

## **The Volunteer Firefighter: Defining Commitment**

*Chief Rick Lasky, Lewisville (TX) Fire Department (ret.)*

Since the day the father of our fire service, Ben Franklin, started the first volunteer fire company, men and women have stepped up and taken on the responsibility of protecting their communities and the families that live there. In most cases receiving no compensation for their time and dedication. The volunteer firefighter defined the word selflessness. But what does it take to make volunteerism work? Especially at a time where many of today's volunteer firefighters are facing the challenge and in some cases, the crisis, of recruitment and retention of their members. This program looks at the methods for implementing a *productive* recruitment and retention program along with the steps needed to train and motivate our next generation of volunteer firefighters.