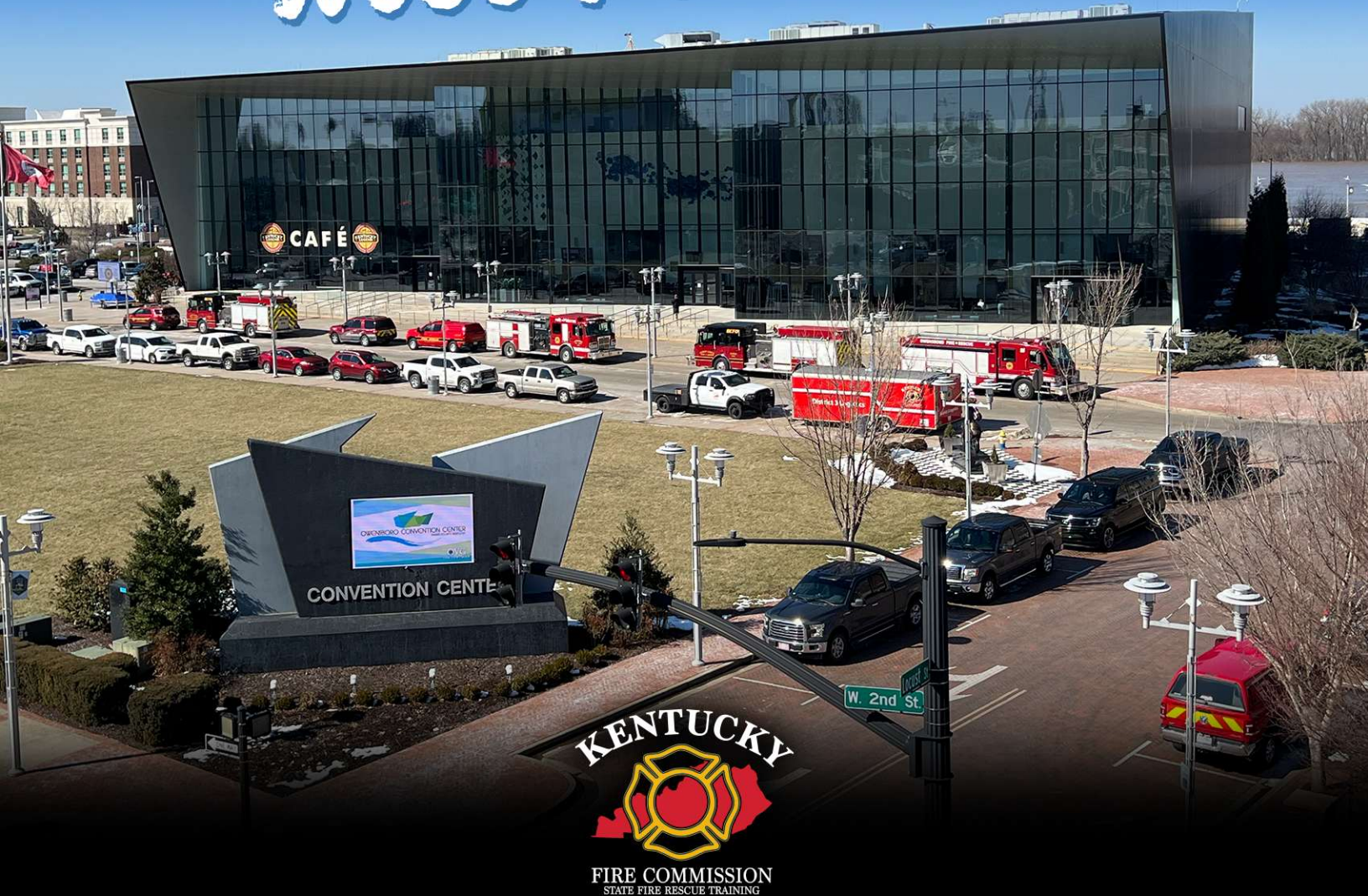




39th Annual Bryant Stiles Officers School

February 19-22, 2026 | OWENSBORO CONVENTION CENTER

EVERYONE
will be there!



Welcome Back to The Bryant Stiles Officers School by the Green River Firefighters Association

The fire departments and members of the Green River Firefighters Association welcome you back to the beautiful Owensboro Convention Center and the 2026 Bryant Stiles Officers School! We have once again planned a very diverse lineup of classes to assist you in becoming a better front-line supervisor and leader, with many **NEW CLASSES!** We carefully reviewed evaluations from previous events and have listened to your requests by adding some classes that may be hard to locate on a regional basis. Please take the time to carefully review the brochure and submit your class selection requests as soon as possible, to ensure your seat. For the most recent and current information about the 2026 Bryant Stiles Officers School by the Green River Firefighters Association, visit www.sfrtarea3.org or contact us at 270-273-3187. Thanks to the following leadership of the Green River Firefighters Association and the always dependable staff of State Fire Rescue Training District 3:

President – Charlie Rafferty – Airport-Sorgho FD

1st Vice President – John Dunning – Richland FD

2nd Vice President – Shane Richards – Hawesville FD

Secretary – Marc Henderson – Calhoun City FD (Vendor Coordinator)

Treasurer – Pat Thompson – Airport-Sorgho FD (School Coordinator)

Past President – Troy Roberts – Lewisport FD

District 3 Training Coordinator – Jimmy VanCleve (Registration Coordinator)

District 3 Field Office Support Specialist- Jennifer Randolph

Saturday Evening With The Vendors

The Bryant Stiles Officers School would not experience its continuous success if not for our dedicated and faithful commercial vendors. Several of our vendors have been with us from the beginning. We appreciate each and every participating vendor. Keep these dedicated vendors in mind when pondering your future personal and departmental purchases. The 45,000 square foot exhibition hall at the Owensboro Convention Center is the perfect venue to visit with friends of new and old. Each school participant will receive a door prize entry when visiting our commercial vendors. Door prizes will be given away at the conclusion of the event at approximately 8:30 pm CST.

HOTEL INFORMATION

The Green River Firefighters Association would like to recommend these preferred hotels that have a long history of supporting the Bryant Stiles Officers School. These hotels *may* offer a special rate for firefighters and others attending the school, while rooms last. Please contact your hotel of choice for rates and mention the Firefighter Conference when booking.



Holiday Inn Owensboro Riverfront

701 West 1st Street

270-683-1111

Home2 Suites by Hilton Owensboro

560 West 2nd Street

270-645-5001



Courtyard by Marriott Owensboro

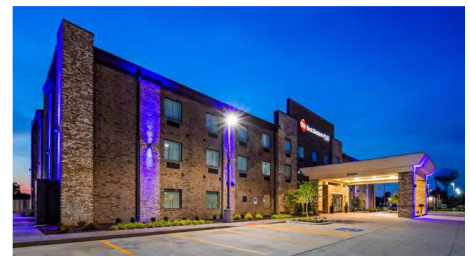
3129 Highland Pointe Drive

270-685-4140

Best Western Plus

1018 Goetz Drive

270-689-0939



TownePlace Suites Owensboro

3365 Hayden Road

270-231-8222

Registration Information

Registration Form: Registration will only be available online at www.sfrtarea3.org. You may enter a 1st and 2nd choice in each session you plan on attending to ensure we place you in a class of your choosing. Again, you must register online at www.sfrtarea3.org.

Choice of Classes: Most classes fill up quickly so make sure you get your registration and payment in as soon as possible to ensure your seat in the class of your choice. Classes with low enrollment will be cancelled 2 weeks prior to school, so if you need a specific class, get your registration and payment in as soon as possible to ensure your class makes it!

Payment of Class Fees and Confirmation: Registration fees must be submitted promptly upon application. Purchase orders from municipalities will be accepted with payment to follow immediately. Confirmation for classes will only be sent to a valid email address upon receipt of payment!

Deadlines and Refunds: Registration fee for a single session or the entire weekend is \$75 per student for payments received prior to close of business on February 14, 2026. Registration fee will be \$85 per student after February 14 and for any on-site registrations. Refunds must be requested by email prior to February 14, 2026 to pat.thompson@kctcs.edu listing the students name, method of payment to GRFA (check or credit card), and to whom to make the refund (check to submitting party on original payment).

Junior Firefighters/Explorers: With this conference being a lecture setting, Junior Firefighters/Explorers are welcome at the Officers School; however, you must submit a letter from the Chief of the sponsoring agency stating they are aware that the Junior/Explorer is attending and the contact information with name and phone number of the on-site supervisor of the attending Junior/Explorer.

Student Conduct: All students/participants are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner as would be expected by the representatives of your sponsoring agency/jurisdiction. Inappropriate conduct or unnecessary disruptions will not be tolerated during any events or classroom sessions of the conference and will be dealt with accordingly. Remember, you are representing your department or organization while attending this or any other public event and many wear clothing, etc. that identify you with a particular agency, so please act accordingly.

Event Schedule

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 19th

8:00am-Class in Session

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 20th

7:00am- 8:00am On-Site Registration/Check-In

8:00am-12:00pm Classes in Session

12:00pm- 5:00pm Conference Registration/Check-in

1:00pm-5:00pm Classes in session

1:00pm Joint Meeting – Kentucky Fire Commission / Kentucky Fire Chiefs /
Kentucky Firefighters Association

6:00pm- 12:00am Firefighter Appreciation Party
DJ, Dancing, Prizes,
Appetizers, and Drink Vouchers from:



SATURDAY FEBRUARY 21st

6:30am-8:00am On-site Registration/ Check-In

8:00am-4:00pm Classes in Session

4:00pm-9:00pm Saturday Evening With the Vendors

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 22nd

7:00am-8:00am On-site Registration/Check-In

8:00am-4:00pm Classes in Session

ALL TIMES ARE CENTRAL STANDARD TIME!

Lunch will be available for purchase at the Convention Center on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Save The Date!

2027 Bryant Stiles Officers School

February 26th – 28th, 2027

Like us on Facebook @GreenRiver Firefighters

www.sfrtarea3.org



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PRESENTS

THE **2026**

FIREFIGHTER APPRECIATION PARTY

JOIN US FOR

DINNER & DRINKS!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

6:00 PM

BRYANT STILES
OFFICERS
SCHOOL

FRONT LOBBY
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CONVENTION
CENTER

THURSDAY CLASS	
1 Fire Suppression Systems for Sprinkler Inspectors	Richard Peddicord
FRIDAY - MORNING CLASSES	
2 Emergency Incident Survivability Profile-Rescue or Recovery	Kenn Fontenot
3 Roadmap to Success	Joshua Dixon
4 Buildings on Fire: Tactical Risks for the First-Due Company and Commander	Christopher Naum
5 The 25th Hour: Priority Management, Not Time Management	Zach Mathews
6 Responding to Civil Unrest and Mass Violence	Frank Montes De Oca
7 Firefighter Cancer Support Network: You Fight Fire, We Fight Cancer	Marc Henderson
8 Fire Officer - Leading Volunteer Firefighters	John Buckman/Tim Holman
FRIDAY - AFTERNOON CLASSES	
9 Designing and Implementing a Training Program	Kenn Fontenot
10 Reading the Building: Building FACTS and Modern Size-up On Today's Fireground	Christopher Naum
11 Responding to Self Storage Fires	Frank Montes De Oca
12 Personality Profiles: Understanding How We Are All the Same but Different	Zach Mathews
13 Functions of Command	John Buckman
14 A First Responders' Guide for Mental Health Issue Recognition	River Valley Behavioral Health
15 Officer Rules of Engagement	Tim Holman
FRIDAY - ALL DAY CLASSES	
16 Beyond the Call: Mutual Aid US&R and the Future of Disaster Response in Kentucky	Doug Hargreaves
17 Fire Alarm Systems for Inspectors	Eric Grimes
18 Fire Inspector II	Tim Juett
SATURDAY - ONE DAY CLASSES	
19 Strategic Planning & Goal Setting For Fire Executives	Zach Mathews
20 It Happened to Us, The Anatomy of a Near Miss!	Tim Whitham
21 Leading and Managing Small Departments	Kenn Fontenot
22 Fire Service "Specific" Leadership Essentials	John Turner
23 Main Street: Old School Hazards for Today's Fireground Reading Buildings	Christopher Naum
24 Managing the MAYDAY	Michael Prete
25 Fire Inspector I	Tim Juett
26 The Art of Reading Smoke	Rob Backer
27 Assisted Living Facilities: Your MCI Waiting to Happen	Frank Montes De Oca
28 What Would "YOU" Do If "YOU" Were Involved?	Dave Goldsmith
SUNDAY - ONE DAY CLASSES	
29 Fireground Strategy: Commanding the Fire Ground	John Turner
30 "Weather 101": What Emergency Responders Should Know About Weather	Christine Wielgos
31 I am in Charge, NOW WHAT? Rules of Engagement for fire Officers!	Tim Whitham
32 Fireground Management For The Small Department	Kenn Fontenot
33 First Arriving Engine Company & Managing Risks	Michael Prete
34 Fireground Leadership and Operational Excellence on Today's Demanding Fireground	Christopher Naum
35 The Art of Reading Smoke	Rob Backer
36 Kentucky Case Histories	Multiple
37 Are You Combat Ready?	Tim Holman
38 Officer..Do Your Job!	John Buckman/Scott Foreman
SATURDAY & SUNDAY - TWO DAY CLASSES	
39 NFA-Leadership in Supervision: Perspectives in Thinking (F0647)	Melvin Byrne
40 NFA-Strategy and Tactics for Initial Company Operations (F0455)	Kevin McDonnell
41 NFA-New Fire Chief: Contemporary Issues (F0762)	David Lewis
42 NFA-Executive Skills: Exercising Leadership Within Communities (F0520)	Justin Heim
43 NFA-Incident Safety Officer (F0729)	David Whiting

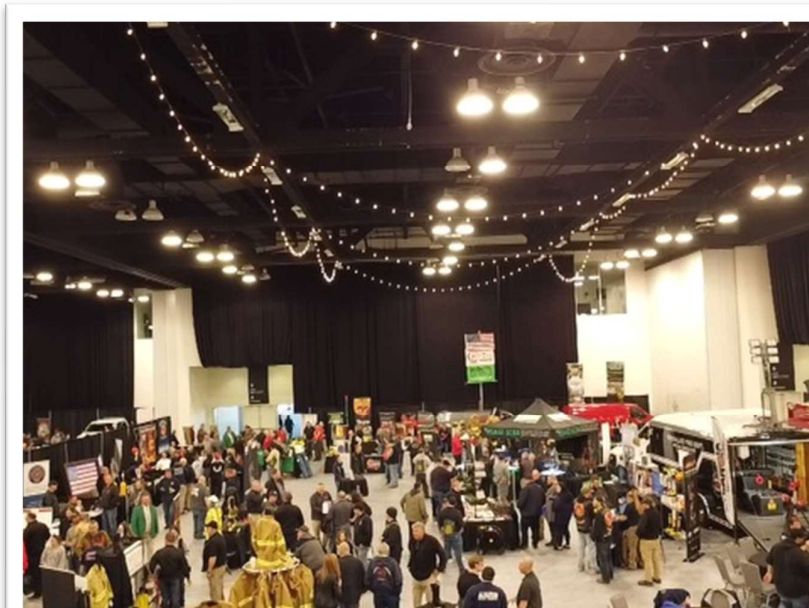
SATURDAY EVENING WITH THE VENDORS

Saturday, February 21st, 2026

4:00 – 9:00 PM



Bring Your Family!
Door Prizes Every Hour For
Adults and Kids!
Numerous Vendors From
Across The Country!
Multiple Vehicles on Display!
Meet Sparky the Fire Dog!





Green River Firefighters 2026 Meeting Dates



January 29th

**District 3 Office – Greenville
4678 State Route 181 N., Greenville**

February 20-22

**Bryant Stiles Officers School
Owensboro Convention Center**

March 26th

**Beaver Dam FD
250 Madison Street, Beaver Dam**

May 28th

**Union Co. FD
220 Mulberry Street, Uniontown**

July 23rd

**Masonville FD
6551 US 231, Utica**

August 1-4

**Kentucky Firefighters Association Conference
Ashland, KY**

September 24th

TBD, in conjunction with NVFC Conference

October 23-25

**Fall School/Owensboro Community College
4800 New Hartford Rd Owensboro 42303**

November 19th

Joint meeting with Dixie/SCKFA TBD

**2027 Bryant Stiles Officers School
February 26-28, 2027**

2026 BRYANT STILES OFFICERS SCHOOL
Green River Firefighters Association
February 20-22, 2026
Owensboro Convention Center-Owensboro, KY

To: GRFA Vendors
From: Marc Henderson, Exhibits Coordinator
Email: Marc.henderson@kctcs.edu Phone: (270) 499-1602
Date: 11/10/25
Subject: **2026 Bryant Stiles Officers School**
By the Green River Firefighters Association

The Green River Firefighters Associations 39th Annual Bryant Stiles Officers School is fast approaching. This year's dates are February 20-22, 2026. The school will once again be held at the Owensboro Convention Center in beautiful downtown Owensboro. The 45,000 square ft. Exposition Hall is primed and ready for our annual **"Saturday Evening with the Vendors" on February 21st from 3:00 to 9:00pm CST.** We want to thank you for being one of these vendors and we look forward to seeing you again this year. This year we will have these options for vendors:

- A 10 X 10 pipe and drape booth at \$200.00 to include (1) 8ft table, skirted on three sides, (2) chairs.
- The basic open floor space, 20'X40' is \$300.00 for one (1) apparatus, ambulance, response trailer and/or service equipment.
- Additional open floor spaces (**limit 2**) can be obtained for \$200.00 each. Additional floor space (**limit 2**) will be 12'x40' for longer vehicles. Other sizes can be accommodated by contacting us.

Floor Space is limited this year so be sure and register early.

Corporate Sponsorships are also available this year.

Important Information

We ask that ALL vehicles and trailers be moved into the Exhibit Hall on Friday, February 20th, 2026.

Vendor Registration Forms will be mailed to:
Green River Firefighters Association, PO Box 775, Greenville, KY 42345, or
email:
Marc.henderson@kctcs.edu

For further information about the 2026 Bryant Stiles Officers School
Contact us at 270-499-1602 or marc.henderson@kctcs.edu



Bryant Stiles Officers School

39th Annual School
February 20-22, 2026
Owensboro, KY



CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP DONOR LEVELS

Information needs to be received by February 1, 2026.

Email to marc.henderson@kctcs.edu

\$10,000 (Platinum)

2 Each of 20X40 Floor Space or Booths
Banner at Registration Desk
Banner in Vendor Hall
Recognition on all Conference Signage
Flyer or Catalog Handed to Students at Registration
1 Hotel Room for 2 Nights at 1 of the Host Hotels
Meeting with Green River Executive Board Sunday Morning

\$5,000 (Gold)

1 Booth or 20X40 Floor Space (Your Choice)
Banner in Vendor Hall
Hotel Room for 1 Night at 1 of the Host Hotels
Ad in Brochure

\$2,500 (Silver)

Free Booth Rental
Signage displayed at the school
Ad in Brochure

\$1,000 (Bronze)

Sponsorship of 1 day's refreshments (morning & noon)
Signage displayed at the school.
Ad in Brochure

\$500

Sponsorship of morning or afternoon refreshments
Signage displayed at the school.

GREEN RIVER FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

2026 BRYANT STILES OFFICERS SCHOOL

Vendor Registration Form

Vendor/Company Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Contact Person: _____ Title: _____

Contact Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please tell us about your exhibit:

<input type="checkbox"/> Fire & EMS Apparatus	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescue & Extrication Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> SCBA & Related
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety & Training Equip.	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Protective Gear	<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle or Trailer	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Medical & EMS	<input type="checkbox"/> Uniforms & Apparel	_____

Booth Information:

1- ☐ 10'x10' Pipe and drape, (2) chairs, (1) 8ft table, \$200.00 _____
(1) 7" X 44" booth ID sign

2- ☐ Basic open floor space 20' X 40' \$300.00 _____

3- ☐ Additional 12' X 40' (LIMIT 2) \$200.00 _____

Total Due: _____

Vehicle(s):

1- Type: _____ Length: _____ feet

2- Type: _____ Length: _____ feet

3- Type: _____ Length: _____ feet

Return completed form and Payment to:

**GRFA Officer's School
PO Box 775
Greenville KY 42345**

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: GREEN RIVER FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

GRFA USE ONLY:

Date received:

Fee Enclosed:

Booth Assignment:

Revised 11/10/25

OUR SPONSORS

Please take time to stop and visit our sponsors for the 2026 Bryant Stiles Officers School. Without their support, we could not have such a great school for the Kentucky Fire Service!



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INQUIRE

Your Community Mental Health Center

RiverValley Behavioral Health is proud to be the first thought, first choice for behavioral healthcare in our communities, serving the Green River area since 1967. We offer a full range of mental health services and supports, in addition to substance use treatment, and services for those with intellectual & developmental disabilities.



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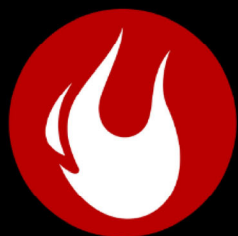
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Louisville, KY 40299



FIREFIGHTER
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Since 2005, the nonprofit Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN) has provided assistance and one-on-one mentoring to thousands of cancer-stricken firefighters and their families.

Vision:

To be the global leader in firefighter cancer support, awareness and education.

Mission:

To assist firefighters and EMS providers and their immediate families diagnosed with cancer by providing badge to badge support, training and guidance.

Visit us at: **FirefighterCancerSupport.org**

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INQUIRE



Thursday Class- All Day

1. Fire Suppression Systems for Sprinkler Inspectors.

Instructor: Richard Peddicord

This class will satisfy the requirements for the six (6) hours continuing education for fire suppression system sprinkler inspectors licensed by the Kentucky Department of Housing, Building, and Construction. This will cover the code requirements, key definitions, the allowable types of fire sprinkler systems, system components, specific tests, inspections and maintenance activities, and required test duration for valves, sprinklers, gauges, alarm devices, fire department connections and fire pumps. This program includes examples and interactive discussion on how the requirements of NFPA 25 are applied.

About the Instructor:

Richard Peddicord began his firefighting experience at the age of 14 years old by attending the KY State Fire School in Lexington. After graduating high school, he volunteered with Fayette County FD. He went on to work for the Kentucky State Police. He spent more than a decade designing, installing and inspecting fire protection systems in Kentucky. Richard has dedicated his professional career to learning and sharing his knowledge of the preservation of life and property in all fire and safety-related areas. Richard surpassed his childhood dream by becoming the Assistant Director for the Kentucky State Fire Marshal's Office. During his tenure with the Division of Fire Prevention, he had many accomplishments, including overseeing the initial operations of the Kentucky Safe Cigarette Program and the states sprinkler inspection program. Richard retired from the Kentucky Fire Marshal's office in 2020. Today, he serves as the Assistant Chief of the Stamping Ground Fire Department.



Friday Class- Morning

2. Emergency Incident Survivability Profile-Rescue or Recovery

Instructor: Kenn Fontenot

Rescue or Recovery? Tips for determining the Survivability Profile of victims at emergencies. Survivability potential of victims are clues learned during initial size up including fire and smoke conditions, building construction, fire department training/equipment, and available resources. These tips can be applied to any emergency.

About the instructor:

Kenn Fontenot is a charter member and the first Fire Chief of the LeBlanc Volunteer Fire Department. Fontenot is a former principal member of the NFPA 1010 committee, NFPA 1700, and a former alternate member on the NFPA 1021 committee. He served for 12 years as the Regional Fire Training Coordinator at the Louisiana State University Fire and Emergency Training Institute and is currently instructing for the Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Academy which is the state fire training agency. He is a past-President and life member of the Louisiana Fireman's Association. He also holds an Associate's Degree in Fire Science.



Friday Class- Morning

3. Roadmap to Success

Instructor: Joshua Dixon

NEW for 2026

The “Roadmap to Success” class offers an in-depth exploration of the success framework utilized by the Henderson Fire Department. Participants will engage in discussions centered on the strategies for becoming a firefighting preparation first department. Key topics will include:

- Mission: Understanding the department’s commitment to serving the community effectively.
- Vision for the Future: Outlining the long-term goals of what the organization wants to achieve.
- Core Values: Examining the Foundational principles that guide actions and decision-making within the department.
- Defining Success: Identifying and analyzing the metrics and milestones that characterize success within the organization.
- Training Program: An in-depth look at the organization year-round training schedule.
- Succession Planning: Identifying and developing personnel to ensure seamless transition and operational continuity.

This course aims to equip participants with the knowledge to contribute to their organization and enhance their own professional development.

About the instructor:

Fire Chief Josh Dixon has dedicated 18 years to the Henderson Fire Department, advancing through multiple roles including Firefighter, Engineer, Captain, and Division Chief, before becoming Fire Chief. His extensive experience covers multiple aspects of firefighting and leadership within the department. Recently, he was honored as the 2025 Career Kentucky Fire Chief of the Year by the Kentucky Association of Fire Chiefs.



Friday Class- Morning

4. Buildings on Fire: Tactical Risks for the First-Due Company and Commander

Instructor: Christopher Naum

New for 2026.

Arriving companies and personnel at today's structure fires must be able to rapidly and accurately identify key elements of a building, process that data based upon a widening field of variables present on today's evolving fireground and implement timely actions that address prioritized actions requiring intervention. This program will present tactical risks and key considerations for the First-Due Company, Company Officer and Commander affecting and influencing operational risk management, command and tactical safety and tactical protocols based upon occupancy risks, reading the building and adaptive management principles that incorporate the Building FACTS model and risks. This program presents insights from a wide variety of building types, eras and vintage and applies insights for Modern Methods of Construction, Tactical Fire Dynamic Challenges and Tactical and Command and Control Considerations. This class is geared towards Company and Command Officers; however, all ranks and experience levels will benefit from this informative and highly engaging program.

About the instructor:

A 50-year fire service veteran and a highly regarded national and international instructor, author, lecturer and fire officer, a distinguished authority on building construction sciences affecting fireground operations, command and tactics, he has traveled extensively throughout the USA and globally delivering training programs on building construction & architecture sciences and firefighting, fireground leadership, command management and operational safety for over thirty-seven years. He is a sought-after national keynote speaker, instructor and presenter and has served as an FDIC General Session Keynote speaker and National Fire Academy Adjunct Instructor.



Friday Class- Morning

5. The 25th Hour: Priority Management, Not Time Management

Instructor: Zach Mathews

NEW for 2026

This class has been part of my leadership series for four years. Using my experience as an executive coach for fire chiefs, I share real stories about the effectiveness of the content. The focus is on setting priorities, establishing balance in life, and delegating tasks to direct reports.

About the Instructor:

Zach Mathews is an experienced speaker, international trainer and executive coach who inspires audiences with his fast paced and entertaining programs focused on leadership, communication, and personal growth. With over twenty-eight years in public safety, Zach brings a wealth of experience to the table. His journey has taken him from conservation officer and wildland firefighter to leadership roles such as Investigation Section commander, Training Section commander, Logistics Manager, and Office of Professional Standards commander. In 2019, the Indiana Department Homeland Security recognized Zach's leadership abilities, tapping him to teach essential skills like body language and executive leadership courses across the state. Zach now serves as the Planning Section Chief for the Indiana Fire & Public Safety Academy where he and his staff are responsible for firefighter certifications and instructor standards. Zach also coordinates statewide executive leadership training programs to include the biannual Indiana Fire Chief's Academy, and a company officer executive leadership course taught throughout the state. Zach is a John Maxwell certified executive coach and DISC behavioral analyst who works one-on-one with fire chiefs to achieve both professional and personal goals. Zach has trained thousands throughout his career and is motivated to provide training that will positively impact the fire service. But what truly sets Zach apart is his passion for effective communication.



Friday Class- Morning

6. Responding to Civil Unrest and Mass Violence

Instructor: Frank Montes De Oca

Groups are frustrated and angry. When emotions boil over, civil unrest occurs. Sadly, fire and emergency services seldom prepare for spontaneous communitywide violence. Recently, focus has been on preparing for the active shooter, which is just one aspect of the challenges first responders will face. In the near future communities will face challenging hot-button issues related to politics, ideology and religion. This **4-hour presentation** is targeted to all ranks and disciplines focusing on knowing the players, intel gathering and sharing, partner communications, avoiding and surviving ambushes and managing mass casualties under duress.

About the Instructor:

Frank Montes de Oca is a thirty-eight-year veteran of the fire and emergency services. Beginning as firefighter medic working through the ranks appointed to positions including Chief of EMS, Training Bureau Commander and senior operations officer for the Orange County (FL) Fire and Rescue Department. Later he was appointed as the Fire Chief and Emergency Services Director of a large combination department in the Orlando metro area. Now residing in North Carolina, Chief Montes de Oca remains active as a contributing editor for *The Pennsylvania Fireman* magazine serving first responders throughout Pennsylvania, Virginia and the southeast. He is an adjunct instructor for the National Fire Academy and is qualified to present programs for OSHA and EPA.



Friday Class- Morning

7. Firefighter Cancer Support Network: You Fight Fire, We Fight Cancer

Instructor: Marc Henderson

NEW for 2026

The harsh reality is that almost two-thirds of the firefighters battling fires today will be battling cancer tomorrow. Cancer remains the leading cause of line-of-duty deaths among firefighters. By making a meaningful contribution to our mission, to assist firefighters and EMS providers and their immediate families diagnosed with cancer through our unique support services, we can make a greater impact on our nation's heroes battling cancer. The goals of this class will be to educate firefighters and EMS Personnel about their increased risk of developing cancer; encourage actions and behaviors to reduce or prevent exposure to occupational cancer hazards; encourage healthy lifestyle choices to further reduce cancer risk; and provide information about screenings and early detection, have conversations about culture change, and share resources available to firefighters, EMS personnel, and their families following a cancer diagnosis.

About the Instructor:

Marc Henderson is the Kentucky State Director for the Firefighter Cancer Support Network and is a cancer survivor. He was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer in 2021. He has 37 years' experience as a volunteer firefighter/EMT in Daviess County Kentucky and has worked for the Kentucky Fire Commission for 16 years, currently serving as the Region 1 Coordinator. Marc served as the Green River Firefighters Association Secretary since 2006, and was the KY Firefighters Association President in 2024. He serves on the Bryant Stiles Officers School Board and is the Vendor Coordinator for the school. He also is the School Coordinator for Kentucky State Fire School held every June in Lexington.



Friday Class- Morning

8. Fire Officer – Leading Volunteer Firefighters

Instructors: John Buckman and Tim Holman

NEW for 2026

This course is specifically aimed at officers who lead volunteer firefighters. We will examine the skills necessary to be effective at motivating volunteers to do their job and be there when the call comes in. Leading is difficult especially when you are trying to motivate people who are not being compensated. Topics to be discussed: Accountability - Leaning Forward - Respect for yourself and others - humility - delegation - integrity and values.

About the Instructors:

John M. Buckman III served 55 years in the fire service from firefighter, Chief, state academy training director, author, photographer, International Association President and instructor. He has authored six books. He has produced 5 photography books. He is a highly sought after speaker for local, regional and national events. He has been at the Bryant Stiles Officers School each year since the beginning.

Tim Holman is a 49 year veteran of Fire & EMS. He currently serves as chief of the German Township Fire & EMS in West Central Ohio. He has conducted training programs on leadership, fire and EMS management and safety issues in 42 states.

Tim graduated with honors from Ottawa University in Kansas. He has an extensive background in health care management, the fire service and organizational development. He is a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (EMS Section And VCOS Section), the Ohio Fire Chiefs and the National Association of EMTs.

Fire Chief magazine named him Fire Chief of the Year in 2002. He is a past commissioner of the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He also serves as an advisory board member for Clark State Community College.

Tim has over 500 hours of training in active shooter hot zone response. He has written numerous articles and he has published two books on leadership and one on team building. He co-authored The Chief Fire Officer Desk Reference (Jones & Bartlett) and The Leadership Guide For Volunteers (Jones & Bartlett).

Tim has a new book coming out in January.



Friday Class- Afternoon

9. Designing and Implementing a Training Program

Instructor: Kenn Fontenot

Attendees will learn how to conduct a training program needs analysis, determine mandatory training needs, design and implement a training program, and be given guidance for resources available for a training program.

About the Instructor:

Kenn Fontenot is a charter member and the first Fire Chief of the LeBlanc Volunteer Fire Department. Fontenot is a former principal member of the NFPA 1010 committee, NFPA 1700, and a former alternate member on the NFPA 1021 committee. He served for 12 years as the Regional Fire Training Coordinator at the Louisiana State University Fire and Emergency Training Institute and is currently instructing for the Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Academy which is the state fire training agency. He is a past-President and life member of the Louisiana Fireman's Association. He also holds an Associate's Degree in Fire Science.



Friday Class- Afternoon

10. Reading the Building: Building FACTS and Modern Size-Up on Today's Fireground

Instructor: Christopher Naum

Today's buildings and occupancies continue to present unique challenges to command and operating companies during combat structural fire engagement. Building and occupancy profiling, identifying occupancy risk versus occupancy type, construction methods, features, systems and components require new skill sets in reading the building and implementing predictive occupancy profiling for today's firefighters, company and command officers for effective and efficient fireground operations. Incorporating the Buildings On Fire FACTS model for First-Arriving Construction, Tactics and Safety, this program provides an overview of the methodology and process to increase operational effectiveness and ensure critical building factors are identified, assessment and monitored throughout the incident with insights on an enhanced size-up model, building and fire risk model and operational template that meets today's fireground challenges in various building types and occupancies. This class is geared towards Company and Command Officers; however, all ranks and experience levels will benefit from this informative and highly engaging program. All new for 2026.

About the Instructor:

A 50-year fire service veteran and a highly regarded national and international instructor, author, lecturer and fire officer, a distinguished authority on building construction sciences affecting fireground operations, command and tactics, he has traveled extensively throughout the USA and globally delivering training programs on building construction & architecture sciences and firefighting, fireground leadership, command management and operational safety for over thirty-seven years. He is a sought-after national keynote speaker, instructor and presenter and has served as an FDIC General Session Keynote speaker and National Fire Academy Adjunct Instructor.



Friday Class- Afternoon

11. Responding to Self-Storage Fires

Instructor: Frank Montes De Oca

NEW for 2026

One-in-three Americans utilize an off-site self-storage unit. Monthly, over four-million Americans search for self-storage sites to store personal items or operate small businesses. When these multi-unit, hidden hazard complexes pose challenges, fire and rescue services must be prepared. Through group exercises, this **4-hour presentation** will address the strategies and tactics necessary to manage potentially catastrophic events to a safe, successful end.

About the Instructor:

Frank Montes de Oca is a thirty-eight-year veteran of the fire and emergency services. Beginning as firefighter medic working through the ranks appointed to positions including Chief of EMS, Training Bureau Commander and senior operations officer for the Orange County (FL) Fire and Rescue Department. Later he was appointed as the Fire Chief and Emergency Services Director of a large combination department in the Orlando metro area. Now residing in North Carolina, Chief Montes de Oca remains active as a contributing editor for *The Pennsylvania Fireman* magazine serving first responders throughout Pennsylvania, Virginia and the southeast. He is an adjunct instructor for the National Fire Academy and is qualified to present programs for OSHA and EPA.



Friday Class- Afternoon

12. Personality Profiles: Understanding How We Are All the Same but Different

Instructor: Zach Mathews

NEW for 2026

As a certified DISC personality training and behavior analysis, I've profiled over 1,000 firefighters. This class trains fire executives on maximizing communication strengths and addressing weaknesses, based on their unique profiles.

About the Instructor:

Zach Mathews is an experienced speaker, international trainer and executive coach who inspires audiences with his fast paced and entertaining programs focused on leadership, communication, and personal growth. With over twenty-eight years in public safety, Zach brings a wealth of experience to the table. His journey has taken him from conservation officer and wildland firefighter to leadership roles such as Investigation Section commander, Training Section commander, Logistics Manager, and Office of Professional Standards commander. In 2019, the Indiana Department Homeland Security recognized Zach's leadership abilities, tapping him to teach essential skills like body language and executive leadership courses across the state. Zach now serves as the Planning Section Chief for the Indiana Fire & Public Safety Academy where he and his staff are responsible for firefighter certifications and instructor standards. Zach also coordinates statewide executive leadership training programs to include the biannual Indiana Fire Chief's Academy, and a company officer executive leadership course taught throughout the state. Zach is a John Maxwell certified executive coach and DISC behavioral analyst who works one-on-one with fire chiefs to achieve both professional and personal goals. Zach has trained thousands throughout his career and is motivated to provide training that will positively impact the fire service. But what truly sets Zach apart is his passion for effective communication.



Friday Class- Afternoon

13. Functions of Command

Instructor: John Buckman

NEW for 2026

Chief Alan Brunacini reminds us that command starts with whoever shows up first — and what they do in those first 60 seconds will ripple through the entire operation. In this workshop we will discuss the Functions of Command. We will review the tasks associated with command whether you have 6 or 16 responding firefighters. The job of the incident Commander will be constantly changing until water is applied to the fire. Water can make the problem go away.

About the Instructor:

John M. Buckman III served 55 years in the fire service from firefighter, Chief, state academy training director, author, photographer, International Association President and instructor. He has authored six books. He has produced 5 photography books. He is a highly sought after speaker for local, regional and national events. He has been at the Bryant Stiles Officers School each year since the beginning.



Friday Class- Afternoon

14. A First Responders' Guide for Mental Health Issue Recognition

Instructors: River Valley Behavioral Health

This class will utilize several 'mini courses' that are educational for the recognition of issues leading to mental health or behavioral emergencies that the First Responder may respond to, including:

Suicide Prevention - Attendees will be able to identify myths & facts about suicide, risk factors for suicide, and how to identify the appropriate resources for individuals experiencing suicidal ideation

Intro to Substance Use Disorders - Attendees will be able to identify signs of a potential substance use disorder, understand the varying models of addiction and stages of change, and identify a variety of substance use disorder treatment options.

Code Red – CODE RED is a safety planning tool informed by evidence, designed to engage youth and adults in identifying trusted individuals, postponing risky decisions, and finding activities that provide relaxation and distraction from suicidal thoughts.

About the Instructor:

RiverValley Behavioral Health is Your Community Mental Health Center.

Since 1967, RiverValley Behavioral Health has provided vital behavioral health services that fit the ever-growing needs of our communities. Our state- designated Community Mental Health Center serves the Green River region of Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, Ohio, McLean, Union and Webster counties.

We offer a full range of mental health services and support, in addition to substance use treatment, and specialized care for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We prioritize your needs, offering a full continuum of evidence-based services tailored to you and delivered by a caring and dedicated team of professionals.

This class will be conducted by one or more of the professional full-time staff.



Friday Class- Afternoon

15. Officer Rules of Engagement

Instructor: Tim Holman

NEW for 2026

This is a highly interactive course that delves into some of the root problems that officers face today. Together we will identify specific issues that confront the officer and develop plans to overcome those issues.

In many cases we know the problems that confront the officer. Most of those problems are not on the fire scene. These issues create stress and anxiety for the officer and the staff lowering overall performance of the department.

Sometime problems originate that are officer initiated. Sometimes the officer needs problem solving skills. Sometimes the officer is treading water and no life preserver is available.

This course will provide practical and proven skills that will help the officer succeed in their role.

About the Instructor:

Tim Holman is a 49 year veteran of Fire & EMS. He currently serves as chief of the German Township Fire & EMS in West Central Ohio. He has conducted training programs on leadership, fire and EMS management and safety issues in 42 states.

Tim graduated with honors from Ottawa University in Kansas. He has an extensive background in health care management, the fire service and organizational development. He is a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (EMS Section And VCOS Section), the Ohio Fire Chiefs and the National Association of EMTs.

Fire Chief magazine named him Fire Chief of the Year in 2002. He is a past commissioner of the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He also serves as an advisory board member for Clark State Community College.

Tim has over 500 hours of training in active shooter hot zone response. He has written numerous articles and he has published two books on leadership and one on team building. He co-authored The Chief Fire Officer Desk Reference (Jones & Bartlett) and The Leadership Guide For Volunteers (Jones & Bartlett). Tim has a new book coming out in January.



Friday Class- All day

16. Beyond the Call: Mutual Aid US&R and The Future of Disaster Response in Kentucky

Instructor: Doug Hargreaves, State Urban Search & Rescue Coordinator

NEW for 2026

Kentucky is entering a new era of coordinated emergency response—one built on shared resources, clear processes, and a unified mission. This session provides an in-depth look at the next generation of disaster response in the Commonwealth and how local agencies and emergency services can benefit from the evolving system.

Students will explore:

- **The Evolution of the Kentucky Mutual Aid System (KMAS):** What a mission request will look like for both the requesting agency and the responding agency, including the introduction of the new statewide resource portal that will enhance visibility of deployable assets across the Commonwealth.
- **Kentucky Urban Search & Rescue (KY US&R):** An overview of the program's structure and capabilities, and how KY US&R can support your community during complex and large-scale emergencies.
- **Streamlined Reimbursement Processes:** A simplified explanation of future reimbursement procedures, required documentation, and what agencies can expect when seeking cost recovery for deployments.
- **The Future of the ESF 4/9 Desk:** A look at the evolving ESF 4/9 mission, how requests and deployments will be coordinated, and the enhanced support structure for fire, rescue, and US&R operations.
- **Incident Support Teams (ISTs):** What they are, why they matter, and how Kentucky will shape IST capabilities to enhance command, control, and logistical support for extended incidents.

This class is designed for fire departments, rescue squads, emergency managers, law enforcement partners, and anyone who may request or provide assistance in a statewide disaster. It's time to be ready for the incident beyond the kingdom walls—where collaboration replaces silos and Kentucky responds as one.



Friday Class- All day

17. Fire Alarm Systems for Inspectors

Instructor: Eric Grimes

This class is developed and presented for the industry professionals that are required to attend and receive recertification credit for licensure. This class will help the students have a deeper understanding of Fire Alarm systems. Discussion as to where they are required, installed and maintained, proper inspection of the systems, how they function, how they can help save a life, and how they may be a benefit to the fire service. This class qualifies for the six (6) hours continuing education required for State Certified Fire Alarm Inspectors, and CEUs for Building Inspectors.

About the Instructor:

Eric Grimes has been in the commercial fire alarm industry for over 35 years. He has worked for Simplex Time Recorders, Tyco Fire and Safety, Johnson Controls, Kaisern Aluminum Warrick and is currently employed by Alpha Energy Solutions. Eric holds an Associates of Applied Science in Electronics and in Fire/Rescue Science Technology. He has been a KY State Certified Fire Alarm Inspector since 1990 and is NICET IV certified in Fire Protection Technology – Fire Alarm Systems.



Friday Class- All day

18. Fire Inspector II

Prerequisite for this class is Fire Inspector I, verified by a copy of your Fire Inspector I certificate, and 6 months in the performance of inspections verified by your chief or supervisor.

Instructor: Tim Juett– Kentucky Fire Marshal's Office

This class is the second step in the Fire Marshal's revised Fire Inspector program. This class is designed for the fire inspectors and building code officials that deal with life safety issues on a daily basis. The students will get detailed instruction on specific occupancy requirements, occupant load calculations and seating arrangements. This class will consist of instruction followed by an exam. Certificates are issued upon passing the test. Course Objectives: Attendees will be instructed in the performance of, and requirements for, complex fire inspections and code recognition; and will gain knowledge in occupant load calculation and seating arrangement in places of assembly, fair and exposition centers, and special events.



Saturday (One day)

19. Strategic Planning & Goal Setting for Fire Executives

Instructor: Zach Mathews

NEW for 2026

Drawing from my experience with fire departments, this class focuses on building strategic 2-year goals. The aim is to help chiefs create a clear mission, vision, and direction for their department, and develop SMART objectives for their team.

About the Instructor:

Zach Mathews is an experienced speaker, international trainer and executive coach who inspires audiences with his fast paced and entertaining programs focused on leadership, communication, and personal growth. With over twenty-eight years in public safety, Zach brings a wealth of experience to the table. His journey has taken him from conservation officer and wildland firefighter to leadership roles such as Investigation Section commander, Training Section commander, Logistics Manager, and Office of Professional Standards commander. In 2019, the Indiana Department Homeland Security recognized Zach's leadership abilities, tapping him to teach essential skills like body language and executive leadership courses across the state. Zach now serves as the Planning Section Chief for the Indiana Fire & Public Safety Academy where he and his staff are responsible for firefighter certifications and instructor standards. Zach also coordinates statewide executive leadership training programs to include the biannual Indiana Fire Chief's Academy, and a company officer executive leadership course taught throughout the state. Zach is a John Maxwell certified executive coach and DISC behavioral analyst who works one-on-one with fire chiefs to achieve both professional and personal goals. Zach has trained thousands throughout his career and is motivated to provide training that will positively impact the fire service. But what truly sets Zach apart is his passion for effective communication.



Saturday (One day)

20. It Happened to Us, the Anatomy of a Near Miss

Instructor: Tim Whitham

NEW for 2026

Firefighters are often reluctant to share events that went wrong or had a negative outcome for fear of being viewed by their peers or stakeholders as unprepared or poor performers. These incidents are often hidden in the corners of fire station or swept under the rug. They are even treated as personal failures of leadership, but rarely are they treated as a learning opportunity. One such event left our department asking questions and examining how we as an organization handle near misses and what we can do to improve performance and procedures. While we had two firefighters bail out of a window due to a sudden and drastic change in interior conditions, the journey our department took to learn from situations like this many and others in order to make cultural changes was profound. This fire, which appeared to be out by all indications of visual and thermal imaging changed in a matter of seconds with temperatures rapidly increasing forced firefighters to choose between ignoring their department MAYDAY policy and immediately bailing out of a window. This class examines how we view, plan for, and experience near misses as well as what you and your agency can do to create a culture of progress.

About the Instructor:

Timothy F. Whitham; MS, EFO, a 28-year veteran of fire and emergency services, serving as a career and volunteer firefighter in career, combination and volunteer agencies at the local, federal and contract level. He is currently the Fire Chief with the Edwardsville Fire Department, in the Kansas City Kansas metro area. Tim holds a Master's Degree in Leadership with the Emphasis in Disaster Planning and Executive Fire Leadership and is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program through the National Fire Academy. He is accredited through the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress as a Fire Officer III, Instructor III, Inspector II, Hazardous Materials Technician and Incident Commander, as well numerous other certifications. Tim is an Adjunct Professor with Columbia Southern University, College of Safety & Emergency Services as well as an Adjunct Instructor and Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Applied Research Project (ARP) evaluator with the National Fire Academy. He currently is a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, where he serves on the IAFC's Affordable Care Act Task Force, and the National Fire Protection Association. Tim is an Army veteran of Airborne Infantry regiments in the active duty and National Guard components



Saturday (One day)

21. Leading and Managing Small Departments

Instructor: Kenn Fontenot

This course is designed to cover the skills needed to meet the standard of NFPA 1021 Fire Officer Professional Qualifications. Topics to include:

- Leadership – to include characteristics of great leaders, leadership styles, which style is best, and the types of firefighter personalities.
- Management – demonstrating the difference from leadership, program management, and the who, what, when and how to manage.
- The definition and types of discipline.
- Program management and how to establish priorities and group nominal techniques.
- Tools of delegation and who and why to delegate.
- Mentoring
- Oral and written communication skills.

About the Instructor:

Kenn Fontenot is a charter member and the first Fire Chief of the LeBlanc Volunteer Fire Department. Fontenot is a former principal member of the NFPA 1010 committee, NFPA 1700, and a former alternate member on the NFPA 1021 committee. He served for 12 years as the Regional Fire Training Coordinator at the Louisiana State University Fire and Emergency Training Institute and is currently instructing for the Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Academy which is the state fire training agency. He is a past-President and life member of the Louisiana Fireman's Association. He also holds an Associate's Degree in Fire Science.



Saturday (One day)

22. Fire Service “Specific” Leadership Essentials

Instructor: John Turner

NEW for 2026

This Course is built on fire service study and observation. What Makes a company officer a true leader in their organization? While leadership traits may transcend profession, this course zeros in on fire service specific leadership. We’ll explore five key traits for effective company officer leadership without the “rah-rah” stories borrowed from sports teams, military units, or other professions.

About the Instructor:

John Turner holds the rank of Fire Chief in Derby, KS, a position he has held for the past five years. His career spans four decades, having risen through the operational ranks in some of the busiest companies within the Wichita Fire Department in Wichita, KS. A chief officer since 2009, he has managed numerous major emergencies. He is a contract instructor at the National Fire Academy and holds a Master’s Degree in education. Chief Turner has conducted training sessions in over 30 states.



Saturday (One day)

23. Main Street: Old School Hazards for Today's Fireground Reading Buildings

Instructor: Christopher Naum

Today's buildings, occupancies and fireground present increasing challenges and demands that directly influence command decision-making and operational tactics. Presenting insights on Main Street Construction, Hazards and Risks for today's fire service, this highly acclaimed seminar focus is to increase awareness and promote new skill sets in the fundamentals of Type III building construction, integrating improved size-up and building reads and operational assessment and engagement. With a focus on Main Street and standalone Type III Buildings, Taxpayers and mixed occupancies, the program will look at the Predictability of Building Performance, overview of construction systems, materials and methods, inherent building characteristics and compromise and collapse risks, adaptive renovations and reutilization. Incorporating the Buildings on fire FACTS concept for First-Arriving Construction, Tactics and Safety, the seminar provides an integrated process to increase operational effectiveness and ensure critical Type III and IV building and occupancy factors are identified, assessed and monitored throughout an incident with a focus on the size-up and building reads. The class highlight consisting of taking the classroom to the streets of Owensboro for a facilitated walking tour of buildings in the downtown Main Streets and surrounding select areas of in the vicinity of the Convention Center learning first-hand about construction features, how to read a building, size-up and discussing tactical considerations in the street environment. Although focusing on Type IIIs, the program will also address other building types along the tour route including commercials, retail, business, govt., and residentials. This highly interactive and thought-provoking program identifies integral functions impacting First-Due tactical decision-making and firefighting. This class is geared towards Company and Command Officers; however, all ranks and experience levels will benefit from this informative and highly engaging program.

About the Instructor:

A 50-year fire service veteran and a highly regarded national and international instructor, author, lecturer and fire officer, a distinguished authority on building construction sciences affecting fireground operations, command and tactics, he has traveled extensively throughout the USA and globally delivering training programs on building construction & architecture sciences and firefighting, fireground leadership, command management and operational safety for over thirty-seven years. He is a sought-after national keynote speaker, instructor and presenter and has served as an FDIC General Session Keynote speaker and National Fire Academy Adjunct Instructor.



Saturday (One day)

24. Managing the MAYDAY

Instructor: Michael Prete

NEW for 2026

The last thing any firefighter, company officer or chief officer wants to hear over the radio on the fireground are the shouts of “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday”!!! This program will review and discuss the common themes in firefighter injury and fatalities, and the common situations that create mayday events. In addition, the students will learn the role of Incident Command in the MAYDAY, the role of a firefighter in the MAYDAY, discuss the importance of effective communication, the PAR, and the importance of Rapid Intervention. Also, the program will identify the relationship of the Incident Management System and a Rapid Intervention Team. Finally, students will have an opportunity to review numerous Case Studies. Students will see final images and hear harrowing last words of firefighters who have given the ultimate sacrifice during mayday events as they learn from those events through in-depth analysis.

About the instructor:

Mike Prete retired after 37-years of active service as an Assistant Fire Chief at Montgomery County (MD) Fire and Rescue Services, a large combination department near our nation’s capital. With over 40-years of fire and rescue experience, Mike started as a volunteer in a department that bordered Washington DC and served in a career capacity for Montgomery County holding positions from Firefighter Paramedic through Executive Operations Chief. In addition to his role directly relating to fire and rescue operations, he managed daily operational and administrative issues including budget, daily oversight and scheduling for 1300 full time personnel. Mike began teaching in his early days as a sergeant, serving as a recruit instructor, and has continued this passion today. With national and state instructor certifications, Mike has served as an adjunct instructor for the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute, NIMS Instructor for MEMA, Anne Arundel Community College adjunct instructor, Practical Incident Control Training lead instructor and holds various certifications in public safety. Since his retirement, Mike splits his time between teaching and as a project coordinator for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF). Mike hosts the NFFF Podcast series Firefighter After Action Review which takes deep dives into Line of Duty Death incidents by discussing all aspects of these incidents with personnel who have knowledge of these tragic events.



Saturday (One day)

25. Fire Inspector I

Instructor: Tim Juett- Kentucky Fire Marshal's Office

This class is the first step in the Fire Marshal's revised Fire Inspector program. Fire and building code officials will benefit from this course. This class will provide instruction based on NFPA 1, 2018 Fire Code, NFPA 101, 2018 Life Safety Code, the Kentucky Standards of Safety (815 KAR 10:060) and the Kentucky Building Code (KBC). Officials will learn basic principles of fire inspections, and how they relate to the KBC and International Building Code (IBC). This class will consist of one fast-paced day of instruction followed by an exam. Certificates are issued upon passing the test.

Course Objectives:

- Prepare the attendees to conduct fire inspections of buildings for fire hazards and code compliance per 815 KAR 10:060 (The Kentucky Standards of Safety).
- Determine if fire protection equipment is operational, maintained and in compliance.
- Determine the adequacy of exits.
- Determine an occupant load for a facility.
- Where required, ensure emergency fire evacuation drills are held.
- Advise property owners of the inspector's findings.
- Gain an understanding of projects that must be approved by the Division of Building Code Enforcement and other Divisions within the Department of Housing, Building, and Construction.



Saturday (One day)

26. The Art of Reading Smoke

Instructor: Rob Backer

Today's structure fires are more dangerous than ever before. Lightweight construction, low-mass synthetics, and open space floorplans have created a perfect storm for rapid, prolific fire growth and extreme behavior. It is imperative for firefighters of all ranks and experience levels to be prepared for this new battle. The Art of Reading Smoke provides the knowledge necessary for first-arriving firefighters, officers, and chief officers to determine the fire's location, progression, and future "from the seat" before seeing any flame. This knowledge ensures that the correct tactics are implemented for the best possible outcome. Through the extensive use of actual fireground videos, first-time students will develop, and return students will refine their knowledge and skills to become INTELLECTUALLY aggressive firefighters, rather than ARBITRARILY aggressive. The next generation of Reading Smoke brings new research, a new library of videos, and discussion on cancer prevention, tactics and strategies to develop the next generation of aggressive interior firefighting!

About the instructor:

Rob Backer is a 23-year student of the fire service and currently serves as Battalion Chief for Thornton Fire Department in Thornton, Colorado, having previously served as a firefighter, Lieutenant, and Captain. He has written for Fire Engineering and multiple fire service blogs. He is an instructor for The Art of Reading Smoke and available to teach nationally. He can be reached at robbacker.fdi@gmail.com



Saturday (One day)

27. Assisted Living Facilities your MCI waiting to Happen

Instructor: Frank Montes De Oca

NEW for 2026

America's population is aging, which presents a multitude of significant fire and EMS challenges. Whether a former single-family residence transformed into a mom-and-pop retirement home or a multi-floor, corporate campus, Assisted Living Facilities are spreading, growing and posing potential disasters for responders. This class will explore case studies of past catastrophic events and share the presenter's firsthand experiences preparing responders to undertake operational plans and tactical actions to minimize tragedy.

About the instructor:

Frank Montes de Oca is a thirty-eight-year veteran of the fire and emergency services. Beginning as firefighter medic working through the ranks appointed to positions including Chief of EMS, Training Bureau Commander and senior operations officer for the Orange County (FL) Fire and Rescue Department. Later he was appointed as the Fire Chief and Emergency Services Director of a large combination department in the Orlando metro area. Now residing in North Carolina, Chief Montes de Oca remains active as a contributing editor for *The Pennsylvania Fireman* magazine serving first responders throughout Pennsylvania, Virginia and the southeast. He is an adjunct instructor for the National Fire Academy and is qualified to present programs for OSHA and EPA.



Saturday (One day)

28. What Would “YOU” Do If “YOU” Were Involved

Instructor: Dave Goldsmith

NEW for 2026

A comprehensive review of five (5) case studies involving members of the fire department, as well as discussing the Lessons Learned.

- Motor Vehicle Accident on the Interstate involving an overturned Tanker Truck, a Tow Truck, two Police Cars and a Fire Apparatus which resulted in a Fire and Firefighter Injuries.
- Arson Fire involving a single-family dwelling that resulted in the Death of a Firefighter, which is still an open case after 31 years.
- Train Derailment with Hazardous Materials that was involved in an Explosion & Fire while the Fire Departments were on scene, resulting in multiple Contractors burned.
- Multiple Alarm Large Warehouse Fire involving Multiple Agencies, after a night of several Water Rescues response during Torrential Rain.
- Arson Fire in a Single-Family Dwelling next door to the Fire Chief during Social Unrest times, which resulted in two Civilian Fatalities.

About the instructor:

David Goldsmith served the Highview Fire Protection District for 35 years, having spent 15 of those years as a volunteer and 20 years as a career member. He has risen through the ranks from Firefighter to Chief, serving as Chief for 14 years until his retirement in 2022.

In 2008 Chief Goldsmith was appointed by Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear to the Kentucky Fire Commission. For 10 years he represented Fire Chiefs of volunteer fire departments, and sat on several committees, such as the Training Facilities Grant Committee, the Loan Committee, the Eligibility Committee and he also Chaired the Education Committee. Chief Goldsmith is the past President of the Kentucky Regional Fire Training Academy, and the past president of the Jefferson County Fire Instructor's Association, serving both organization for several years. Chief Goldsmith is the former owner of America's Bravest Equipment Co, and his hobbies are woodworking, working on his antique fire chief car, and hanging out with his 3 kids, 9 grandkids, and 7 great grandkids. He has been married to his wife Debbie for the past 52 years.



Sunday (One day)

29. Fireground Strategy: Commanding the Fire Ground

Instructor: John Turner

NEW for 2026

This dynamic, interactive course is designed for all levels, from small volunteer to metro departments. It goes beyond the mechanics of using the command system, diving deep into the decision-making process at the command post and the critical role of the incident commander. Learn how to formulate effective strategies, know when to adapt, and how to respond to a Mayday. Finally, prepare for what happens after the fire with guidance on handling media interviews. This course is full of nuggets to sharpen your command skills and build confidence in making life-saving decisions on the fireground.

About the instructor:

John Turner holds the rank of Fire Chief in Derby, KS, a position he has held for the past five years. His career spans four decades, having risen through the operational ranks in some of the busiest companies within the Wichita Fire Department in Wichita, KS. A chief officer since 2009, he has managed numerous major emergencies. He is a contract instructor at the National Fire Academy and holds a Master's Degree in education. Chief Turner has conducted training sessions in over 30 states.



Sunday (One day)

30. “Weather 101”: What Emergency Responders Should Know About Weather

Instructor: Christine Wielgos

This class will go over several meteorological topics that will be very useful for fire, police or any first responder. The class will begin with basic storm spotter information, including storm types, storm identification, safety and reporting procedures. Some advanced level storm spotting techniques and topics will also be covered. You will then learn all about Doppler Radar and how to interpret basic radar data and how to use it. Lastly, the class will end with a comprehensive overview of severe weather safety and how to stay the most up to date with the ever-changing weather.

About the instructor:

Christine Wielgos is the Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Paducah KY. She received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Meteorology from Northern Illinois University. She has worked with the National Weather Service in Paducah KY since March 2000. As Warning Coordination Meteorologist, Christine's responsibilities include ensuring consistency and integrity of National Weather Service products and services, conducting safety and preparedness programs throughout the area, leading education and training courses for partners and the public, as well as occasionally working the forecast and warning operations desks.



Sunday (One day)

31. I am In charge, NOW WHAT? Rules of Engagement for Fire Officers!

Instructor: Tim Whitham

One of the most misunderstood applications of promotions is what will be required of the individual. Moving from one position to another within the fire service is a daunting task. It is not easily accomplished and will require sacrifice. Leadership is a constant hard-fought battle that will require all of the individual's abilities, a lot of time and effort, forward thinking, dedication, sleepless nights, stress, mistakes, gains, sacrifice, pride, intestinal fortitude and taking responsibility. Whether the fire officer wants to admit it or not, they are now the "BOSS", and with it comes a new mindset, abilities and the ability to avoid making critical mistakes that will affect their ability to motivate, lead and change their organization and the fire service.

About the Instructor:

Timothy F. Whitham; MS, EFO, a 28-year veteran of fire and emergency services, serving as a career and volunteer firefighter in career, combination and volunteer agencies at the local, federal and contract level. He is currently the Fire Chief with the Edwardsville Fire Department, in the Kansas City Kansas metro area. Tim holds a Master's Degree in Leadership with the Emphasis in Disaster Planning and Executive Fire Leadership and is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Program through the National Fire Academy. He is accredited through the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress as a Fire Officer III, Instructor III, Inspector II, Hazardous Materials Technician and Incident Commander, as well numerous other certifications. Tim is an Adjunct Professor with Columbia Southern University, College of Safety & Emergency Services as well as an Adjunct Instructor and Executive Fire Officer (EFO) Applied Research Project (ARP) evaluator with the National Fire Academy.



Sunday (One day)

32. Fireground Management for the Small Department

Instructor: Kenn Fontenot

This course will cover basic fireground management principles and how to apply practical fireground tactics. We will also take a look at resource management and operational considerations.

About the Instructor:

Kenn Fontenot is a charter member and the first Fire Chief of the LeBlanc Volunteer Fire Department. Fontenot is a former principal member of the NFPA 1010 committee, NFPA 1700, and a former alternate member on the NFPA 1021 committee. He served for 12 years as the Regional Fire Training Coordinator at the Louisiana State University Fire and Emergency Training Institute and is currently instructing for the Louisiana Fire and Emergency Training Academy which is the state fire training agency. He is a past-President and life member of the Louisiana Fireman's Association. He also holds an Associate's Degree in Fire Science.



Sunday (One day)

33. First Arriving Engine & Managing Risks

Instructor: Michael Prete

First Arriving Engine Company: This program will help the student understand the role of the engine company on the fireground. To accomplish this, this program will review building construction, discuss how to develop a relationship with truck crews to work together in suppression efforts, and develop an understanding of individual engine company responsibilities as they arrive first due to an incident.

Managing Risks: Fire department files bankruptcy, firefighters found guilty of negligence and forced to pay retribution, firefighters chief held accountable for line of duty death, ordered to pay millions of dollars to surviving family members. These are everyday headlines. So how do officers and chiefs avoid these pitfalls? This program will define the issues and factors that the leadership of an organization uses to manage risk both in the station, in public and on the scene of an incident. The program will look to develop an understanding of personal influence and how traits, values and tradition affect risk. This program will help develop strategies for risk assessment and develop tools to manage risk in all aspects of the fire service.

About the instructor:

Mike Prete retired after 37 years of active service as an Assistant Fire Chief at Montgomery County (MD) Fire and Rescue Services, a large combination department near our nation's capital. With over 40 years of fire and rescue experience, Mike started as a volunteer in a department that bordered Washington DC and served in a career capacity for Montgomery County holding positions from Firefighter Paramedic through Executive Operations Chief. In addition to his role directly relating to fire and rescue operations, he managed daily operational and administrative issues including budget, daily oversight and scheduling for 1300 full time personnel. Mike began teaching in his early days as a sergeant, serving as a recruit instructor, and has continued this passion today. With national and state instructor certifications, Mike has served as an adjunct instructor for the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute, NIMS Instructor for MEMA, Anne Arundel Community College adjunct instructor, Practical Incident Control Training lead instructor and holds various certifications in public safety. Since his retirement, Mike splits his time between teaching and as a project coordinator for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF). Mike hosts the NFFF Podcast series Firefighter After Action Review which takes deep dives into Line of Duty Death incidents by discussing all aspects of these incidents with personnel who have knowledge of these tragic events.



Sunday (One day)

34. Fireground Leadership and Operational Excellence on Today's Demanding Fireground

Instructor: Christopher Naum

NEW for 2026

This is an engaging and thought-provoking program that challenges conventional fire service paradigms and explores leading edge fire service discussion points from across the North American Fire Services with new strategic, tactical and operational considerations due to building construction, extreme compartment fire behavior and occupancy risks and the demands associated with today's evolving and demanding fireground. Integrated leading insights and emerging concepts and methodologies related to fireground tactical theory, suppression needs for effective fire suppression and command operations and methodologies for operational excellence and firefighter safety.

About the instructor:

A 50-year fire service veteran and a highly regarded national and international instructor, author, lecturer and fire officer, a distinguished authority on building construction sciences affecting fireground operations, command and tactics, he has traveled extensively throughout the USA and globally delivering training programs on building construction & architecture sciences and firefighting, fireground leadership, command management and operational safety for over thirty-seven years. He is a sought-after national keynote speaker, instructor and presenter and has served as an FDIC General Session Keynote speaker and National Fire Academy Adjunct Instructor.



Sunday (One day)

35. The Art of Reading Smoke

Instructor: Rob Backer

Today's structure fires are more dangerous than ever before. Lightweight construction, low-mass synthetics, and open space floorplans have created a perfect storm for rapid, prolific fire growth and extreme behavior. It is imperative for firefighters of all ranks and experience levels to be prepared for this new battle. The Art of Reading Smoke provides the knowledge necessary for first-arriving firefighters, officers, and chief officers to determine the fire's location, progression, and future "from the seat" before seeing any flame. This knowledge ensures that the correct tactics are implemented for the best possible outcome. Through the extensive use of actual fireground videos, first-time students will develop, and return students will refine their knowledge and skills to become INTELLECTUALLY aggressive firefighters, rather than ARBITRARILY aggressive. The next generation of Reading Smoke brings new research, a new library of videos, and discussion on cancer prevention, tactics and strategies to develop the next generation of aggressive interior firefighting!

About the instructor:

Rob Backer is a 23-year student of the fire service and currently serves as Battalion Chief for Thornton Fire Department in Thornton, Colorado, having previously served as a firefighter, Lieutenant, and Captain. He has written for Fire Engineering and multiple fire service blogs. He is an instructor for The Art of Reading Smoke and available to teach nationally. He can be reached at robbacker.fdi@gmail.com



Sunday (One day)

36. Kentucky Case Histories

East KY Floods, London Tornado, Bardstown Nursing Home Fire, Louisville Bridge Rescue

Instructors:

Doug Hargreaves

Chantz McPeek

Chief Todd Spalding

Captain Micheal Renn

NEW for 2026

Eastern Kentucky Flooding-2025: On Friday February 14, 2025, approximately nine inches of rain fell in Kentucky resulting in twenty-two deaths. **Doug Hargreaves** will present on the response to massive devastation that occurred from flooding that went through the Eastern portion of Kentucky. Items covered will be the Command/Coordination and response activities that were implemented to save lives.

London Tornado: Chantz McPeek was one of the first responders that arrived on the scene following the devastating tornado that traversed Southeastern Kentucky on May 16, 2025. The tornado was on the ground for almost one hour and thirty minutes and resulted in twenty deaths and 108 injuries including one Line of Duty Death of a local firefighter along the 60-mile path. **Chantz McPeek and Shane Lynch** will detail the response that occurred in the London area.

Bardstown Nursing Home Fire: In March 2025 at 06:38, the Bardstown Fire Department was dispatched for a fire at a nursing home facility in Bardstown. 22 residents had to be transported due to smoke inhalation. This course will talk about the challenges faced as a small full-time department. The failures of the facility that contributed to fire growth and spread and the lessons learned. **Chief Todd Spalding** will present this session.

Louisville Bridge Rescue: March 01, 2024, following an accident on the Clark Memorial Bridge in Louisville that left a female truck driver's truck dangling for nearly 40 minutes, responders will detail the rescue efforts that brought her back to safety. **Captain Michael Renn** will be presenting this session.



Sunday (One day)

37. Are You Combat Ready?

Instructor: Tim Holman

NEW for 2026

Combat ready is an organizational culture that creates firefighters and EMS providers that are physically, mentally, emotionally ready, and skilled to engage any incident they are called upon to mitigate.

Conventional training occurs during drills and scheduled training. Conventional training primarily focuses on skill development. Combat Ready training zeros in on developing Muscle Memory, Critical Thinking, performing under pressure and stress. It prepares the individual to work through the emotional aspects of an incident. To shunt the stress away from the incident temporarily and encompasses the physical and emotional impact on performance.

Combat Ready training is a daily endeavor to raise the standard of performance for all individuals in the department. Once the standard is reached, the bar is raised. Continuous improvement is the goal.

Five Elements of Combat ready:

- Skill Development is exceptional
- Muscle Memory allows high performance in extreme conditions.
- Stress Shunt
- Physical Aspect
- Emotional Aspect

About the instructor:

Tim is a 49-year veteran of Fire & EMS. He currently serves as chief of the German Township Fire & EMS in West Central Ohio. He has conducted training programs on leadership, fire and EMS management and safety issues in 42 states.

Tim graduated with honors from Ottawa University in Kansas. He has an extensive background in health care management, the fire service and organizational development. He is a member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (EMS Section And VCOS Section), the Ohio Fire Chiefs and the National Association of EMTs.

Fire Chief magazine named him Fire Chief of the Year in 2002. He is a past commissioner of the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He also serves as an advisory board member for Clark State Community College. Tim has over 500 hours of training in active shooter hot zone response. He has written numerous articles, and he has published two books on leadership and one on team building. He co-authored The Chief Fire Officer Desk Reference (Jones & Bartlett) and The Leadership Guide For Volunteers (Jones & Bartlett). Tim has a new book coming out in January.



Sunday (One day)

38. Officer... Do Your Job!

Instructor: John Buckman and Scott Foreman

NEW for 2026

This course is designed for the person who desires to become an officer as well as current officers looking to improve their influence. This is not about your job description, but it is about your job.

Through expert-led sessions, interactive exercises and real-world applications, attendees will develop a structured approach to leadership in their department.

Executive Presence, Strategic Leadership, and Effective leadership today requires more than functional expertise — it demands communication skills that foster trust, engagement and influence.

This class will focus on the following critical leadership skills necessary to making your department a better and more functional organization.

- Communications
- Risk Management
- Team Building
- Decision-Making / Problem Solving
- Delegation
- Planning

About the Instructors:

John M. Buckman III served 55 years in the fire service from firefighter, Chief, state academy training director, author, photographer, International Association President and instructor. He has authored six books. He has produced 5 photography books. He is a highly sought after speaker for local, regional and national events. He has been at the Bryant Stiles Officers School each year since the beginning.

Scott Foreman is the Fire Chief at Ohio Twp. In Warrick County. He has been with Ohio Twp. Since April of 2023. Prior to that he spent 23 years with Henderson FD in Kentucky where he spent the last 8 as Fire Chief. He began his fire service career with the Knight Twp. FD in Vanderburgh County at the age of 15.



Saturday & Sunday

39. NFA Leadership in Supervision: Perspective in thinking (F0647)

Instructor: Melvin Byrne

This two-day course provides the supervisor with the conceptual foundation and framework for success in leadership roles by exploring creative, analytical, political and critical thinking perspectives. The course addresses skills needed for assessing situations from multiple perspectives, making critical decisions, fostering creativity and innovation, and using persuasion.

About the Instructor:

Melvin Byrne has devoted his career to advancing fire service leadership and public safety. Beginning as a volunteer firefighter and EMT in 1974 with the Ashburn Volunteer Fire Rescue Department, he rose to serve as Chief and on the County Fire Commission. His professional path included Loudoun County Fire Rescue, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs, along with teaching at the National Fire Academy. A graduate of the Executive Fire Officer Program, he also holds a master's in Fire and Emergency Management Administration from Oklahoma State University.



Saturday & Sunday

40. NFA Strategy and Tactics for Initial Company Operations (F0455)

Instructor: Kevin McDonnell

This 2-day Course is designed to meet the needs of company Officers (Cos) responsible for managing the operations of 1 or more companies during structural firefighting operations. This course is designed to develop the management skills needed by COs to accomplish assigned tactics at structure fires.

About the Instructor:

Kevin McDonnell is a Deputy Fire Chief for the City of Holyoke, MA. Deputy Chief McDonnell is a National Fire Academy instructor in the Incident Management program, and a pro board-certified fire instructor 2 for the state of Massachusetts. Deputy Chief McDonnell is also the firefighting skills program coordinator for the state of Massachusetts which covers all live fire training post recruit academy training. A lifelong learner, Deputy Chief McDonnell holds a bachelor's degree in fire administration, a master's degree in executive leadership and countless other certifications, including Fire Officer 3, Incident Safety Officer, and CFO from the Massachusetts firefighting Academy.



Saturday & Sunday

41. NFA- New Fire Chief: Contemporary Issues (F0762)

Instructor: David Lewis

This 2-day course will develop managerial skills, leadership skills, and contemporary issues and awareness necessary for newly appointed or elected fire chiefs to effectively meet their obligations. This course will help to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for them to perform effectively now and in the future.

The primary audience is newly appointed or elected fire chiefs in volunteer, combination or career departments. The secondary audience is departmental leaders who may become fire chiefs and local-level government administrators and elected officials, including fire district commissioners, board members, etc.

About the Instructor:

David Lewis is an active member of the Odenton Volunteer Fire Company (Maryland), having served in both Chief Officer and Administrative Officer positions. Additionally, he has served as President of the Maryland State Firefighters Association, President of the Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firefighters Association, and Director of the National Volunteer Fire Council. David is nationally recognized as a subject-matter expert in fire and emergency services issues and has delivered training programs and conference presentations across the U.S. He is a certified instructor for the Maryland Fire & Rescue Institute, the National Volunteer Fire Council, and the National Fire Academy. As an emergency services educator, Mr. Lewis is able to apply his life experiences in an environment that shares with others and builds future leadership across the emergency services community.



Saturday & Sunday

42. NFA- Executive Skills Series: Exercising Leadership Within Communities (F0520)

Instructor: Justin Heim

NEW for 2026

The objective of this 2-day course is to provide fire service authority figures with knowledge and skills that enable them to exercise leadership when confronting adaptive challenges presented by increasingly diverse internal and external communities. The goal of the course is for participants to use the diversity of ideas, peoples and cultures as resources in exercising leadership to address adaptive challenges in their communities.

The primary target audience is fire and emergency service personnel in positions of authority (executive-level officers) who have an opportunity to exercise leadership.

About the Instructor:

Justin Heim is a National Fire Academy Instructor.



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Owensboro, KY



Saturday & Sunday

43. NFA- Incident Safety Officer (F0729)

Instructor: David Whiting

This 2-day course examines the Safety Officer's role at emergency responses. This course focuses on operations within an Incident Command System (ICS) as a Safety Officer and emphasizes response to all-hazard types of situations.

About the Instructor:

David Whiting is a National Fire Academy Instructor.



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Bryant Stiles Officers School

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Hosted at:

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