

VOTE



★ 2025 Florida Fire Chief's Association
East Central Region Director ★

JOSEPH HIGHTOWER

EXPERIENCE

- 35+ Years in Fire/EMS Service
- Chief Fire Officer
- Federal, State, County & Municipal Experience
- Army Civilian Fire Officer of the Year Recipient
- Large & Small Department Experience

VISION

Serve

I will serve every East Central Fire Department like it was my own.

Communication

I will ensure communication transparency of the Board of Directors and action the Board takes.

Trust

I will be the voice for East Central Fire Chiefs.

VOTE FOR HIGHTOWER!

April 13th-May 28th

Joseph A. Hightower, Fire Chief

Mount Dora Fire Department

I would like to introduce myself to the Florida Fire Chief's Association East Central Region members. My name is Joseph Hightower, Fire Chief of the Mount Dora Fire Department. I am running for the East Central Regional Director of the Florida Fire Chief's Association. I have had the opportunity to meet and speak with many of you, but in case I haven't, I would like to tell you a little about myself. I have been in the Fire/EMS Service for 35 plus years where most of my career has been spent in the Federal Fire Service. I began as a volunteer after graduating high school as many of us did. My first paid job was as an EMT in Alabama (my home state). After completing Paramedic School, I went on to spend 6 years at Dekalb County Fire EMS in Atlanta, GA where I had an opportunity to be a responder to 1996 Summer Olympic events. Before starting my Federal career, I had the opportunity to lead my hometown EMS service as their Director. I began my Federal career at Anniston Army Depot, Anniston Alabama as a Firefighter/Paramedic advancing through the ranks to Fire Protection Specialist (Training Chief). I was promoted to Assistant Chief of Operations in a move to Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield. I served in several positions to include, Assistant Chief of Operations, Chief of Training, Deputy Fire Chief, and Acting Fire Chief before retiring in 2018. After retirement, I worked as a National Lead Instructor for the Center for Domestic Preparedness (FEMA). In that role I had the opportunity to lead and instruct agencies from across the country in preparing for terrorist events, Incident Command, and decontamination procedures for field and hospital settings. In June 2023, I accepted the position of Fire Chief for the City of Mount Dora where I currently remain. Our department is accredited through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International and are rated with an ISO rating of 2.

I am credentialed through the Center for Public Safety Excellence as a Chief Fire Officer. I hold a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Fire Science Administration from American Military University. I am currently a National Registered Paramedic of 35 years and hold a State of Florida Paramedic License.

Over my career, I have had the opportunity serve on many local, state, and federal committees and working groups. Some of my greatest memories and accomplishments in the Fire Service include:

1. Department of the Army Worldwide Fire Officer of the Year 2005
2. Local Incident Commander – 2 Presidential Visits
3. Lead Briefer – FORSCOM Command (4 Star) visit
4. Strike Team – Sweat Farm Rd/Bugaboo Wildland Fire GA-FL
5. Department of the Army Lead Evaluator Chemical Exercise Program
6. Department of the Army 9-1-1 Program re-write committee
7. Department of Defense Presidential Excellence Award
8. State of Florida Fire Marshal Out-of-State/DoD Firefighter committee

I am a member of the following Organizations:

1. Florida Fire Chief's Association
2. Central Florida Fire Chief's Association
3. Lake County Fire Chief's Association
4. International Association of Fire Chief's
5. Mount Dora Chamber of Commerce

As Chief Fire Officers, we all face our own challenges inside our departments and communities, but I feel we are facing challenges that will affect us all. East Central Florida Fire Department's need a voice at the table to express our concerns and needs. I want to be that voice for you. Communication and Transparency will be my key factors. I will make sure you know the topics on the table and I will bring our topics to the table. Thank you for your consideration and I am asking for your VOTE for the East Central Regional Director of the Florida Fire Chief's Association.