

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Brett Kunkel, Shoal Creek Fire Protection District

Committed to Carrying Forward the Values and Vision of IAFPD

As I step into the role of President of the Association, I do so with both humility and a deep sense of responsibility. I would like to acknowledge the recent passing of our former President and my dear friend, Michael Dillon, whose leadership, dedication, and service left a lasting impact on our organization and the Illinois fire service.

On behalf of the IAFPD Board of Directors, we honor Mike's legacy and extend our sincere condolences to the Dillon family and members of the Braidwood Fire District for their loss.

It is in that spirit of gratitude and remembrance that I look ahead, committed to carrying forward the values and vision that have shaped our Association over the years.

My involvement in the IAFPD dates to 1979 as a volunteer firefighter working with Kenny Long to form a fire district in my area and gradually helping other fire departments and villages do the same for a few years. I became an Area Representative in 1989 and a Director in 1993. I was elected Secretary in 1997, elected Vice President in 2018 and just recently assumed the office of President.

The first quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors was held on January 10, 2026, and elected Damon Schuldt of Martinton FPD (Iroquois Co.) to fill the vacancy of Vice President and elected Don Loos of Liberty FPD (Adams Co.) to fill the open seat of director. These are not new faces to the IAFPD, but dedicated directors who will do great service to our Association.

Additionally, we welcome Area Representatives James Hoscheid of Cherry FPD (Bureau Co.) and Art Kilburg of Fulton FPD (Whiteside Co.), who were appointed at the September 2025 Board meeting.

Lastly, the IAFPD Foundation Board welcomed Jeff Bryant, a retired Fire Chief of Amboy FPD, as a director. We are pleased to have Jeff's fundraising experience and proactive leadership that will support the organization's mission to educate the next generation of the fire service.

Congratulations again to each of these gentlemen who bring a wealth of experience and camaraderie to the IAFPD. I look forward to serving with you in the year ahead. ■

Brett Kunkel, IAFPD President
Shoal Creek Fire Protection District

IN MEMORY

Michael Matthew Dillon **11/6/1949 – 11/1/2025**

- IAFPD President 2005-2025
- IAFPD Treasurer 2000-2005
- Elected IAFPD Director in 1998
- Appointed IAFPD Area Rep 1996
- Member OSFM Fire Advisory Commission
- Vice Chairman IL Fire Services Association
- Member of IL Fire Service Institute Advisory
- Member Statewide Interoperability Communications Executive Committee



Michael Matthew Dillon (75) of Braidwood, IL, passed away peacefully on November 1, 2025. Born November 6, 1949, Michael devoted his life to family, faith, and community. On November 6, 1971, he married Dawn Downey and shared nearly 54 years of marriage, filled with love, laughter, and unwavering devotion to one another.

Michael proudly served his country in the U.S. Army from 1970 to 1971, stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. His time in the military reflected the same sense of duty and integrity that defined every part of his life.

Michael began his fire service career at 18 years old with the Braidwood Fire Department, where he served as a firefighter, EMT, and Training Officer. In 1973, he became a trustee for the department and he was Board President at the time of his passing. Michael worked for ComEd for 34 years in a variety of roles, eventually becoming Fire Marshal at the Dresden Plant before his retirement. He enjoyed golfing and bowling and was a loyal fan of the Chicago Cubs and Bears. Above all, he will be remembered for his kindness, dedication, and steadfast commitment to the community he loved.