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FLSS Election

The call for candidates is NOW closed.

In preparation for the 2024 election, your Fire and Life Safety Section is seeking candidates for:

- **Chair:** two-year term, expiring at FRI in 2026
- **Vice Chair:** two-year term, expiring at FRI in 2026
- **Two At-large members:** three-year terms, expiring at FRI in 2027

For additional details on duties and full eligibility information, please visit the [Fire & Life Safety Section](#) page to review the [FLSS Bylaws](#).

For additional details on full eligibility information, please visit iafc.org/elections.

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International Association of Fire Chiefs



David Blenman Fire Lieutenant
Baltimore County Fire Department,
Office of the Fire Marshal in Towson, MD,

Eastern Division

David Blenman, a dedicated Fire Lieutenant with the Baltimore County Fire Department, Office of the Fire Marshal in Towson, MD, seeks a Member-at-Large position within the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), Fire and Life Safety Section. Since his start as a Fire Safety Inspector in 2004 with the State Fire Marshal Office, David has amassed a diverse skill set, serving in roles such as Emergency Medical Technician Basic, EMT/Firefighter, Fire Specialist, Community Risk Reduction Manager, and Fire Marshal. His unwavering commitment to community outreach and public education is evident in his dedicated service to the Baltimore County Fire Service.

Acknowledged for his outstanding contributions, David received the "Trailblazer Award" from the Baltimore County Branch of the NAACP. Currently, as President of the local Chapter of the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters- Guardian Knights, he actively engages in committees like the Baltimore County FD Peer Support Team, FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Peer Reviewer, and serves as an NFFF Advocate for Maryland.

David's affiliations extend to key organizations, including the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters, National Fire Academy Alumni, NAACP~ Baltimore County Branch, International Code Council, National Fallen Firefighter Foundation, National Fire Protection Association, National Fire Sprinkler Association, and the American Wood Council.

With a proven record of leadership, community service, and a broad spectrum of experience, David Blenman is well-positioned to contribute valuable perspectives to the IAFC, Fire, and Life Safety Section as a Member at Large.



Mike Carsten

Assistant Chief

Tucson, AZ, Fire Department

Western Division

Mike Carsten has proudly served at the (TFD) since 1998 and has been in the fire service since 1991. He currently serves as the Assistant Chief of Business Services and Community Risk Reduction. Within the Business Services Bureau his responsibilities include direct oversight of Fire Prevention, Logistics, Community Risk Reduction (CRR), Accreditation, as well as IT/Technology. He promoted through the ranks of Firefighter, Paramedic, Captain, Battalion Chief, Deputy Chief and currently Assistant Chief. Assistant Chief Carsten has served as adjunct faculty with Pima Community College since 2002. He is an instructor in the Public Safety and Emergency Services Institute, teaching Strategy & Tactics. He has served as a representative for the Fire and Life Safety Section on the program planning committee for Fire Rescue International (FRI) since 2016. In addition, he serves on the program planning committee for the Community Risk Reduction Leadership Conference sponsored by the IAFC. Chief Carsten currently sits on the Board of Directors for the International Association of Firefighter Chiefs Fire & Life Safety Section and the Arizona Burn Foundation. In his current role as Assistant Chief and formerly as the Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal of the Fire Prevention Division, he has been strongly focused on reducing injuries, life loss, and property loss through focused attention on Fire Prevention and Community Risk Reduction Initiatives. Chief Carsten holds a Bachelor of Science in Fire Administration from Columbia Southern University (Summa Cum Laude) and currently is working on his M.S. in Fire Executive Leadership/Public Administration at Columbia Southern University.



Landon A. Churchill

Deputy Chief – Strategic Services

Spring Fire Department – Harris County ESD No. 7

656 E Louetta Rd.

Spring, TX

Southwestern Division

Above all, I see the election for the FLSS Board of Directors as a chance to connect and serve. As a Deputy Chief with the Spring Fire Department in Texas, I have participated locally, regionally, and nationally as a leader and educator, always with the same goals of serving and connecting. My aspirations with FLSS are to continue that work. I'm a tireless advocate for proactive risk reduction, and I know I can contribute meaningfully to the FLSS.

As the fire service industry continues to evolve to meet the changing landscapes of our world, there continues to be a deep need for connection and clear vision. Issues like cultural identity come to the forefront, as we are challenged by vocabulary; are we life safety education, fire prevention, risk reduction, or one of the many other terms used to describe people dedicated to making sure that someone's worst day doesn't happen? The answer must be one that unites and includes. It will be crucial to thoughtfully address friction points with radical candor, and the emphasis must be on collaboration. In an industry plagued with adversarial politics, it is my firm belief that our road forward is to explore a common vision that balances the varied backgrounds, generations, community needs, and opinions that come into play, and to facilitate a conversation where no party is alienated or marginalized. Every voice has value, and the noble goal of keeping our communities safe unites us to a common cause.



Matthew Henss
Indianapolis Fire Department
Deputy Chief
Community Risk Reduction
[Great Lakes Division](#)

Matt Henss is a dedicated professional with 29 years of service in the Indianapolis Fire Department, currently holding the position of Deputy Chief of Community Risk Reduction. Guided by a servant mindset and anchored in the core values of integrity, courage, and compassion, Matt is intentional in giving back to his family, friends, organization, and the community.

Throughout his career in suppression, Matt has undertaken various roles, from Firefighter to Executive Officer. His commitment extends beyond operational duties, he has served in the Peer Support Group and as a Shift Training Officer, contributing to department events and initiatives.

In the administrative realm, Matt has showcased his leadership skills by establishing the Scheduling Coordinators Office, overseeing scheduling events impacting daily staffing. Later, as the Chief of Planning, he led the restructuring of the planning division and supervised the Accreditation and the Performance and Compliance office. Matt's dedication to continual improvement played a pivotal role in the department's successful achievement of international accreditation and ISO class 1.

Matt earned his associate degree in Fire Science from Ivy Tech Community College and a bachelor's degree in management from Indiana Wesleyan University. Currently, he is a member of the 2023 IAFC's Fire Service Executive Development Institute (FSEDI) cohort, a Tobias Fellows alum, and the City of Indianapolis leadership program L.E.A.D. Matt is dedicated to continual growth.

Away from his professional life, Matt finds joy in spending time with his family. Personally, he dedicates time to his hobbies, including golf, reading, and fly fishing.



Raymond Allen Reynolds

Fire Chief

Nevada, Iowa Public Safety Department

Missouri Valley Division

I seek re-election to the FLSS board for At-Large Member. I am a career chief serving a volunteer department covering 137 sq. miles. My roots in the fire service come from being a volunteer firefighter. I remain very committed to inclusion as my fire department has nineteen female firefighters on our staff of 48. I have a part-time job as a Lieutenant/critical care paramedic for the Bondurant Fire Department. I am 33 years into the job. Governor Kim Reynolds has appointed me to the Fire Service Emergency Response Council in Iowa. We oversee fire service training for all firefighters in the state and

advise the State Fire Marshal. I've served as State Fire Marshal in Iowa from 2010-2013. I am a combat Veteran who served in Iraq from 2003-2004.

Serving on the Fire Code Action Committee (FCAC) and participating in the IAFC strategic plan have been the most rewarding part of my membership to the IAFC. We have successfully researched major fires affecting the cellulose ethanol industry and passed new fire codes for the safety of those firefighters involved in agro-industrial fires. I have taught several Command Officer Leadership Symposiums (COLS) for the IAFC. My passion lies in preventing fire deaths. I currently lead a national working group of 30 partners on behalf the IAFC FLSS to address home oxygen therapy fires. I humbly request your support.



Gage Schlice,
Battalion Chief, Fire Marshal,
City of San Bruno, Ca
[Western Division](#)

Gage Schlice is running for election as an at-large Fire & Life Safety Section Board member. He serves as the Fire Marshal and is responsible for fire and life safety prevention/education activities and fire investigations. Gage started his career in 2003 as a wildland firefighter for Cal Fire and has since held various positions in the fire service. He has multiple degrees, including a bachelor's degree in Fire Administration.

Gage's passion is technology and working with developers to implement cutting-edge systems that enhance fire and life safety. He has worked with several large tech companies in Silicon Valley, where he has had to solve many issues that were not addressed by codes or standards. He continues to update and develop a practical approach to new codes to address fire and life safety. Gage enjoys educating the public, firefighters, and developers on fire safety and utilizes every opportunity to learn about new and emerging technologies.

Gage aims to implement Community Risk Reduction strategies in fire departments by engaging and collaborating with community members, local government officials, businesses, and other relevant stakeholders. This will help to gain valuable insights and establish partnerships. To achieve this, we must train firefighters and community members on fire safety, emergency preparedness, and other relevant topics.

Gage is a proud father of two children, Gage (14) and Olivia (10), and wants to make the world a better and safer place for his kids.



Jason Tharp

Battalion Chief

Harris County Emergency Services District (ESD)

No. 48 in Katy, Texas

[Southwestern Division](#)

Chief Tharp is the Battalion Chief of Community Risk Reduction (CRR) and Public Information Officer for Harris County Emergency Services District (ESD) No. 48 in Katy, Texas. He began his career in the fire service as a volunteer in 2006 before transitioning to a career firefighter in 2010.

Chief Tharp holds a bachelor's degree in emergency management administration from Texas A&M-San Antonio. He has also completed the Fire Service Chief Executive Officer program at Texas A&M TEEK and the Texas Fire Chiefs Academy from the Texas Fire Chiefs Association.

In 2018, Chief Tharp was promoted to Lieutenant of CRR. A year later, Community Risk Reduction became an official division of the department, and he was appointed as the head of the division, assuming the role of Battalion Chief. Chief Tharp has presented at many state and national conferences on CRR.

In 2020, Chief Tharp received the Lone Star Achievement award from the Texas Fire Chiefs Association (TCFA) for his outstanding community efforts in CRR. In 2021, he was honored with the Valor Award, and in 2023 he was named Administrative Person of the Year. In addition to his duties at HCESD 48, Chief Tharp also serves as a full-time District Chief for Eastex Fire Department (HCESD10) in Northeast Harris County.

Chief Tharp has entered as a candidate for an at-large position on the Fire & Life Safety Section. He hopes to bring his extensive experience to the section and work collaboratively with the team to achieve the FLSS Priorities.