

Meet Anthony Modugno Jr.

Editors' Note: This is part of the series of "Employee of the Month."

When I started looking back at my career choices three things seem to have motivated me. Well, maybe four actually, but I'll tell you about the three first—skiing, sailing and fighting fire.

Not really related, I know, so I'll explain. I grew up sorta close to Long Island Sound in Bedford, N.Y., close enough that when I was young I got enrolled in some sailing lessons and found I was pretty good at it. As I started to get better, I got into competitive racing so regattas and training really took care of my summers as a kid. Through high school summers, but eventually year round, I sailed. Winters were for skiing. This led me to choose the University of Vermont for college, the only school where I could ski in the winters and sail in the spring and fall. They also have a great geology program, which I majored in. Why Geology? Because I concentrated in hydrology, a study of water, which goes back to the relationship I had with Long Island Sound and sailing. Also, in the winter I could study snow hydrology, which meant hiking into mountains to examine the snowpack, read and ski.

So how does fighting fire fit into all this? It just does. My mom was an ER nurse at Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan. My uncles and cousins are police, fire or military. I've been in the Boy Scouts since before I can remember; now I'm an Eagle Scout. So maybe it's in my blood. Maybe that's why one day over 12 years ago I walked into the local volunteer fire department and asked to join. It's stuck with me ever since.

With influences from the fire department, I started taking EMS classes at college, Wilderness First Responder, EMT-B. While taking these courses the thought was put into my head about ski patrolling. Being an EMT and a decent skier got me an invite at Smugglers' Notch Vermont to volunteer patrol. I put in two years there becoming the first ever to patrol on a snowboard.

After college I thought about staying in Vermont but an opportunity was dropped in my lap because of my sailing background. I moved to Clearwater, Florida, to learn the yacht charter

business. The Moorings took me all over the Caribbean and Bahamas, somewhere I had spent time before teaching and leading sailing expeditions. I loved being down in the islands but could never get used to Florida. So I went back up to New York where I got more involved with the fire service again while also managing a yacht club where I used to teach sailing.

When the events of September 11 happened, I was at a crossroads—settle down in New York or keep moving. My experiences that day and the months to follow helped me decide to take a chance and move to Colorado. I had encouragement from friends already there. The plan was to get hired on a professional ski patrol at a "big" Colorado resort. It worked and I wound up on Aspen/Snowmass Ski Patrol. While there, I couldn't escape my fire experiences and soon found myself hired with the Snowmass Wildcat Fire Department.

This arrangement worked well for several years until a little bird got me interested in moving back to New York. The little bird, now my wife, had never been to the east coast. As soon as we were back, I got recruited for the fire department but this time as a Lieutenant and then on to Captain. At the same time and again by chance I got an opportunity to use the skills I learned in college to work for the NYC Department of Environmental Protection as a hydrologist. Wanting to continue to give my college education a chance I transitioned out of the fire service totally and into Hydrology by taking a job with the United States Geological Survey, Water Resources Division in Baltimore, Maryland.

Finally though, after a few years reflecting on my recent experiences, I decided a career in the fire service was really where I belonged, what I missed. A call from a friend here in Pine Knoll Shores got me headed in the right direction. All the places I've been and things I've done may seem erratic to some, but it does follow an underlying theme and gives me great perspective. I'm happy to be the new A-Shift Captain for Pine Knoll Shores Fire and EMS, fighting fires at the beach.

Advocate for Seniors

By Jim Scanlon

The North Carolina Senior Tarheel Legislature is an organization that was established in 1993 when the General Assembly approved Senate Bill 479, with then Senator Beverly Perdue as its primary sponsor.

The Senior Legislature is composed of one delegate and one alternate delegate from each of the state's one hundred counties. Its mission is to assess the legislative needs of older adults and to promote citizen advocacy of solutions to meet these needs. The STHL convenes itself periodically in a forum modeled after the North Carolina General Assembly, where issues important to senior adults are discussed and priorities are established for legislative advocacy. The STHL convened its first meeting of 2009 in March. Held in Raleigh, the meeting marked the fifteenth anniversary of the organization.

Among the highlights of the meeting were presentations about services and initiatives focused on older adults made by state officials, including Walter Dalton, Lieutenant Governor; Dennis Streets, Director of the Division of Aging and Adult Services and Maria Spaulding, Assistant Deputy Secretary for Long-Term Care and Family Services. Governor Perdue hosted a special fifteenth anniversary reception for delegates at the Governor's Mansion, where she emphasized her continuing commitment to the welfare of the state's older citizens. The assembly of senior

delegates also discussed and solidified a list of priorities for legislative advocacy during its two-day meeting.

The priorities established by the STHL for advocacy during the next two years include the following:

- Sustain the funding of "Project Caregiver." This program provides information, referral, consultation, and linkage for caregivers of persons afflicted with Alzheimer's disease.
 - Increase by \$5 million the funding for the existing Home and Community Care Block Grant program that provides services for older adults.
 - Increase by \$2 million the recurring funds for senior centers.
 - Cap the increase of assessed valuation of property determined during revaluations for persons over the age of 65 who are eligible for the Homestead Exemption.
 - Increase the income limit for the Homestead Exemption to \$35,000.
 - Implement practical and cost-effective steps to address concerns regarding the mixing of populations, including young adults with mental illness and frail older persons, residing in long-term care facilities.
- For additional information regarding the North Carolina Senior Tarheel Legislature, you may contact the delegate for Carteret County, John Thompson, at johnth@ec.rr.com or 726-7221.

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