

Opinion: Why Chief Michael is LTCC's distinguished alumni

By Melonie Guttry

On behalf of the Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation I am happy to announce that the third LTCC Distinguished Alumni is Fire Chief Jeff Michael.

This nomination was submitted by Virginia Boyar, so a huge thank you to Virginia for taking the time to make this nomination possible. In addition, I would like to thank all LTCC employees who submitted nominations. The Alumni Association committee had excellent nominations this year, which made the decision very difficult.



Jeff Michael

Michael obtained a fire science certificate of achievement from LTCC in 1981. He has served as the fire chief of Lake Valley Fire District since 2005 and has been with the district since 1979. Previously, he had positions of battalion chief, captain, engineer and firefighter. Chief Michael was recently awarded:

- o Chief of the Year, Lake Tahoe Basin Regional Chiefs Association
- o Certified Chief Officer with the California State Fire Marshal

- o Appointed by California and Nevada Governors to the California Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission
- o Recognition award for the Angora Fire, El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
- o Recognition award for the Angora Fire, California Interagency Incident Management Team
- o Special recognition after the Angora Fire from California State Fire Marshal Kate Dargan, for "An outstanding job of leading his troops through a battle and his community through a recovery."

Michael has been instrumental in the development of Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Academy and continues to be actively involved. He has provided staffing, facilities, equipment and supplies that are critical to the academy's success. Whenever the college requires assistance to administer this complex and highly-regulated vocation program, Chief Michael will "drop everything" to come to our immediate assistance. Beyond lending his expertise to the college, Chief Michael serves as a formal mentor to LTCC's academy cadets and graduates. He strives to know each student on a personal level and then supplements their formal education with practical hands-on advice to help them perform as firefighters in our unique environment.

What an honor to have Chief Michael sharing his knowledge and his passion for fire science with current LTCC students. Chief Michael will be recognized at our graduation ceremony on June 24, the same day of his official retirement from Lake Valley Fire Protection District.

Melonie Guttry is director of the Lake Tahoe Community College Foundation.