



## *A Lifetime of Service:* **FIRE CHIEF JIM LENTZ AND THE LOWER PROVIDENCE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Story & photos by Beth Ann Bittner Mazza | Additional photos courtesy of Jim Lentz

**A**t 16 years old, Jim Lentz witnessed a fire that would change the direction of his life.

It was 1987, and a fatal fire in his neighborhood prompted a young Lentz to take the next step toward something he had wanted to do since childhood. He joined the fire service as a junior firefighter.

Nearly four decades later, that decision has grown into a lifetime of service, leadership and innovation.

Today, Lentz serves concurrently as Battalion Chief with the City of Coatesville Bureau of Fire and Fire Chief of the Lower Providence Fire Department. He has spent more than 39 years in the fire service, working in both urban and suburban environments and serving in roles ranging from firefighter and EMT to fire marshal, emergency management coordinator, fire chief and battalion chief.

But while his professional résumé is extensive, Lentz's philosophy about the fire service is surprisingly simple.

**“IF YOU LOVE WHAT YOU DO, YOU NEVER  
WORK A DAY IN YOUR LIFE.”**

For Lentz, that passion has translated into a career—and a commitment to the fire service—that continues to evolve with the changing needs of the communities he serves.

### **The Call to Serve**

Lentz's interest in firefighting began long before he officially joined a department. As a young person, he was drawn to the idea



of becoming a firefighter. When the opportunity came at age 16, he joined Lower Providence as a junior firefighter and began learning what the job was really about. While in high school, he attended North Montco Technical Career Center, studying diesel mechanics. His early working years included surveying, construction and home repair and improvement work. Those experiences would later prove valuable in the fire service, where an understanding of equipment, buildings, construction and mechanical systems can be critical.

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