



SEPTEMBER 29, 2022 | ISSUE 20

# Rattle Watch

Proudly informing South Carolina firefighters.



## NOW ACCEPTING: Applications for Officer Academy

[The Fire Officer Academy: The Company Officer](#) is an intense program not designed for the complacent. The Company Officer tests students in ways they haven't been tested since they joined the fire service, leaving a lasting impression on the trajectory of their career and the camaraderie between students creates a lifelong family. The Company Officer takes you back to the basics while addressing the issues you face as a leader in your department.

"The Company Officer far exceeded my expectations; it's more than just a 'class,' it's a lifelong experience," said Officer Academy alumni and Anderson Fire Department Lt. Brandon Stroud. "I was surprised from beginning to end. From the selection process, to the content and layout of the class, to the specific lessons learned, to the camaraderie that was built. Not only did I learn some new things to incorporate, I built relationships with people that I can now carry with me forever."

From the morning physical training sessions to mealtime, **The Fire Officer Academy: The Company Officer** is calculated in its approach as it aims to uplift, test, and challenge the leaders of the South Carolina fire service.

*Note that an application is required, including a resume and letter from the applicant's Chief. Applicants do not need to be a member of the South*

Carolina State Firefighters' Association Officers Section but membership with the Officers Section is preferred. Applicants will be vetted prior to being accepted into the program and will be sent pre-course assignments to be completed prior to final selection. The Fire Officer Academy is limited to 25 people. Cost is \$125.

[Application deadline is \*\*October 15.\*\*](#)



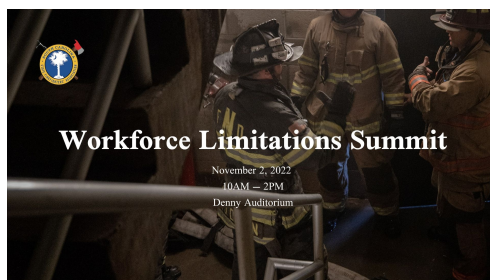
## Association events

### Labor shortage crisis: Let's talk + make plans

We recognize that the South Carolina fire service – both in the career and volunteer sectors – is on the brink of a **labor shortage crisis**.

Staffing shortages aren't unique to the fire service but there are *unique aspects* of the fire service that makes filling those shortages a *significant challenge*.

We are hosting [two summits](#), **Workforce Limitations** and **Volunteer Criticality**, to allow for an open and honest conversation about the issues you're facing and to *figure out the next steps*.



### Workforce Limitations: Nov. 2

A structured, interactive dialogue by participants around the state to discuss and identify trends and needs in addressing **paid staffing shortages**. The objective of the summit is to produce action items at the local, regional, state, and federal level which can positively affect change.

Nov. 2, 10 a.m.-2p.m. in the Denny. [Register.](#)

### Volunteer



## Criticality: Nov. 5

A structured, interactive dialogue by participants around the state to discuss and identify trends and needs in addressing the maintenance of **volunteer firefighter numbers**. The objective of the summit is to produce action items at the local, regional, state, and federal level which can positively affect change.

Nov. 5, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. in the Denny. [Register](#).

## Community events



### Forestry Commission hosting Horse + Buggy Show

The Forestry Commission will be hosting its inaugural **Fire Department Horse and Buggy Show** Saturday, Oct. 8 from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Forestry Commission Headquarters (5500 Broad River Road in Columbia). Departments will bring at least one piece of converted federal surplus equipment that they received from the Forestry Commission for a “show and tell.”

The event will also feature a truck pull from 10-11 a.m. Teams of 5-7 people will need to register on-site and all payments made to Special Olympics of South Carolina. Cost is \$100 per team and all funds from the truck pull will go to Special Olympics of South Carolina.

Vote for your favorite vehicle, eat (hot dogs, chips and drinks provided) and mingle from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. The Forestry Commission will have a table set up for departments to talk about the Federal Surplus Property and Grant programs.





## NFFF's 'Light the Night' begins on Sunday

The [National Fallen Firefighters Foundation](#) every October sponsors the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend, the official tribute to those firefighters who died in the line of duty during the previous year. NFFF created [Light the Night](#) in 2017 to recognize the 25th anniversary of NFFF and the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend. In the years since, Light the Night has expanded and includes fire departments and families lighting their homes in red.

*As the sun goes down next week, buildings and homes across the country will again glow in respect from October 2-9, 2022, to honor the fallen and their families.*



## Capt. Browning shares details on YES program

**Capt. Michael Browning** is a member of the 2022-23 Leadership Institute class and shared details on the Belton Fire Department's **YES program** for his individual project. In the article below, Capt. Browning shares the history of Belton's YES program and how it's impacted the department and the community.

YES stands for **Year End Studies**. The program was an idea our elementary school had for various trades and activities for the kids to participate in at the end of the school year. The students select from

various activities, including crafts, gardening, camping, law enforcement and fire service. The teachers select an activity to host and work with the corresponding tradesmen. It is a two-and-a-half-day event for kids from the elementary school grades 3-5 to experience what the fire service is and what we do.

After the first year of participating in the YES program, *the Belton Fire Department wanted to take it a step further.* We take them on field trips with help from the school district on buses to see how different fire departments operate and to the local career center to the firefighter program. During this experience the students can look forward to when they get to high school and also get the opportunity to see live burns take place.

The students are taught the history of our department and given a tour of the fire house and fire apparatus. They participate in fire extinguisher class and go through a scale down of an obstacle course that is set up like an agility test. We also include EMS by having them bring an ambulance by the station so they can see and go through an ambulance where they are also taught how and when to preform CPR. At the end of the program, they receive a certificate of participation. This program is all about getting the kids involved and getting them to use the equipment that we use just to see how cool this job is.

The program is important because it shows kids what the fire service is about, not just running calls but shows that we help the community with so much more. *It also plants the seed at a young age for recruitment and we can show case our junior program so maybe they will get involved at when the time comes.*

The main reason for our success is **Chief Maness**. He allows us to do whatever it takes to see this program through and the dedication of our members these show the importance of this program. ***We have gained some junior firefighters from this program*** when they turn fourteen, the message that we send from this gets spread at school and we hear back from the principal and other teachers of how exciting and how they have learned from this.

*It seems that more and more kids want to be a part of this program when the time comes because of word of mouth from the others.*

Other departments can adopt a similar program by first getting involved with your schools, it came easy to do this because of how heavily we are involved in the schools. Start small by doing open houses for the schools then expand each year to make it bigger.

Email [Capt. Browning](#) or [Chief Maness](#).

Thanks to Capt. Browning for providing a brief write up of the program.

## Participate in a UNC + NIOSH study

As a firefighter, it's important that you take your health in your own hands. The Motion Science Institute of the **University of North Carolina Chapel Hill** in participation with the **NIOSH Total Worker Health** is conducting fall risk assessments to determine *how to reduce firefighter trips and falls*. The data collected by this study is safe and will not impact

participant's job status.

[Here's how you can participate.](#)



- [October 12 - Quarterly Training + Business Meeting](#)
- [October 15 - Applications due for Officer Academy](#)
- [November 2 - Workforce Limitations Summit](#)
- [November 5 - Volunteer Criticality Summit](#)
- [January 26-29, 2023 - Fire Service Improvement Conference](#)



## **South Carolina State Firefighters' Association**

Westpark Boulevard 111, 29210, Columbia

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