



# THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **November 10, 2023**

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**"You are 100% responsible for your own  
actions."**

—unk

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## The Chief's Desk

(Note: No one proofread this for me this week soooo, it is what it is 😊)

The holiday season is fast approaching! Are you ready? It's hard to believe that Thanksgiving is only a few weeks away. I'd encourage you to start thinking about what you're grateful for this year ahead of Thanksgiving Day. I know this has been a tough year for us as an organization, and for many of you personally. Despite the adversity we've faced whether organizationally or as individuals there is still a lot to be thankful for as we close out 2023. Okay, I know where some of you are going – "I'm thankful this year is over!" Dig deeper...

Staff spent two days this week in a program called Struggle Well. I mentioned this program previously after I attended an offering in Montana. We believe this program can help fill a hole that exists in our mental and behavioral health repertoire.

I think we've done a lot to offer more access to culturally competent counseling services, and programs. The question is, what have we done to prevent a crisis from happening? We won't eradicate mental and behavioral health problems, or relational issues for everyone. I don't believe that's possible. However, we can offer opportunities for folks to put more tools in their toolbox earlier in their career, and then at various stages throughout their career.

We need to start speaking less about how PTS, PTSI, and PTSD are such a problem in the fire service and more about what opportunities exist to help our folks find emotional strength and wellbeing starting day one. We need to understand that struggling is natural and healthy, how you can thrive after struggle, how struggle can lead to growth, as well as reinforce the idea that hope exists. If you consider our organization, with every significant event we've faced we've emerged stronger on the other side.

Since the session this week, senior staff has visited and determined that it is a program we want to introduce within our agency. Each session is five days long and our intent is to have everyone in the organization attend one of the sessions. As you can imagine the logistics of a putting on a program like this and getting everyone through will be a challenge, but we'll figure it out. We have some ideas for some of the initial offerings and will work with training to establish a schedule starting the first part of 2024. The training will take place at a location off-site and will be regional to include our LEO partners as well as other fire service agencies. It may take us two or three years to get everyone through the program.

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### **Upcoming Events:**

Nov 13: Meeting with AZDHS Phoenix, Meeting with Know Your Talents Scottsdale  
Nov 14: Darkhorse Demo, WFCA Conference Meeting, Discussion Fire Station Property, Meet and Greet AC Candidates  
Nov 15: AC Panel Interviews, WFCA Board Meeting, 62 Push In, Meet the Chief Event  
Nov 16: Chiefs Interview for AC,

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### **Board Meeting:**

Board Meeting: Nov 27  
CAFMA – 1700-1830

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## **'We can't find our way out': Audio, details of deadly N.J. cargo ship fire**

By: Ted Sherman

The radio transmissions grew increasingly desperate.

"We have to get a line... We have fire on the 10th floor."

"We got 50-foot flames! We have multiple cars on fire..."

"You're coming in unreadable."

For a time, there was silence. Then the unthinkable:

"We can't find our way out!"

Long seconds ticked by.

Someone finally called out.

"Did you just hear Engine 16's last transmission? Be advised it sounded like he said he cannot find his way back out..."

The chilling mayday call quickly launched a desperate search as firefighters waged a hellish battle deep inside the 692-foot freighter berthed at Port Newark in an effort to find two of their missing men.

It was a battle they never saw coming. And as it turns out, one they were not prepared to fight.

Before the night was over, veteran Newark firefighters Augusto "Augie" Acabou, 45, and Wayne "Bear" Brooks Jr., 49, would be dead after they became entrapped within a burning vessel loaded with 1,200 highly combustible junk cars and trucks bound for West Africa. Their deaths on that warm summer night would raise a host of questions as to what went wrong and whether the department even had a strategy for fighting a ship fire.

[FireRescue1.com](http://FireRescue1.com)

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## Chief's Desk Cont.

Struggle Well is not counseling, it's training. The intent of the program is to effect change within the culture of an organization. These changes are achieved through the adjustments participants make in their own lives after the program. Think about it, when we are more self-aware, when we adopt healthier habits, and when we find balance within our families as well as with our finances the outlook we have on life will likely improve. An improved outlook on life will usually lead to changes in individual behavior which impacts the culture within an organization.

As an organization, we are going through a time of significant change. A lot of folks are retiring, some have resigned, and we're increasing the number of people we have across the organization. If we take a moment to do some quick math, it's very possible we could be hiring up to 25 new firefighters over the next year. Part of the increase is driven by attrition; however, the largest majority are new positions. If we don't get the SAFER Grant, we will be asking the board for eight positions in the next budget cycle. Having a positive outlook - *when* we get our CON we'll be hiring 12 additional personnel. These numbers do not include the additions that will be made in our non-ops divisions.

Ultimately, we believe this is a prime opportunity for us to introduce a program of this caliber into our organization. We are also working to enhance cancer screenings for all employees at whatever the recommended age is for their gender and job category.

I believe we're in a good place regarding our efforts to improve the overall health and safety of our membership. There's no light switch for any of it, and no one size fits all package to address every circumstance. That's why our on-going efforts to seek additional resources and programing is so vitally important.

Remember, it all starts with you. Take care of your family, manage your finances, make good life choices, and make the choice to maintain a positive attitude.

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