

Director's Message



I'd like to start out my first message as executive director of the NTOA with a thank you to all those who made our annual tactical and crisis negotiations conferences a tremendous success. Neither of these conferences would have been

possible without the exceptional support of their hosts, the Phoenix Police Department and Arizona Tactical Officers Association (ATOA). To say that I was impressed by the professionalism of all those I came into contact with would be an understatement. Those either assigned to the events, or who volunteered, went above and beyond to make these conferences a success for the attendees. Thank you also to the NTOA staff who worked tirelessly to ensure the conferences were among the best ever, with almost 1,300 law enforcement professionals attending. Lastly, thank you to all attendees who continue to seek improvement and represent these specialties so well.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the incredible and inspiring message delivered by our keynote speaker, retired Phoenix Police Detective Jason Schechterle. His focus on adversity and our response to it was certainly one of the best perspectives that I have ever heard. His message had a profound impact on how I now look at daily "problems" in my life. I would encourage each of us to never forget his story and maintain proper perspective. His message could not have been more timely or relevant, given the challenges and adversity facing law enforcement today.

Unfortunately, as I write this piece, our nation has suffered through another horrific active shooter incident, this time in Las Vegas. While the loss of life is tragic and disturbing, it also was encouraging to see first responders rising to the call and demonstrating the true character of our profession. While hundreds were running to safety, Las Vegas Metro

Police Department (LVMPD) officers were running into harm's way to help the injured and attempt to identify the gunman's location. It truly captured the finest our profession has to offer our respective communities.

The incident also serves as a reminder that we will need to continually reevaluate potential threats in our communities. Each has unique venues that present tactical challenges to our police capabilities. We have a duty to evaluate our ability to respond to and intervene when violence strikes. We are only limited by our imaginations in forecasting possible scenarios within our jurisdictions. I would strongly encourage you all to analyze potential targets and conduct training to ensure your preparedness. While it is difficult to predict future events, we need to be students of history and learn from the past to be better prepared for future responses. We can always learn something from an incident that has occurred elsewhere. Please make the effort to educate yourselves and be prepared.

As part of your preparation, please don't forget the NTOA as a resource. We can help with our members-only scenario database, as well as our intelligence portal. We make every effort to ensure we have current and relevant information available for your use. Our primary goal continues to be to provide the best training and information for you to succeed in serving your constituents. To that end, please let us know if there is anything we can do to be of further assistance to you. I thank you all for your service. Be safe. ■

Thor Eells

Executive Director

See an interview with Thor Eells on page 14 of this issue.