



REDLINE

LEADERSHIP L.L.C.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT COACHING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY LEADERS



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Tip o' the Hat!!

This month's "Tip o' the Hat" goes out to Elizabeth Bednarcik for her appointment to Deputy Chief of Prevention for Brighton (CO) Fire Rescue. Elizabeth's trek to this spot began in 2004 with the Cross Plains (TN) Fire Department as a volunteer where she remained until 2010. At the same time, she worked as an Advanced EMT for Robertson County EMS and a Firefighter/EMT with White House (TN) Fire Department. In 2012 she moved on to a Firefighter position with Gallatin (TN) Fire Department where she worked up to the spot of Assistant Chief. 2020 found Chief Bednarcik moving to Brighton where she continues to work in her field of passion; Prevention. If this hasn't been enough, she has also worked as an Instructor at the NFA.

In her spare time, Elizabeth has completed a Bachelor's degree in Design Communication and a Master's in Public Administration. She is a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer program (NFA) and holds her Chief Fire Officer and is Credentials through CPSE as a Chief Fire Officer and Fire Marshall!!! I'm not even going to attempt to list her contributions to the fire service or certifications!

I asked Chief to share some "Words of Wisdom" to which she replied; *After more than twenty years in the fire service, I've come to believe that our impact is defined not only by how we respond to emergencies, but by how we help people prepare for them and build stronger, more resilient lives. Small efforts matter, and what we give to others strengthens the entire community. One truth stands out above all: in the end, what matters most is love. Each day, we have a choice: lead with purpose, prepare well, and choose love.*

Congratulations Chief Bednarcik on your appointment as Deputy Chief! I can't wait to see what the future holds for you!!



"Trailer Park Leadership!!"

One of the assignments in my High Performance Leadership Program is to write a brief paper titled "The Kind of Leader I Want To Be....Or Not To Be!" While it's a little play on words from an ancient philosopher, it is intended to help people work with greater

awareness of what they want to do as a leader and how intentional actions will help them live it out. Many people include in their musings that they want to be the kind of leader that "Never asks someone to do something" they wouldn't do themselves. Additionally, I see a lot of people professing they "want to lead by example." I agree with both of these positions but always offer an ounce of caution in maintaining focus on their leadership role. Please, let me explain my thoughts.

A good bunch of years ago, probably around 1996, we were dispatched to a gasoline leak in a local mobile home park. We loaded up the engine, both of us, and headed out. On arrival, we found a small, skirted, single wide mobile home on a concrete pad with a car parked in front. We parked the engine and approached the scene and immediately smelled gasoline. We removed the occupants from the home and began investigating the source. The parked car had a leak in the fuel tank which allowed fuel to drain onto the concrete, following the slope under the mobile home.

The rear of the car was lifted by a tow truck, stopping the leak by running all the fuel to the front of the tank. We spread what absorbent we carried on the engine, slowing the fuel movement under the trailer, but quickly recognized we didn't have nearly enough. We called the station and found someone to bring us a couple more sacks so we could cover and clean up that which had run under the home. To do so, someone had to crawl under the mobile home through a section of skirting we removed.

Continued P2

"Trailer Park!" (cont.)

Being the smaller of the 2 of us, I quickly volunteered and scampered under, spreading with my hands the absorbent material.

Upon exiting the crawlspace, covered in dust and cobwebs, my partner asked me; "Why did you go under there, you're the officer?" I explained (or justified) my actions by stating, "I'm not going to ask you to do something I am not willing to do." Additionally, I am a "lead by example" kind of person as I hold myself to all the expectations I have for others. He appreciated my actions and values, and that was the end of it. Ok, pause this thought for a minute.

Now fast forward to more recent years, at least since I was promoted to BC in 2012, and I often shared with leaders that they "need to give someone else a chance to be successful," or "your role has changed, be a watcher, task focus and you can't see bigger picture" or "no, you're not first through the door because you can't see your people if they are behind you." I really learned this responding as an Incident Safety Officer while working in the Training Division and had it reinforced responding as a BC. You see so much more when you step back a bit and get a bigger perspective. You see the risks better, the ones we take as well as the ones imposed on us by the incident, you notice things better and you are in a better position to take action to protect our folks. Or maybe you are just in a better position to call for help and communicate instructions to get someone out of trouble. Hmmm.

So, back to the mobile home. Picture me laying in the cramped crawlspace, covered in dust, cobwebs, up close and personal with the "cat waste," the strong odor of gasoline filling my nostrils as I spread absorbent. Imagine those fuel vapors finding an ignition source, engulfing the mobile home and myself in flame. Was I in the best position to call for help, to give instructions to incoming apparatus, should a disaster occur? Sure, my driver was very adept and using the radio, upgrading the incident but he wasn't the "expert" and he wasn't the one the organization assigned to fulfill those responsibilities. It wasn't his job, it was mine. And I was not in the right spot.

Continued next column



EXAMPLE: *noun: a pattern or model, as of something to be imitated or avoided.*

What kind of EXAMPLE are you setting with your actions and behaviors?



"Trailer Park!" (cont.)

So, remember, when your role changes, so do your responsibilities. Yes, your value of "not asking someone else to do something you wouldn't be willing to do" is right but

maybe the time isn't. Maybe you look for a different opportunity such as in the station or at the drill grounds. Maybe you demonstrated your willingness to act earlier in your career and let your reputation carry it forward for you. Today, you must focus on your job/role and make sure you are fulfilling the responsibilities that are assigned to it.

Meltdown!!

My computer had a serious hardware failure last week. Good news....all my files are backed up so I didn't lose anything moved from email to folders. Bad news....I lost all my Outlook contacts and distribution groups. So, I am working to recreate those. In the meantime,

- You may get a newsletter you wished to opt out of. Please let me know.
- You may get a Link of the Week you wished to opt out of. Please let me know.

I appreciate your patience as I navigate this small disaster. I have recognized the gap in my system (Outlook doesn't automatically back up) and am taking steps to prevent recurrence.

