

The Volunteer Firefighter

“Defining Commitment”



Chief Rick Lasky

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Benjamin Franklin

- Created the first Volunteer Fire Company in Philadelphia in 1736
- Union Fire Company
- *And we're still doing it!*



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Some famous Americans who served as Volunteer Firefighters

- George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Paul Revere, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, John Barry, Aaron Burr, Benedict Arnold, James Buchanan and Millard Fillmore

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What does it take to commit to a life of Volunteerism?

- Commitment
- Selflessness
- Duty
- Pride



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- Honor
- Tradition
- Passion
- Dedicating yourself to a certain life style

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It takes someone special!



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The Professional Volunteer Fire Department

- Fire Engineering Magazine
Tom Merrill Snyder (NY) FD



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The old town Volunteer and today's Volunteer

- Drill nights
- Meeting nights
- Fundraisers
- Picking and choosing calls



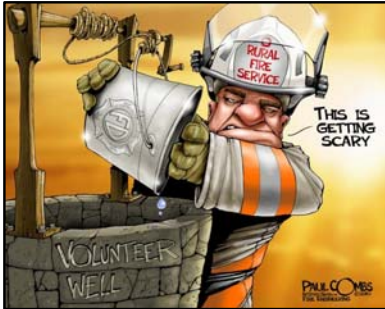
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Balancing your personal and firehouse lives

- The *first family*, the one at home, and your *second family*, the one at the firehouse

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Recruitment and Retention



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Recruitment and Retention

- Hiring the right people
- The new generation
- Who lives in your community?
- What are your response distance guidelines?
- Roster numbers and filling turnout gear

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Recruitment and Retention

(cont.)

- Incentive programs
 - State pension
 - Insurance
 - Reimbursement
 - College tuition
 - Outside training conferences
 - Yes... X-Box in the firehouse

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Recruitment and Retention

(cont.)

- Jr. Firefighter programs to aid in recruitment
- Citizen Fire Academies
- Area assignments
- *“Find me one like you.”*
- Other ideas??

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Training and Motivating our next generation of Volunteer Firefighters

- The department training calendar
- They want to do well!
- Make the drills and meetings interesting
 - Organized and on topic

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Mentoring your Volunteers

“One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade”



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The benefits of mentoring

- Sharing insights and information
- Encourages junior officers
- Enhances training
- Improves communication and feedback
- Creates higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment!

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- Creates a system for networking and professional development
- Improves overall quality of department's organizational culture
- Faster promotional rates
- Increased career mobility
- Builds a strong team

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Who is a good mentor?

- Accepts mentor role as a trust position
- Is successful and accomplished
- Motivator
- Passion for teaching and helping others
- Willingness to help
- Good communicator and listener

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Mentoring challenges

- Attitudes, beliefs and values
- Poor people skills
- Egos
- Confidentiality
- Bullies and thugs

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Mentoring your Volunteers; So what can you do?

- Provide a conducive environment
- Promote and support mentoring
- Discuss advantages ...why
- Prepare for the role
- Do it!

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How do you promote?

- Elections
- Appointments
- Testing
- Others??
- How do you bridge strategic plans from one group of officers to the next installment?

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How do you train your officers?

- Company officer training
- Chief officer training
- National Fire Academy
- Others??

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Other enhancers

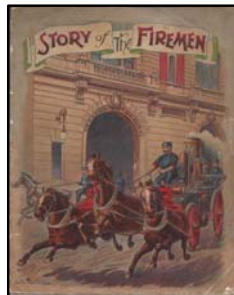
- Do you have good, strong, SOPs and SOGs?
- Association rules and regs
- Are you using the talents and assets of all of your members?
- What do you do for your retired/ former members?

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Other enhancers (cont.)

- Department history and fire service history committee



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Other enhancers (cont.)

•Ceremonies

- Awards
- New members
- Promotional
- Retirements
- New Apparatus
- New Firehouse
- Honorary Firefighters and Chiefs



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Other enhancers (cont.)

- Stay involved in the community
 - Programs and activities
- Get your state association(s) involved
 - NVFC.org
- Market your mission
- Get out of the firehouse

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It takes someone special!

Are you that someone?

We need more like you!

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