

ASSOCIATION UPDATE



By Cheri Breneman
Association Administrator

Proudly Representing the IAFPD

In recent months, I have been offered the opportunity to represent the Association at several conferences, meetings, and special events. While in some cases, Zoom meetings are here to stay, I tend to appreciate the value that comes with in-person attendance and gatherings. The fire service is a close-knit community united by a shared mission to make a difference, contribute, and share stories. I can always expect to learn something and promote the excellent work of IAFPD in the process.

Most recently, I was honored to represent this great organization with a few other IAFPD leaders at the 100th Anniversary of Illinois Fire College, which was held in June. The IFSI went all-out to showcase their rich history, what they have experienced during this long period, and how they have provided training over the decades. Congratulations to all who planned the event and presented this special celebration, and cheers to a strong future with more growth and success.

In May, the IAFPD was a newcomer to the Illinois Association of County Officials Spring Conference tradeshow conveniently held in Springfield. The three-day event invited us to deliver information about our organization, brag about our members, and introduce our top-notch training program to the County Board members. We must ensure these county officials know the services IAFPD provides to those they appoint.

Next up, it is always a true honor to attend the Illinois Firefighter Medal of Honor Ceremony held annually in our

Capitol City. If you have not yet made the trip for this program (held annually on the second Tuesday in May), I strongly encourage you to do so. The OSFM and the event committee spend months preparing for a day of remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice and others who heroically serve with courage, pride, and honor. If you are interested in learning more about the event or want to nominate a hero within your fire district, the details are posted on the events page of the OSFM website sfm.illinois.gov.

Finally, the IFCA Symposium, also held in May, brought together about 250 members of city fire departments and fire protection districts, a dozen or so supportive vendors, and state organization representatives. As an attendee who has also planned conferences, I congratulate the IFCA on another well-organized meeting for learning and networking. A great job by all!

We are eagerly anticipating the next big event for both the IFCA and IAFPD as we return to Peoria to co-present the IFSC 2024, the combined conference in September. If you were unable to attend this event last June, we certainly hope you will join us this year. This publication includes the program details and other information about the 3-day event, including how to book your room and get registered. Thank you to the IFSC planning

committee for [Working Together for a Better Tomorrow](#).

If your fire district has new trustees or has trustees who have never attended an IAFPD Conference, we encourage them to consider attending the IFSC 2024. The IAFPD Foundation Scholarship program has a Trustee's Grant Program available to assist members who are interested in attending the conference but may have financial constraints hindering their ability to participate. Details are available on the IAFPD Foundation page located on IAFPD.org.

Guests are also welcome and encouraged to attend the IFSC. The IAFPD Auxiliary has arranged two activities for guests to participate in while their spouses or significant others are in the classroom. All registered guests are invited to attend the conference's social events, meal functions, and tradeshow activities.

Both associations have developed a quality educational lineup. One of our primary goals is to ensure that every attendee leaves the event with something useful that they may use or apply right away. Both IAFPD and IFCA websites have links to the event registration website. Register before August 23, and you can save a few dollars for each attendee. I hope to see you in Peoria September 15-18, 2024. ■



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IACO Spring Conference presents: *Being Civil in and Uncivilized World*



IACO Spring Conference Cheri Breneman and Richard Brunk, Rock Island County



IFCA Symposium Steve Dinolfo & Karl Ottosen's Open Forum



IFCA Symposium sponsor American Response Vehicle



IFSI 100th Anniversary Street Party: Jim Keiken, Cheri Breneman, Ken Yeakley, Brett Kunkle, Madeline & Dick Jaehne and Brad Breneman



IFSI 100th Anniversary Celebration presented plaque by IFA leaders Kevin Schott and Terry Ford

The **Medal of Honor** is the highest award given by the state of Illinois to a Firefighter for an act of outstanding bravery or heroism by which the Firefighter has demonstrated in great degree the characteristics of selflessness and personal courage above and beyond the call of duty, under adverse conditions, with the possibility of extreme personal risk.

On May 14, 2024, at the 31st Annual Medal of Honor Awards Ceremony in Springfield, Teutopolis Lieutenant Brett Repking, Firefighter Dan Kocher, Firefighter Ryan Lee, Montrose Assistant Chief David Browning, and Captain Drew Pals were recipients of this award. The recognition was for the rescue of several victims at the scene of a vehicle accident on September 29, 2023 involving the release of thousands of gallons of anhydrous ammonia, a very toxic poisonous product that causes severe respiratory distress or death. The individual actions of these Firefighters included the rescue of several victims under adverse and toxic conditions requiring four of the victims being flown from the scene in critical condition to trauma centers in the state.

