighter from turnout gear and SCBA is important
- ❑ Receive training on when and how to rapidly remove turnout gear and SCBA and routinely practice the rapid removal methods
- ❑ Understand other recommendations such as appointment of a safety officer, inclusion of emergency medical services (EMS), and adherence to certification requirements for Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers



Firefighters training on how to perform the *Firefighter Down CPR* technique using three rescuers. Photo courtesy of Oil City Fire Department.

### FIRE FIGHTER FATALITY INVESTIGATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM INVESTIGATION

On March 3, 2021, a 21-year-old firefighter recruit suffered a medical emergency which led to their heart stopping, or sudden cardiac arrest, during SCBA Confidence training. The firefighter was maneuvering through a tunnel prop wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), which had the SCBA facepiece covered to simulate visual disruption. Upon identifying cardiac arrest, rescuers rapidly removed the firefighter's PPE using a modified *Firefighter Down CPR* technique. This rapid removal of PPE allowed for early cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) intervention until they placed the automated external defibrillator (AED) electrodes and completed cardiac analysis. The firefighter was transferred to a Level 1 hospital for advanced specialized care, until succumbing to brain injury from reduced oxygen on March 12, 2021. Prompt removal of PPE allowed for early access for CPR. While the firefighter still succumbed, this cardiac event highlights the importance of removing the downed firefighter from the hazard zone and providing early access for the AED and starting CPR as soon as possible. Details of this event are available in the full [NIOSH report](#).



#### Citation

NIOSH, American Red Cross, Butler County Community College Public Safety Training Facility, Firefighter Down – CPR [2024]. Training on the Rapid Removal of an Unresponsive Firefighter from Turnout Gear and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus. By Attwood WR, Kiederer M, Eisenberg J, Schaeffer T, Funke J, Moore S, Watford C, Singletary N, Smith K, and Herbert M. Pittsburgh, PA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2024-104, <https://doi.org/10.26616/NIOSH PUB2024104>

## ***Training on the Rapid Removal of an Unresponsive Firefighter from Turnout Gear and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus***

### **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

#### **What are common causes of a firefighter becoming unresponsive while wearing turnout gear and SCBA?**

Unresponsiveness can result from many different medical issues including reduced oxygen supply to the brain (decreased blood flow or inadequate inhaled oxygen), elevated core body temperature (heat stroke), severe dehydration, or neurological problems. Intense exertion and heat exposure while wearing turnout gear and SCBA increase the workload on the heart, thereby increasing a firefighter's chance of experiencing a cardiac medical emergency that can result in unresponsiveness.

#### **Why is the rapid removal of an unresponsive firefighter from turnout gear and SCBA important?**

An unresponsive firefighter's PPE can create a delay in performing a primary assessment of their airway, breathing, and circulation. It can also hinder a rescuer's ability to provide immediate emergency medical care such as effective chest compressions or attachment of AED electrodes in the event of sudden cardiac arrest / arrhythmia. Removing PPE in an uncoordinated and panicked manner can consume time and delay emergency medical care. Rescuers need to know how to rapidly remove PPE from an unresponsive firefighter so emergency medical care can start quickly. PPE removal should only begin after rescuers remove the unresponsive firefighter from any hazard zone or immediately dangerous to life or health environment.

#### **What is *Firefighter Down CPR* and what does it consist of?**

*Firefighter Down CPR* is a 10-step rapid removal method that involves multiple rescuers working together to remove an unresponsive firefighter from turnout gear and SCBA in less than 30 seconds. This 10-step process ensures that CPR compressions can be started quickly and AED electrodes can be placed to enable heart rhythm analysis and treatment. Resources such as a training presentation and instructional video can be found on the [Firefighter Down CPR](#) website.

#### **What other rapid removal method should fire departments and fire training facilities consider?**

Fire departments and fire training facilities should also consider cutting the turnout gear off of an unresponsive firefighter using manual shears or scissors or battery-powered fabric cutters. This option should be recognized as a potential sharps hazard. If used, it should be routinely practiced with appropriate tools and equipment.

#### **How can fire departments and fire training facilities train on these rapid removal methods?**

Fire departments and fire training facilities should practice these rapid removal methods as standalone training and as part of other training scenarios (e.g., structural fire rescue). Training should include appropriate tools and any necessary changes due to their specific equipment and those of mutual aid partners. They should also consider including these methods in their standard operating procedures or guidelines.

#### **What other recommendations should be considered?**

Fire departments and fire training facilities should consider appointing a safety officer and including EMS providers at all emergency response and training activities where firefighters are performing strenuous physical work while wearing turnout gear and SCBA. Firefighters should follow basic life support certification requirements from the [American Heart Association](#) or [American Red Cross](#), and receive continued education on warning signs or symptoms of heat illnesses.

*Banner: Photos by Shutterstock and @kali9/Getty Images*

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Scan here for more information on the  
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# VFCF ANNOUNCES BENEFIT GOLF TOURNAMENTS FOR 2024



The Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation will be holding three benefit golf tournaments around the Commonwealth in 2024. The proceeds from these events will be used to help support the continuance of the Virginia Fire Officers Academy and the Virginia Chief Officers Academy. In addition, scholarships are also supported for first responders and or their immediate family members.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Start Time</b>
<b>14th Annual VFCF /Spotsylvania –Lees Hill Golf Club</b> POC—Chris Eudailey—ceudailey@vfca.us or 540-809-9397	5-31-24	1100 Hours
<b>10th Annual VFCF /Williamsburg –JCC/Kiskiack</b> POC—Ryan Ashe—757-220-0626	9-13-24	0800 Hours
<b>9th Annual VFCF /Salem –Blacksburg Country Club</b> POC—John Prillaman—jprillaman@salemva.gov or 540-375-3080	10-7-24	0800 Hours

Additional information can also be found at [www.vfca.us](http://www.vfca.us). The VFCF is actively seeking sponsors and door prizes for each of these events. The goal for these three events for 2024 is \$50,000.

# 14<sup>th</sup> Annual

Virginia Fire Chiefs Foundation  
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# TWO CAPITOLS CONSULTING UPDATE: EIGHTH WEEK OF SESSION

## MARCH 1, 2024

As we draw closer to the scheduled end of Session next week, bills are slowly making their way to the Governor's desk. Next week is expected to be the last week of the legislative session, with the legislature scheduled to adjourn sine die (official closing of the legislative session) on Saturday, March 9. Committees continue to move through their dockets, with this week being the last week for major committee action.

As of today, there are still 471 bills still pending, 851 bills that have failed, 394 that have been continued to 2025, and 626 bills that have been passed. Approximately 200 bills have been signed by the Speaker and President of the Senate, and are now waiting to be transmitted to the Governor.

This legislative session has seen an increase in bills failing in the Money Committees after first being reported from a policy committee. According to the Virginia Public Access Project, as of earlier this week there had been 131 bills that failed in either House Appropriations or Senate Finance and Appropriations this year. This is the most since 2018, when around 120 bills died in the Money Committees.

Numerous bills are slated to reach the Governor's desk only to be met with the veto pen. Most notable among them are a slate of gun control bills, including a ban on assault weapons and a ban on "ghost guns", a term for gun kits and unfinished guns which are currently unregulated. Some gun rights advocates are hoping the Governor may sign two of these bills: an expansion of the gun security tax credit and harsher penalties for parents who let their kids play with their guns leading to an accident.

In further negotiations regarding the proposed sports arena in Alexandria, the Governor has privately proposed a \$322 million toll relief plan for Hampton Roads. This is a vast increase from the Senate's \$92 million for toll relief (toll relief was not included in the House budget). The Governor's plan would include money allowing 14 free trips for low and middle income Portsmouth and Norfolk residents using tunnels to cross the Elizabeth River, \$27 million to expand the current toll relief plan, and \$130 million in state funds to pay off all currently unpaid charges on the tunnels since 2014.

If you have any questions about the legislative session or governmental matters in general, please reach out to our team so we can assist you. Have a great weekend!

—

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# COMMONWEALTH

The Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. - April 2024

# Chief

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