



2026 WPLF SUMMER TRAINING CONFERENCE & EXPO



TRAINING SESSIONS

THE LAZARUS LEADER



Chief (ret.) Rod Covey
(Port of Seattle Police Department)



Rod Covey was a sergeant by age 25, a captain by 30, running the Highway Patrol by 38, and then in 1998, at only 44 years of age, his doctors told him that he had no more than three months to live. Over the next seven years he fought for his life, surviving a dozen near death moments and over two dozen surgeries. He went from leading over 1,000 personnel to a staff of two, eventually back to leading a department of 170. Then in early June 2020, just weeks after the death of George Floyd, he was unexpectedly put on administrative leave for allegations of retaliation against one of his Black officers – allegations that carried an overtone of racial bias. 16 months later, after a 45-year unblemished career, Rod was very publicly fired from his position as Chief of Police, making it impossible for him to ever be a Chief again anywhere in the country. In the years that followed, he worked with his legal team to get his name and reputation restored. That happened in 2024, when a 12-person jury in Seattle, WA returned a very quick, unanimous verdict stating that Chief Covey had been wrongfully terminated for being denied any kind of due process after calling out some of the key leaders at his employer for unethical conduct. The jury then awarded him the largest single-plaintiff verdict in the history of Washington State. But his employer appealed the decision, and it took an additional stress-filled 18 months before reaching a mutually agreeable settlement.

In this presentation, Rod shares his very personal life lessons learned about resilience, leadership, and character. Involved in the administration of over 1,000 cases of discipline, he came to realize that over 2/3rds of those cases were the result of a failure of leadership and a failure of friendship. Given a second chance at life and leading, he used his experience to help the Port of Seattle Police Department move from one of the worst to one of the best agencies in the northwest. He did this using ethical autopsies, embedding the organization's values into everything they did, and surrounding himself with people that had good self-awareness and a willingness to be coached. He will also share lessons learned from the experience of being wrongfully terminated and what it takes to win cases such as his.

Rod spent 13 years at the Port of Seattle Police Dept. serving as a deputy chief and then Chief of Police. He previously served 32 years with the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) where he served as the Commander of the Arizona Law Enforcement Training Academy, the Chief of Staff for the Director of Public Safety, the Chief of the Highway Patrol, the Executive Director of the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training (AZ POST) Board, the Director of the AZ Regional Community Policing Institute, and the Director of the Center for Leadership Excellence. He has brought his extensive experience and expertise in leadership and organizational development to classrooms, universities and organizations nationwide, having trained and coached thousands of new and experienced leaders. He promises that by the end of his presentation, every person in attendance will walk away with at least one thing that will significantly change them forever as a leader, a parent, a spouse, and/or a friend.



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TRAINING SESSIONS

GENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION & LEADERSHIP



Dr. Jim DeLung
Organizational Development Professionals

This session breaks down the five dominant generations in today's workforce: Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha. Participants will gain a clear understanding of each group's core drivers, communication styles, and expectations, then learn how to recruit, retain, and lead across generational lines with less friction. The focus is practical: What actually works now, and what will work next as workforce demographics continue to change.

Dr. Jim DeLung is a public safety and private sector executive, leadership authority, and systems-level problem solver known for transforming organizations that are underperforming, misaligned, or stalled.

He currently serves as Police Administrator for the Prescott Police Department, where he leads the Prescott Regional Communications Center, overseeing mission-critical operations for 17 public safety partners covering 5,254 square miles. Retired from the Phoenix Police Department, Dr. DeLung brings decades of real-world leadership under pressure, combined with executive experience in organizational strategy, workforce development, and cultural alignment.

Jim is the creator of the new AEIOU Leadership framework; a practical system used to drive accountability, execution, and unity across teams and organizations. His work has impacted thousands of professionals across North America through high-level training, executive development, and keynote presentations.

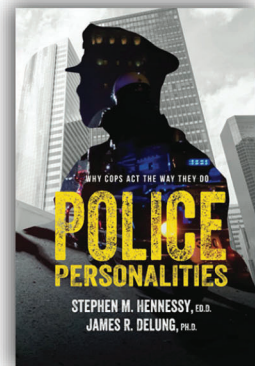
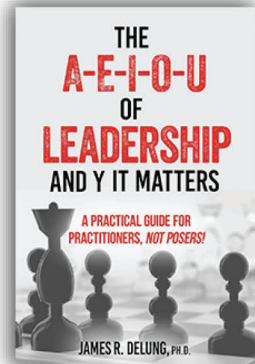
Known for his direct, no-nonsense delivery, Dr. DeLung challenges leaders to confront blind spots, eliminate excuses, and execute at a higher level. His sessions are not just theoretical; they are operational, actionable, and designed for leaders who take responsibility for results.

Dr. DeLung holds a PhD in Business Administration with an emphasis in Organizational Leadership from National University, along with a Master of Education and Bachelor of Science from Northern Arizona University.

Publications:

The AEIOU of Leadership and Y It Matters: A Practical Guide for Practitioners, Not Posers!

Police Personalities: Why Cops Act the Way They Do





2025 WPLF SUMMER TRAINING CONFERENCE & EXPO



SPEAKERS & PRESENTATIONS

FORENSIC INVESTIGATIVE GENETIC GENEALOGY: WHAT POLICE LEADERS NEED TO KNOW



Presented by Christina M. Neal, MS, PMP
Lead Scientist | Signature Science, LLC



Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG) is rapidly transforming the way law enforcement agencies approach complex investigations, unidentified human remains cases, and violent crime cold cases. This presentation is designed to provide police chiefs, command staff, investigators, and agency leaders with a practical understanding of what FIGG is, how it works, and the critical leadership considerations surrounding its use.

Attendees will gain insight into the investigative process behind forensic genetic genealogy, including forensic DNA analysis, genealogical research methods, case suitability considerations, legal and privacy implications, and collaboration between agencies, laboratories, and investigative teams. The session will also examine how FIGG has been used to generate investigative leads in high-profile and previously unsolved cases across the country.

The presentation will focus on operational realities and executive-level decision-making, helping police leaders better understand policy considerations, resource allocation, evidentiary standards, public communication, and the ethical responsibilities associated with emerging forensic technologies.

This session will be presented by Christina Neal, Lead Scientist at Signature Science, who brings more than 22 years of experience in human DNA analysis and forensic genomics. As Technical Leader of the Advanced Genomics Laboratory, Christina oversees forensic DNA casework, research and development initiatives, and the implementation of advanced DNA technologies, including forensic investigative genetic genealogy (FIGG).

Prior to joining Signature Science, Christina spent nearly 13 years with the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory supporting the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System, where she concluded her service as Training and Education Manager. Her experience includes forensic science operations, DNA identification, laboratory leadership, and the advancement of emerging forensic technologies used in complex investigations and human identification efforts.

FORENSIC INVESTIGATIVE GENETIC GENEALOGY - WISCONSIN STATE CRIME LABORATORIES

Additional presentations will be provided by Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories (WSCL) Division of Forensic Sciences (DFS) representatives Nicole Roehm and Rachel Sourther, along with Marshall Ogren of the Wisconsin DOJ Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), discussing how their agencies collaborate using forensic investigative genetic genealogy (FIGG) to develop investigative leads in unsolved criminal and unidentified human remains (UHR) cases.





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TRAINING SESSIONS

FROM REPRIMANDS TO CHARGES BEFORE THE PFC: THE ROLE OF THE CHIEF IN INVESTIGATIONS AND DISCIPLINE



Attorney Kyle Gulya
von Briesen & Roper

Internal investigations and employee discipline present some of the most challenging responsibilities facing today's law enforcement leaders. This session will provide police chiefs, command staff, and public safety leaders with practical guidance on navigating the disciplinary process, from initial complaints and reprimands through formal proceedings before a Police and Fire Commission (PFC).

Attendees will gain insight into investigative best practices, due process considerations, documentation requirements, labor relations implications, crisis management strategies, and legal considerations impacting disciplinary decisions. The presentation will also examine the chief's leadership role in maintaining accountability, organizational integrity, professionalism, and public trust while minimizing legal and operational risk.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE

Employment and labor law issues impacting public safety agencies continue to evolve rapidly. This session will provide an important update on recent legal developments affecting law enforcement agencies, including labor relations, employee discipline, internal investigations, workplace policies, anti-discrimination practices, public records and open meetings laws, crisis management, and emerging employment law trends.

Designed specifically for police chiefs and command staff, this presentation will offer practical, real-world guidance to help leaders effectively navigate complex personnel matters while reducing organizational risk and maintaining operational effectiveness.

These presentations will be provided by Attorneys Kyle Gulya and Ryan Heiden.

Kyle Gulya is a Shareholder and Chair of the Government Law Group at von Briesen & Roper, S.C. He advises public and private sector employers on labor and employment matters, including regulatory compliance, workplace policies, collective bargaining, personnel management, internal investigations, crisis communications, and Wisconsin public records and open meetings laws. Kyle has extensive experience working with Police Departments, Sheriff's Offices, Fire Departments, and Police & Fire Commissions throughout Wisconsin. He regularly presents nationally on labor, employment, public records, and open meetings law issues and has authored numerous related publications. Kyle has longstanding relationships with the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, Wisconsin Fire Chiefs Education Association, and Wisconsin Police Leadership Foundation.

Ryan Heiden is a Shareholder in the Government Law Group at von Briesen & Roper, S.C., where he focuses on school law and public sector labor and employment matters. Ryan routinely advises public sector employers on complex labor relations, internal investigations, employee discipline, anti-discrimination practices, crisis management, wage and hour matters, collective bargaining, and public records and open meetings compliance. He also has extensive experience addressing issues unique to public safety employees and Police & Fire Commissions. Ryan frequently presents throughout Wisconsin on labor and employment law, school law, and public records issues.



Attorney Ryan Heiden
von Briesen & Roper, S.C.





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TRAINING SESSIONS

OFFICER-INVOLVED CRITICAL INCIDENTS: WHAT CHIEFS NEED TO KNOW



Officer-involved critical incidents present some of the most challenging and high-profile situations a law enforcement executive may face. This training session is designed to provide police chiefs, command staff, and agency leaders with critical insight into investigative processes, leadership considerations, interagency coordination, public communication, and operational decision-making following a critical incident.

Presented by the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI), this session will provide attendees with a practical overview of DCI's role, jurisdiction, and investigative responsibilities during officer-involved incidents and other major criminal investigations across the state. DCI Special Agents and criminal analysts work closely with local, county, tribal, state, and federal partners to investigate complex and sensitive cases, including homicide, public integrity matters, cybercrime, human trafficking, internet crimes against children, financial crimes, drug trafficking, and other significant criminal activity.

Attendees will gain valuable perspective on investigative protocols, scene management, evidence preservation, communication strategies, leadership expectations, and best practices for navigating the operational, legal, and community challenges that often accompany critical incidents. This session offers an important opportunity for chiefs and aspiring leaders to better understand the investigative process and strengthen preparedness for incidents that can profoundly impact agencies and communities alike.

OFFICER-INVOLVED CRITICAL INCIDENT: CASE STUDY

WI DOJ DCI representatives will also be presenting an officer-involved critical incident case study to provide attendees with practical insight into investigative procedures, leadership decision-making, interagency coordination, communication strategies, and the operational challenges agencies face during high-profile critical incidents.



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TRAINING SESSIONS

CHIEFS' CORNER ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: RECRUITING/HIRING, BUDGETING, AND LEADERSHIP



This interactive roundtable session will focus on three of the most significant challenges facing today's law enforcement leaders: recruiting and hiring, budgeting, and leadership. Experienced police chiefs from agencies across Wisconsin, representing departments of varying sizes and communities, will share practical perspectives, lessons learned, and strategies for addressing the evolving demands of modern policing.

Designed as an open forum discussion, attendees will gain valuable insight into real-world leadership challenges, emerging opportunities, workforce development, retention strategies, fiscal realities, and organizational leadership. Whether you are a current chief, an aspiring leader, or simply interested in hearing diverse perspectives from veteran law enforcement executives, this session promises to provide meaningful discussion and actionable takeaways.

WISCONSIN ATTORNEY GENERAL LEGAL UPDATES



Attorney General Josh Kaul
WI DOJ

Josh Kaul was sworn in as Wisconsin's 45th Attorney General on January 7, 2019. Josh's top priority is public safety. Under his leadership, the Wisconsin Department of Justice has worked to combat the opioid epidemic and the increasing use of meth in Wisconsin, to make our schools and communities safer from gun violence, and to pass legislation designed to prevent Wisconsin from having another backlog of untested sexual assault kits. Josh is also committed to fighting for clean and safe drinking water and against climate change and to protecting the rights of Wisconsinites.

Josh served as a federal prosecutor in Baltimore, where he prosecuted murderers, gang members, and drug traffickers. After moving back home to Wisconsin, he worked to protect our right to vote, going to court to challenge restrictions on voting.

