Association Update

Beyond the Paycheck
People, Partnerships and Purpose

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Association Administrator

There are many rewards that come with my role at IAFPD that extend well beyond a paycheck. Among the greatest are the people I meet, the relationships I build, and the opportunity to work alongside individuals who are truly dedicated to making a difference in the fire service. As fall settles in and we begin reflecting on another busy year while looking ahead to 2027, I am reminded of the many programs, activities, and special events where IAFPD has had the privilege of being represented. Conferences and educational programs naturally bring people together, providing valuable opportunities to network, exchange ideas, and strengthen partnerships. Sadly, attending funerals and memorial services has become more frequent than any of us would wish. Yet, even during these difficult occasions, they are reminders of the remarkable individuals who have shaped IAFPD, its membership, and our affiliated fire service organizations. It is truly an honor to have known and worked alongside so many dedicated fire service members who have left a lasting legacy.

While ***The Fire Call*** regularly features announcements, event highlights, and photographs, I wanted to share a few opportunities that demonstrate the strength of our fire service and the many ways IAFPD remains involved.

Illinois State Fair: Volunteering to educate families about home and fire safety is especially rewarding. We hope the information we share is never needed in an emergency but knowing that a simple conversation could someday help save a life makes the effort worthwhile.

Community Risk Reduction Meetings: Opportunities to collaborate with fire service professionals and community partners who share a commitment to preventing emergencies before they happen.

Camp I Am Me Fire Prevention Week Luncheon: An inspiring gathering featuring remarkable stories, well-deserved recognitions, and support for Burn Camp.

IFCA Conference & Tradeshow: A well-attended event that allows us to reconnect with mutual members, supporters, and industry partners while exploring the latest technology and equipment in the fire service.

IFA Down & Dirty: An action-packed weekend offering affordable, hands-on firefighter training led by experienced instructors who generously share their knowledge and expertise.

Legislative Summit: A day spent alongside leaders representing 12 fire service organizations, working together to identify priorities and develop a coordinated legislative agenda for the upcoming spring session. A powerful reminder of what can be accomplished through collaboration.

Essential Trustee Training (ETT): A fire protection district with knowledgeable, well-trained trustees sends a powerful message to its community. IAFPD's specialized 12-hour, three-part program provides an important foundation for effective district governance.

IAFPD Winter Conference: Our winter gathering in O'Fallon brings together approximately 40–50 fire protection districts, 150 attendees, and 20 vendors for networking and 12 hours of quality education designed for fire district trustees, pension trustees, and fire chiefs.

Continuing Trustee Education Sessions – A tradition spanning more than 40 years, these programs remain an excellent opportunity to meet neighboring district officials, exchange ideas, and enjoy a day of learning and camaraderie with legal experts.

Cheers to 85 Years! – In 2027, IAFPD will celebrate its 85th anniversary! Eight and a half decades of growth, change, challenges. We look forward to recognizing this milestone throughout the year, and perhaps enjoying a little anniversary cake along the way!

These experiences are reminders that the value of IAFPD membership extends well beyond the personalized service, publications, and exceptional resources highlighted during membership renewal. The true strength lies in people who contribute their time, expertise, and commitment to advancing the fire service. If you serve a fire protection district and need assistance, we encourage you to reach out. If your department is considering the formation of a fire protection district, we have resources to help guide the process. And if your district is not yet an IAFPD member, I invite you to contact our office and discover the many benefits of belonging.

As we approach the holiday season and close another productive year that seems to have passed all too quickly, please know that the IAFPD Board and Staff are thankful for the people we serve, and the relationships that continue to make our work so meaningful. For me, those relationships and the opportunity to make a difference are among the greatest rewards of all. Wishing you and your families a blessed holiday season and a wonderful year ahead! ■