

IN THE NEWS



Congratulations!



Congratulations to John Cumbee on being named Firefighter of the Year by his peers at the Cornbelt Fire Protection District. With more than 21 years of dedicated service, Cumbee continues to demonstrate the passion that first drew him to firefighting prior to serving with Cornbelt. When he is not working his day job as the fire marshal at Willard Airport, an article in The News Gazette by reporter Rob Le Caters claims Cumbee can likely be found at the fire house. He was commended for his leadership, mentorship, and commitment to the department. Selected through a peer-nominated process, this special recognition reflects the respect of his crew members and the impact he makes each day.



Thank you IAFPD Foundation Directors Bonnie Bayser and Paul Grzelak for representing IAFPD at The Friends of Camp I Am Me recognition reception on March 5th. The event celebrates the volunteers and donors who make a lasting impact on the organization.

IN MEMORY



William "Bill" Artman (82) of Freeport, passed away on September 4, 2025. Bill married Jan Scheider on June 2, 1963. He worked at several Chevrolet dealerships from 1962 to 2005. He served in the Army Reserves for 6 years, belonged to the Cedarville Fire Dept for 26 years and was a longtime member of the Cedarville Snow Travelers Snowmobile Club. Bill started farming in the mid 70's.



Bradford L. Janzen (83) of Peoria passed away on June 6, 2025. He was born in Rochester, MN and married Vicky Lindemann on October 5, 1974, in Ottawa, IL. She survives. He is also survived by his son and daughter and five grandchildren. He served as the elementary school principal at Illini Bluffs CUSD #327 from 1970-2003. He was a Hollis Park District commissioner for 20 years and served as a volunteer firefighter with the Timber-Hollis Fire Protection District 1973-2003 and trustee from 1978 to 2025.



Cyrus "Cy" Jay Bunting (83) passed away on March 2, 2026, after an extended illness. A devoted father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and public servant, Cy lived a life defined by compassion, service, and love for family. A skilled craftsman with a background in facilities management and engineering, Cy worked at Principia College, Ralston-Purina, Erickson Chemical, and owned several small businesses. He served his community as Mayor of Elsah, Special Deputy Sheriff, and lifelong volunteer firefighter, beginning at age 14. He was Chairman of the QEM Fire Protection District Board until January 2026.



Steven W. Woods (67), of Fulton, IL, died Friday, February 27, 2026. Steve was born July 13, 1958, in Clinton, IA, 1976 graduated from Clinton High School. Steve was employed at Metform for 40 years, retiring in 2024. He was also a dedicated volunteer with the Fulton Fire Department for 26 years. Steve enjoyed coaching youth football and baseball for many years, sharing his time and encouragement with countless young athletes. Survivors include his wife of 32 years, Mickey Woods; five children and fifteen grandchildren, six great-grandchildren; and his beloved dog, Rizzo.



Brett Kunkel (69) We are deeply saddened to announce the sudden passing of Brett P. Kunkel on March 29, 2026. He was born on April 19, 1956, in [St. Louis, MO](#). Brett dedicated his life to his family, service, friendship and leaves behind a legacy of courage and hard work. He officially joined as a volunteer fire fighter in 1974 and became the Chief of the Sorento Fire Department in 1980. Brett P. worked diligently to create a district as well as annexation of Panama, Donnellson, and later Walshville to create the existing Shoal Creek Fire Protection District. In 1989 Brett had become an area representative for the IAFPD, and by the time of his death Brett had earned a position as President. In addition to his service as a firefighter, Brett worked as coal miner at Monterey Coal #1 for 30 years.

Brett is survived by his four daughters and spouses, thirteen grandkids and two great grandchildren, three brothers, their spouses many nieces, nephews and cousins.