

# AROUND THE STATE



## A Word from our Fire Service Partners

**From the Editor:** The following column is intended to provide our readers an update on fire service activities from around the state.

### Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal



The Fallen Fire Fighter and Medal of Honor Ceremonies were held in Springfield on September 10th and Fire Marshal Perez personally thanks the OSFM's Greg Hay and Robin Sudduth for once again putting on an amazing event. Thank You to Governor JB Pritzker for attending and for your words of encouragement and support for our brothers and sisters in the fire service. Firefighter Jacob "Jake" Ringering of the Godfrey Fire Protection District, Firefighter Kody Vanfossan of the Christopher Fire Department, Firefighter Mario Araujo of the Chicago Fire Department, Firefighter/Paramedic Dylan Cunningham of the South Holland Fire Department, Firefighter/Paramedic Robert Reisinger of the River Grove Fire Department, Firefighter Edward Singleton of the Chicago Fire Department and Paramedic Robert Truevillian of the Chicago Fire Department were honored for their heroic sacrifice as their families were presented with the Duty Death Gold Badge. These men made the ultimate sacrifice, but their families will help keep their memories and legacy alive. We recognized the heroic efforts and accomplishments of many members of the Illinois Fire Service by presenting the Medal of Valor and Unit Citations. Thank You, to all the members of the Illinois Fire Service who have dedicated their lives to help protect and serve the communities they live in.

The OSFM continues to work hard to provide funding and training opportunities to all departments through grants from our office. The latest grant, Illinois Fire

Department COVID-19 Relief Grant, which is a one-time offering, awarded 36 Illinois Fire Departments \$316,000 dollars. This grant was intended to provide funds to make up for lost donation revenues stemming from their inability to host local fundraising events during the periods of quarantines in 2020. These fundraising events include pancake breakfasts and spaghetti dinners, and pay for necessities like fuel for fire trucks, utilities, and insurance.

The OSFM collaborated with the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA) who helped assemble a special committee to review the grant applications utilizing a blind review needs-based analysis. This grant is financed through the Illinois Fire Prevention Fund, a non-general revenue fund that is supported primarily by a 1% assessment of the gross fire risk premium receipts of all insurance companies operating in the state.

We want to stress the importance of making sure you remain compliant with NFIRS reporting. It's important, even if you do not have any calls in a month, you still need to complete a "No Activity Report" in NFIRS. Failure to do this can cause you to be ineligible to receive a grant or loan from the OSFM. For directions on how to complete one see the FAQs here: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/lam/FireDepartment/NFIRS/Pages/NFIRS-Support-and-Guides.aspx>. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact us at <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/Contact%20Us/Pages/default.aspx> and select "NFIRS" in the "Division or Category" field." This is affecting numerous departments and districts eligibility to apply and receive grant funding. To

check the status of your department or district, visit: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/SFMDocuments/Documents/NFIRSComplianceReport.pdf>.

**JC Fultz**  
State Fire Marshal

### Illinois Fire Chiefs Association

From IFCA President John Kachanuk, Havana FD:



Wow, what a journey and an honor to be the President of the IFCA. I would like to thank the members of the IAFFPD who were able to attend the conference and the banquet. It was great talking with you about our continued partnership. I look forward to working with the IAFFPD as together and along with the Illinois Fire Service partners we move forward with educational opportunities, sharing of information and promoting excellence within the Fire Service. If you have any questions or need my assistance, please feel free to reach out to me or our executive team. My direct email contact [j.kachanuk@havanail.gov](mailto:j.kachanuk@havanail.gov) please never hesitate in contacting me.

From Jim Grady III IFCA – ED:

The IFCA held our annual conference in Peoria (October 17-20) and had a good turnout consisting of 200 registrants, 123 vendors (staff of 400) and 30 mechanics. Several recognitions were given: Chief Emeritus Alan Berkowsky, Ed Enright, Pat Kenny and Bruce Ziegler. Chief of the Year for 2020 Chiefs Derek Bergsten and John Koller. We also recognized Ed "EE" Enright

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with a lifetime achievement award titled the Jerry Burke Award, named after our previous Director and mentor Jerry Burke.

The passing of the gavel welcomes Chief John Kachanuk of the Havana FD as President for 2021-2022. John worked his way through all levels within the association, served on several committees and is going to be very engaged with our partners / friends at the IAFFPD. Chief Rich Mikel from Elk Grove Village FD is our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President followed by Chief Tom Styczynski of the Alsip FD as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. Our immediate past President is Don Shoevlin of the Harlem-Roscoe FPD. This executive team along with all of our directors and representatives are committed to working with the IAFFPD as together we move forward with training, education, sharing of resources and partnerships.

The OSFM & IFCA Partners with Covid relief Grant Assistance to/for Volunteer Departments that lost revenue due to the lack of fund-raising events. With over \$300 thousand dollars given to 30 plus departments this was a great success and partnership. I have attached an article written by Chief Al Yancey of the Minooka FPD addressing one major item that was discovered within the grant process – lack of reporting. Please read this and if you need help reach out.

Over the past few years, we have seen many fire departments in Illinois not reporting to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). This is a relatively simple task and it is free. Some department may have commercially available report management system (RMS) whereby they report their fire incidents as well as track training, inspections, equipment etc.; however, while an RMS is certainly a useful tool, it is not required to report NFIRS. You can simply contact the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal NFIRS Reporting Manager and get set up a direct entry account, using a web-based reporting tool and begin reporting your fire and response incident reports.

Here is the deal. First and foremost, IT IS THE LAW. (425 ILCS 25/0.01) (from Ch. 127 1/2, par. 5.9) Sec. 0.01. The Fire

Investigation Act required the fire chief to report, *by the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month following the occurrence of a fire that facts relating to the cause and origin of the fire, and as such other information as may be called for in a format approved on or forms provided by the Office.* So, the fire chief, as the appointed fire official is responsible to make sure that fire and incidents are reported. The “format approved on or forms provided by the office” is NFIRS and the “office” is the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal.

So, you really need no other reason because it is the law. However, one might argue there are some reasons with greater impact; dollars! The Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (the clearinghouse of all national fire data) will not throw you in jail for not reporting; however, if you do not report you are not eligible for state or federal fire grants. The Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Federal Emergency Management Agency disqualifies hundreds upon hundreds of applications from the very beginning because the department does not report NFIRS. The basis of the disqualification – it is the law; the state and federal government cannot award state and federal funding to a fire department that is not reporting (under the law).

It does not matter how much you need the grant funding or how well you prepared your grant application. If you do not report to NFIRS you are disqualified. I can tell you from firsthand experience that it is disheartening to see departments who can really use the funding be disqualified due to a simple reporting requirement. Let's fix this. There are millions of dollars available through Illinois OSFM Grants and hundreds of millions of dollars available through Federal Assistance to Firefighter Grants.

Get your login and begin reporting. If you need assistance with how to report on the web-based tool, the OSFM and even the FEMA NFIRS Office can assist you. Don't miss out on needed funding due to lack of reporting. To get started, go to the OSFM's NFIRS information page: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/lam/FireDepartment/NFIRS/Pages/default.aspx> which includes information on how to obtain a username as well as training resources and contact information for the OSFM NFIRS help: [sfm.firshelp@illinois.gov](mailto:sfm.firshelp@illinois.gov)

The IFCA assessment team has expanded our delivery to include virtual assessments/testing? Dave Slivinski and his team is ready to serve the members of the fire service with promotion testing, new hire interviews and consulting services? You might think what can an assessment do for us or my volunteer department? You might be surprised as an assessment will help with a road map for continued success plus give well deserved pats on the back for overall success. Our new virtual officer development/evaluation gives you an insight with future officers, and for volunteer departments the need to promote and cultivate officers is a priority. We feel we will deliver you quality and professionalism in every aspect. Contact Dave Slivinski our Consulting Manager. [dslivinski@illinoisfirechiefs.org](mailto:dslivinski@illinoisfirechiefs.org)

The IFCA Education-Research Foundation is delivering all levels of classes directly related to The Fire Officer levels. Information will available on our website. [www.illinoisfirechiefs.org](http://www.illinoisfirechiefs.org)

Every month the IFCA sends out a monthly news Hot-Sheet, if you as a Trustee would like a copy please ask your Chief as he/she should be receiving from our IFCA Area Representatives or send me a note and we will make sure you are kept informed. [jgrady3@illinoisfirechiefs.org](mailto:jgrady3@illinoisfirechiefs.org)

If you have any questions or need information, please do not hesitate in contacting me or our IFCA office. [jgrady3@illinoisfirechiefs.org](mailto:jgrady3@illinoisfirechiefs.org) 1-847-966-0732.

## Illinois Fire Service Institute



Fall is here and the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) team is busy delivering top-quality training and education across the state.

### FALL 2021 ACADEMY

IFSI welcomed our largest ever Academy class on September 15. Fifty-four candidates, representing 26 departments and 17 counties are working to complete the resident program in Champaign. Over the course of the seven-week program, the IFSI instructional team will challenge each student to develop comfort and familiarity in live fire conditions and learn

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how to operate effectively and efficiently as a member of a company.

### BASIC OPERATIONS FIREFIGHTER BLENDED PROGRAM

The Fall 2021 Basic Operations Firefighter (BOF) Blended class has successfully completed 12 weeks of balanced hands-on and online training. Students are progressing well through this pathway to state certification with the support of a strong instructional team.

Dates and site locations have been set for the Spring 2021 BOF class. This no cost program will be offered in Cherry Valley, Colona, Streator, and Centralia starting January 8, 2022.

### SAVE THE DATE

Preparations are already underway for the 2022 Winter Fire School. This annual event will once again offer hands-on, live fire and classroom training programs. Registration opens in November. As always, we are grateful for your support in the fulfillment of our Mission.

**Jim Keiken**  
Director

### MABAS

*Called to Assist the Fire Service in Louisiana After Another Devastating Hurricane.*



*Members of the Illinois Fire Strike Teams in Louisiana who participated in local 9/11 memorial events*

Hurricane Ida struck the coast of Louisiana on August 29<sup>th</sup> with sustained winds of over 150 MPH. The damage was devastating as it moved across the nation and caused severe flooding in

the Northeast. The State of Louisiana requested assistance under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). This is the nationwide mutual aid network between the states where assistance can be requested by a stricken state. Illinois answered two of these requests. The first was for a 46-person Type III Urban Search and Rescue Team. They left Illinois on August 30<sup>th</sup>. The Team, along with other state teams, conducted search and rescue, damage assessment, and humanitarian missions in the area north of New Orleans. After a week assignments Louisiana determined that it needed assistance in bolstering the hard-pressed fire service surrounding New Orleans and the Team returned home on Labor Day.

Replacing the US&R Team were three Fire Engine Strike Teams comprised of 68 firefighters from 33 departments throughout Illinois. They responded with 15 engines, 4 command vehicles, and other equipment for a two-week deployment. While in Louisiana the Strike Teams filled in the mostly volunteer department fire stations surrounding New Orleans. They also provided fire protection services for the large base camp established for the relief forces from all over the nation. One particular problem the Strike Teams were faced with was the large number of carbon monoxide related incidents caused by the use of gasoline generators in enclosed spaces due to the lack of electrical service. It should be noted that both responding groups provided exemplary humanitarian aid to the residents they met by giving up their deployed food and water, clearing debris, tarping damaged home roofs, and many other needed tasks. We all should be proud of the service provided by these dedicated men and women of the Illinois Fire Service.

One common factor with this response is the special equipment, vehicles and training that were used by MABAS to help mitigate these emergencies. Much of these items and training were provided by Federal Homeland Security funds that were made available after the 9/11 attack. Illinois has greatly benefited from the enhanced mutual aid capability available from the fire service. Unfortunately, much of this capability is beginning to wear out and the Federal funding is no longer available for replacements. An initiative is underway by the IEMA to

assess the capital equipment needs of all agencies providing mutual aid in Illinois in recognition of the importance fire service mutual aid is to Illinois. MABAS is in the process of evaluating its capital equipment replacement needs over the next 10-year period. We then will look to the State of Illinois to include these capital expenditures within the State budget. This will not be an easy process, but it will be helpful to have the support of the IEMA Director in this effort. We will also need the support of the many fire service organizations in Illinois to make this happen.

MABAS staff are finalizing plans for the 2022 MABAS Conference which will be held February 21 through February 25, 2022 in Bloomington-Normal, IL. The theme of the Conference will be back-to-basics with MABAS and fire service based mutual aid. We hope many of you will be able to attend.

**Glenn Erickson**  
Executive Director

### Illinois Fire Safety Alliance Camp I Am Me Seeking Volunteers to Make a Difference in Young Survivors' Lives



The Illinois Fire Safety Alliance's signature program, Camp "I Am Me," provides a special and unforgettable one-week camp experience for children and teenagers who have experienced injuries from burns. 2022's camp will represent the 31st year of Illinois' camp for young burn survivors and the IFSA is looking for compassionate and enthusiastic volunteers from the fire service and beyond to help during the entire week of camp – in the cabins, at the various activities, and having just as great of an experience as each of the 70 campers!

The IFSA's camp provides the setting for child burn survivors to share their common experiences while being able to play and not feel self-conscious about their scars. The benefits to the campers – physical, psychological, and emotional, all begins with the tremendous volunteer staff during this one special week of the year.

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Though the 2022 dates have not yet been set, Camp "I Am Me" has historically started the third Sunday of June and concludes the following Saturday. The program takes place at the YMCA Camp Duncan in Ingleside, Illinois, located in northern Lake County. Volunteers must be 21 years of age at the time of camp to participate, must be able to stay at camp the entire week, and participate in camp's Staff Professional Development Day, which will take place in February in Rolling Meadows. For additional details and to complete the Request to Volunteer Form, visit [www.IFSA.org/get-involved](http://www.IFSA.org/get-involved).

### The Return of Fire Prevention Week Luncheon Sees 300+ Attendees

More than 300 members of the fire service and beyond joined the IFSA on October 7th at the 80th annual Fire Prevention Week Luncheon. Guests were treated to a gourmet lunch and networking opportunities with colleagues and program sponsors alike.

Rather than a keynote presentation this year, each of the 14 members from the Illinois Fire Services Association were able to address the room on their organization and their strategic direction through the pandemic and beyond.

Three Fire Prevention Awards were also presented. Special Recognition Awards were given to Illinois Senator Adriane Johnson and Illinois Representative Jeff Keicher for their successful efforts in thwarting fireworks legalization legislation earlier in the year. The Corporate Responsibility Award was given to First Alert, the Illinois-based smoke alarm manufacturer, for their years of ongoing fire safety and burn prevention efforts across the state.

Nominations for next year's program are now being accepted. The online nomination form can be found at [www.IFSA.org/FPWL](http://www.IFSA.org/FPWL).

**Philip Zaleski**  
Executive Director

## Illinois Fire Inspectors Association



It is with fondness that we remember Tom O'Connell from the Chicago Fire Dept. Tom died August 10<sup>th</sup> at the age of 88. Tom was often seen with Pat Mieszalla presenting ground breaking fire prevention programs. He was known nationally for his efforts in the area of public education, including development of his children's "Learn not to Burn" program, and the establishment of the Illinois Burn Camp. Other efforts included Illinois' smoke detector legislation and the creation of the Illinois Fire Fighters Memorial.

**Save the Dates:** The IFIA plans to return to the in-person format for Fire and Life Safety Conference March 23 – 25, 2022 at the Par-a-Dice hotel in East Peoria. We will again be present a free pre-conference class for IFIA members for the afternoon on March 22. Program topics are tentative watch our website for more information.

The *Did You Know Mini-Seminar* returns November 19<sup>th</sup>. This gives attendees a

chance to hear about many different topics at a high level. The date is November 19<sup>th</sup>, and it will be virtual. The cost is \$25, and the topics scheduled so far are: review of flexible sprinkler drops; NPFA 770, hybrid fire extinguishing systems; fire alarm device operation video; five year forward flow backflow preventer test; non-invasive 5-year sprinkler inspections; and smoke control system maintenance.

Are you one of the fire departments having difficulty finding out about construction occurring in schools, or getting in to do fire inspections on that work? If so, read on. The following link will take you to the Illinois School Code, specifically Article 3 on the Regional Superintendent of Schools <https://tinyurl.com/2kw9aswv> (105 ILCS 5/Art. 3). The sections shown below deal with being made aware of plans and specifications received by a regional office of education for any future construction or alteration of a public school, and how to perform new construction inspections under the jurisdiction of a regional superintendent.

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The Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts  
is proud to be a member of the  
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Sec 3-14.20 - If a municipality or, in the case of an unincorporated area, a county or, if applicable, a fire protection district wishes to be notified of plans and specifications received by a regional office of education for any future construction or alteration of a public-school facility located within that entity's jurisdiction, then the entity must register this wish with the regional superintendent of schools. Within 10 days after the regional superintendent of schools receives the plans and specifications from a school board and prior to the bidding process, he or she shall notify, in writing, the registered municipality and, if applicable, the registered fire protection district where the school that is being constructed or altered lies that plans and specifications have been received. In the case of an unincorporated area, the registered county shall be notified. If the municipality, fire protection district, or county requests a review of the plans and specifications, then the school board shall submit a copy of the plans and specifications. The municipality and, if applicable, the fire protection district or the county may comment in writing on the plans and specifications based on the building code authorized in Section 2-3.12, referencing the specific code where a discrepancy has been identified, and respond back to the regional superintendent of schools within 15 days after a copy of the plans and specifications have been received or, if needed for plan review, such additional time as agreed to by the regional superintendent of schools. This review must be at no cost to the school district.

Sec. 3-14.21. Inspection of schools.- Sec 3-14-21d - If a municipality or, in the case of an unincorporated area, a county or, if applicable, a fire protection district wishes to perform new construction inspections under the jurisdiction of a regional superintendent, then the entity must register this wish with the regional superintendent. These inspections must be based on the building code authorized in Section 2-3.12 of this Code. The inspections must be at no cost to the school district.

**Robert Morris**  
Executive Director, IFIA

## Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts

With great enthusiasm I announce the election results for the Trustee position with the Illinois Firefighters' Pension Investment Fund (FPIF). Thank you to all the fire districts and municipalities who voted, the leaders with NIAFPD and IAFPD for their communications and Chief Dave Geary, Wauconda, for his behind-the-scenes efforts and support through the campaign process. Dave gave me new reasons to admire his commitment to the fire service. Thanks to the Lisle Woodridge Fire Protection District board and staff for their encouragement and support.

I am very grateful, proud, and humbled to be the only representative on this Board from a fire district. My term runs until January 2023. The nine-member FPIF Board, includes four members from municipalities and fire districts and five members from active and retired firefighters, began their work on January 1, 2020 with a goal to provide above market returns at below market costs. The first task being to consolidate funds from 296 local fire pension funds into the statewide investment pool overseen by FPIF.

On October 1, 2021, seventy-five local pension funds made the first fund transfer to FPIF. The remaining local pension funds (approx. 60 funds in each tranche) will transfer their investments to FPIF in Nov, Dec, Jan, and Feb. When funds are received by FPIF, the team of investment managers will begin to place those funds into a range of diverse investments that are intended to increase returns on investments and reduce the amount of



revenues needed to fund future pensions. With the October funds transferred to FPIF, the process of reallocating these local funds to the new investment model has already begun. FPIF will begin to issue reports on investments it is managing in December 2021. Increasing investment performance is a critical objective for FPIF. From my limited contact with FPIF Board and staff members in the last ten days, I can assure you that they are consumed by the task of transferring and reinvesting our assets into higher performing investment vehicles. A key strategy for improving investment performance is reducing the expense for managing each investment. The FPIF investment team has negotiated some amazingly low expense costs to get us started.

Beginning with its October 15<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, FPIF began discussion with standards for future actuarial reviews. Each local pension fund from around the state has likely had good and bad experiences with the Illinois Department of Insurance or your own actuary reviewing the capability of your pension fund to pay for future benefits. If you would like to share your thoughts about these experiences, and how they might inform future actions, I welcome your feedback.

I need your input and feedback to successfully represent fire protection districts. Contact me with any comment or concern. I especially need your feedback over the next 60 days on the standards that will be used for actuarial analysis. I can be reached at 630-388-8127 or jfperry1970@gmail.com. Please keep in touch! ■

**John Perry**  
Lisle-Woodridge FPD

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