

16th Annual Texas Fire Marshals' Conference Presenters' Bios

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Chris Connealy**

Title: **Texas State Fire Marshal**

Organization: **State Fire Marshal's Office**

Presentation: **Opening Remarks and Courage to Be Safe**

Speaker's Bio

Chris Connealy was appointed as the Texas State Fire Marshal on June 18, 2012. He previously served as fire chief of the Cedar Park Fire Department from 2004 to 2012. Chris has been in the fire service 34 years. He initially served 26 years with the Houston Fire Department and retired January 2004. He promoted through the ranks and retired as fire chief. Chris has associate, bachelor, and master degrees. Chris completed the Harvard University State and Local Executive program in 2003. He is accredited as a Chief Fire Officer and is a National Fire Academy EFO graduate. He was appointed by Governor Perry and served as presiding officer on the Texas Commission on Fire Protection, served on the Texas Fire Chiefs Association executive board, and received various awards during his career in the fire service. Chris serves as an adjunct instructor for TEEEX and Austin Community College. He loves his profession and serving others.

Contact: (512) 305-7906

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Don Jansen**

Title: **Fire Plans Examiner**

Organization: **City of Georgetown**

Presentation: **Opening Comments**

Speaker's Bio:

- 36 years in the Fire Service
- 25 years in Fire Prevention
- Currently serving as Fire Plans Examiner for the City of Georgetown

Contact: jon.jansen@georgetown.org
(512) 930-8453

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Senator Brian Birdwell**

Presentation: **Keynote**

Speaker's Bio

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Brian Birdwell is a native Texan, decorated military veteran, survivor of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon, husband, father and lifelong conservative Republican proudly representing the citizens of Texas State Senate District 22.

A native of Fort Worth and a graduate of Lamar University, U.S. Army Command & General Staff College, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Birdwell served in the Army for more than twenty years. He was first elected to the Texas Senate in a June 2010 special election and was subsequently re-elected in November 2010 and again in November of 2012.

Currently, Brian serves as Vice-chairman of the Veteran Affairs & Military Installations Committee and is a member of the Senate Finance, Higher Education, Economic Development and Government Organization committees. He is also serving a 2011-2015 term on the Sunset Advisory Commission and is a member of five additional legislative subcommittees. In 2013, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz appointed Brian to his U.S. Service Academy Nominations Board, and in 2014, Senator Cruz named him Chairman of the 22-member board.

Brian and his wife of 27 years, Mel, reside in Granbury, where they attend Lakeside Baptist Church and operate *Face the Fire Ministries*, a non-profit assisting and encouraging critical burn survivors and wounded servicemen and women. The Birdwells have one son, Matt, who is a recent graduate of Texas Tech University.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Dr. R. Garner**

Title: **Professor**

Organization: **Sam Houston State University**

Presentation: **Lessons on Leadership: Wisdom from Those Who've Been There**

Speaker's Bio

Dr. Randy Garner is a **Professor** of Behavioral Sciences and former **Associate Dean** in the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University. He holds a **B.S.**, **M.A.**, and **Ph.D.** in Psychology from the University of Houston, with specialization in the area of Social Psychology, and a doctoral minor in Organizational Behavior and Management. Additionally, Dr. Garner has a (second) **Ph.D.** in Theology and Religious Studies.

Prior to moving into academia, Dr. Garner began his more than 30 years of law enforcement service in 1976 and has worked in all divisions and levels of command. He was appointed as the **Chief of Police** for a Houston-area agency in the mid 1980's where he was active in a variety of national, state, and local law enforcement organizations. Dr. Garner has taught with or is a graduate of all of the major police command colleges in the country, including the **F.B.I. National Academy**, the **Graduate Management Institute**, the **Leadership and Command College (LEMIT)**, the **Institute for Law Enforcement Administration**, and the **Southern Police Institute** (University of Louisville). During his police career, Dr. Garner was licensed as a Texas Polygraph Examiner, a Forensic Hypnotist, a Police Firearms Master, a Police Defensive Tactics Instructor, and was an FBI-trained Hostage Negotiator.

Dr. Garner has been with Sam Houston State University for more than 18 years and was the founding Director of the **Texas Regional Community Policing Institute (TRCPI)** and served as the Executive Director of the **Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT)** before his appointment as Associate Dean. Currently he serves as the Director of the **Texas Police Chaplains Association**.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Dr. R. Garner**

Title: **Professor**

Organization: **Sam Houston State University**

Presentation: **Lessons on Leadership: Wisdom from Those Who've Been There**

(Continued)

Dr. Garner has received numerous academic awards and honors including the **Excellence in Educational Instruction** award in 2006, the University of Houston's 2005-2006 **Distinguished Alumni Award**—the highest honor the association and the University can bestow upon an alumnus and the **Social Psychologist in Texas** award in 2004.

Dr. Garner has authored numerous books and professional publications with particular emphasis in the areas of social influence, persuasion, and leadership. His books, **Criticism Management** and **Constructing Effective Criticism: How to Give, Receive, and Seek Productive and Constructive Criticism in Our Lives** have been adopted by command colleges, leadership courses, and communication programs across the country. Additionally, Dr. Garner is the Editor-in-Chief of **Applied Psychology in Criminal Justice**, an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, academic journal that examines the social and psychological aspects of human behavior as related to applied societal and criminal justice settings.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Kelly Ransdell**

Title: **Public Educator Advisor**

Organization: **NFPA**

Presentation: **NFPA Public Education and EMAC Update**

Speaker's Bio

Kelly Ransdell is the Deputy Director of the North Carolina Department of Insurance- Office of State Fire Marshal overseeing the Prevention, Programs and Grants Division. She is the State Director of Safe Kids North Carolina which includes 40 coalitions covering 71 counties. She is responsible for the Fire Standard Compliant Cigarette Program and the Fire and Rescue Grants and Relief Funds. Her Injury Prevention Team is the largest in the nation with 7 full-time positions.

Kelly attended North Carolina State University where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology with a minor in Criminal Justice. She received a Master of Arts degree in Industrial Organizational Psychology from East Carolina University. She began her career in emergency services as an EMT with Knightdale EMS & Rescue where she served for 7 years as a volunteer.

She serves on the NFPA 1035 committee that provides technical assistance for national fire prevention standards. She is the Public Education Advisor for the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Public Education Division and works in 11 states in the southern region of the US. She serves on many state and national committees related to injury prevention.

She received the NC Governors Award of Excellence in 2010 for her creation of Operation Medicine Drop- a statewide medication take back initiative that has collected in excess of 50 million dosages throughout the state over the last 3 years. She also has received numerous national awards through Safe Kids Worldwide including 2006 State Coordinator of the Year and Lead Agency of the year- 2011. In NC, she received the Governor's Highway Safety Program Director's award and the University of North Carolina- Injury Prevention Research Center Impact award for her as an individual and Operation Medicine Drop as the program.

Kelly lives just south of Raleigh NC and is married to a narcotics agent. She has two daughters- an 8 year old and 2 year old. Her favorite job is being a wife and a mama.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker **Lemuel "Speedy" Laster**
Name:
Organization: **Phil Ackland and Associates, LLC.**
Presentation: **Inspecting Commercial Kitchen Systems**



Speaker's Bio

Mr. Laster joined Phil Ackland Inc. in 2007 as an Instructor; training individuals for commercial kitchen exhaust cleaning. In November 2008, Mr. Laster received his credentials from Mr. Ackland to teach the Fire Inspectors Course and has taught the Inspectors course at numerous locations across America, Canada, United Kingdom, and the Orient.

Mr. Laster has consulted with several national restaurant chains regarding changes and or modifications to their C.K.V. systems to improve fire safety. Mr. Laster is a member of the consulting team for Cherokee Machinery Consulting. He also provides hands-on inspection services.

Mr. Laster is a member of the N.F.P.A., the Georgia Fire Inspectors Association, and the Tennessee Fire Safety Inspectors Association.

Civic functions: Past Master of Dalton Masonic Lodge and Member of Yaarab Shrine Temple in Atlanta GA.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Ron Farr**

Title: **Lead Regulatory Engineer**

Organization: **UL**

Presentation: **Residential Fire Behavior Research And Smoke Alarms**

Speaker's Bio

Ronald Farr is currently employed with UL - Regulatory Services.

He has more than 45 years with the fire service, serving 3 years as the State Fire Marshal for Michigan and prior to that Ron served with the Charter Township of Kalamazoo Fire Department for 37 years, the last 6 years as their Fire Chief.

Ron is a member of numerous state and national fire service organizations to include the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs, Michigan Fire Inspectors, International Fire Marshals Association, International Fire Chiefs Association, ICC and the National Fire Protection Association. He is a member of several NFPA Technical Committees, and a former member of the NFPA Standards Council.

Ron is a Past President of the International Fire Marshals Association, Michigan Fire Inspectors Society and the Michigan Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators.

He is the recipient of several awards to include the International Fire Marshals Association's *Percey Bugbee Award for Notable, Significant and Enduring Contributions to Fire Safety*, the Michigan Fire Inspectors Society *President's Award for Excellence in Fire Prevention* and the Michigan Association of Fire Chief's *Fire Chief of the Year*.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Paul Valentine**

Title: **Division Manager, Fire Protection Engineering**

Organization: **Nexus Engineering**

Presentation: **The Impact of NFPA 1037 on Today's Fire Professional Fire Marshal**

Speaker's Bio

Paul Valentine is the Fire Protection Engineering Division Manager for Nexus Engineering. Paul is responsible for the management of the company's fire protection engineering services and all consulting services to municipalities and fire districts. Prior to his position at Nexus Engineering, his fire service career included serving the Mount Prospect Fire Department where he held the position of Fire Marshal for 15 years.

Paul has a Bachelor of Science degree in fire protection and safety engineering technology from Oklahoma State University and a Master's degree from Benedictine University in management and organizational behavior. He is also a graduate of the National Fire Academy, Executive Fire Officer Program. He is co-author of two fire service text books; *Fire Prevention Applications* and *Fire Prevention Applications for the Company Officer*. Paul is presently serving as Chair of NFPA 1037 and a principal member of other NFPA committees. He is an elected member of the International Fire Service Training Association's Executive Board and a Vision 20/20 Steering Committee member.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Nancy Trench**

Title: **Assistant Director**

Organization: **IFSTA Fire Protection Publications**

Presentation: **Residential Smoke Alarm Installer Training – A Curriculum**

Speaker's Bio

Nancy J. Trench is the Assistant Director for Research, for Fire Protection Publications at Oklahoma State University where she has worked for more than 35 years.

Mrs. Trench is recognized nationally as a leader in fire and life safety education. She is an expert in the design, implementation and evaluation of fire and life safety education programs. Her expertise includes programs for those at highest risk for home fire deaths and injuries: young children and people with disabilities. She is an advocate for partnerships to build effective risk reduction programs and for risk assessments to target program planning and delivery. Mrs. Trench received the second annual Dr. Anne W. Phillips Award for Leadership in Fire Safety Education from The Home Safety Council in 2008.

Mrs. Trench formerly managed the state fire training system in Oklahoma. She has experience designing and delivering training and certification programs for the fire and emergency response community as well as active participation in international accreditation of certification entities.

Nancy served as an appointed member of the Board of Visitors for the National Fire Academy, an elected member of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Board of Directors, and A Trustee for the Learn Not to Burn Foundation. She currently serves as a member of the NFPA 1035, Professional Qualifications for Fire and Life Safety Educators technical committee. She is an alumnus of OSU with a degree in Fire Protection and Safety Engineering Technology.

Nancy is active with Vision 20/20, National Strategies for Fire Loss Prevention.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Warren D. Bonisch, P.E.**

Title: **Senior Vice President**

Organization: **AON**

Presentation: **Life Safety Code's Philosophy in the Renovation of Buildings Chapter 43: Building Rehabilitation**

Speaker's Bio

As Senior Vice President, Mr. Bonisch maintains client relationships for a variety of commercial, governmental and institutional clients. Project work includes warehouses, mercantile facilities, health care, correctional, and judicial facilities, multi-use projects, hotels, convention centers, office buildings, shopping malls, and colleges. His work includes the development and presentation of equivalencies, variances, fire testing, computer modeling, code interpretations and accessibility code compliance, sprinkler designs, review of construction plans, evaluation of existing buildings and systems, and analysis of overall building life safety and fire protection features.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Bruce Woods**

Title: **Department Head Mitigation and Prevention**

Organization: **Texas Forest Service**

Presentation: **After a WUI Large Loss Fire – Post – Fire Assessment Teams – What Are Their Functions?**

Speaker's Bio

Bruce started with the Texas A&M Forest Service in December 2003 as the Chief Fire Training Coordinator, where he provided management and leadership to external training programs that included wildland firefighting academies, NIMS/ICS training and Type III IMT training. In October 2007, Bruce was promoted to the Chief/Department Head position for the Mitigation and Prevention Department within the Forest Resource Protection Division for the Texas A&M Forest Service. In his role as a Department Head, Bruce leads statewide Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) programs, wildfire prevention efforts, and fuels management programs for the Texas A&M Forest Service.

Prior to joining the TFS, Bruce has 26 years of municipal fire service experience serving as a Fire Chief for 14 years. Bruce holds degrees from Blinn College and Texas A&M University; he is an Executive Fire Officer graduate from the National Fire Academy and is a Texas Certified Public Manager through the William P. Hobby Center for Public Service at Texas State University. He holds various master level certifications with the Texas Commission on Fire Protection and is actively engaged in fire service professional associations where he currently serves on the International Association of Fire Chiefs Wildland Fire Policy Committee and the Southern Group of State Foresters WUI Council. In 2004 Bruce was the President of the Texas Fire Chiefs Association and has served as a guest instructor for the TEEEX annual Texas Municipal Fire School for 30 years.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Rob Troutt**

Title: **Chief Boiler Inspector**

Organization: **Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation**

Presentation: **How to Recognize a Boiler in Texas**

Speaker's Bio

Robby D. Troutt (Rob) has provided over twenty years of service protecting the citizens of the United States through his military, law enforcement, and government career. After serving 4 years in the US Army, Rob then earned a degree in Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration (HVAC&R). After completing school, Rob went to work teaching inmates HVAC&R at Mabel Bassett Correctional Facility in Oklahoma City. While employed by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC), Rob applied and became a Reserve Deputy Sheriff with the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Department. While employed with Oklahoma DOC and the Oklahoma County Sheriff's Department Rob received the "Medal of Meritorious Service", award which was presented by the Governor of Oklahoma for his responses during a motor vehicle accident which he came upon while on vacation.

Mr. Troutt has spent over fifteen years in boiler field including operation, fabrication, repair, alterations and inspections of boilers. Later he joined up with Dyn-Par at Tinker Air Force as a boiler plant operations supervisor. Hartford Steam Boiler of Connecticut hired him to perform inspections in Texas, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, California and China. In 2008 Mr. Troutt accepted a position with the state of Texas as a Boiler Inspector Team Lead. In January 2013 he was chosen for the position of Chief Boiler Inspector of Texas.

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Presenters' Bios

Speaker Name: **Timothy Rutland**

Title: **Interim Executive Director**

Organization: **Texas Commission on Fire Protection**

Presentation: **Texas Commission on Fire Protection Update**

Speaker's Bio

Tim Rutland has been privileged to serve with the Texas Commission on Fire Protection for seven years. His initial responsibilities involved review and approval of training courses, and conducting state certification exams. Within the first year he was promoted to supervisor over the certification team. In January of 2012 he accepted the position of Educational and Professional Development Manager for the agency, which at the time included curriculum development, injury reporting, and the agency's library program in addition to the certification activities. Tim was named as the interim Executive Director for the Commission in April of 2013, and was selected for the permanent position in February, 2014.

Prior to working for the commission, Tim served for 25 years with the Corpus Christi Fire Department. His tenure there included responsibilities in fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, emergency management, and training. He retired in June of 2007 and began working at the commission the following month.

"One of the real pleasures of my job is the opportunity to interact each day with those on the front line of our great profession, whether it's providing information or guidance, or just spending a few minutes visiting and catching up on the latest. I am reminded over and over of the great quality and diversity of people in the Texas fire service, and I am honored for the chance to play a small roll in their mission. A second great pleasure of my job is working every day alongside the other agency personnel...you won't find a better group anywhere. The fire service community can be assured that all of us at the agency understand our mission, and stand ready to assist in any way we can. Our goal is always to partner with the Texas fire service in ways that will keep our state's fire protection personnel on the cutting edge of effectiveness, professionalism, and safety."