

ASSOCIATION UPDATE



*By Cheri Breneman
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Productive Partnerships

The new year is an ideal time to remind the membership of their important role with their your fire protection district, and the essential role they play in everything we do as their Association. To echo the words of President Dillon, please help us stay connected and informed on the many ways we can support each other. Whether you are serving your first term or your 10th term with the Board of Trustees, the educational programs and printed resources provided by IAFFPD can help you be a better trustee. While we have a significant number of members who utilize their IAFFPD membership, our goal is to be sure that all districts are made aware of what they have available.

All fire districts who renewed for 2023 receive a follow-up thank you packet that includes the 2023 Annual Calendar and Checklist, a tool many have grown to rely on for their monthly meetings.

The packet also included the newsletter with a summary of passed legislation and information on all upcoming educational programs we are planning in the months ahead. Please add this information to your next meeting agenda.

This moment is a nice segway to share yet another reminder about the new conference partnership you have read in my previous articles and seen in other print forms and social medial platforms. There are many members, vendors, and supporters who have longed to see this

collaboration and there are leaders from both organizations working together to bring what is anticipated to be a resounding success. **Join us for the 1st Annual Fire Service Conference June 14-17, 2023 in Peoria.**

Whether you have attended the IFCA conference or the IAFFPD conference in the past or not, this year is the one that we are encouraging members to consider attending. As with previous years, the IAFFPD Foundation has financial assistance available via their scholarship program that can help offset some of the expenses for districts that want to attend but may have budget constraints hindering their participation.

As association conferences in general are beginning to return to what they were pre-pandemic, the idea to consolidate this year, presents an incredible opportunity for an in-person gathering at the facility both of our organizations have used for many years. This year is very important for both the IAFFPD and IFCA and I personally hope that we can count on you to be part of this history-making endeavor and fire service partnership!

Speaking of fire service partnership, it was a true honor to be recognized by the Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts at their 30th Annual Conference for the role I have in the IAFFPD's organizational partnership. I am grateful to many who have contributed to my professional growth over the years and who have supported the efforts that have

enabled me to make a difference to those we serve. Thank you to NIAFFPD Executive Director Gina Degleffetti and President Bonnie Bayser for this special recognition. During the award presentation, Gina shared the IAFFPD has been proactive with NIAFFPD in the Pension Election process – campaigning and lobbying members to support our mutual efforts – to have a voice on the IFPIF pension board and my specific work with communications between the NIAFFPD, its members and several other fire districts across the state to educate them on the petition and election process. The efforts prevailed in the first election process and allowed the IFPIF organization to recognize our strong influence on our members with pension boards. The IAFFPD and NIAFFPD have been working together to address this serious issue legislatively since the consolidation law was passed.

As for other work, the two organizations have a 25-year history of working together on issues that impact our members. My role is to help organize the Fire Service Legislative Day in Springfield, which is returning after a 3-year absence and is being planned for March 8th.

The year 2023 presents an opportunity to witness the work and success that comes with strong partnerships. ■