

Here's another blast from the past, courtesy of *Hose & Nozzle* magazine from November 1957. Here's Shermand Pickard, Director of Fire Service Training for the North Carolina Department of Insurance, talking about a statewide program for training volunteer firefighters at the local level. For anyone with ties to the Raleigh Fire Department, that name and face are particularly familiar. Shermand Pickard was appointed as the city's [thirteenth Fire Chief](#) on March 3, 1986.

He had previously served for nineteen years as Director of Services for the North Carolina League of Municipalities. He was a native of Greensboro, and raised in Burlington. He joined the Burlington Fire Department two years after graduating from high school, and was a member from 1949 to 1955. He left the department as Director of Training. He was hired by NCDOI as director of fire and rescue service training. He was also a volunteer fireman in Garner during the 1960s. Click to enlarge:

SHERMAN PICKARD ON

State Fire Training

BY SHERMAN A. PICKARD
Director of Fire Service Training for
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In November 1955 the North Carolina State Department of Insurance, upon request from the North Carolina State Firemen's Association, began to formulate a statewide local level volunteer firemen's training program. To date, November 1957, 1280 firemen, paid and volunteer, representing 140 fire departments in North Carolina, have received the first unit of the training.

The local level training program proved to be quite an undertaking. It became apparent to the beginning that if we were to render a service that would be of value to these municipalities, we first had to make a thorough study in the field of the problems that the volunteers are faced with and exactly what was needed most in a training program. In other words, we felt that before we could help with the problems, we first had to have a thorough understanding of these problems ourselves.

One of our first findings was that the matter of adequate fire equipment was definitely "not a problem." However, the need for more help in utilizing this equipment to its fullest extent stood out like a sore thumb.

It is common logic that the fighting of any fire must start with an efficient fire stream, be it fire or solid. We found a serious need for training in the setting up of good fire streams which must, by necessity, be introduced with pump operation training.

Next we found that many departments needed training concerning how and where to attack confined fires. In other words, the street was the first stand and the smoke was being handled. We found a shocking absence of protective clothing and emergency breathing equipment. The absence of these two items proved to be partially responsible for the street method of attack. Needless to say, a real selling job needed to be done concerning the acquisition and utilization of these necessities in fire fighting.

We found that the highly effective 1½" fog method of control was not being used in the majority of cases. Many rural departments were using only handlines as the initial attack line and had not given any consideration to 1½" fog lines. It seemed to be general opinion that the larger lines used water too fast and consequently tankless water would be exhausted before the fire was extinguished. It further seemed to be general opinion that the use of "A" booster lines equipped

with high pressure guns for the purpose of saving water, being supplied by a few pressure mains between single stage front mount with 1 to 1 ratio between pump and engine was the scheme in an attack line. This action resulted in the firemen being able to keep the fire going for quite a long while before the building finally burned down. The need for training in this area was apparent.

We found that the courtesy of the all-important public relations interview work were being totally ignored.

We were to learn that most often the chief was in selected either because he required the separate line of charge or because he happened to live next door to the fire house. We do not mean to say that a person so selected would not be a good chief. However, these qualifications alone are hardly enough for a position of such tremendous responsibility. Thus the need for better training, both administrative and fire fighting, was apparent. There are only a few of the existing conditions that pointed out the tremendous need for local level training.

Armed with some definite answers as to what was needed in a training program, we next tackled the task of trying to determine what should be taught first and how many hours would be devoted to the first unit of the program. After trying several approaches in different schools, we found that during the first week, even until the end of the first night, the time could best be utilized in teaching the use of protective clothing, emergency breathing equipment, fog and its proper application, and complete fireground procedures relating to house fires. Where at all possible a structure of some type is burned for the purpose of putting into practice the classroom teachings. The chiefs attending are assigned as a post-command team and on Friday night the three taught on Thursday night are



Sherman Pickard

thoroughly discussed by the team, with the instructor acting as moderator. It is our opinion that the basic principles of fire fighting relating to the simple house fire can be made to fit any building, provided these principles are thoroughly understood.

It has proved us that after the first week of this type training the departments show marked improvements in their fire fighting methods. Also they are aware of the changes, if any, that are necessary to be made in their equipment setup in order to utilize it to the best advantage. The second unit of the program is comprised of fifteen additional hours devoted to the subjects that were covered from the high spots in unit one are gone into in detail, thus giving complete exposure to the subjects as necessary. Also new subjects on the firemanship level

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