



ATLANTIC CITY NEW JERSEY - 2018 B.C.O.C. EDUCATIONAL SYMPOSIUM & CONFERENCE

2018 Educational Symposium & Conference

The 2018 B.C.O.C. Educational Symposium and Conference will be held in Atlantic City, New Jersey from April 9-12, 2018. The host hotel will be the Harrah's Atlantic City at 777 Harrahs Blvd., Atlantic City, NJ 08401 phone: (609) 444 - 5000 Visit our website for more details WWW.BCOC.US

Why Attend the B.C.O.C. Educational Symposium?

For the last few years our annual symposium has made leaps and bounds in terms of format, organization, and content. In addition to presenters from around the country, the symposium has partnered with Valdosta State University for the last few years which has allowed those who attend the symposium to earn CEU's from an accredited institution. The symposium has also been able to offer official courses from the National Fire Academy. The B.C.O.C. Educational Symposium is administered in a professional, participative, and relaxed atmosphere that is centered on the most current

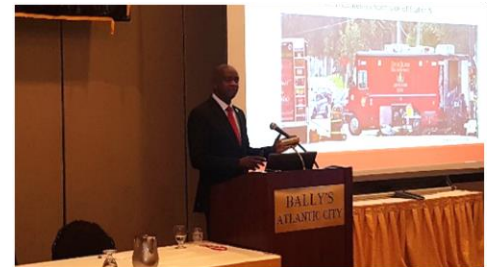
Flashpoint

-Be an Informed Officer



September 2017

issues in the fire service today. Those who attend will meet peers from all over the country and have the opportunity to share and learn from one another.



Formal Education Needs in the Fire Service

The fire and emergency service is a dynamic profession, and it's up to each member to continue to improve. The fire service has done a good job of providing training to its members; however, until recently, the fire service as a whole has not put a lot of emphasis on formal education. The fire chief and executive-level chief officers usually promote up through the ranks, learning the skills of firefighting and receiving the training that goes along with that. Once someone reaches the executive level of the fire department, the skills of being a firefighter aren't needed as much, yet the skills of a business executive are. Today's executive-level chief officers are focused less on firefighting skills and more on skills of finance, budgets and political and administrative issues. The necessary administration knowledge of a professional fire chief is gained through formal education. It imparts knowledge on how to become a critical thinker administratively, and it increases the knowledge base from a nontraditional area of the fire service. Formal education also teaches students to look at problems from different angles as well as how to use data and to address problems using logic to resolve them. Formal education also provides the needed education to prepare future leaders to accept the challenges the fire service will face in the future. A great example occurred a few weeks ago. A neighboring chief officer attended a department-head meeting representing the fire chief. This meeting included the city manager and all of the other department heads for that city. This is a weekly meeting to discuss and share issues happening within their city. All of the other department heads have earned master's degrees or doctorates, and in most cases a master's degree is



the minimum qualifications for the position. The chief officer later shared that he felt that some of the discussions regarding the budget and human-resource issues were a bit above his head. In past years, the fire chief didn't need an advanced degree and wasn't on the same formal education level as the other department heads. That's changing as more and more fire chiefs have advanced formal education. Fire chiefs have always been respected, but having an advanced degree adds a level of professionalism and respect in a department-head meeting and throughout a community as well. Currently, many programs available are to members of the fire service in education development and formal education. A few programs are the [National Fire Academy-Executive Fire Officer Program](#), [Naval Post Graduate School](#) and the [IAFC's Fire Service Executive Development Institute](#). There are also many traditional and online bachelors, masters and doctoral programs available. The fire service has always been respected for what firefighters do for their communities. However, one way to improve our desire for professionalism is to increase our

formal education to stay on par with other professional organizations. Fire chiefs are essentially running corporations and they need the education to be successful in today's business world.

By Greg Barton

This article first appeared in the September 2016 edition of the International Association of Fire Chief's [On Scene](#) publication.



Troops to Firefighter/ EMT Veterans Program

Troops to Firefighters, Inc. is an organization seeking nonprofit status with the IRS and the State of

Georgia. The primary focus of the program was founded by retired Fire Chief Winston L. Minor, serving 29 years with the Atlanta Fire Department.

We offer a program in which transitioning military personnel, unemployed veterans and spouses will receive nationally recognized firefighter and emergency medical technician certifications which will place the individuals that complete the program in a highly qualified status for a firefighter/EMT position with any fire department in the country.

Target Audience

The Department of Defense has projected over 500,000 veterans returning to the United States by the end of the year 2014. Our targeted audience will be military veterans, spouses and active duty transitioning out of active duty who have the skills and interest to learn the qualifications needed to become successful Firefighters and EMT's. We would be looking to place a diverse group of qualified women and men into rewarding fire services careers.

METHODOLOGY

Our strategy for this project is to recruit, mentor and place military veterans in fire service careers. We have incorporated several methods of attracting veterans to our program (Job Fairs, web site/search engine optimization), Social Media and traditional print media/advertising) We have established networking relationships with organizations such as the Yellow Ribbon, Goodwill, VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) and others which

have the goals of making the veterans' transition from military to civilian life a smooth one. These organizations have contact lists which will permit us to distribute our recruiting session information to thousands of veterans.

At our recruiting sessions, we make detailed presentations of the opportunities in the fire service, traits of good candidates, benefits of working in the fire service, shift work, the project's training and other aspects of the program. During the certification of participants we will mentor each by providing a minimum of 80 contact hours with each candidate one-on-one. These counseling sessions include group sessions as well.

We then will seek out those fire departments whether federal, county, city or private as to their hiring status and present to those that are hiring the qualifications of our project participants as potential employees. We have finalized agreements or have agreements pending with technical colleges and state fire schools in South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. These institutions are or will soon be on board to provide the certified training for our project.

NETWORKING

Troops to Firefighters are networking with a plethora of veteran's organizations, non-profits and other state and federal organizations in order to maximize our audience. Some of the many organizations that we are affiliated with are as follows, but not limited to:

- Points of Light - Community Blue Print
- The Veteran Leadership Corp & Hands on Atlanta
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- The Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Yellow Ribbon Program
- Georgia Department of Labor
- VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars)
- American Legion
- Atlanta Technical College
- IAFC (International Association of Fire Chiefs)
- BCOC (Black Chief Officer's Committee) Alabama State Fire College
- South Carolina State Fire College

We are seeking an opportunity to make presentations to organizations such as the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense to advise them on how Troops to Firefighters can assist with the task of placing Troops and under employed veterans in quality professional positions within the public safety sector.

From the Executive Board:

The Executive Board was represented by Myself, Joe Pryor, Dwayne and Tereasa to attend Homegoing services for Chief Oscar Brennan in Homestead Florida. The E-Board represented by myself,

Dwayne and Joe and Tereasa at FRI in Charlotte, N. C ; we made contacts with new members as well as potential sponsors. Joe Pryor and myself attended the annual convention for the IABPFF in Las Vegas where a presentation was made to all

the regions on our upcoming 2018 Symposium and Conference.

Dave Harris
BCOC President

The Loss of a Giant...

OSCAR BRENNAN

FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN FIREFIGHTER
(RETIRED/MIAMI-DADE FIRE DEPARTMENT)

Oscar Brennan was born on March 16, 1943, in Miami, Florida. He is the eldest of eight siblings. Chief Brennan was the pioneer Black Firefighter in the Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue Department. He later became Fire Chief for the City of Birmingham, Alabama.

Chief Brennan was hired in June 1968 as the first Black Firefighter for what was then Metro-Dade County Fire Department. His career span of 25 years allowed him the opportunity to rise through the ranks as Lieutenant, Captain, Division Chief, and Fire Marshal. He ultimately achieved the rank of Assistant Fire Chief with the department before retiring from Miami-Dade County's Fire Department in 1993.

Chief Brennan became the first Black to serve as Fire Chief, when he was appointed to the City of Birmingham, Alabama in January 1993. He held that position until his retirement in 1998.

Chief Brennan has served as a member of the International Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA); International Association of Firefighters (IAFF); Board Member of The Red Cross of Birmingham, Alabama; Urban League of Greater Miami; Birmingham Blood Bank; Boy Scouts of America, Birmingham, Alabama; Black Chief Officers Committee (B.C.O.C.); International Association of Black Professional Firefighters (I.A.B.P.F.); and sits as a board member for the Madison County Hospital.

Chief Brennan has received numerous honors, awards, certificates and accolades during his 30-year career in Fire Service.

Chief Brennan attended Dunbar Elementary and Mays High School before graduating from Miami-Dade Community College with an Associate Degree in Fire Science. He later earned his Bachelor's Degree in Fire Safety and Science at Florida International University.

Brennan studied at the prestigious Harvard University J.F.K. School of State & Local Government Executive Education Program and the National Fire Academy's Executive Development Program. He earned a certificate in both programs.

Chief Oscar Brennan retired in 1998 and presently lives in Greenville, Florida with his wife Norma.

