



Fire Chief Ben Rigney

West Manatee Fire District

Ben Rigney, a native of Anna Maria Island and a fourth-generation resident of Manatee County, epitomizes a profound commitment to public safety deeply rooted in community values. Following in the footsteps of his parents, Chief Rigney married his high school sweetheart and embarked on a lifelong journey as a public servant. Joining West Manatee Fire and Rescue District in 2006, he has held the position of Fire Chief since 2019.

Chief Rigney has successfully secured grants exceeding \$650,000, facilitating the addition of three firefighter positions, acquiring new air packs, and enhancing safety equipment for both personnel and the community served by the district.

Under Chief Rigney's leadership, the district has made significant strides in service improvements. Pioneering non-transport advanced life services, the district became the first in Manatee County to offer this elevated level of care, resulting in numerous lives saved and setting a benchmark for other Fire Districts.

An advocate for education, Chief Rigney holds a master's degree in public administration and a Bachelor of Science in Marketing. In 2023, he graduated from the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy, focusing on recruiting, and retaining the next generation of firefighters. His dedication to understanding generational differences has enabled West Manatee Fire and Rescue District to seamlessly fill vacancies without compromising service quality.

Chief Rigney's commitment to service extends beyond district boundaries. He actively participates in the Florida Fire Chiefs Association's Government Relations Committee, presides over the Manatee County Fire Chiefs Association, is a member of Bradenton Kiwanis, and serves as Fire Coordinator for the region, coordinating responses to major emergencies inside and outside of Florida, including deployment during Hurricanes Irma, Michael, and Ian, as well as serving as the Fire Coordinator for Manatee County during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Outside of professional duties, Chief Rigney is deeply invested in the community. As a devoted husband and father of three, he volunteers with Younglife and contributes his time to Saint Stephens Episcopal School, where his children - Emma (17), Ben Jr. (16), and Noah (13) - attend and his wife, Cori serves as the school chaplain.

Chief Rigney holds dear the precious moments shared with his family, finding joy in a range of shared hobbies. Their collective interests span the depths of the ocean through scuba diving adventures.

Additionally, the family maintains an active lifestyle, engaging in activities such as running and playing various sports, fostering not only physical well-being but also a strong sense of camaraderie. Movie nights constitute cherished times, as they come together to enjoy cinematic experiences and create lasting memories.

In the midst of his busy schedule, Chief Rigney's diverse interests reflect a harmonious blend of adventure, fitness, and family-oriented leisure. By embracing these passions, he not only finds personal fulfillment but also brings a well-rounded perspective to his leadership role within the West Manatee Fire and Rescue District.