

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



By now, many of you have already heard of our decision to transition our 2020 Law Enforcement Operations Conference to a virtual setting. Like you, this is an event that the staff and I look forward to each year, as it provides a unique opportunity to interact with one another while taking advantage of the very best training available anywhere.

For the past year, our staff has been working closely with the local hosts to create a memorable experience for all attendees. In the midst of this planning, we too were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel restrictions and social distancing requirements necessitated the rescheduling of numerous classes. We began to closely monitor the pandemic's impact in the Kansas City area. The local hosts could not have been more helpful in sharing information to help us to make timely and informed decisions regarding the conference. We were hopeful that many of the challenges were resolving and we would be able to gather in Kansas City. Unfortunately, the resurgence of COVID-19 nationally made it clear that we would need to transition to a virtual conference and delay our in-person meeting until 2021.

The virtual conference allows us to offer critical training during unprecedented times. Online access will allow those to attend who otherwise would have been negatively affected by travel restrictions, costs or health risks. The training staff has done an outstanding job lining up exceptional training opportunities. Great effort has gone into ensuring the same caliber of training will be presented. I can guarantee that the course material and instructors

are the same high quality you all have come to expect from the NTOA. I have no doubt that those of you who attend will come away pleased and better off for the experience.

As I've said before, we are living and working in unprecedented times, with the combination of the pandemic and civil unrest. Either issue in isolation would have been incredibly demanding to the training environment. Together they are posing the greatest challenges of our careers. There is no question that the easiest path would be to decrease training; in fact, it is one many are actively calling for. We must not allow that to happen. Now is the time for us to recommit ourselves to self-improvement.

I strongly encourage each of you to attend this inaugural virtual conference to avail yourself of this exceptional training. The topics will be timely, meaningful and applicable to the current environment you find yourselves working in. The knowledge gained will prove invaluable in the future. The virtual setup will allow attendees to ask questions and interact with the instructors as if they were in physical attendance. In other words, little if anything will be lost in our transition to this format. Please do not pass up this unique opportunity to grow.

As always, the NTOA is here to meet your training needs. If there is anything we can be doing for you please let us know. I look forward to "seeing" you all virtually soon. In the meantime, take care and stay safe!

God Speed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thor Eells". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Thor Eells
Executive Director