

**2026 WSFA Annual Convention
Session Descriptions**

Implementing Mass Casualty Protocol - Chippewa County Apple Orchard Incident

Cory Jeffers

Deputy Chief, Chippewa Fire District

A school field trip turned into a scary situation for many. This session will take a look at the incident involving school age kids and the emotions and effects on the first responders.

Advances in Firefighter Health and Wellness

Tim Congdon

Retired Firefighter, Fire Investigator, Fire Instructor

MnFIRE Initiative Program, MN

The high incidence of occupational illness among firefighters nationwide – particularly cardiac, emotional wellness and cancer – is alarming and requires an immediate response. The goal of this program is to provide education and support for firefighters and their families with regard to cardiac, emotional trauma, and cancer. A greater awareness of these issues facing all firefighters...volunteer, career, and all in between...is the first step to preventing these issues from ending careers and lives. You will leave the class with a number of impactful strategies, many of which can be implemented immediately at little or no cost to your department.

A Case for Aggression in the Fire Service

Bruce (BJ) Breecher

Lieutenant – Verona Fire Department

This session will review the role of aggression, where and how it belongs in the fire service. The instructor shares that aggression on the fireground is often the result of skill and preparation, not recklessness, and that it is necessary for pushing through challenging situations. The instructor will also discuss the importance of aggressive training, fitness, mental health care, and recruitment, calling for a balance between professionalism and the readiness to tackle difficult and sometimes dangerous tasks head-on.

Pride, Passion, and Professionalism: Reigniting the Volunteer Fire Service

Dan Retzlaff

Captain, Columbus Fire Department / Creator of the Forward Firefighter Podcast

Volunteer fire departments are the backbone of Wisconsin's emergency response system, but today's culture presents real challenges in recruitment, retention, and morale. This session explores the core values that define the volunteer fire service—pride, professionalism, and purpose—and how they shape the way we serve our communities. Drawing on firsthand stories from across the state and a deep connection to the fire service, this presentation offers practical ideas and a peer-driven perspective to help departments strengthen their internal culture, public image, and sense of mission. Attendees will be encouraged to reflect on what it means to serve and how we can continue honoring the traditions of our calling.

When your Structure Fire Turns into a Firefighter MASS Casualty Event. Why you need a REHAB Policy.

Richard M. Carani

Fire Chief Minocqua Fire and Rescue Department, Minocqua, WI (2022-Present)

Retired Fire Chief Libertyville Fire Department, Libertyville, IL (1989-2022)

Minocqua Fire Department, July 26, 2025, MABAS Division 114 Box Alarm Structure Fire.

Lessons learned when over 100 firefighters needed REHAB due to the day's high heat and humidity while fighting a 5th Alarm Fire at a large storage building. Discussion will include REHAB requirements, the process used to adopt a county wide REHAB policy in Oneida County, REHAB challenges and the benefits of REHAB for Firefighters

Fire Service Building Construction Refresher. What's Changed and What's In the Future

Eric Wiseman

Building Construction Guru

Building construction techniques and their impact on firefighters have seen many changes in the past decades. The movement to lightweight materials, pre-engineered components, and creations to reduce labor time in building a structure have all occurred.

This session will focus on the latest changes and new products in building construction and will offer strong awareness and safety concerns for firefighters dealing with modern construction. It will also explore the increased hazards that come along with light-weight construction, and what the future may bring and its impact on the fire service.

Maximize Your Department Training and Within Your Training Budget

Dan Roeglin

Fire Training Director – Northwood Technical College

Fire Department training programs vary across Wisconsin based on size of department; frequency of training sessions; training budgets; and participation by members.

Regardless of how many times a month your department has training, this session will give you ideas on maximizing your program to meet requirements, needs, participation, and value.

Presentation and discussion will include no-cost ideas for training; funded training through the Wisconsin State Technical College system programs and offerings from other organizations; and meeting your department's training needs while not wasting time. A good training program also meets the needs of all department members, not just a certain age/years of experience group. Participation by those in attendance will be encouraged to share both good training results, and challenges in providing department training.

Heat Illness Mastery: Awareness, Recognition, and Prevention for Firefighters

Roy Smalley

Personal Trainer, Fire Officer, Fire & Emergency Services Instructor

Mayville Fire Department and Mayville EMS

Heat doesn't care how tough you are. Firefighters across the U.S. have collapsed and died from heat stroke, exhaustion, or rhabdo, sometimes in conditions that didn't even seem extreme. This session goes way beyond "drink water" reminders to expose the hidden warning signs, cultural traps, and prevention tactics that make the difference between pushing through a shift and never going home. If you think heat illnesses only happen to somebody else, this class just might prove you wrong.

Firefighting in Solar Farms and Energy Storage Facilities

Adam Sabourine

Alliant Energy

This presentation will cover the firefighting strategies and hazards of solar panel fields and battery energy systems associated with solar farms.

Back to the Core: Advancing Professionalism in Fire and EMS

Todd Messer

Brooklyn Park Fire Department

This session will center on enhancing our professional roles within the Fire Service and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Through a focused and candid discussion guided by the A-B-C's framework, we will explore strategies to strengthen our commitment to excellence in a rapidly evolving healthcare environment.

Today's FIRE/EMS landscape is more complex and demanding than ever before, placing significant strain on providers and challenging our resilience, dedication, and professionalism on a daily basis. As leaders and practitioners, it is imperative that we not only understand our responsibilities but also actively seek ways to uphold and elevate the standard of care our communities expect and deserve.

This is an opportunity to pause, reflect, and realign with the core values that define our profession. Let us use this time to recommit ourselves to personal and professional growth, ensuring we remain the best versions of ourselves in service to others.

Behind The Panel

Christian Wandmacher

Prescott Fire

WATEROUS - Pumps, Foam & CAFS

Senior Technical Service Specialist

In the class, "Behind The Panel" Attendees will get a behind the panel look at what happens when we move that lever, push that button, turn that crank or hold that switch on the Pump Panel. Attendees will get a refresher on Basic pump theory and inner workings of Centrifugal Fire Pumps. As the cost of Fire trucks is at an all-time high there is now a demand for a longer working life of the truck and fire pumps, this class will cover detrimental Issues that can happen to a fire pump and how Operators/Engineers can combat and or prevent these detrimental issues. Attendees will also be able to get their hands on some pump parts and pump accessories. Attendees will walk away with better understanding of how the water gets to the fire.

Doing It Right: Reducing Cancer in the Fire Service

Steve Shapira

Fire and EMS Programs - Century College

This class is the updated (2024) version of the groundbreaking Firefighter Cancer Support Network white paper Taking Action Against Cancer in the Fire Service (2013). The course includes understanding the science of firefighter cancer, occupational exposures, and identifying everyday best practices to reduce the likelihood of a diagnosis.

