



# WISCONSIN STATE

FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

*Together We Make A Difference*

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## **Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs' Association Announces 2023-2024 Board of Directors**

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MILWAUKEE, WI – The Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs' Association (WSFCA) announces their new slate of officers to their 2023-2024 Board of Directors, 2023 Career & Volunteer Chiefs of the Year, and the 2023 Safety Section Leadership Award Winners.

### **2023-2024 New Slate of Officers:**



**Chief Joe Pulvermacher** (Fitchburg Fire Department) assumes the position of President. Chief Pulvermacher is proud of his 30+ year history in the fire service. In 1988, he started as a volunteer firefighter for the Village of Butler (WI). In 2016, Chief Pulvermacher was sworn in as Fitchburg's Fire Chief.



**Chief Aaron Lipski** (Milwaukee Fire Department) assumes the position of 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President. Chief Lipski has served the Milwaukee Fire Department for over 25 years. Lipski is a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Milwaukee Firefighter that has filled every rank, rising from Firefighter to Heavy Equipment Operator, to company officer positions of Lieutenant and then Captain. He was sworn in as the Milwaukee Fire Chief in June 2021.



**Chief John Breuer** (Allenton Fire Department) assumes the position of 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. Chief Breuer has more than 40 years of experience in the fire service at all levels throughout his career. He has been Chief of the Allenton Fire Department since 1983 and continues to educate as an Adjunct Faculty Instructor since 1998.



**Chief Nate Melby** (Town of Campbell Fire Department) assumes the position of Sergeant at Arms for another term. Chief Melby is a Past President of the Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs Association, current President of the La Crosse County Fire Officers Association, 25-year veteran of CFD, and has been Fire Chief since 2009.



**Chief Todd Eckes** (Wisconsin Rapids Fire Department) assumes the position of Treasurer. Chief Eckes started in the fire service 33 years ago as a volunteer, working his way up through every rank. He became Fire Chief of Wisconsin Rapids Fire Department in 2022.



**Chief Matthew Fennig** (Lake Country Fire & Rescue) assumes the position of Southeast Trustee. Chief Fennig has been dedicated to the fire service for over 20 years, serving as the Lake Country Fire & Rescue Chief since 2010. He is also the President of the Waukesha County Fire Chiefs Association.



**Chief Stuart Matthias** (Ashland Fire Department) assumes the position of Northwest Trustee. Chief Matthias has served the Ashland Fire Department since 2002, later becoming Chief in 2021.



**Chief Mark Renderman** (Altoona Fire & Rescue) assumes the position of West Central Trustee. Chief Renderman was appointed as Fire Chief in 2017 after serving as Fire Chief for the Owen-Withee-Curtis Fire & EMS Department where he started his career as a volunteer firefighter and EMT in 1997. He also serves as the President of the Eau Claire County Fire Chiefs Association and on the Chippewa Valley Technical College Advisory Committee.

### **2023-2024 Executive Committee:**

Chief Joe Pulvermacher, Fitchburg Fire Department, ***President***  
 Chief, Aaron Lipski, Milwaukee Fire Department, ***1st Vice President***  
 Chief John Breuer, Allenton Fire Department, ***2nd Vice President***  
 Chief Todd Eckes, Wisconsin Rapids Fire Department, ***Treasurer***  
 Chief Michael Stanley, Oshkosh Fire Department, ***Immediate Past President***  
 Christopher Ruditys, ***Executive Director***

### **Board Members & Trustees:**

Chief Nathaniel Melby, Town of Campbell Fire Department, ***Sergeant at Arms***  
 Chief Jeremy Hansen, Appleton Fire Department, ***Career Service Trustee***  
 Chief Christopher Dallas, Valders Fire Department, ***Volunteer Service Trustee***  
 Chief BJ DeMaa, Waupun Fire Department, ***Combination Service Trustee***  
 Chief Craig Olson, Campbellsport Fire Department, ***East Central Trustee***  
 Chief Jay Heckel, Marinette Fire Department, ***Northeast Trustee***  
 Chief Matthew Fennig, Lake Country Fire & Rescue, ***Southeast Trustee***  
 Chief Stuart Matthias, Ashland Fire Department, ***Northwest Trustee***  
 Chief Mark Renderman, Altoona Fire & Rescue, ***West Central Trustee***  
 Chief Christopher Garrison, Sun Prairie Fire & Rescue, ***Southwest Trustee***  
 George Klaetsch, ***Lobbyist***

## 2023 Award Winners

The Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs' Association announces their 2023 Chiefs of the Year and Safety Leadership Award.

### VOLUNTEER CHIEF OF THE YEAR



**Chief Kevin Tielens**  
New Franken Volunteer  
Fire Department  
*2023 Volunteer Chief  
of the Year*

### CAREER CHIEF OF THE YEAR



**Chief James Small**  
Palmyra Public Safety  
Department  
*2023 Career Chief  
of the Year*

### SAFETY SECTION LEADERSHIP AWARD



**Wausau Fire Department**  
Fire Chief Robert Barteck  
**2023 Safety Section Leadership Award**

### Testimonials:

*"We are proud to welcome and serve the new and returning members of the WSFCA Board. These individuals have top-of-the-line experience in both Fire Service and Emergency Medical Services. They represent some of the finest community leaders in the state of Wisconsin, who have committed their lives and careers to the safety of our residents. We are fortunate to have incredible leaders to help move our Association, and the fire service as a whole, forward."* **Christopher Ruditys, WSFCA Executive Director.**

*"I'm grateful to be able to serve as the next Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs' Association President. I understand that progressive development is needed in a dynamic profession and I am honored to be able to continue the contributions that have happened throughout this Association's history. Working with fire service leaders, I intend to move the needle a little further... make the profession a little better... a little safer... a little more sustainable – advocating every day..."* – **Chief Joe Pulvermacher, WSFCA President, Fitchburg Fire Department**

*“Kevin’s dedication extends far beyond his own department. I have witnessed his willingness to help any department or firefighter in need, whether on an incident scene or a personal level. Chief Tielens exemplifies the title of “Chief.” He has no concern for status or prestige; his concern is entirely for his firefighters and the citizens they serve.*

*Chief Tielens was instrumental in the development of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) in Brown County. Kevin immediately saw the value of forming MABAS Division 112 but also understood the critical relationships that would need to be cultivated for its success. At the time, there was little cooperation between most departments in the county, but the need was clear. In true Chief fashion, Kevin ensured he was at every meeting to create the division. More importantly, he worked diligently behind the scenes to build relationships between departments that either didn’t exist or needed some work. Kevin demonstrated to all departments, whether volunteer, paid-on-call, combination, or career that we could do more collaboratively than alone.*

*Chief Tielens taught me the value of establishing and maintaining strong relationships within the fire service. He is the Chief who answers his phone 24/7/365, without fail. He is the Chief who doesn’t just answer questions in the middle of the night but drives across the county to stand by your side and provide assistance. Chief Tielens is the epitome of a professional. He understands what his community needs, what his department needs, what the departments around him need, and he understands how to make it all happen. Yet, he does this all while being a dedicated family man.” – **Assistant Fire Chief Robert Goplin, Green Bay Metro Fire Department***

*“When Chief Small arrived, Palmyra’s fire service had been declining for decades, creating a large divide in the community. Chief Small developed an inclusive process where employees were defined as Kind, Compassionate, Problem Solvers. Frequent employee training focused on Safe, Simple, Structured approached emphasizing an inclusive workplace culture of mutual respect and teamwork. These efforts transformed the department and community. We entered 2023 as an award-winning department.” – **Matt Sockrider, Village of Palmyra Trustee & Public Safety Committee Chair***

*“Wausau Fire implemented a program with an Athletic Trainer to evaluate the physical tasks performed by firefighters so it could be understood what was being lifted, carried, pushed, pulled, etc., by the department’s members. Then a strength-based, injury prevention training program was created to improve fitness, educate on proper lifting techniques, and reduce the risk of injury for the recruits.*

*A year later, 18 recruits participated in the program and reported less musculoskeletal discomfort, better sleep, and improved diet. Wausau Fire also saw an 82% increase in strength in the first three months of the probationary period. Wausau Fire continues to evaluate this program to reduce overall musculoskeletal discomfort among its members.*

*Wausau’s Fire approach to injury management is the best practice. Since its inception, musculoskeletal sprains and strains have decreased in the department. We have seen fewer lost days, and the injury’s severity has decreased. The program is focused on a sports medicine approach to managing the care of injured members. We provide direct access to athletic training, physical therapy, and providers who understand the work of a firefighter.” – **Traci Tauferner, LAT, CSCS, Advanced Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine***

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