



VCOS VCOS NEWS

The Official Newsletter of the Volunteer & Combination Officers Section
of the International Association of Fire Chiefs

Winter 2010–2011

2010 'Symposium in the Sun' Highlights



2010 Symposium Tops All Others

By Chief Timothy S. Wall, North Farms (CT) Volunteer Fire Department

It's one question I never tire of hearing: "How are you going to top this?!" In each of the last few years, without fail, after our Symposium in the Sun ends and I'm out

talking to people in the hotel lobby and bidding adieus, at least one person will walk up raving about the experience they just completed and ask how we can possibly top it next year.

I have to say Symposium 2010 was the best one we've ever put on. If it seems like I say that every year it's because I do. And it's true. Each year they get a little better. And that's not just my opinion, but that feedback comes directly from the attendees—attendees who continue to come back year after year. So as good as this last one was, I'm confident that next year's will be even better. Now, I can't tell you specifically right now how that's going to happen, but the reason it will is because of the dedication of the VCOS membership, its board of directors, and most especially the Symposium committee.

One of the reasons people come back each year is because the material we present is always different. Generally when you return to an industry show on an annual basis, you pretty well know what you're going to see and hear. You walk onto the show floor and oftentimes know in advance where each vendor is going to be. We don't have that at the Symposium. We have a lot of familiarity and relationships that have been built over the years, but as far as the presentations, our committee does a great job mixing up the speakers, bringing in new, relevant topics and just keeping everything fresh.

The combination of the program, attendees and setting make it the ultimate destination for any chief fire officer from a volunteer or combination department who is serious about improving

his or her education and professionalism, and who wants access to the skills and information that can help improve the department back home. It's always nice when we can bring in people for the first time; invariably they walk away with new information and hopefully everyone at home gets to benefit from it.

This year two highly-respected, well-known figures from the fire service joined us for the first time, and they



VCOS sponsor Pierce Manufacturing always attracts admirers with its trucks on the beach!

were both blown away! They said they'd heard all the talk and feedback over the years, but it wasn't until they sat in the sessions and interacted with the people that they finally realized that all the hype they'd been hearing was actually true. I just had to laugh!

Congratulations to all the winners of the awards presented at the Symposium (more details inside this newsletter) and sincere thanks to Provident and VFIS for continuing to sponsor those awards. In addition, we thank ALL the sponsors who make the Symposium possible. Without the support and participation of our fabulous corporate partners, we wouldn't be nearly as active or effective for our membership or for the fire service in general.

I thank all the attendees and wish you well during 2011 as you take the information and the new relationships forward. We hope to see you again at Symposium 2011. It won't be easy to top 2010, but we'll do our best!

'Symposium in the Sun' Highlights

2010 a Record-Setting 'Symposium in the Sun'

By: Chief Jim L. Wilson, EFO, Mariposa County (CA) Fire Department

In a year when most conferences and symposiums experienced reduced attendance, your VCOS Symposium in the Sun 2010 set new registration records. Combining steadfast dedication to quality education, one of the most enjoyable locations in America and loyal VCOS members has proven to be a winning combination. To conference organizers, there can be no better compliment than one heard several times from first-time attendees: "The educational sessions were so compelling I had little time to enjoy the spectacular beach." By a show of hands, over twenty percent of this year's attendees were first timers.



The pre-conference's theme was *The Fire Chief as CEO*. A lineup of dynamic presenters focused on techniques to assist fire chiefs in managing public safety departments more efficiently during these challenging times. Symposium rolled out three days of outstanding presentations but the highlight was an on-stage collaboration between Fire Chief Magazine Editor Janet Wilmoth and Chief Alan Brunacini. The Grand Ballroom was full and Sunday's audience was glued to their chairs as the dynamic duo candidly discussed contemporary issues and responded to audience questions.



This year's "open mic" Networking Night was record setting. Over 75 fire service executives and officers gathered in the Island Room until well past 9:30 pm. brainstorming issues and solutions.

The Symposium Committee and IAFC staff are hard at work planning Symposium in the Sun

2011. Even though this year was a sell-out, please rest assured that VCOS is not resting on successes of the past. Every member of a volunteer or combination fire department can depend on Symposium in the Sun to deliver superior educational opportunities that are in tune with contemporary issues being faced by all fire service leaders.

Mark your calendars now for the best conference value in 2011 and plan on registering early next year! Symposium in the Sun 2011 is scheduled for November 10 to 13 in Clearwater Beach Florida at the Sheraton Sand Key Resort.

Get To Know Your Candidates!

The VCOS Board of Directors recommends that you get to know the two candidates running for IAFC 2nd Vice President and make sure you vote when you receive your ballot.

- **Fire Chief David Daniels**, Woodinville Fire & Rescue, Woodinville, Wash.
(www.idaviddaniels.com)
- **Fire Chief William R. Metcalf**, North County Fire Protection District, Fallbrook, Calif.
(www.chiefbillmetcalf.com)

'Symposium in the Sun' Highlights



Attendees have many opportunities to meet new friends and discuss what they've learned at that day's educational sessions.



IAFC President and Chairman of the Board Chief Jack Parow addresses Symposium attendees at the Friday opening ceremony. Chief Parow thanks VCOS and its members for their leadership.



Fire Chief Alan Brunacini, Ret. (Phoenix Fire Department) and Janet Wilmoth, the editor of Fire Chief Magazine, share the stage in "Alan and Janet Unplugged," an unscripted, candid conversation discussing changes they have seen in the fire service industry over the years.

'Symposium in the Sun' Awards

Chief Bales Receives John M. Buckman III Award

Fire Chief John E. Bales of the Golden (CO) Fire Department was the 2010 winner of the John M. Buckman III award, sponsored by Provident Insurance. The award recognizes a chief officer of a volunteer or combination fire department who stands out on the local and/or regional level as a true professional who has demonstrated leadership, integrity, and outstanding moral values within the fire service.

The award was presented by Chief Bales' son, Captain Steve Bales. Standing to the left of Chief Bales and Captain Bales is Fire Chief John M. Buckman III. On the far left is Mr. Barry Balliet, the President of Provident Insurance.

For information on the 2011 Buckman Award, access www.vcos.org/awards/buckmanleadershipaward.



Retention & Recruitment Award Given to Montgomery Co.



The 2010 winner of the Retention and Recruitment award sponsored by VFIS was the Montgomery County (MD) Volunteer Fire-Rescue Association. Accepting the award is, from right to left: Chief Joseph Chornock of the Germantown (MD) Volunteer Fire Dept and District Representative; Mr. Eric Bernard, Association Executive Director; Mr. Andrew B. White, District Representative and Ms. Marcine Goodloe, Association President. To the far left is Dr. William Jenaway, Executive Vice President of VFIS, who made the presentation.

For information on the 2011 VFIS awards, access www.vcos.org/vfis.

DuBoistown Wins Safe Driving Initiative Award

Congratulations to Fire Chief Richard A. Knecht, Ret. of the DuBoistown (PA) Fire Department, the winner of the VFIS-sponsored Safe Driving Initiative Award. Chief Knecht was not able to attend Symposium to accept the award for a job well done by his department, but Dr. William F. Jenaway was able to present the award in person at the annual conference of the Pennsylvania Fire & Emergency Services Institute later that month.

'Symposium in the Sun' Scholarships

Chiefs Hardwick and Karrow Awarded 2010 Symposium Scholarships

VCOS Vice Chair Brett Waters (far right) presents checks to the two Symposium scholarship winners Assistant Chief Kevin D. Hardwick of Glendale (OH) Fire & Rescue and Fire Chief Jeff Karrow (far left) of the Alexandria (MN) Fire Department. Scholarships are awarded every year to assist two chief officers from volunteer and combination departments which lack the financial resources to offer professional development to their leaders.

For information on the VCOS 2011 scholarship programs, access www.vcos.org/scholarships.

Chief Brewer Given 2010 Emerging Leader Scholarship



Gasaway Consulting Group Senior Associate Eddie Buchanan (and Division Chief for the Hanover County (VA) Fire EMS Department) presented the first "Emerging Leader Scholarship" award check to Fire Chief Scott F. Brewer of St. Tammany Parrish (LA) Fire District #9. This new scholarship was sponsored by the Gasaway Consulting Group. Company president, Dr. Richard B. Gasaway, noted the scholarship provides a way for a new fire chief to attend the Symposium's many educational opportunities.

For more information on the 2011 scholarship programs, access www.vcos.org/scholarships.



Know Someone Deserving of an Award or Scholarship?



For information on the 2011 VCOS-FRI scholarships, the Symposium scholarships, the John M. Buckman III Leadership award, the Safe Driving Initiative award and the Retention-Recruitment award, visit the VCOS website at:

www.vcos.org

'Symposium in the Sun' Exhibits

Symposium Exhibits Provide The Perfect Mix

By Mike Macdonald

If you think being a firefighter is tough, try being a vendor in this ultra-competitive industry. Unyielding standards and a tight-knit community where handshake

deals still exist and your reputation is everything. Imagine having to travel around constantly taking care of your territory, and then having to pack up and travel to industry shows 20 to 30 times a year.

Then, imagine being at one of those "shows," and sitting in the lobby of a hotel with only other vendors to talk with—not one customer to be found. Then imagine thinking that this isn't a good thing, but that it's a great thing.

"There are shows where you get tons of sales and tons of leads, but this event isn't about all that," says Dan Seidberg, president of iamresponding.com. "You don't measure this one in number of sales, you measure it in the relationships you build and the loyalty you find. The people here are the leaders of the industry, and it's a privilege to sit down and talk with them and develop long-term relationships. I'll take this conference over any other event I do all year long."

The reason why there are no attendees to talk to is because they're all sitting in meeting rooms listening to some of the industry's most dynamic speakers talking about the most relevant topics.

"This is the only conference that I go to—and this absolutely amazes me—where the classes start and everybody is in them. And nobody leaves



John Hill representing First Bankers Corporation (far left) and Allen Fremier of NetDuty Software speaking with Symposium attendees.



Auggie Matt of A.F. Matt & Associates with a potential customer for his flashlight harnesses.



Justin Powell of ACS Firehouse Software explains his fire department records management system to two Symposium attendees.



At Right: George Krause of Globe Manufacturing Co LLC explains the benefits of his boots.

At left: Scott Gohl of Dragon Fire Gloves speaking with some fire department representatives.



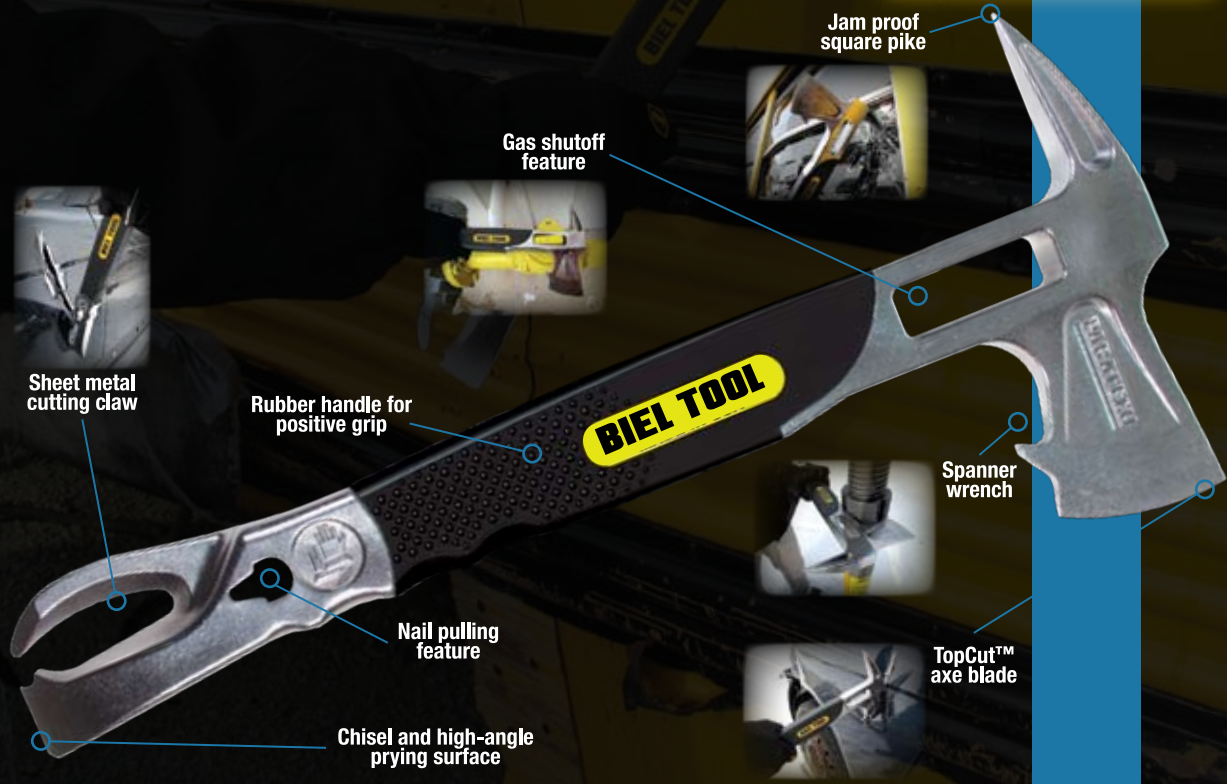
Continued on p. 9

PARATECH®

NEW

THE COMPLETELY REDESIGNED BIEL TOOL

FET
FORCIBLE ENTRY TOOLS



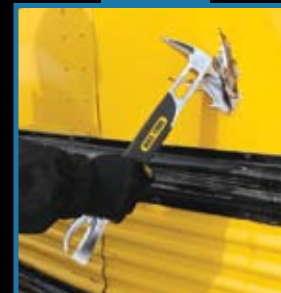
THE NEW BIEL TOOL IS NOW ONE PIECE MADE OUT OF HEAT TREATED, ELECTRO-POLISHED STAINLESS STEEL WITH AN EXTREMELY DURABLE ERGONOMICALLY MOLDED RUBBER HANDLE.

THE NEW BIEL TOOL IS LIGHT (3.3 LB / 1.5 KG) ENOUGH TO WEAR ON A BELT OR CARRY IN THE POCKET OF A BUNKER COAT.

THE PERFECT ALL-PURPOSE OFFICER'S TOOL

DESIGNED FOR FORCING DOOR AND WINDOWS, PRYING AND TWISTING HASPS AND LOCKS, LIGHT OVERHAULING, NAIL REMOVAL, GAS SHUTOFF, METAL CUTTING AND CHOPPING.

TOPCUT™ FORWARD CUTTING EDGE AXE BLADE DESIGN



FOR INFORMATION ON HOW PARATECH PRODUCTS CAN HELP YOU
LIFT, SHIFT, SEAL, STABILIZE AND PENETRATE,
CALL US AT (800) 435-9358 OR VISIT US ON THE WEB AT www.paratech.com

MADE IN THE USA & USED WORLDWIDE

'Symposium in the Sun' Sponsors

THANKS TO OUR SYMPOSIUM SPONSORS!

"We ask that all our members make a point of looking first to these businesses when selecting a vendor. They have shown their commitment to the volunteer fire service and we can show our gratitude by supporting them when the opportunity arises."

—Chief Timothy S. Wall, VCOS Chair

Adayana Government Group

Phone: (703) 564-7100

Website: www.adayana.com

Learning & development, management consulting, and performance technologies

American Military University

Phone: (877) 777-9081

Website: www.PublicSafetyatAMU.com

Provides accredited online education for public service professionals

A.F. Matt & Associates, LLC

Phone: (315) 420-9207

Website: www.searchsleeve.com

Flashlight harnesses

ACS Firehouse Software

Phone: (800) 921-5300

Website: www.firehousesoftware.com

Records management system

Columbia Southern University

Phone: (251) 981-3771

Website: www.columbiasouthern.edu

Online, accredited institution of higher learning

Dragon Fire Gloves

Phone: (800) 975-7059

Website: www.dragonfiregloves.com

Manufacturer of hand protection

Fire Corps

Phone: (888) 324-6361

Website: www.firecorps.org

Citizen involvement in emergency services

Fire Team USA

Phone: (615) 533-0305

Website: www.fireteamusa.com

National workshop series on fire protection

FirehouseDecalsAndMore.com

Phone: (513) 677-3124

Website: www.firehousedecals.com

Decals, emblems, lapel pins

First Bankers Corporation

Phone: (877) 323-1776

Website: www.firstbankers.net

Fire truck budget help

Globe Manufacturing Co LLC

Phone: (603) 435-8323

Website: www.globefiresuits.com

Personalized turnout gear

GPSS/ IAFC Services

Phone: (703) 273-0911

Website: www.iafc.org

Public safety consulting experts

Haix North America, Inc.

Phone: (866) 344-4249

Website: www.haix.com

High-tech footwear

IamResponding.com

Phone: (315) 701-1372

Website: www.iamresponding.com

Instant mass-messaging system for responders

Incident Response Technologies

Phone: (800) 527-8675

Website: www.irtsoftware.com

Software for emergency service agencies

ISO

Phone: (856) 985-5600

Website: www.isomitigation.com

Data, analytics, and decision-support services for fire professionals

Kaplan Continuing Education

Phone: (866) 542-4042

Website: www.kaplancontinuingeducation.com

Providing online learning

Learning for Life

Phone: (972) 580-2433

Website: www.learningforlife.org

School & community-based organization working with youth

Minerva Bunker Gear Cleaners

Phone: (718) 728-7400

Website: www.bunkergearcleaners.com

Bunker gear care and maintenance

MorganStanleySmithBarney

Phone: (800) 221-3636

Website: www.smithbarney.com

Retirement planning and financial advisory services for first responders

Symposium Sponsors

Navistar International Transportation

Phone: (312) 836-2751

Website: www.navistar.com

Trucks, diesel engines, buses and chassis

NetDuty Software

Phone: (866) 222-6518

Website: www.dutyroster.net

Fire department staff scheduling shift exchange and timecard management

Paratech Inc

Phone: (815) 534-6923

Website: www.paratech.com

Emergency service and specialty industrial products

Pierce Manufacturing

Phone: 920-832-3000

Website: www.piercemfg.com

Fire apparatus manufacturer

Plymovent Corporation

Phone: (800) 644-0911

Website: www.plymovent.com

Protection against airborne contaminants thru source capture ventilation

Provident Insurance

Phone: 866-626-6500

Website: www.providentbenefits.com

Insurance benefits for emergency service organizations

Res-Q-Jack/Ward Diesel

Phone: 800-466-9626

Website: www.res-q-jack.com

Stabilization, extrication and rescue accessories

Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium

Phone: 859-622-6868

Website: www.ruraltraining.org

Training and tools for rural responders

TargetSafety

Phone: 877-944-6372

Website: www.targetsafety.com

Web-based training and compliance management programs

Ursus Charts

Phone: 888-708-7787

Website: www.charts411.com

Customized CPR and first aid marketing materials

VFIS

Phone: (800) 233-1957

Website: www.vfis.com

Insurance protection and services for emergency service organizations

Exhibits, from p. 6

early,” says Seidberg. “People come out between classes and talk to us, but when the program is on, they’re in there fixated. And that’s a testament to the way they run the show.

“The people who run the symposium are fantastic. The VCOS board is an incredibly dedicated group of people who do a great job. They communicate their excitement and energy to everyone who is here. That’s what gets everybody down here, and that’s what keeps everybody coming back.”

Scott Beecher, vice president of Ward Diesel, agrees. “The fact you have people coming back year after year says a lot about the quality of the program,” Beecher says. “The return rate is incredible, and that’s because each year they present new topics and new ideas. The whole thing is built on a strong educational base.

“And that actually works out well for us. It’s not like a big show where everybody is crammed in a hall and you get 30 seconds to talk as they wander by. Here you get to sit and talk with the people who are out there running fire departments. You see people come back year after year and you get to know them and they develop a level of trust. It’s fantastic when you have a customer here, and they come up and start talking to people right in front of you and they tell them how your product has worked for them. This setup is a win-win for the attendees and for the vendors.”

With the popularity of the symposium, some have suggested the VCOS make the symposium larger, making more room for attendees and even using the hotel’s ballroom to host more vendors as opposed to keeping a limited number in the lobby. But the VCOS prefers to keep it as is: intimate, friendly, but packing a big punch.

“The conference has few exhibitors, and that makes it work really well for the attendees and the few vendors who are here,” says Seidberg. “Right now they have the perfect mix of vendors, attendees and events. It allows for much more networking than you’ll find at a sales show. And the attendees love being here. So that allows the vendors to interact with people who are happy to be here and are having a good time, and that’s a good thing.”



From left: IAFC staff Carrie Abernathy, Athena Oliff, and Kayce Henderson help with registration.

2010 Symposium Earns Rave Reviews from Attendees

By Mike Macdonald

When you step off the elevator and walk into the lobby at 7:59 a.m., expecting to see the better part of 450 people milling about outside a conference room before the third and final day of a symposium, but instead find only a few scattered hotel workers, you get this sinking feeling that you've confused the schedule. No group is that punctual, right?

In this case, however, you would be incorrect, because every seat in the room was filled as the final day's sessions began. The event was the VCOS Symposium in the Sun, and the attentive audience is why it is the must-attend event in the fire service.

Holding this event each November in Clearwater Beach, Fla., the

Volunteer & Combination Officers Section of the IAFC has set the bar for what a gathering of fire service leaders should be, and the organization continues to nudge it up a notch each year. The combination of phenomenal speakers and unrivaled networking opportunities—held in a luxurious setting with just enough down time to allow attendees to recharge their batteries—makes attendees rave about the experience.

"I came for one reason but ended up getting something totally different out of the trip," says David Daniels, chief of the Woodinville (Wash.) Fire and Life Safety District and International Director of the IAFC's Safety, Health & Survival Section. "I came as a presenter but ended up learning a great deal myself. To see fire chiefs, chief officers and company officers sitting around the table in conversation and then all walking away with new information makes everyone better for the experience."

Chief Daniels' experience is typical of first-time attendees, which is why so many of them return year after year since the symposium's inception in 1999.

"I went to the original symposium in Tampa and have only missed one since," says Ron Smith, training chief for the Campbell County (Wyo.) Fire Department. "I left that first one with so much good information, and when I got back to my department I just wanted to do so many things. It was so energizing. That's why I keep coming back. I call it my battery-charging experience."

"As a returning attendee you start seeing familiar faces every year, and that has led to some professional relationships that I use all the time. The educational information provided is excellent,

and the VCOS does a great job making sure presentations are timely and addressing issues that are important to the fire service. But it's the networking opportunities and the caliber of people

who attend that separate it from other fire service events. I'm fortunate that my department has the budget to attend several events, but if I had to choose one, the VCOS symposium would be the one I would attend every year."

Word of the symposium's value has spread over the years, but despite its reputation for being such an exceptional event, some continue to find reasons to not attend. The VCOS has worked hard to make the symposium relevant to all,

regardless of department size, and has developed scholarship programs to help those departments that can't afford the travel costs.

"I never considered coming here before because we're fairly small, and I thought we would be out of our league," says Jeff Karrow, chief of the Alexandria (Minn.) Fire Department, who was awarded one of the scholarships. "I try to make our state meetings but wanted to take it to the next level. I didn't know if there would be a lot of rah-rah, cheerleading stuff here or if it would be way over my head, but I wanted to see what this symposium was about. And I was not disappointed. In fact, I'm going to figure out a way to come here every year with one of my officers to empower the young leaders of the department."

"I went to every function from start to finish and took two tablets of notes. I'm bringing it all back. I'm going to download presentations from the website and go over everything with the guys from the department. I owe that to them."

"When I first started networking here I was like a nervous puppy, but I started meeting people and exchanging cards, and I realized it doesn't matter if your department makes 60 calls or 6,000 calls. At the networking night I sat with the president of the IAFC and other fire service leaders whom I aspire to be like. I realized it doesn't matter if we're big or small, I can listen and gain insight—and I can provide insight from my end too. The symposium exceeded my expectations. I would highly encourage any chief officer to make it to this event."



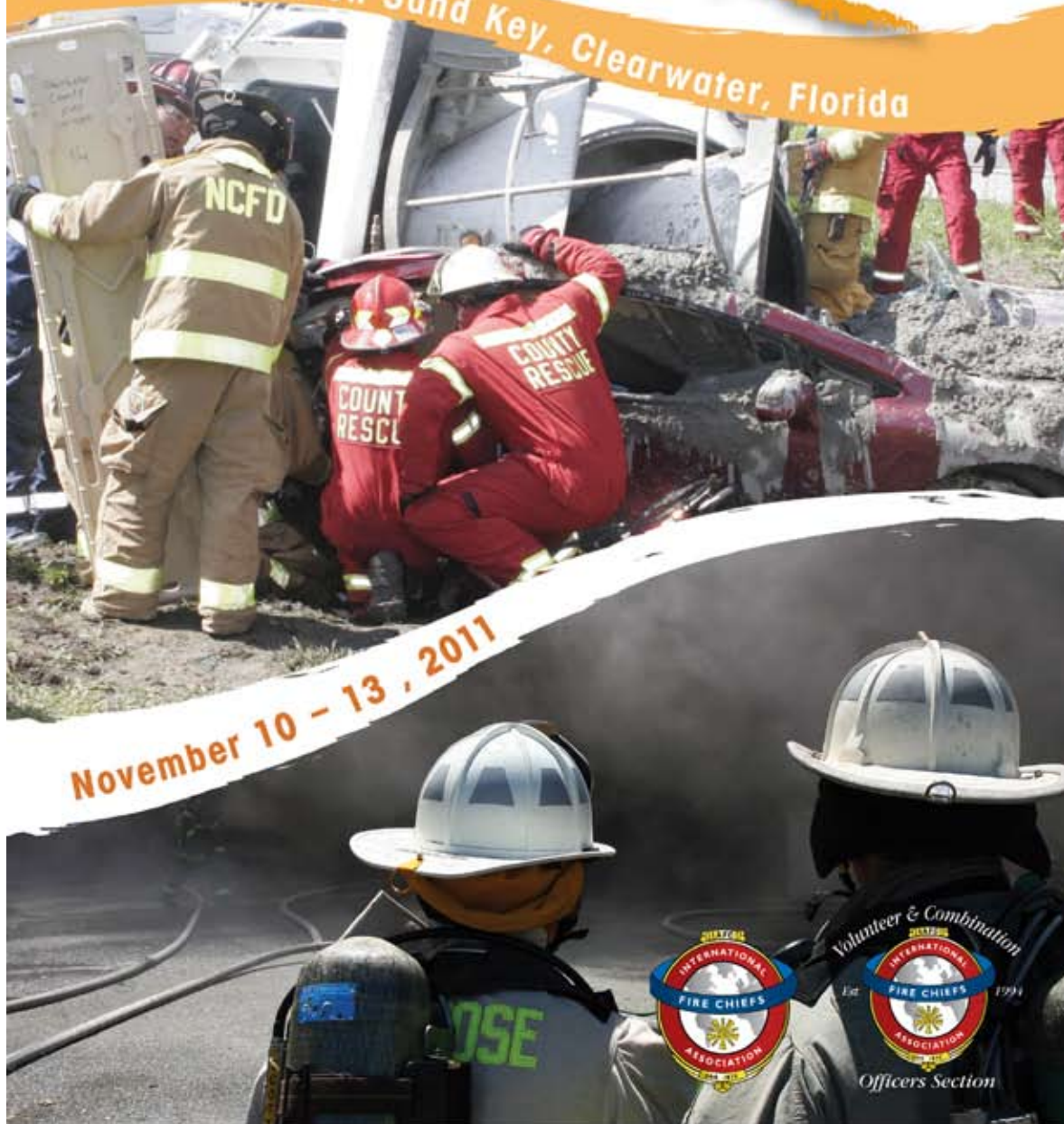
Even at 8:00 pm on a beautiful Florida evening, a networking session had 75 attendees discussing a wide-range of topics and concerns.

The ONLY National Symposium for Leaders of Volunteer/Combination Departments

Conference Brochure

Symposium in the 2011 Sun

Sheraton Sand Key, Clearwater, Florida



November 10 - 13, 2011

Leading Your Organization From The Inside Out

www.iafc.org/vcossymposium

VCOS Board of Directors Public Contact Information

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair

Chief Timothy S. Wall
NE Division - term thru 2012
North Farms Volunteer Fire Dept
PO Box 4337, Yalesville Station
Wallingford, CT 06492
(203) 265-7173
firewallco7@sbcglobal.net

Vice Chair

Chief/Fire Marshal Brett Waters
WE Division - term thru 2013
Central Valley Fire District
205 E Main St
Belgrade, MT 59714-3848
(406) 388-4480
bwaters@centralvalleyfire.com

Secretary/Treasurer

Chief Joseph Florentino
SW Division - term thru 2012
Little Elm Fire Department
100 West Eldorado
Little Elm, TX 75068
(214) 975-0425
jflorentino@littleelm.org

International Director

Chief Shane Ray, EFO
SE Division – term thru 2013
Pleasant View Volunteer Fire Department
2551 Pleasant View Rd
Pleasant View, TN 37146-8040
(615) 746-9824
chiefrays@aol.com

AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBERS

Chief Fred C. Crosby, II
SE Division – term thru 2013
Hanover Fire & EMS
PO Box 470
Hanover, VA 23069-0470
(804) 537-6195
fccrosby@co.hanover.va.us

Chief John Eggleston, EFO, CFO

SE Division - term thru 2011
Albemarle Cnty Dept of Fire Rescue
460 Stagecoach Rd Ste F
Charlottesville, VA 22902-6441
(434) 296-5833
deggleston@albemarle.org

Chief Stephen F. Miller, Sr.

EA Division - term thru 2011
Cabin John Park VFD
8521 Horseshoe Lane
Potomac, MD 20854-4839
(301) 365-2028
smillrrat@aol.com

Chief David B. See (Ret.)

EA Division - term thru 2012
Salisbury Fire Department
38297 Providence Church Rd.
Delmar, DE 19940-3136
(410) 548-3120
davidsee@comcast.net

Chief Jim L. Wilson, EFO

WE Division - term thru 2011
Mariposa County Fire Dept
PO Box 162
Mariposa, CA 95338-0162
(209) 966-4330
jwilson@mariposacounty.org

Chief Fred Windisch, EFO, CFO

SW Division – term thru 2013
Ponderosa Fire Department
17061 Rolling Creek Dr
Houston, TX 77090-2411
(281) 444-8465
fwindisch@ponderosavfd.org

IAFC Staff Liaison

Joelle M. Fishkin
International Assn of Fire Chiefs
4025 Fair Ridge Dr
Fairfax, VA 22033-2865
(703) 273-9815 ext 343
jfishkin@iafc.org

Special Thanks To:

Assistant Chief David A. Bretz
Symposium Photographer

This issue of the VCOS quarterly newsletter is published with the support of:

PARATECH®

VCOS News is published quarterly through the efforts of Editor Joelle Fishkin, Production Editor Cathy Cruise, and numerous fire service contributors.

**Volunteer & Combination Officers Section
International Association of Fire Chiefs
4025 Fair Ridge Dr.
Fairfax, VA 22033**

