



WISCONSIN STATE FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

Together We Make A Difference

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Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs' Association Announces 2024-2025 Board of Directors

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MILWAUKEE, WI – The Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs' Association (WSFCA) announces their new slate of officers to their 2024-2025 Board of Directors and 2024 Career & Volunteer Chiefs of the Year.

2024-2025 New Slate of Officers:



Chief Aaron Lipski (Milwaukee Fire Department) assumes the position of WSFCA President. Chief Lipski has served the Milwaukee Fire Department for over 25 years. Lipski is a 4th generation Milwaukee Firefighter that has filled every rank, rising from Firefighter to Heavy Equipment Operator, to company officer positions of Lieutenant and then Captain. He was sworn in as the Milwaukee Fire Chief in June 2021.



Chief John Breuer (Allenton Fire Department) assumes the position of 1st Vice President. Chief Breuer has more than 40 years of experience in the fire service at all levels throughout his career. He has been Chief of the Allenton Fire Department since 1983 and continues to educate as an Adjunct Faculty Instructor since 1998.



Chief Steve Denzien (Grand Chute Fire Department) assumes the position of 2nd Vice President. Chief Denzien is the Fire Chief and Emergency Manager for the Town of Grand Chute. He started his full-time career in 1998 with the City of Brookfield. In 2019 he was sworn in as Chief of the Two Rivers Fire Department and in 2023 became the Fire Chief of the Town of Grand Chute. He also serves as an instructor for the Public Safety Management program at SIU.

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Chief Craig Olson (Campbellsport Fire Department) assumes the position of East Central Trustee. Chief Olson began his career with the Lake Tomahawk Volunteer Fire Department in 1986 and joined the Campbellsport Fire Department in 1992, where he has been ever since. Chief Olson is passionate about representing the volunteer departments throughout Wisconsin.



Chief Stuart Matthias (Ashland Fire Department) assumes the position of Northwest Trustee. Chief Matthias started in the fire service as a volunteer 25+ years ago, before becoming a career firefighter in Ashland in 2002. In 2021 he became the Fire Chief. He also serves as the treasurer of Bayfield County Fire and Emergency Association, is an adjunct instructor for Northwood Technical College, and serves as the WSFCA representative in the HazMat section.

2024-2025 Executive Committee:

Chief Aaron Lipski, Milwaukee Fire Department, ***President***

Chief, John Breuer, Allenton Fire Department, ***1st Vice President***

Chief Steve Denzien, Grand Chute Fire Department, ***2nd Vice President***

Chief Todd Eckes, Wisconsin Rapids Fire Department, ***Treasurer***

Chief Joe Pulvermacher, Menomonee Falls Fire Department, ***Immediate Past President***

Christopher Ruditys, ***Executive Director***

Board Members & Trustees:

Chief Nathaniel Melby, Town of Campbell Fire Department, ***Sergeant at Arms***

Chief Jeremy Hansen, Appleton Fire Department, ***Career Service Trustee***

Chief Christopher Dallas, Valders Fire Department, ***Volunteer Service Trustee***

Chief BJ DeMaa, Waupun Fire Department, ***Combination Service Trustee***

Chief Craig Olson, Campbellsport Fire Department, ***East Central Trustee***

Chief Jay Heckel, Marinette Fire Department, ***Northeast Trustee***

Chief Matthew Fennig, Lake Country Fire & Rescue, ***Southeast Trustee***

Chief Stuart Matthias, Ashland Fire Department, ***Northwest Trustee***

Chief Mark Renderman, Altoona Fire & Rescue, ***West Central Trustee***

Chief Christopher Garrison, Sun Prairie Fire & Rescue, ***Southwest Trustee***

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2024 Award Winners

The Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs' Association announces their 2024 Chiefs of the Year.

VOLUNTEER CHIEF OF THE YEAR



Chief Todd Stange
Silver Creek Fire
Department
2024 Volunteer Chief

CAREER CHIEF OF THE YEAR



Chief Jerry Minor
Pittsville Fire Department
2024 Career Chief

Testimonials:

"We are proud to welcome and serve the new and returning members of the WSFCA Board. These individuals have top-of-the-line experience in both Fire Service and Emergency Medical Services. They represent some of the finest community leaders in the state of Wisconsin, who have committed their lives and careers to the safety of our residents. We are fortunate to have incredible leaders to help move our Association, and the fire service as a whole, forward." **Christopher Ruditys, WSFCA Executive Director.**

"I am humbled, proud, excited, and energized to serve as the Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs' Association President. A WSFCA member since 2012 and having served on the Board of Directors for the previous 2 years, I have had the incredible fortune to learn from my fellow Board members and predecessors in this position. Chief among what I have learned is that the strength of a focused, organized, determined collective will always succeed. It is my aim to support our Board as we continue to improve our organization's outreach and to continue pursuing legislation that makes our lives and the lives of the communities we serve safer. Together, we are better!" – **Fire Chief Aaron Lipski, WSFCA President, Milwaukee Fire Department**

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“Within his own department he, in conjunction with the State, initiated a pilot pre-hospital Defibrillation program that would eventually lead to the first prehospital service to utilize defibrillation in the county. There were many other services his department would pioneer in the area, Epi prehospital, as well as advanced EMS services to name a few.

Jerry was instrumental in the area’s first swift water and ice rescue training programs. Besides being a guiding force to start a county wide free mutual aid program, Jerry was also a leader recognizing the need to initiate MABAS within the county and still is a local leader for Division 116. Through His experiences Jerry recognized that Rapid Intervention Teams were needed in Central Wood County and developed a central “RIT” team program over 15 years ago that operates yet to date.

Farm/Ag Safety was his next mission recognizing a need after tragedy struck in his department’s response area. Jerry was instrumental in developing and delivering Ag Rescue classes nationwide with the National Farm Medicine Center, as well as the Rural Firefighters Delivering Agricultural Safety & Health (RF-DASH) program working on the prevention side of farm related incidents. Knowing that many hazards exist on farm related incidents Jerry worked to bring Farm MAPPER (Mapping to Assist, Protect and Prepare Emergency Responders) to the area identifying a user-friendly pre-plan for farms in the area through this program.

His many years of work with the DNR with regards to training in central Wisconsin, countless hours delivering a framework for the DNR grant program in the area, as well as the mapping program used within the State, proves to be invaluable with wildland response.

*Most recently the signing of his vision AB 917, “The Banning of Counterfeit Lighters”, shows his commitment to the safety of our children and his fortitude to continually advocate for this bill. On Friday April 5th in front of the community he serves and dedicated his 4 plus decades of service to, this bill was signed into law by the Governor Evers. A concept he introduced and endlessly fought for 16 years, committing his time and effort to ensure tragedy, like his department had witnessed, would not happen again. – **Wood County Fire Chiefs Association***

*“I would like to thank Chief Minor and all the other public safety officials who have worked tirelessly over the past several years to shine a light on the dangers of knock-off lighters and the many injuries and deaths they can cause. Chief Minor’s strong support for this bill is one of the main reasons why we were finally able to reach our ultimate goal. Now, our communities will be much safer for all Wisconsinites.” – **Wisconsin Senator Patrick Testin***

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“Fire Prevention education has been a priority of Chief Stange for the past 20 years. He was instrumental in getting the department included in the Fire Prevention program at Random Lake School District with other area departments in the district when he served as an Assistant Chief. He has delegated his officers and firefighters to help each October with supporting this event.

In August of 2018, Chief Stange brought to the membership an idea to explore the possibility of expanding the current station to add an additional 2 truck bays, new offices and conference room. After a few months studying the feasibility of the project, the membership gave him approval in January 2019 to form a building committee. This committee did an excellent job under his leadership, broke ground in July 2019, the building was completed in December 2019 and an open house dedication ceremony took place in February 2020. Through Chief Stange’s leadership the Department obtained 501(c)(3) tax exempt status at this time which allowed him to obtain a private \$250,000 donation to be used toward the expansion project.

The Department celebrated 100 years of service in 2018 and Chief Stange organized a community celebration for this milestone achievement. He is also the first chief in department history to serve over 10 years in the chief position. In 2020, Chief Stange organized a plan with the help of the department’s officers to improve the ISO rating of the Silver Creek Fire Department. His goal was to improve the rating of 9 to 6. After months of hard work, the department was evaluated and awarded a 5 rating in August 2021. This was a great accomplishment for a small rural fire department without fire hydrants.

*The Silver Creek FD is very fortunate to have Chief Stange as our leader, he has done major improvements to the organization and modernization of our fire department to make our department a pillar of the community and a when our neighboring departments call upon us for aid they know that Silver Creek FD will bring expertise and utmost professionalism to their incidents.” – **Assistant Fire Chief Paul Hartmann, Silver Creek Fire Department***

*“I have chaired the Town of Sherman for thirty-two years and in that time have interacted with a number of individuals who have served as chief of our local department. However, none have shown as great a commitment to the fire service and the community as Chief Stange. Before attaining the rank of chief, Stange worked with the town to convince us of the value of joining the LOSA program. While the town was initially skeptical, the program has become a valuable recruitment and retention tool. Membership at the department is currently at an all-time high”. – **William C. Goehring, Chairman, Town of Sherman – Sheboygan County***

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