



METROPOLITAN AIRPORTS COMMISSION

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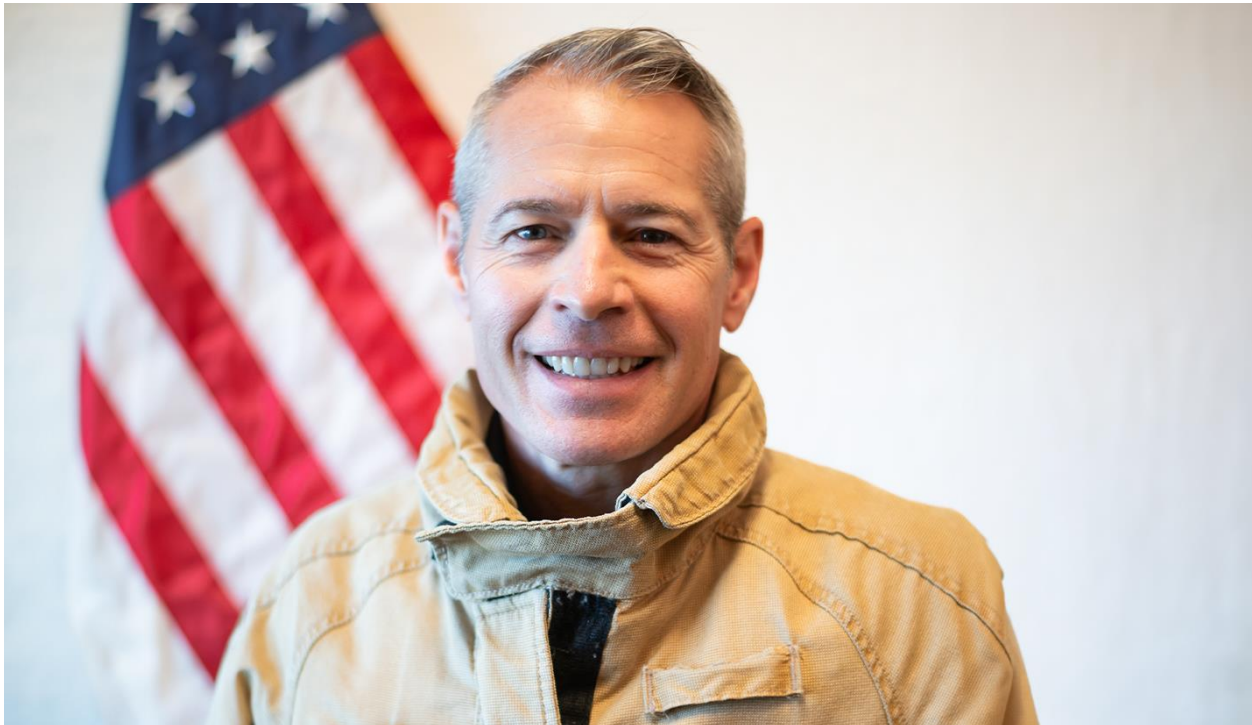
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Metropolitan Airports Commission selects Mark Watzak as fire chief Nationally recognized firefighter brings experience, skill to his new role



MSP Airport Fire Chief Mark Watzak. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Airports Commission

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) has selected Mark Watzak as the new fire chief for Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) following a competitive search. Watzak brings to the airport decades of experience as a firefighter and leader in both civilian and military roles.

Prior to joining the MAC, Watzak served for over 17 years with the Richfield Fire Department in various positions including firefighter, fire investigator, acting officer and interim lieutenant. Across his different roles, his responsibilities included overseeing fire and alarm response, residential and commercial inspections, firefighter technical training, and community education. He also served as treasurer of the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1215 from 2019 to 2021.

“Mark Watzak brings an impressive mix of technical and leadership experience to his new role at MSP Airport,” said MAC CEO Brian Ryks. “Over the course of his career, he has shown an ability to deliver consistent, high-quality service in dynamic and challenging settings. We are fortunate to have such a talented and experienced leader for our airport fire department.”

Watzak served more than 28 years as a firefighter in the Minnesota Air National Guard, with his last six years as a fire chief assigned to the 148th Fighter Wing Fire Department based in Duluth. He has been deployed multiple times to support various overseas operations and received numerous military and civilian honors. In 2009, Watzak was recognized as Air National Guard Military Firefighter of the Year and presented with the Chief Albert Fitzpatrick Award.

“I am honored to have this opportunity to lead the MSP Airport Fire Department and proud to become a member of such a high-caliber organization,” Watzak said. “I look forward to building on the extensive track record of this department in aiding passengers and employees, while playing an integral role in ensuring safe and efficient operations at MSP.”

Watzak holds a master’s degree in public safety leadership and administration from the University of Arizona, a bachelor’s degree from Concordia University St. Paul and an associate degree in fire science from the Community College of the Air Force.

Watzak joined the MAC, which owns and operates MSP and six general aviation airports in the region, on Monday, May 20.

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) owns and operates one of the nation’s largest airport systems, including [Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport \(MSP\)](#) and six general aviation airports. The MAC’s airports connect the region to the world and showcase Minnesota’s extraordinary culture to millions of passengers from around the globe who arrive or depart through MAC airports each year. Though a public corporation of the state of Minnesota, the organization is not funded by income or property taxes. Instead, the MAC’s operations are funded by rents and fees generated by users of its airports. For more information, visit www.metroairports.org.