



Fraternal Order of Police

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President's Message:

Pathways To Success - Local Lodge Leadership

By Chet Effler – State President

I was truly honored to be asked to teach at the recent Pathways to Success Conference in Las Vegas, hosted by the National Fraternal Order of Police. Opportunities like this are more than just professional milestones. They are reminders of the responsibility we carry to develop, mentor, and strengthen the leadership within our organization at every level.

Among the courses I had the privilege to teach, one session stood out as especially important: Local Lodge Leadership. It is a topic that goes to the very core of who we are as the Fraternal Order of Police and how we ensure the long-term success of our lodges across North Carolina and beyond.

I approached this session by going back to the foundation, the Ritual Book. In a time where organizations can easily drift from their original purpose, it is critical that we remain grounded in who we are and why we exist.

The FOP is not just a name or a structure. It is a mission driven organization built on service, unity, and the protection of those who serve.



(Continued on next page)

Inside This Issue

President's Message
1

Chaplain's Corner
3

Counsel's Corner
Testifying in Court
4

National Lodge Update
6

Local Lodges Peace Officer
Memorial Service
8

1st Annual Officer Ride Down
9

Retirees Did You Know?
10

Why Representing Your Lodge
Is Important
11

Leadership Transition Looms
in NC Senate
13

NC Peace Officers
Memorial Service
14

Keeping Up With Time
Amending Constitution & By-Laws
15

Using Formsite To Improve
Your Membership
16

Trivia
17

Re-Elect James Shores
Vice President
18

Elect Greg Brown
Vice President
19

Re-Elect Christopher "Chris" Schenk
2nd Vice President
20

Elect Greta Philbeck
Sergeant at Arms
22

The Voice of Law Enforcement

President's Message:

Pathways To Success - Local Lodge Leadership (Continued)

One of the central themes I shared is this: Strong lodges don't happen by accident. They are built by leaders who understand responsibility, accountability, and the weight of influence.

Leadership within a local lodge is not about position! It is about purpose! It requires discipline in communication, clarity in decision-making, and the ability to maintain unity even when challenges arise. Crisis will come, whether internal or external, and when it does, leadership is tested not by words, but by actions.

We discussed how professionalism, restraint, and presence set the tone for the entire lodge. The way leaders carry themselves, both publicly and internally, directly impacts credibility within the community and confidence within the membership. Decorum is not optional; it is essential.

A key focus of the course was governance. Strong lodges are built on strong structure. That means clearly defining the roles of the President, Executive Board, and Board of Directors. It means preventing internal conflict through clarity and communication. It means fostering shared accountability rather than isolated authority.

Perhaps one of the most important lessons emphasized was this: Leadership is not ownership. Our lodges do not belong to any one individual or group. They belong to the membership.

As leaders, we are stewards, not owners. That requires servant leadership, intentional succession planning, and a long-term vision that extends beyond our time in office.

We also addressed the very real consequences of displayed leadership. Every decision, every action, and every public statement carries weight. Leadership behavior impacts morale, reputation, legal exposure, and the overall stability of the lodge. The standard we set becomes the standard that is followed.

The goal of this training and what I hope to continue reinforcing across North Carolina is simple: Equip our leaders with practical tools, sound governance strategies, and a renewed commitment to lead in a way that protects the mission, serves the membership, and strengthens the future of our organization.

I also want to take a moment to personally thank those from North Carolina who attended the conference in Las Vegas. Your willingness to invest time in learning, training, and professional growth speaks volumes about your commitment to your lodges and to this state. What you bring back includes ideas, energy, and renewed purpose and that will make our State Lodge and our local lodges stronger.

We are only as strong as the leaders we develop and the standards we uphold.

Let's continue to build lodges that are disciplined, united, and mission focused lodges that will stand the test of time and serve generations to come.



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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

By Phil Wiggins

In the Bible it says, *“It is God himself who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus; and long ages ago he planned that we should spend these lives in helping others.”* (Ephesians 2:10 TLB)



On April 14, 2026, I was taking part in the 41st Annual Peace Officers' Memorial Ceremony at Lawndale Baptist Church in Greensboro, N.C. While sitting on the stage and looking out at the family survivors of line of duty deaths, I could not help but be filled with tears and emotions of joy, because of the number of law enforcement departments represented to offer support. I am sure many officers and friends attending this service had the same feelings of being present to show their love to family and friends of men and women that had made the ultimate sacrifice. I believe each of us were fulfilling Gods direction in using our lives in helping others, which should give us joy in bringing comfort and strength to the families of the officers that were honored.

God designed you and me to make a difference with our lives. The Bible also tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:31, *“Wether, therefore you eat or drink, whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”* We were not just made to do our own thing, take up space, eat, and breathe, but God wants our lives to be productive by giving back, and helping our fellow man. When we are serving others, the Bible tells us we are serving God. In Colossians 3:23-24 it says, *“and whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as the Lord, and not into men; knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ.”*

Chaplain Phil Wiggins
NC State Lodge Chaplain



Counsel's Corner

Testifying in Court

By George V. Laughrun, II – NC State Lodge Counsel

I have had the privilege of trying cases in District Court, Superior Court, Administrative hearings, and Federal Court with officers having to testify every day.

I believe many times officers don't take testifying seriously, and many times that causes a Judge or jury to not want to believe their testimony or follow their testimony to reach a just verdict or decision.

I would like to share a few points I believe are important for credibility and believability of officers. First, dress appropriately. I have witnessed officers show up for court on their day off in blue jeans and sweatshirts, obviously this sends the wrong message to a Judge and especially if the matter is before a jury. When possible, always wear your uniform. If possible and you have it available, wear a Class A uniform with a tie, as this shows respect for the Court and the jury. If you are faced with an administrative or certification hearing where officers are often not allowed to wear their uniform, wear a coat and tie to show that you respect the authority of the panel and the process. My father, who was a schoolteacher, always taught me every week, “shine your shoes before you go to court, it will look like you respect the whole process from the toe to the head.”

Next, when taking your oath, make sure to stand tall with your left hand on the bible, raising your right and face either the clerk, Judge, or magistrate that will swear you in, speaking with a firm and audible voice. Keep in mind, the Judge and/or jury will judge your credibility and believability by the way you present yourself.

On a side note, officers are often times waiting in court for their cases to be called, and sometimes it looks like a “cocktail party” when officers are joking around or talking with their fellow officers and attorneys. All these actions are observed by Judges and juries.

Following your oath, you will be asked questions. When giving answers, be prepared to give concise and truthful answers. There is nothing wrong with saying you do not recall or remember if you are not 100% sure of your response. I have seen many officers hedge their bets and not be truthful in court; this is a kiss of death as once you have crossed that line with a District Attorney, Judge, or defense lawyer, they will know that you are not truthful. Being truthful is an officer's best weapon. No case is worth hedging the truth as your credibility and believability are always on trial and this could follow you through your career as you face some of these same Judges, District Attorneys, etc. With this being said, if you are unsure of a question being asked of you by the District Attorney or lawyer, do not be afraid to ask them to clarify the question or to repeat the question. This is also a good way to get a few more seconds to gather your thoughts before giving your answer.

If possible, take the time to review your notes and/or body camera footage before court if you know your case is going to trial. If you are not sure of an answer, you can always ask the District Attorney or defense attorney if you can use your notes to refresh your recollection, but I would recommend refraining from reading directly from your notes as they are not admissible, they are only there to refresh your memory. If you do need time to review, you would want to ask the Court if you can have a moment to review and then look up ready to answer the question. You also have a right to explain your answer. It is not like what we see on TV when a lawyer asks yes or no questions, you have a right to explain the answer you give. Stating, “I don't know”, “I don't



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Counsel's Corner

Testifying in Court (Continued)

remember”, or “I don't recall”, does not mean that you forgot the facts. No one can answer every question, every time, from a prosecutor, defense lawyer, or judicial official.

When presenting yourself in court, be sincere and dignified. One of the goals of a defense lawyer is to rattle an officer on the witness stand and once an officer loses their composure, it is hard to get it back during cross or direct examination. At the same time, it is important to remain respectful of defense lawyers. I am not saying you should put up with argumentative questions or questions designed to embarrass you, but always keep your cool and demeanor so that the Judge and jury will see that you do respect the process. Like it or not, Judges and juries hold officers to a higher standard. Please refrain from becoming arrogant, flippant, impatient or excited. The worse it gets, the greater the opportunity for you to rise above and impress the Judge and jury with your character, integrity, dignity, and your knowledge of your testimony.

Manners go a long way. Speak clearly, audibly and answer “yes/no, sir/ma'am” to prosecutors and defense counsel. Specifically, when speaking to a Judge, always use “Your Honor”. Again, this goes along with your demeanor and how you present yourself to the triers of fact. Speaking clearly is just as important as remembering who your audience is. Using police jargon can be confusing to jurors. The public is not used to police radio traffic codes (i.e. you responded to a 10-50), just use the words “I responded to an accident”.

I always tell witnesses to look at the Judge or jury when testifying, that is your audience. If you are in Superior Court, make sure you look at each juror in the eye when you are giving your answer or explaining your testimony.

In my many years of being in courtrooms I cannot fathom how hard it would be for an officer who works a 12-hour shift, getting off at 6 a.m. and then has 9 a.m. court without having any sleep or food. It is always important to notify the District Attorney if you have worked a night shift so that they can try to get your case moved along to get your out of court without waiting until the end of the docket.

Lastly, if a defense lawyer approaches you before court to speak with you or ask to see your notes, always be willing to speak with them regardless of your opinion of them. If you do not cooperate with them, it is likely that one of the very first questions they ask you on the stand is, “Officer, you would not meet with me or show me your notes, would you?”. Again, this can be judged by the Court and jurors as if you are trying to hide something or are uncooperative.

As always, stay safe.



National Lodge Update

By Dennis McCrary – NC National Trustee

Many of you attended the State Board of Directors meeting in Carolina Beach so you received the most up-to-date information that was available from the National Lodge. There has not been another online National Board of Directors meeting as the Board will meet in Anaheim, California on April 23-26. I will provide a very detailed report for the next BlueNote after we return from the National Board Meeting. Most of our members were not at the Carolina Beach meeting so I will cover some issues the National is addressing that I presented at that meeting.



The Western States Association has requested that we have a joint meeting with them and the Southern States Association next year. North Carolina State President Effler is chairman of the Southern States Association this year, so the meeting will be held in North Carolina. Our Association extended an invitation to Western States Association to join us next year in North Carolina when we hold our meeting. It has not been determined at this time exactly where the meeting will be held but a decision will be made soon.

Past National President John Dineen passed away in March 2026. President Effler was unable to attend so he asked me to represent North Carolina FOP at the wake and funeral in Chicago. The services were well attended, and the Chicago FOP was very appreciative of our presence.

I know members may get tired of me suggesting they take advantage of the Amazon Business Program that is offered to the FOP. The National FOP has received over \$130,000 so far from Amazon and that amount can continue to grow up to one million dollars. This offer for Prime is free to FOP members but does not include music or movies. Those that already have a Prime account must use a different email address to sign up for our version. FOP members often receive a more discounted price from regular Prime prices, and the FOP receives a small percentage. This is a savings for the member and income for your National Lodge. We only have five thousand members participating so far but stand to make big money if more sign up. This is definitely a win-win for the FOP so please go to FOP.NET under Member Benefits to sign up.

All lodges should be making plans now to attend the National Memorial Service in Washington, DC on May 15. This is a moving event that pays honor to those officers who lost their lives and to the families that are having to cope. Your attendance matters to the survivors and if you have never been, it will be a moving experience.

The North Carolina FOP along with the NC Attorney General's Office held our Peace Officers Memorial Service in Greensboro on April 14. The service was exceptional and we heard nothing but compliments after it was over. Some of the best came from our Attorney General who said, "I think it went exceptionally well and your partnership was the biggest reason... Your team was fantastic and I think it made an enormous difference to these families."

Our NC State Biennial Conference will be held at Carolina Beach in August of this year. I will be running for reelection as your National Trustee at that time. I do believe I have represented you in a professional manner and I take immense pride in how North Carolina FOP is respected on the National level. There are many NC FOP members serving on National Committees and I have served as chairman of the National Disaster Relief Committee for years. I ask that you support me, and I promise to continue to promote North Carolina as one of the premier FOPs in the country.

Please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you or your lodge.

BlueNote Information and Submission Dates for 2026

Executive Editor – Terry Mangum

Welcome to the May/June issue of the BlueNote. There are some very interesting and informative articles in this issue. Also, be sure to check the page listing the Peace Officers Memorial Service being hosted by our Local Lodges. Support and attend one of these services in your area.

I again asked the State Lodge Trustees at our Spring Board of Directors meeting In April, as FOP leaders of the local lodges to help us out by submitting articles on their lodge activities. We need to hear from more members and more Lodges. You do not have to be a Local Lodge or State Lodge officer to contribute articles or photos. So, I encourage all of our readers to submit articles to your BlueNote publication. Contributions are what make each issue of the BlueNote possible, because without submitted articles and photographs, there would be no publication.

Submitting an article is a simple and painless process. Just e-mail your article or information to my e-mail address terrymangum@frontier.com by the due date and I will prepare your article for publication. That is so easy! You can also submit photographs without an article. But if you do, please select a few of the best photos and include the names of the individuals in the picture and the event.

And remember to share the BlueNote with non-FOP law enforcement, family, and friends.

Below are the remaining Article Submission Due Dates for the 2026 issues of the BlueNote. Clip these Dates and Post in a visible location for future reference!

Article Submission Due Date for 2026:

July/August issue: Due by June 19, 2026

September/October issue: Due by August 21, 2026

November/December issue: Due by October 16, 2026

As always, I am here to serve you and our membership. If I may be of assistance to you, or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.



FOP Local Lodges Peace Officers Memorial Service

MONROE-UNION COUNTY LODGE 19

On Tuesday, May 12th, the Union County Sheriff's Office will conduct the Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony, beginning at 12:45 p.m. The service will be held in the Courtyard at the Union County Judicial Center.

This service is open to the public and you are asked to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the service. For GPS directions, the service location is 400 North Main Street, Monroe, North Carolina 28112.

CATAWBA COUNTY LODGE 26

On Friday, May 15th, Catawba County FOP Lodge 26 will conduct their annual Peace Officers Memorial Service, beginning at 1:00 p.m. The service will be held at their Catawba County Peace Officers Memorial which is located at the Catawba Memorial Park Cemetery in Hickory. This service takes place each year during National Police Week to honor officers killed in the line of duty.

This service is open to the public. For GPS directions, the service location is 3060 Hwy 70 S.E., Hickory, North Carolina 28602.

WNC MACON-JACKSON COUNTY LODGE 81

WNC MACON-JACKSON COUNTY FOP LODGE 81 will conduct their Annual Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial Service on Friday, May 15, 2026, at NOON. The service will take place at the Gazebo on Town Square, across from the Macon County Courthouse in Franklin (Macon County), North Carolina. All are invited to come and join with us as we remember our fallen North Carolina officers from 2025.



1st Annual Officer Down Ride

By: Randy Hagler – Immediate Past President

On Saturday, May 30th, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Fraternal Order of Police and the Blue Knights NC III will be hosting the first annual “Officer Down Ride” to honor the four officers who were murdered in Charlotte on April 29, 2024. The ride will begin at the Hendrick Center, 6030 E. Independence Boulevard (directly across Independence Blvd. from CMPD Independence Division Office). Online registration is encouraged but is not required. The first 125 to register (online included) will receive a challenge coin memorializing the ride. Registration opens at 0900 and kickstands up at 1100. Our CMPD escorted ride will be approximately 55 miles and will return to the Hendrick Center at approximately 1230. Lunch will be provided at the conclusion of the ride.



A vertical poster for the 1st Annual Officer Down Ride. The background features a stylized American flag with stars and stripes. The text is centered and reads: "1ST ANNUAL OFFICER DOWN RIDE Police Escorted Ride HONORING THE FALLEN Joshua Eyer Samuel Poloche Thomas Weeks William Elliott SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2026". Below this, it says "Please join members of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Fraternal Order of Police and the Blue Knights NC as we ride to remember the four officers killed in the line of duty on April 29, 2024, in Charlotte, NC." A list of bullet points includes: "\$30 PER BIKE", "Commemorative challenge coin for first 125 to register", and "Lunch at the end of the ride". To the right of the list are two circular challenge coins. Below the list, it says "Starting at: 6030 E. Indp. Blvd. - Hendrick Independence Center". Another list of bullet points includes: "Approximately 55-mile ride through Mecklenburg, Union, Stanley, and Cabarrus Counties", "Registration Begins at 9:00 am", "Kickstands Up: 11:00 am", and "Ride Returns at Approximately 12:30". At the bottom left is a QR code with the text "Scan me!" below it. The bottom of the poster shows a group of motorcycles riding on a road at night.

In the early afternoon of April 29, 2024, a U.S. Marshals Fugitive Task Force, which included CMPD, U.S. Marshals, and NC Department of Adult Corrections, was attempting to serve felony warrants on a subject from Lincoln County. As officers approached the residence, the suspect opened fire from inside the residence striking multiple officers. Four officers (Joshua Eyer – CMPD, Thomas Weeks – U.S. Marshal Service, and

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1st Annual Officer Down Ride (Continued)

William Elliott and Samuel Poloche – NC Department of Adult Corrections) were killed and eight other officers were wounded before the shooting ended. Thankfully, the shooter was also killed during the shootout. This ambush style attack on these officers is recognized as the deadliest day in law enforcement history in Charlotte.

As we ride to remember these officers and all other LEO's who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line duty, allow me to include a quote by the President of North Carolina Fraternal Order of Police, Chet Effler – “As the North Carolina Fraternal Order of Police, we stand united with our state and local partners, as well as the families of the fallen, to ensure their legacy is never forgotten. We also call on our communities to stand with us, not just in remembrance, but in continued support of those who wear the badge today. Their service matters, their sacrifice matters, and their memory must endure.”

Please check the link on the flier above and if you are a rider join us as we “Ride to Remember” these four brave law enforcement officers and the others who were wounded. All monies raised will all go directly into the Charlotte Mecklenburg FOP Foundation account so we may continue to support the families of these four officers and other law enforcement officers and their families that may be in a similar circumstance. If you do not ride or are unable to make this event, please consider making a donation to the FOP Lodge #9 Foundation. You can use the QR code on the flier to either register for the ride or to make a donation to the Foundation which is classified as a 501(c) (3) for tax purposes. As previously mentioned, all monies donated to the Foundation go to the Foundation and eventually to officers or their families that need assistance.

We hope to see you on May 30th!

Retirees – Did You Know?

By Martin “Marty” Wilson – Retirement Committee Chair

I sat in on an RGEA webinar on April 15, 2026, that had asked the question, “When will we get a COLA.” There are a few variables that need to happen, to include that the investments through North Carolina Treasurer Bradford Briner continue to make gains. Investments need to gain annually 6.5%, and in 2022 the investments did a nosedive at 10%. The investments have been making a recovery and since the new Treasurer took office the investments made 13% in 2025.

During the webinar, the Treasurer said that even with the crisis in the Middle East the investments are still making gains. The Treasurer, along with the LGERS and TSERS Board of Trustees, take advice and look at projections from the State Retirement Systems Staff as to the gains made over a five-year period and they will be looking at this in 2027. As I stated before, THERE are many variables that go into determining when a COLA is given, and this is just one of them. The NC State Treasurer is making advancement toward getting the RETIREES a COLA, and he also must make sure the Money will be there in the future to continue to cover the cost.



Martin Wilson
Retirement Committee Chair
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Why Representing Your Lodge Is Important

By Greg Brown – State Sergeant at Arms

Over the years, I have had the pleasure of attending many Board Meetings and State Conferences. Through those years, I have seen many times where a lodge did not send their State Trustee or a representative to fill in for the State Trustee.

It is very important that you send someone, not only to bring back valuable and important information to your lodge and members but also to make contacts and fellowship with your brothers and sisters. It does not cost you or your lodge anything to send someone.

The NC Fraternal Order of Police needs your help and involvement to continue to build upon the efforts of our past and current lodge officers and members to assist us in taking the NC FOP State lodge, local lodges and the growing membership through the next few years and beyond.

What the NC FOP needs is a dedicated group of members that recognize the worth of this organization and can dedicate the time to make the necessary decisions and changes it needs to keep our vision open for our current membership.

Each of us willingly joined this organization that our predecessors put their heart and souls into. We joined because of what they created, nurtured and promoted and it was something that appealed to us. Whether it was for legal aid coverage, a connection to your community, or the social connection to our fellow brothers and sisters, there was something that being a member offered. There was something we each needed and had fulfilled when we joined the NC FOP.

The NC FOP needs your help to fulfill your duty to our State Lodge and local lodge, our past members, our current members and all those amazing people in law enforcement that will be joining the NC FOP in the years to come. We have the opportunity to do something great as a member of the NC FOP. It takes work and it takes time, but if our members step up and do their best, we will have fulfilled our duty as a NC FOP member.

It is imperative that we answer and follow up with all member interest forms that are emailed to us either from the National or State Lodge in a timely manner. I can attest that many of you are doing so with little to no response from the person that sent in the form. I thank you for doing your part to try and get new members in your lodge from these interest contacts.

New members are the lifeblood of every organization. They bring new ideas, increase the organization's person power, foster organizational growth, prevent member burn out, and take over leadership roles when members leave.

People join organizations for many reasons. They want to get involved, to meet people and make new friends, to develop skills, and to just have fun. The Fraternal Order of Police needs new members because they bring new ideas and talents. They also replace old members and officers as they age out. It is vital that an organization has a well-conceived and executed recruitment and retention plan.

Recruitment and Retention is the responsibility of every member of the organization. The Fraternal Order of Police is a ground up organization. Every member must be involved in the planning and implementation of a recruitment and retention campaign. The NC FOP has created a Membership and Recruitment Committee to help oversee the implementation of recruitment campaigns and maintaining memberships.

The following suggestions will help make your local lodge recruitment efforts more successful. It is important that both the local leadership and members know what the FOP goals and objectives are.

(Continued on next page)



Why Representing Your Lodge Is Important (Continued)

Set Recruitment Goals

- Remember what made you get involved.
- Probably the most important step in designing a recruitment strategy is for you to think back to when you first became involved.
- What attracted you?
- How were you recruited?
- If you weren't, how did you hear about the group?
- Why have you stayed involved?

Get Everyone Involved

Have your current members identify law enforcement officers they know who might want to get involved. Personally invite them to attend a meeting. Word-of-mouth is the best and least expensive type of publicity you can use.

- Talk about the FOP.
- Tell people what the FOP has to offer them.
- Ask them about themselves and really listen.
- Sell the FOP and the benefits of membership.
- Tell them how the FOP can benefit someone like them.
- Personalize the message to each potential new member.
- Let them know how their talents, skills, and interests would help the organization.

Design an Advertising Campaign Using Visual Elements

Recruitment campaigns need to have a visual element as well. Have those members with artistic talents work on your posters, flyers, banners, bulletin boards, etc. Be creative.

Hold an Orientation for New Members

Teach them about the Fraternal Order of Police and what we do as an organization. Although involvement is crucial to the longevity of the group, understanding the organization and its goals, structure, and objectives. By taking the time to orient new members to the privileges and responsibilities of membership, you create a more educated membership.

Recruitment Tips

- Remember that a personal contact is always better than 1000 flyers and newspapers advertisements. People join organizations because they like the people they find there. Nothing can replace the simple act of getting to know someone and asking them to join the organization.
- Sponsor events so that the Fraternal Order of Police name gets out there more. Be sure to have information about the Fraternal Order of Police at each event.
- Feed potential members.
- When someone has expressed an interest in joining the Fraternal Order of Police get them involved and give them a meaningful task to do.
- Go out of your way to make new members or potential members feel like “players” right away.
- Make a list of all of the advantages of being a member of the Fraternal Order of Police.
- Always take photos at meetings and events, then put together a scrapbook for prospective members to see.
- Create a display that you can set up.
- Have an informational meeting.
- Print up business cards for your members to carry.

Represent your local lodge members at the state and national levels, do the necessary work, and make the important decisions to keep the NC Fraternal Order of Police growing for the next generations of members.

Leadership Transition Looms in North Carolina Senate

By Wayne King – State Lodge Legislative Agent

A major shift is underway in North Carolina politics following the unexpected primary defeat of longtime Senate leader Phil Berger, setting the stage for a consequential leadership transition within the General Assembly.

For more than a decade, Berger served as president pro tempore of the North Carolina Senate, guiding Republican priorities and playing a central role in shaping legislative outcomes. His tenure, which began in 2011, marked a period of unusual stability in Senate leadership – one that political observers say has made the position among the most powerful in state government.

With Berger's departure from leadership now imminent, attention has turned to who will succeed him and how that individual may influence the future direction of state policy.



Why the Role Matters

The Senate president pro tempore holds significant authority within North Carolina's legislative structure. The role includes assigning committee positions, appointing members to boards and commissions, and overseeing key staffing decisions – tools that collectively shape the legislative agenda and policy outcomes.

Because of this concentration of power, the selection of the next Senate leader will have far-reaching implications not only for legislative priorities, but also for the balance of influence within state government.

Emerging Contenders

Several Republican senators have already begun positioning themselves as potential successors, though most have been careful to express deference to Berger while he remains in office.

Among the early names discussed:

- **Sen. Ralph Hise** – Currently serving as deputy president pro tempore, Hise has publicly indicated his intention to seek the role and is viewed as a strong contender with established relationships across the caucus.
- **Sen. Amy Galey** – A member of the Senate leadership team, Galey could represent continuity and would make history as the first woman to hold the position.
- **Sen. Brent Jackson** – A veteran legislator with deep institutional knowledge, also considered part of the potential leadership conversation.

Additional reporting suggests other influential figures within the caucus may also emerge as serious contenders as discussions continue.

Timing and Political Dynamics

The timeline for selecting a new leader remains uncertain. Lawmakers could move to elect a successor later in the 2026 legislative session or wait until the next term begins in January 2027.

In the meantime, potential candidates face a delicate political balance – demonstrating leadership vision while avoiding direct contrast with Berger's tenure. Observers note that any successor will need to differentiate themselves in meaningful ways while maintaining unity within the Republican caucus.

What Comes Next

While it remains unclear whether the next Senate leader will wield the same level of influence as Berger or his predecessor, Marc Basnight, the role will continue to play a pivotal part in shaping North Carolina's policy landscape.

As the General Assembly navigates this transition, the selection of a new president pro tempore will be one of the most important political developments to watch – one that could define the direction of state government for years to come.

North Carolina Peace Officers Memorial Service

By Greg Brown – State Sergeant at Arms

On Tuesday April 14, 2026, members of law enforcement from across North Carolina gathered to honor and remember four local law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty.

Officer Adrian Dorsey Newton
EOW: 07/18/1936
Wilmington Police Department

Officer Mark D. Laskowski
EOW : 03/02/2022
Albert J. Ellis Airport Police Department

Détention Officier Francisco Paul Flattes
EOW : 06/30/2025
Cherokee County Sheriff's Office

Officer Roger Smith
EOW: 11/08/2025
WakeMed Campus Police & Pulice Safety Department



Chief Estella Patterson of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department was the keynote speaker. Chief Patterson said “law enforcement is an extremely hard profession on families and please know that their sacrifices are not lost on us. Law enforcement is a calling of great sacrifice and responsibility. We devote our lives to duty and we know what it means to grieve those who never return home after their shift.” She went on to say, “We stand proudly with you the families here today, your loved one is never forgotten, and his or her service is never questioned or disputed. Instead, we will make sure we will recognize their faithful service and amplify their contributions.”

Governor Josh Stein also attended the ceremony. He stated, “We ask law enforcement officers to run toward danger when the rest of us might flee, and today we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice to keep us safe. We owe them a debt that we can never adequately repay, so the least we can do is to offer our praise and our gratitude to their families – and to value the profession like it deserves.”

While we gathered to honor and celebrate each life that was tragically lost, we must not forget that these men and women chose to be on the front lines. They wanted the responsibility of protecting others and they sought the opportunity to make the world a better place by taking action, not by wishing it so. They did not exist in the margins. They put themselves on the front lines to keep criminals, violence, and threats out of our neighborhoods and away from our children, and to make our communities safe.

These services are a gathering of love for family members. It is something that has more impact coming together in a large group. People get into police work to help others and make change; they stay in because of a dedication to the community. They defend the community with their lives, and for that people cannot express enough thanks.

(Continued on next page)

North Carolina Peace Officers Memorial Service (Continued)

Our lives must honor them through a commitment to law enforcement, to assure that their sacrifice was not in vain. They will remain in our hearts forever

President George W. Bush said it best, during a National Peace Officers Memorial Service, “It takes a special kind of person to serve in law enforcement. Most people run from danger law enforcement runs toward it. You've chosen one of the toughest jobs in the world. And I suspect during times of dangerous duty or lonely patrols, it might seem like the only person you can depend upon is each other. Days like today I hope not only helps our families, but helps those who serve remember that a larger community here in this country stands with you, that we're grateful for your service.”

Program participants and organizations that supported this year's ceremony were Lawndale Baptist Church, North Carolina Troopers Association Caisson Unit, Greensboro Police Department, Attorney General Jeff Jackson, North Carolina Justice Academy, North Carolina Fraternal Order of Police, North Carolina C.O.P.S., North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Rifle Team, North Carolina Law Enforcement Choir, North Carolina Law Enforcement Women's Association, Greensboro Fire Department, High Point Police Department, Wilmington Police Department, North Carolina Sheriff's Association, and North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police.

Keeping up with the Time – Amending your Constitution and By-Laws

By Kevin Hornaday – Chairman Constitution and By-laws Committee

During conference years, more than others, we see an increased interest in updates to the Constitution and Bylaws, both for the State Lodge, as well as local lodges.

Updates should be considered anytime to meet the needs of our membership and to better define our mission and values. Additionally, updates to the Local Lodge Constitution and By-laws should be made to incorporate any amendments passed by the delegates at the National Lodge and State Lodge Conferences which apply to local lodges or their membership.



How to get started

Amending the Constitution and By-laws is not that difficult. The difficulty comes in whatever the content may be; difficult or controversial topics may bring more discussion among the membership and that is highly encouraged. Healthy debate makes us stronger as an organization.

The Process

At one time, you may have seen amendments that had fancy language such as “whereas”, and other words that really don't have a purpose. We no longer use that type of amendment. Instead, you would start by introducing the amendment, state the section you are intending to change with Currently Reads, and below it, state, “To read” with the amended language. Using underlines and strikethroughs help illustrate the desired change and eliminate questions.

As always, if you have any questions about amending your Constitution and By-laws, reach out to your C&BL representative or me.

Using Formsite To Improve Your Membership

By Trey Warner – State Trustee Lodge 100

The Old North State Lodge 100 has successfully used Formsite in conjunction with PayPal for over a year. Applicants simply scan a QR code that takes them directly to our FOP application. After entering their information, they are automatically redirected to PayPal to set up a monthly draft. Once an application is completed, President Effler, Treasurer Jones, and I receive an immediate notification.



Today's new generation of law enforcement officers is fully immersed in technology. This digital shift presents challenges in recruiting, but Formsite helps us overcome them. Lodges can purchase Formsite and customize the information they want to collect. Beyond membership applications, it can be used to create surveys, forms, spreadsheets, and databases using standard Microsoft Office formats. It is an excellent recruiting tool that allows lodges to sign up new members on the spot.

As many of you know, I announced my candidacy for **Chairman of the Trustees** during our Spring State Lodge Board of Directors meeting in April. This election will take place in August during the Biennial Conference. I am honored to have the endorsement of our outgoing Chairman, John Byrd, and I am truly grateful for the support and encouragement many of you have shared. I have taken time to carefully review the FOP Ritual and the Constitution and By-Laws relating to the duties and responsibilities of the Chairman of the Trustees.

On April 14th, I attended the 41st North Carolina Peace Officers Memorial Service in Greensboro, where four brave officers were honored for making the ultimate sacrifice. I encourage each of you to attend next year's ceremony if you are able—it is a moving tribute to our profession. In May, I will be volunteering at Police Week in Washington, D.C., assisting with registration and supporting the memorial event. I look forward to seeing many of you at our State Lodge Biennial Conference in August.



TRIVIA

WINNER, WINNER, CHICKEN DINNER!!!

We have a **Returning WINNER** of the 2026 March/April issue of our Trivia contest. Champion TRIVIA player **Byron Highland**, State Trustee of Pitt-Greenville Lodge 69, is the **Grand Prize Winner** of the BlueNote TRIVIA contest. **Byron** was the first to correctly identify Dennis McCrary, Greta Philbeck, Randy Hagler, Dean Vernon, Mary Jane Mangum and Terry Mangum as the six (6) individuals in the Trivia photograph. There were a few other correct answers received but **Byron, a past TRIVIA Winner**, was a speedster and the quickest to respond

If you have not won a TRIVIA contest, do not give up. Give it a try!!! To play, just submit your answers and maybe you too can be a BlueNote TRIVIA Grand Prize Winner like **Byron Highland**.

Remember, you should send in your responses as quickly as possible, since the TRIVIA guesses usually come in with lightning speed. I hope to see your name listed as the BlueNote TRIVIA Grand Prize Winner in the next issue. .

LET'S PLAY TRIVIA AND LET THE FUN TIME BEGIN!!! DRUMROLL!!! TRUMPET FANFARE!!!



It is once again **TRIVIA TIME** and **TIME** for everyone to **Play TRIVIA**.

You now have a great opportunity to participate in the most entertaining and exciting feature of the BlueNote, **TRIVIA**.

I hope everyone reading this issue of the BlueNote will play!!!

Now, put on your thinking caps. Think hard! Can you identify the **four (4)** individuals serving at the table in this photograph?

If you can identify these individuals, just send an email to terrymangum@frontier.com with your answer along with your name and the number of your Lodge.

Remember to send me your answer as quickly as you can.

The correct **TRIVIA** answer will be posted in the **July/August 2026** issue of the BlueNote along with the name of the **first** individual submitting the correct answer. Good Luck!!!

REELECT James Shores Vice President



Brothers and Sisters,

I am seeking reelection as Vice President of the State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police, continuing a commitment that began in 2004 with Lodge 79. During my time there, I served as Sergeant-at-Arms, Second Vice President, and later as Vice President, gaining valuable leadership experience at the local level.

In 2013, I was approached to establish Lodge 97 in Davidson County. I am proud to have built that lodge from the ground up, serving as its President and helping it grow into a strong and active organization supporting our law enforcement community.

I was elected as Second Vice President of the State Lodge in 2020, where I worked closely on legislative efforts to advance the mission of the FOP. Through that work, I have built lasting relationships with State Legislators and members of Congress, advocating for policies that support law enforcement officers and their families. I have also had the honor of serving on both State and National law enforcement committees.

In 2024, I was elected as Vice President of the State Lodge and have served in that role with dedication and accessibility to our members. In 2025, I was deeply honored to be recognized on the floor of Congress and entered into the Congressional Record by Addison McDowell for a lifetime of service.

While serving as Vice President, I worked alongside our members during the challenges of Hurricane Helene, ensuring support and coordination when it was needed most. Even during my personal battle with cancer, I remained engaged—taking calls, answering messages, and assisting lodges across the state.

Following my recovery, I have continued that commitment by helping with the creation of the FOP Mobile Feeding Heroes Trailer, providing critical support to first responders during emergencies and major events.

I respectfully ask for your support and your vote as I seek reelection, so I can continue advocating, serving, and delivering for our members and their families.

Fraternally,

James Shores

State Vice President

ELECT Greg Brown Vice President



Brothers and Sisters,

For the past 12 years, it has been my distinct honor to serve as your State Sergeant at Arms. I come before you today to humbly ask for your support and vote to build upon the progress we have made together as I am seeking election to the position of Vice President.

Since joining the FOP in 2005, I have dedicated myself to our mission through various roles, including Lodge President, State Trustee, and current President of the NCFOP Foundation Inc.

My leadership is built on a foundation of tough, fair, and transparent decision making to ensure our organization remains the gold standard for our members.

A Proven Track Record of Service

My commitment to the NCFOP is reflected in my diverse contributions:

- **State Impact:** State Sergeant at Arms, Foundation President, Foundation Vice President, Foundation 2nd Vice President. Director and North Eastern Region Coordinator for D.A.R.T., Chair of the Membership and Recruitment Committee.
- **Community & Compassion:** Chair of the Law Enforcement Peace Officers Memorial Service and coordinator of the Cops and Kids programs.
- **Support for the Fallen:** My wife and I have personally traveled across the state to support the families of officers injured or killed in the line of duty, providing care and a shoulder to lean on during their darkest hours.

Honors and Integrity

Representing you on the national stage at the National Police Officers Memorial and receiving the 2012 Mark Tucker Award remain the highlights of my career.

Since you first elected me to the State Executive Board in 2014, I have managed member funds with the fiscal responsibility, diligence, and respect you deserve.

My Commitment to You:

If elected as Vice President, I will continue to serve with the same integrity mentality that has guided my 20-year history with this order.

As Abraham Lincoln said, "I am a success today because I had a friend who believed in me and I didn't have the heart to let him down." I ask for your support and your vote to continue being that advocate for you.

Fraternally and Respectfully,
Greg Brown

RE-ELECT Christopher “Chris” Schenk

North Carolina State Lodge 2nd Vice President



Brothers and Sisters of the North Carolina Fraternal Order of Police,

I am writing to ask for your support and your vote in the upcoming North Carolina State Lodge elections at our State Biennial Conference in August. During our 2026 Spring Board of Directors meeting in Carolina Beach, I announced that I would be seeking re-election for the office of 2nd Vice President of the North Carolina State Lodge.

I was elected to the office of 2nd Vice President during the State Biennial Conference in 2024 in Cherokee. I continue to have the support of my wife, Jennifer, and FOP friends, members and leaders because I value their opinion and their honesty. I am pleased to say that they are still very supportive of my decision to seek re-election for this position. I feel that I have worked hard to uphold the integrity of this Office. I have worked to be a voice of reason when difficult decisions have had to be made for this Order. I continue to maintain this position with honesty, integrity, and accountability. I feel that I have earned the trust of the members of this Order.

In 1990, I began my law enforcement career with the East Spencer Police Department. On November 1st, 2020, I retired from full time service with the Salisbury Police Department with 30 years of credited service. I continued as a retired reserve officer for two additional years.

I began my membership with the Fraternal Order of Police with the now closed Orange County Lodge for several years in the early 1990s. I have been a chartered member of the Fraternal Order of Police, Salisbury-Rowan Lodge 87, since 2006. I have been an Executive Board member since 2006, serving terms as President, State Trustee, Lodge Trustee, and currently I am both the President and State Trustee.

For the newer FOP members, allow me to provide you with information on my service to the North Carolina State Lodge. I have served the State Lodge as the Lodge 87 State Trustee since 2010. Currently, I am the State 2nd Vice President. I am a member of the Legal Aid Committee for the State Lodge and have served on this committee since 2018. I also serve as a Co-Chair on the Political Endorsement Committee. I have had the honor to be a member of the new Feeding Heroes food truck committee. This has been an amazing honor to be a part of this from the ground up. Additionally, on the National FOP level, I serve on the National Disaster Area Response Team Committee (Food Preparation). On this committee, I have responded to call out requests in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana (September 2021), Fort Myers, Florida (October 2022), Marion, North Carolina and Aiken, South Carolina (September and October 2024), and Kerrville, Texas (July 2025). I have also been honored to assist the North Carolina State Lodge with the State Memorial Service and the National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial in Washington, DC.

I have my dedication to our fine organization to offer you and the North Carolina State Lodge as your 2nd Vice President. And I have proven experience, on the Local, State, and National levels, working for our

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RE-ELECT Christopher “Chris” Schenk (Continued)

membership and our organization.

As I mentioned, I am retired. Time has always been an issue for those serving on the State Executive Board. Retirement provides me with the time needed to perform the duties of the office fully. Some may argue that a person not currently working in law enforcement will be out of touch with the concerns and issues affecting our working members. I strongly disagree. A retiree who remains actively involved in the FOP stays current on the issues with the working members. As a retiree, I also stay current by being a State Certified Instructor in the local Basic Law Enforcement Training program. Many of our National and State Executive Board members, past and present, are retired. I consider retirement to be a plus for a dedicated and committed State Lodge officer and not a deficiency.

I am a dedicated member of the Fraternal Order of Police, and I truly desire to continue to serve the North Carolina State Lodge as your 2nd Vice President. However, to accomplish this I need your help. So, I am sincerely asking for your support and your vote at our State Biennial Conference in August.

Fraternally yours,

Christopher Schenk
Salisbury-Rowan Lodge 87

Elections are important!



Make sure you participate in every election to ensure we have great, responsible, leaders in our organization.

ELECT Greta Philbeck Sergeant at Arms



Brothers and Sisters,

I am both honored and humbled to announce that I am seeking the office of Sergeant at Arms for the North Carolina State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police.

My journey in law enforcement began in 1994 with the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office, where I had the privilege of serving in the Isothermal Narcotics Task Force before transitioning to the Civil Division. I concluded my career there in 2015 as a Sergeant assigned to the courthouse. Those years shaped my commitment to service, accountability, and professionalism, which are values that continue to guide me today.

I joined the Fraternal Order of Police in 1998 with the Rutherford County Lodge 36. Later while there, I had the honor of serving as Lodge President. Currently, I serve as the State Trustee for Cleveland County Lodge 18. Over the years, I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to contribute to our organization through service on multiple FOP committees. Some of these were Chair of the Labor Committee, Credentialing Committee, and most notably the Awards Committee, where I currently serve as Chair. Also, I received the prestigious Mark R. Tucker Memorial Award in 2013. This award recognizes a member who works to improve the NCFOP and goes above and beyond to promote our organization and assist our members and our law enforcement family.

On the National Lodge level, I have served on the National FOP Memorial Committee since 2001, and I currently Chair the Credentialing Subcommittee. This work, centered around honoring our fallen heroes and supporting their families, has been among the most meaningful experiences of my career. Serving here has reinforced the importance of structure, integrity, and attention to detail which are qualities essential to the role of Sergeant at Arms.

It is my pledge to you that I will continue to work hard for our membership. I consider it a privilege to serve our organization as your Sergeant at Arms, and I ask for your support and your vote in my bid to be elected to this office.

Respectfully,

Greta Philbeck
State Trustee
Cleveland County Lodge 18