

DELTA HOTELS HELENA, MT

OCTOBER 15-17, 2026

Presented jointly by
Montana State Fire Chiefs Association
Montana State Volunteer Firefighters Association
Montana Fire Trustees Association
Montana County Fire Warden's Association



Wednesday, October 14, 2026

Fire Wardens Business Meeting



All sessions are open to everyone. However, we've marked the sessions, with the green star, that may be most relevant for Trustees as a quick reference to help guide your planning.

Thursday, October 15, 2026

7:30am - 5:30pm

Registration Desk Hours [Hotel Lobby]

Capitol/State Room

8:00 - 11:30

Business and Training

11:30 - 1:30

Lunch - tour of the DNRC Hangar

1:30 - 4:00

Lessons Learned and Significant Events

4:00 - 5:00

Update from Brian Fennessy, Chief, United States Wildland Fire Service

Grand Ballroom

1:00 - 5:00

Vendor Set Up

5:00 - 7:00

Social Event with our Vendors and Sponsors

Friday, October 16, 2025

7:00am - 5:00pm

Registration Desk Hours [Hotel Lobby]

7:00 - 7:30

Fun Run - 2 miles [Meet in the hotel lobby]

Capitol/State Room

Opening Remarks



8:00 - 8:45

Legislative Update | Partner Updates | National Fallen Firefighter Foundation Update | Montana Mutual Aid Update | Montana Firefighter Memorial, Jamie Swecker

8:45 - 9:45

Leadership Starts from Within: Emotional Intelligence for Public Safety Leaders

Jenny and Scott Macallair, Higher Wire Leadership Development



9:45 - 10:45

Fire Sprinklers and Firefighters...Partners in Protection!

Shane Ray, President, National Fire Sprinkler Association



10:45 - 11:15

Networking with Vendors and Sponsors

Capitol Room

Creating ISO Geospatial (GIS) Data



Dustin Tetrault, Director, Planning and Strategic Services Division, Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI)

State Room

The Incident that Hope Ran Out On

Adriane Beck, Director, DES Coordinator, Office of Emergency Management, Kyle Sturgill-Simon, Lewis and Clark County Emergency Manager, David Stamey, Director - Emergency Services Stillwater County, Doug Dodge, Jefferson County DES/Fire Warden

11:15 - 12:15

Natatorium

12:15 - 1:15

Lunch (provided)

Capitol/State Room

1:15 - 2:00

Navigating the Legislative Firestorm



Joe Kolman, Government Relations Director for the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association

2:00 - 2:45

Montana Tax Structure



Rep. Llew Jones, House District 18, Conrad

2:45 - 3:15

Networking with Vendors and Sponsors

Capitol Room

National Fallen Firefighter Foundation

Training Opportunities

Chief Matt Hoppel, Billings Fire Department

State Room

County Commissioners Roundtable



Randy Brodehl, Flathead County Commissioner; Bill Barron, Lake County Commissioner; Dan Huls, Ravalli County Commission

3:15 - 4:15

Transition

Capitol/State Room

4:20 - 5:00	Legal Size-Up: Current Issues for Montana’s Fire Service  <i>Catherine "Kate" Dinwiddie, B.A., J.D., Montana Fire Law</i>		
6:00 - 6:30	Social Hour - Montana Historial Society		
6:30 - 10:00	Awards Banquet - Montana Historial Society		
Saturday, October 17, 2026			
7:30am - 5:00pm	Registration Desk Hours [Hotel Lobby]		
8:00 - 8:15	Welcome Back		
	Capitol/State Room		
8:15 - 9:15	Are You Ready? My First Day as a Battalion Chief  <i>Chief Jason Dillingham</i>		
9:15 - 10:15	Communicate Like a Pro: Firehouse Communication Strategies, the 8 rules for Building a culture of excellence  <i>Matthew S. Caward – Division Chief (RET) Founder, RGB Firehouse Leadership</i>		
10:15- 10:45	Networking Break		
10:45- 11:45	Using the Most Effective Resources to Influence Policy at Every Level of Government  <i>Garry Brieze, former Executive Director of the Colorado State Fire Chiefs, Board of Directors, Jackson 105 Fire Protection District</i>		
11:45 - 1:00	Lunch (provided)		
	Lewis Room	Gallery	Clark Room
	Section Meeting - Career	Section Meeting - Combo	Section Meeting - Volunteer
	Governor Room		Trustees 101 
	Capitol Room		State Room
1:00 - 2:00	How to AI Your Way Out of AI: The Robots Aren't Coming... They're Already Here <i>Scott Roseberry, Battalion Chief, Garland Fire Department</i>	Grant Writing, Local, State, National  <i>Jason Caughey, Fire Chief, Laramie County Fire Authority; Lois Olsen, President, Tri-County Firesafe Working Group</i>	
2:00 - 3:00	Where we are now with NERIS? <i>Tom Jenkins, Research Program Manager, Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), UL Research Institutes</i>	Building a Stronger Fire Service: Recruitment and Retention Lessons from the Volunteer Fire Service  <i>Dr. Brittany Hollerbach, Associate Scientist and Deputy Director, Center for Fire, Rescue & EMS Health Research, NDRI-USA</i>	
3:00 - 3:15	Break		
	Capitol/State Room		
3:15 - 4:15	Closing Presentation  <i>Dr. Candace Ashby, President, ELITE Public Safety Consulting, Inc</i>		
4:15 - 5:00	Legal Questions in the Montana Fire Service: Q&A with MFTA Counsel  <i>Catherine " Kate" Dinwiddie, B.A., J.D., Montana Fire Law</i>		
5:00	MFTA Annual Meeting 		