



New England Association of Fire Chiefs

2025 Conference and Expo

Mohegan Sun Uncasville, CT

PROGRAM

WWW.NEWENGLANDFIRECHIEFS.ORG

Friends, Vendors, and Colleagues,

On behalf of the New England Association of Fire Chiefs, a division of the IAFC Welcome to the 2025 Exhibition and Professional Development Conferences at Mohegan Sun Casino. Over the next 3 days, there will be several professional development opportunities covering many of today's hot topics. Of course, there will also be apparatus and equipment on display in the intimate Uncas Ballroom!

For those who enjoy golf, Wednesday kicks off this year's expo at River Ridge Golf Course. Enjoy this beautiful course and network with colleagues.

Wednesday afternoon kicks off the education with the IAFC Officer Development Programs Chief Officer 1. Exhibit floor opens at 1700 providing an opportunity to check out the latest and greatest equipment and apparatus. Stay for a while and enjoy some food and beverage while celebrating our exhibitors during the Vendor Appreciation from 1700-1830!

Thursday starts with presentations on the California and Maui wildfires, then choose from several different professional development opportunities including the IAFC ODP, meet with vendors on the exhibit floor, attend the memorial service, and enjoy the Presidential celebration and welcome the new NEAFC President! All members of the NEAFC are encouraged to attend the annual membership meeting. Friday morning continues with several different professional development opportunities.

This conference will provide you with opportunities to meet with colleagues from all over the New England region and leading fire service vendors displaying the most advanced equipment/ services available today. Without the support of our vendor partners, this conference would not be possible, so please visit their booths and show your appreciation!

Throughout the conference, members of the NEAFC will be available to assist with any questions you may have. Please feel free to stop by the registration desk with any questions or concerns. All of us at The New England Association of Fire Chiefs hope you enjoy the 2025 Exhibition and Development Conference.

Thank you from your NEAFC officers,

Chief Ken Jones, President (New Hampshire)
Chief Peter Starkel, 1st Vice President (Connecticut)
Chief Tom Higgins, 2nd Vice President (Maine)

2025 New England Association of Fire Chiefs Conference and Expo

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, October 29, 2025
Golf Outing at River Ridge Golf Course
259 Preston Road
Griswold, CT 06351
www.riverridgegolf.com



River Ridge Golf Course is one of southeastern Connecticut's most challenging public 18-hole championship courses, conveniently located 20 minutes from Mohegan Sun Casino. Opening in May of 1999 this Par 72 6698-yard course prides itself on their well-manicured and carefully maintained fairways and greens and many other player friendly amenities. The first three holes are built on an open space that was formerly an apple orchard. The other 15 holes are characterized by rolling hills and scenic vistas that present various challenges to golfers of all skill levels.



2025 New England Association of Fire Chiefs Conference and Expo

REGISTER AT WWW.NEWENGLANDFIRECHIEFS.ORG

CONFERENCE PRICING

Full Conference Attendee - \$350.00

Includes access to the Officer Development Programs (ODP) in partnership with the IAFC and Columbia Southern as well as all educational sessions, and exhibit floor over all three days.

Floor Pass Only - Free

Allows entry to the exhibit floor only at no cost. Browse the latest equipment, services, and items available to today's fire & EMS services!

Thursday Only Attendee - \$250.00

Includes access to the Officer Development Programs (ODP) in partnership with the IAFC and Columbia Southern as well as all educational sessions, and exhibit floor for Thursday only.

Friday Only Attendee - \$150.00

Includes access to the Officer Development Programs (ODP) in partnership with the IAFC and Columbia Southern as well as all educational sessions, and exhibit floor for Friday only.

River Ridge Golf Only - \$100.00

Enjoy 18 holes with a cart on this beautiful course. Includes beverage and snack at the turn!
259 Preston Road Griswold, CT 06351

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Professional Development

Wednesday

Officer Development Program – Total of 6 Modules

Module 1 – Leadership & Team Management– Chief Dave Emanuel, Wednesday (10/29) @ 1300

Module 2 – Budget & Resource Management- Chief John Oates, Wednesday (10/29) @ 1500

Module 3 – Strategic Planning- Chief John Oates, Thursday (10/30) @ 0945

Module 4 – Community Relations- Chief Ken Richards, Thursday (10/30) @ 1300

Module 5 – Risk Assessment & Mitigation– Chief Tom Jenkins, Friday (10/31) @ 0930

Module 6 - Training & Professional Development- Chief Tom Jenkins, Friday (10/31) @ 0930

Wednesday Afternoon – 1300

Officer Development Program - Module 1

Wednesday Afternoon – 1500

Officer Development Program - Module 2

Wednesday Evening – 1700-1930

Vendor appreciation on the Exhibit Floor, Visit vendors and enjoy some snacks and beverages

Thursday

Thursday Morning – 0730-0815

Enjoy some coffee and continental breakfast on the Exhibit Floor

Thursday Morning – **Keynote Presentation** Chiefs Niemeyer & Fennessy (0815 - 0915)

Chiefs Fennessy and Niemeyer will cover 3 significant wildfire events that led to overwhelming loss of life, structures, and damage to the environment. The fires being covered are the Camp Fire in Paradise California in 2018, The Maui fires of 2023, and most recently the Palisades Fire in 2025. Throughout the presentation there will be discussions on critical factors, lessons learned, and further after action. The Chiefs will also cover critical components to a successful wildfire program including mitigation, response, and recovery. This is an interactive session where attendees are encouraged to engage through questions and conversation.

Thursday Morning – 0915-0945

Visit vendors on the exhibit floor and enjoy some snacks and beverages

Thursday Morning – 0945-1030

Officer Development Program - Module 3

Courageous Conversations – Bill Tanks & Sam Heaton

Is your Department a Place you would Join? – Dave Snyder & Lee Price

CRR – NFPA

Leader or Manager – Chief Greg Flynn

Break – 1030-1100

Visit vendors on the exhibit floor and enjoy some snacks and beverages

Thursday Morning continued– 1100-1145

Officer Development Program - Module 3

Courageous Conversations – Bill Tanks & Sam Heaton

Is your Department a Place you would Join? – Dave Snyder & Lee Price

CRR – NFPA

Leader or Manager – Chief Greg Flynn

Lunch Break – 1145-1300

Visit vendors on the exhibit floor

Thursday Afternoon – 1300

Officer Development Program - Module 4

Employee Development – Chief Michael O'Brian

10 Fingers/10 Toes – Chief John Oates & Chief Tom Jenkins

Recruitment – ADAPT

Fire Department Chaplain training - Mass Fire Chaplains

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Thursday Continued

Break – 1345-1415

Visit vendors on the exhibit floor and enjoy an afternoon snack

Thursday Afternoon continued – 1415-1500

Officer Development Program - Module 4

Employee Development – Chief Michael O'Brian

10 Fingers/10 Toes – Chief John Oates & Chief Tom Jenkins

Recruitment – ADAPT

Fire Department Chaplain training - Mass Fire Chaplains

Break – 1500-1600

Visit vendors on the exhibit floor

Annual Memorial Service 1630-1715

Annual Membership Meeting 1730-1830

Presidential Celebration 1830

Friday

Breakfast – 0830-900

Visit the vendors on the exhibit floor and enjoy a continental breakfast

Friday Morning **Keynote** – Chief Tom Jenkins 0900-0925

Friday Morning – 0930

Officer Development Program - Modules 5 & 6

Retention - ADAPT

OSHA proposed Rule Update – Chief Dave Denniston

FF Mental Health – Dr. Nicole Sawyer

Break – 1015-1035

Visit the vendors on the exhibit floor and enjoy a snack

Friday Morning continued– 1035-1115*

Officer Development Program - Modules 5 & 6 *(Ends at 1245)

Retention - ADAPT

OSHA proposed Rule Update – Lee Price

FF Mental Health – Dr. Nicole Sawyer

Final chance to visit vendors on the exhibit floor! – 1115-1300

Speakers Biographies

Nicole L Sawyer, PsyD is a licensed clinical psychologist in Exeter, New Hampshire. She has been in clinical practice since 2005 and works exclusively with public safety professionals and first responder agencies. Dr. Sawyer currently serves as the supporting psychologist for the NH State Police Peer Support Unit, she provides clinical support for various Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) teams across the state and is an instructor for the NAMI-NH Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) program. She is the professional crisis intervention specialist for the Seacoast Emergency Response Team (SERT), the Strafford County Regional Tactical Operations Unit (SCRTOU), and the NH State Police SWAT (NHSP-CNU), responding alongside law enforcement in the community. In addition to her field roles, she provides psychological consultation, assessment, and evaluation for fire, police and corrections agencies across NH. Dr. Sawyer is known best for her straight-talking and candid trainings and workshops, taking a direct approach to the psychological challenges faced by public safety professionals and first responders over the course of their careers.

Michael O'Brian is the Fire Chief for the Brighton Area Fire Authority in Michigan, overseeing fire protection across 74 square miles with five stations. He also leads Code Concepts Group, a top consulting firm helping communities with technical projects. Chief O'Brian serves on the board of the International Association of Fire Chiefs as the International Director of the Fire and Life Safety Section. He was President of the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs from 2013-2017. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Administration from Eastern Michigan University, where he also teaches as an adjunct instructor. A dedicated member of multiple ICC and NFPA technical committees, Chief O'Brian is a past chair of the Fire Code Action Committee with the International Code Council. He is a national leader in fire service preparedness for lithium-ion batteries and a passionate advocate for firefighter health and wellness.

Sam Heaton led the 1700+ personnel of Cobb County (GA) Department of Public Safety agencies which consist of Police, Fire & Emergency Services, 911 Communications, Emergency Management, and Animal Services. Cobb County is located northwest of Atlanta and is the third most populous county in the state with approximately 780,000 people. Heaton began his career with Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services in October 1985. He worked his way through the ranks of the department from a firefighter/paramedic to his appointment to Chief of the Department in May 2008. After six successful years as the Fire Chief, he was appointed as the Director of Public Safety for Cobb County. This appointment was a first for the county as all previous Directors came from a law enforcement background.

After five years as the Public Safety Director and 33+ years of total service, he retired in March 2019 and began consulting work with various Public Safety entities in the areas of leadership and management training, diversity training, and strategic planning. He is currently working with the City of Powder Springs overseeing the departments of Police, Parks, Code Enforcement, and Courts.

Heaton co-created a class titled "Courageous Conversation" and it continues to be shared with departments across the nation and at the IAFC Fire Service Executive program. He has also been instrumental in the continued growth of the Cobb County Safety Village which provides personal safety and fire life safety training to over 20,000 students each year. Heaton has an associate's degree in Fire Science and a bachelor's degree in public safety administration. He is a graduate of the Atlanta Regional Commission's Regional Leadership Institute and a graduate of the University of Georgia's Government Management program.

Speakers Biographies

During his career he served in various roles with the Metro Atlanta Fire Chiefs Association and Georgia Fire Chiefs Association and in 2018 Governor Nathan Deal appointed him to serve on the Georgia Board of Public Safety where he served until his retirement.

Today Heaton continues to teach and serve through his consulting business and locally he serves as the President of the Cobb County Retired Employees Association, the Vice-Chair of the Cobb County Employees Pension Board, serves on the Board of the Marietta Youth Museum and the Cobb County Safety Village Foundation. When not working he spends time with his family (wife, three daughters, and four grandkids) and traveling.

William “Bill” Tanks was appointed to the role City Manager for the City of Mableton Georgia on April 1st, 2024. In his role as the chief executive and administrative officer, he is responsible to the city council for the administration of all city affairs.

He previously served as the Executive Director for Public Services for the City of Powder Springs, Georgia from December of 2021 until April of 2024. In his Powder Springs role he served as second in command to the city manager and provided executive leadership to the three department heads of the Powder Springs Police Department, The Powder Springs Parks Department, and the Powder Springs Municipal Court. Prior to his service to the City of Powder Springs, he served as the Agency Director for Public Services for Cobb County Government and provided executive leadership to the seven department heads that led the Cobb County Senior Services, Cobb County Library System, Cobb County Elections, UGA Cobb Extension Offices, Cobb Sustainability Waste and Beautification, Cobb Parks Department, and the South Cobb Government Services Center. Prior to serving as the Agency Director for Public Services with Cobb County Government he served as an Executive Chief Officer for Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services. His combined eleven years of senior executive experience in local government was preceded with twenty-one years of faithful service to the citizens of Cobb County as a Cobb County Firefighter, Fire Officer, Chief Officer and paramedic. Bill Tanks also served in the United States Navy and Navy Reserves for 20 years until his retirement in 2006 as a Chief Petty Officer. He has received many awards for his service in the military, public safety, and local government; however, his greatest satisfaction has come from the countless awards and recognitions of the teams he has been privileged to lead.

He holds two master’s degrees, one bachelor’s degree, and an associate degree. His community involvement spans more than 30 years and he has served on several local boards either as a member, treasurer or chair. He and his wife, Lee Ann Tanks, currently live in the West Cobb area. He is the father of four adult children and grandfather of one college student and two elementary students. He teaches leadership and team building across the country and has conducted presentations on the subjects of team building, transformational leadership, and most notably Courageous Conversations.

Speakers Biographies

Kenneth W. Richards, Jr. MS, EFO, CFO has been a member of the Fire Service for 49 years, starting in 1976 at the age of 14 as a Junior Firefighter in Old Mystic, CT. Ken has served as the career Fire Chief / Fire Marshal of the Old Mystic Fire Department for 32 years. He is the past President of the New England Division of The International Fire Chiefs Association (NEDIAFC), and a 32-year member of the NFPA. Serving as a member of the Fire Service Training Technical Committee for 21 years and its Chair for the past 14 years. Chief Richards earned his Bachelor of Science in Fire Technology from Charter Oak State College and holds a Master of Science in Executive Fire Service Leadership from Grand Canyon University. He is also a 1999 graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program, a Certified Chief Officer from the Center for Public Safety Excellence, a Fire Officer IV NFPA Standards and a Fire Instructor III NFPA Standards.

As the Fire Chief of the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA), **Brian Fennessy** leads more than 1,800 firefighters and non-sworn personnel who collectively serve 2 million residents across 23 cities and unincorporated county. Chief Fennessy began his career in 1978 with the USFS and BLM working as a hotshot crew-member and ultimately crew superintendent. In 1990, Fennessy joined the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department and ultimately became Chief of Department in 2015. In 2018, he was appointed to Fire Chief of the OCFA. Chief Fennessy currently serves as Chair of the FIRESCOPE Board of Directors; represents California as a member of the Western Fire Chiefs Association Wildland Fire Policy Committee; represents the nine West Division FEMA Urban Search & Rescue Task Forces; and President of the California Fire Chiefs Association. In 2022, Chief Fennessy was recognized as CalChiefs Fire Chief of the Year and in 2023, the International Association of Fire Chief's Career Fire Chief of the Year.

Dave Emanuel, MPA, EFO, CFO, is the chief of the Durham, NH Fire Department, serving the Town of Durham and the University of New Hampshire (UNH). Chief Emanuel has over 30 years of career and volunteer fire and EMS experience as a firefighter, company officer, and chief officer, in both labor and management leadership positions, is an instructor for the NH Fire Academy, and is a nationally recognized leadership speaker.

Chief Emanuel holds a Master of Public Administration and bachelor's degrees in business administration and civil engineering from the University of New Hampshire and is a licensed NH Professional Engineer. He is a credentialed Chief Fire Officer by the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. Chief Emanuel has contributed to the fire service by serving as a Commissioner for the Commission for Professional Credentialing of the CPSE, currently on the Board of Directors for the IAFC Safety, Health, and Survival Section (SHSS), and the Executive Boards of the New Hampshire Association of Fire Chiefs and Seacoast Chiefs Fire Officer Mutual Aid District. He has worked with the IAFC Bullying Behavior Prevention Taskforce since 2017 and chaired the Taskforce since 2019. Having served as both a career and volunteer chief officer, he understands that addressing firefighter safety, health, and survival challenges are essential for our first responders in all levels of emergency services. He strives to network and leverage connections on the local, state, and national level to build relationships and promote education and training for industry progress.

Speakers Biographies

Lee Price is a 35-year veteran of emergency services and is currently a Risk Management Training Manager for McNeil & Co. in Cortland, NY. During his career he has served in a wide range of roles in fire and EMS for paid, volunteer and combination agencies, including 23 years as a career Firefighter and Fire Captain/Paramedic. Having been a Certified fire and EMS instructor for more than two decades, Lee has also been an EMS training program director as well as serviced on regional EMS committees and executive boards. Lee currently serves on 2 NFPA technical committees and the NVFC Red Ribbon committee for firefighter safety.

Chief Greg Flynn joined the fire service in 1998. He has served West Bloomfield as a firefighter/paramedic, EMS Division Captain, Assistant Chief, and Fire Chief. Flynn holds a bachelor's degree in public safety studies, is a graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program, and possesses a Master's degree from the Naval Postgraduate School – Center for Homeland Defense & Security in Monterey, California.

Chris Barron currently serves as the Fire Chief of the Travis County Emergency Services District #5 / Manchaca Fire/Rescue department located just south of Austin, Texas.

Chief Barron has worked diligently in the fire service for over 34 years, serving as Chief for 24 of those years, to increase service delivery performances in the local area and around the state. He has used several performance improvement programs to lead ESD#5 from an all volunteer department, ISO Class 7/9, to a fully staffed ISO Class #2 department.

Barron retired from the State Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Association where he served for almost 15 years as the Executive Director. Barron was responsible for the administration and oversight of the 23,000-member organization representing first responders in Texas and central and south America. While serving as Executive Director, he was responsible for several initiatives benefiting Texas first responders including the Texas wildfire fund and Hurricane Harvie relief programs, authoring and successfully awarded three Department of Homeland Security SAFER grants and oversight of the construction of the new headquarters building.

In 2019, Chief Barron started his own consulting company to assist emergency services across the nation on their challenges, improving performance and recruitment/retention efforts. His focus with his business is to assist fire departments facing challenging times with staffing, volunteer workforce reductions, organizational changes, and leadership challenges. He is also working with departments on performing fire department assessments, funding resources, and developing marketing and strategic plans.

Barron has received numerous leadership and organizational awards for his leadership including the John Buckman Leadership Award, the IAFC/VCOS Recruitment/Retention Award and in 2014, Chief Barron was awarded the International Association of Fire Chiefs Chief of the Year Award amongst a nationwide group of colleagues.

Barron holds numerous fire certifications, and an associates in fire protection, bachelor's and a master's degree in business administration.

Speakers Biographies

Chelsea Rubadou is an engineer for the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and currently works as a staff liaison and subject matter expert for standards dedicated to community risk reduction, data analysis, and fire prevention programs. Her goal is to develop contemporary resources and materials for stakeholders in these important spaces. Previously at NFPA, Chelsea co-developed an innovative community risk assessment tool designed to help CRR professionals implement high-quality CRR without the need of a local data science team. She also serves on the Commission for Fire Accreditation International. Chelsea earned her master's degree in Fire Protection Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI).

Karen Berard-Reed, M.Ed., is the Community Risk Reduction Director at the National Fire Protection Association where she leads strategic delivery of CRR initiatives. Karen develops innovative tools and resources to assist stakeholders who are focused on data and standards-driven processes to improve community safety. Her contributions include training, partnership-building, and critical tools to support CRR efforts such as CRAIG 1300™, the NFPA Community Risk Assessment Insight Generator and the CRR Kitchen Table, a monthly virtual gathering of prevention-minded professionals. Karen previously managed NFPA's high-risk outreach activities and created safety education materials for young children, older adults, and underserved communities. Karen serves on the IAFC Fire and Life Safety Section Board of Directors, the NASFM Core CRR team, the Vision 20/20 steering committee and has served as an instructor at the National Fire Academy. Before coming to the NFPA, Karen worked in the health promotion field in K-12, higher education, and community settings.

DIRECTIONS

Mohegan Sun Casino

DIRECTIONS

FROM BOSTON AND POINTS NORTH:

Take Mass Pike to I-395 South. Exit 9 (old 79A) off I-395 in Uncasville, CT.

FROM HARTFORD:

Take I-84 East to Route 2 East to I-395 South. Exit 9 (old 79A) in Uncasville, CT.

FROM NEW YORK CITY

Follow I-95 through New York and into Connecticut. Stay left on I-395 North towards Plainfield/Norwich. Take Exit 9 (old 79A) on CT-2A East toward Ledyard/Preston. Then take Exit 6/Mohegan Sun Boulevard in Uncasville, CT.

FROM PROVIDENCE

Take Route 6 West to I-395 South. Exit 9 (old 79A) in Uncasville, CT. or

Take I-95 South to Exit 84N/Route 32. Follow Route 32 North to I-395. Exit 9 (old 79A) off I-395 in Uncasville, CT.

PARKING

With more than 13,000 on-site guest parking spaces, parking at Mohegan Sun is never a hassle, whether you are visiting Casino of the Earth or Casino of the Sky. Entrances to Casino of the Earth are themed by the seasons Winter, Summer, and Autumn. Once inside, the casinos are connected by the Spring Gateway so you never have to leave the building. If you are interested in reserved parking, click on the link below.

[RIVERVIEW RESERVED PARKING](#)

HOTELS AND LODGING

Lodging reservations are the individual responsibility of each attendee. Some, but not all, lodging options are listed below.

Reservations for hotels are now open!

The group reservation cutoff date is TBA

RESERVATION PROCESS: Rooming List/Individual Call-In

If booking online please use the link below

<https://book.passkey.com/go/NE1005>

*Should guests prefer to call in their guestroom reservations, group delegates should use group code:
NEAOFc via toll-free phone number 1-888-226-7711.*

You must mention the NEAFC Conference for these rates!

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