



Florida Fire Chiefs' Association



Legislative Symposium

The Chief Fire Officer and the Legislative Process

Introduction

As Florida's leading organization for fire and emergency services professionals, Florida Fire Chiefs' Association specializes in advocating for legislation and regulations that enhance the ability of fire professionals to protect and preserve the communities they serve.

The Mission Statement of the Association states; "The Florida Fire Chiefs' Association shall advance the profession of fire and emergency services through strategic and proactive leadership, education, development, and advocacy."

The Association strives to accomplish its mission by committing its leadership and staff to a series of strategic elements specifically designed to serve the needs of its members. All elements and corresponding key initiatives have been articulated and approved by the Board of Directors.

To achieve the mission of the Association, strategic initiatives with realistic goals and objectives must be established. Goals and objectives are imperative to provide the individual members with adequate direction. The attainment of a performance objective should be recognized and celebrated to provide the proper sense of accomplishment.

The number one strategic initiative of the Association is to create and maintain a Legislative Committee that serves the Association year-round as the FFCA's proactive voice for legislative and regulatory issues. To achieve this initiative, we must; 1.) Establish a methodology and policy to ensure a greater presence in Tallahassee during the legislative session, 2.) Develop and adopt a legislative agenda that serves the best interest of the Association and its membership, 3.) Develop and adopt a Federal legislative agenda.

The purpose of this one-day symposium is to focus on the training, equipping, and the empowering members of the Association to engage in the legislative process.



Session Descriptions

The Process

The Florida Legislature is the Legislature of the U.S. State of Florida. It is organized as a bicameral body composed of an upper chamber, the Senate, and a lower chamber, the House of Representatives. Article III, Section 1 of the Florida Constitution, adopted in 1968, defines the role of the Legislature and how it is to be constituted. This session is designed to walk the attendee through the legislative process and how a proposed bill becomes law.

Presenters – **Eric Prutsman and Travis Blanton**

The Legislator’s Perspective

One of the major roles of a legislature is representation – representing various constituencies, mainly people in each lawmaker's electoral district, but also organized groups and individuals elsewhere in the state. The question is, how well does the legislature perform its representational tasks? This session is designed for you to hear the perspective of the Legislator regarding the process and how to balance between personal and public opinion.

Presenters – **Legislators TBD**

Know Before You Go – Developing Relationships

Legislators are like us, many times they only know about a topic by what they see in the paper or Google regarding our issues. By following some simple guidelines and a few helpful hints, you can develop a relationship with your elected official. While some dynamics may change at the federal or local level, the approach to elected officials applies at all levels of government.

This session is designed to give you confidence in your ability to educate the Legislator on the background of your organization and its latest issues.

Presenters – **Chiefs Darrel Donatto**

Lobbying Efforts – Do’s and Don’ts

Legislative lobbying in Florida is **any activity between a registered legislative branch lobbyist and an elected official or legislative staff** that involves working to influence the outcome of a policy issue or position within the legislative branch. This session is designed to help the attendee understand the difference between lobbying and “grassroot” initiatives and what you can and cannot do in your discussions with Legislators and/or legislative staff.

Presenters – **Eric Prutsman and Travis Blanton**



Testifying Before a Committee

Testifying before a legislative committee will be a positive experience for you if you follow some simple rules and prepare ahead of time. Effective testimony should not be a frightening or intimidating experience, but rather the use of common sense, personal relations and communication skills in a more formal setting.

This session will provide the attendee with the “rules of the road” relating to delivering an “expert” persuasive testimony before Legislative Committee.

Presenters – **Eric Prutsman and Travis Blanton**

Rule Development Process – Stakeholder Meetings, Rule Workshops & Public Hearings

So, the proposed bill passes...now it's time for rule development. This process is guided by a set of core principles and begins with the Department or Agency that has been authorized to draft the proposed rule. This session will outline the rule development process and provide guidance on how to navigate the bureaucracy while presenting an effective message.

Presenters – **Steve McCoy, Department of Health and TBD, State Fire Marshal's Office**

FFCA Legislative Agenda

In this session, FFCA leadership will discuss the Association's key legislative priorities for the upcoming session.

Presenters – **Chief John Miller, FFCA President and Chief Darrel Donatto, FFCA Legislative Chair and 2nd Vice President**

Capital Building Walk

Explore the Florida State Capital Building and learn to navigate its many halls and stairways.

Lead by Tour Guide and Capital Navigation Expert – **Eric Prutsman**



Florida Fire Chiefs' Association

Legislative Symposium

January 14, 2019

Florida Sheriffs Association

2617 Mahan Drive

Tallahassee, FL 32308

8:30 Welcome & Introductions

Miller/Donatto

9:00 The Legislative Process

Prutsmann/Blanton

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9:30 The Legislator's Perspective

Legislator(s) TBD

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10:15 Break

10:30 Know Before You Go – Developing Relationships

Donatto

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11:00 Lobbying Efforts – Do's & Don'ts

Prutsmann/Blanton

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11:30 Testifying Before a Committee

Prutsman/Blanton

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12:00 Networking Lunch – Provided

1:30 Rule Workshops & Public Hearings

McCoy/SFMO (TBD)

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2:00 FFCA's Legislative Agenda

Miller/Donatto

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3:30 The Capital Walk

Prutsman

Explore the Florida State Capital Building and learn to navigate its many halls and stairways.