

## VCOS 2015

### Report

President Joe Zeorles, 1<sup>st</sup> VP Ted Walius, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Rich Perillo and EM Warren Jones attended the VCOS Conference in Clearwater on November 13 to 15.

Events, seminars, and classes attended:

**Shell Pipeline:** Gweneyette Broussard of Shell updated everyone on the Shell Pipelines thought the United States on the pipelines and handling emergency events should one occur with the pipelines.

**On the Shoulders of Giants:** Assistant Chief Peter Van Dorpe of Algonquin-Lake in the Hills Fire Protection District, did a presentation entitled On the Shoulders of Giants: His presentation had to do with the transformation of the fire service and what it means to be in the business of service. He shares some examples of people who by words and actions are meeting the obligation to be giants within the fire service. He also spoke on how to prepare the next generation of firefighters. He said what we do is different, what we do is special and what we do truly matters. We must all do what we can to leave the job a little better for the next person.

**This Didn't Have to Happen:** Chief Marc Bashoor of Prince George's County Fire/EMS spoke about the 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue fire which led to a double near-miss for two of his firefighters. He reviewed chilling audio and video tapes of the incident. He covered in depth the Safety Investigation Report and gave a glimpse into what happened and how the department has affected change.

**Multi-Generational Leadership: Mistakes and Best Practices:** Dr. Richard Gasaway presented a talk on leadership in a multi-generational environment. He discussed effective and ineffective leadership styles, the roles of the mission, vision core values, officer selection and development and how to avoid the five dysfunctions of the team and more.

**Cultivating Motivation in Leadership:** Chief Matthew Love of the Cimarron Hills, CO Fire Department gave a high energy presentation on leadership principles combined with fresh perspective to describe and inspire ways for the fire office to create a motivational environment, with a heavy emphasis on training. Chief Love provides examples though story and illustration to help the leader identify what actions will affect team dynamics and overcome leadership barriers.

**Cancer Committee Update:** The cross-sectional committee was formed to look at cancer in the fire service and what can be done to prevent the occurrences. Committee members reviewed what is being done and what you can do to protect yourself and your membership whether career or volunteer.

**R & R issues:** Chief Bill Jenaway of VFIS led a panel discussion on best practices for recruitment and retention. The hour and a half discussion was packed full of participation from the room full of attendees. Items brought up were as follows: USFA document on Recruitment and Retention, marketing your program, government access channels, outsider to run your promotional program, Explorer posts, Telecorp for background checks, High School Protective Service curriculum, vocational schools, Live in Programs, Juniors, Video on social media, Pandora, Fire Prevention, School District Superintendents, Hoot, Tweets, and Buffers, match recruiters with who you are recruiting, mentors, fire camps, incentive programs, and the NVFC Recruitment Program.

**Crossfire:** Randy Keirn presented an interactive, group participation, program on conflict management. It was a hands on interactive program where you met and work with the others in the class on conflict scenarios and best practices. It gave you the opportunity to meet people from all over the country attending the symposium and work with them on individual conflict management items.

**Combat Ready Firefighting:** Chief Richard Riley of Traditions Training and Clearwater Fire Department discussed how well prepared are the fire service prepared to respond to our fires today. The lack of urgency and complacency has worked its way into our day to day operations. The session used a number of videos and audio along with first hand experiences to illustrate points made in the class.

**Pipeline Emergency Preparedness:** James Rist, Program Specialist, International Association of Fire Chiefs covered three critical components of planning and managing a pipeline response in your community. The program dealt with gas and liquid pipelines covering preplanning and scene perspectives on the initial 6-12 hours of a pipeline response.

**Defining the Future by Understanding the Past and Present:** Jack Snook, Senior Advisor, Emergency Services Consulting International presented a program on how we move into the future to successfully lead the fire department of tomorrow and by understanding our past gives us the knowledge to plan for the future. And to create a stronger more resilient fire service of tomorrow.

**Roundtable Networking Event:** The roundtable was an open discussion on how to prepare your officers and membership on becoming a combination company. One Chief brought up that had a small number of volunteers, many of them were getting older. He wanted to know how to proceed with a combination company, where to find funding and how to broach the topic to his membership. The discussion lasted about an hour with many examples from other departments who went through the same thing because of the lack of volunteers.

In additions to these programs attended by the officers there were other classes available and networking sessions where you could share your issues and styles with the other attendees from across the country.