



# IN THE NEWS

## Act of Kindness!



Center **Somonauk Community Fire Protection District Trustees**  
Left center: Mark Tuttle / Center right Brad Meyer & surrounding are members of the Ambulance Corps of Greenfield, Iowa.

The Somonauk CFPD board donated a BLS Ambulance to Greenfield, IA Ambulance Service. The donation was fitting given the destruction caused by an F-4 Tornado in May. The fire station was destroyed along with the ER at the hospital and ambulance building. Their Fire Chief and several members were displaced as their homes were destroyed also.



## Congratulations!



Chief James P. Seavey Sr. Health & Wellness Leadership Award: Chief John Swan Sr. (IL)



Colona Fire Chief John Swan was named the recipient of the Chief James P. Seavey Sr. Health & Wellness Leadership Award by the National Volunteer Fire Council on Tuesday, March 12.

NVFC credited Swan for starting the "Go Green Clean" program at the Colona Fire Department. In that program, firefighters used green cattle tags to identify gear that was clean and safe for firefighters to use, preventing anyone responding to a fire from using gear that hadn't been decontaminated after being used in a previous incident.

After the program was successfully implemented in Colona, Swan used his role as president of the Illinois Firefighters Association to bring Go Green Clean across the state. Since then, Go Green Clean has visited over 40 towns and given 94 free decontamination kits to fire departments. According to the IFA, the campaign has reached more than 100,000 people.

Swan was presented with the other award winners at a ceremony on April 26 in Arlington, VA. Way to go John! The award Co-sponsored by VFIS and Ward Diesel Filter Systems.



**IAFPD needs your Fire District to Elect Karl Langhammer (Carol Stream FPD) to the Illinois Firefighters Pension Investment Fund (IFPIF) Board**



- The IFPIF Board is responsible for all actuarial reporting to determine our annual pension cost and the investment of our pension funds. There are 296 suburban and downstate pension funds, 109 represent fire districts. Representative fairness is what we need.
- While Fire Districts are not provided a seat at the table the IAFPD continues to lobby lawmakers to amend the statute that allows a permanent seat.
- Karl Langhammer has a 14-year history of serving the Carol Fire Protection District. He served as a paid-on-call firefighter for 7 years and has served as a trustee on the Fire and Pension for the last 14 years. He currently serves as Treasurer. These important leadership roles speak to Karl's readiness to serve the FPIF. His participation focuses on the local government mission of fiscally responsible service.



Watch for the ballot to arrive at the Fire District Offices as they will be mailed on October 27th  
The Fire District Board President casts the Vote, not the Pension Board President.  
Return the completed ballot by November 20th to allow time for the delayed mail service  
and arrival by the December 1st election deadline!



# IN MEMORY



**Richard "Rich" Escherich, Jr.** (82) of Lake of Egypt, IL, passed away on January 30, 2024. Rich served the U. S. Air Force from 1961 until 1965. His working years were spent primarily with U.S. Steel sailing on the Great Lakes and his last many years working for First National Bank, until retirement in 2003, Rich was a Trustee for the Lake of Egypt Fire Protection District. He is survived by his loving wife of 26 years (Linda), four children, two step-sons, and fifteen grandchildren.



**Maurice O'Keefe** (83) of Manteno, passed away March 12, 2024. Surviving are his wife (Donna), five sons, two daughters, his brother-in-law, 12 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. 'Moe' retired from working at Quaker Oats in 1995. He also served as a Manteno Police Officer. His true passion lay in the fire services. He served the Manteno Community Fire Protection District for 63 years as a firefighter, fire chief, pension trustee and fire district trustee. He was president of the Kankakee Valley Fire Chief's Association for many years and his larger-than-life presence and etched his legacy into the district's history.



**Wesley Oliver Hoscheid** (86) of Cherry, passed away on March 23, 2024.. He married Rita Houski on January 7, 1961 (Rita), she precedes him in death. He served in the United States Army National Guard for 6 years. He worked at Conco Inc. for 32 years and later at Complete Industrial. He volunteered for the Cherry Fire Department for 54 years. He is survived by his three sons, eight grandchildren 8 great grandchildren



**Dennis Frank Oaks** (72) of Belleville passed away July 9, 2024. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Valerie, three children, their spouses, eight grandchildren, four great grandchildren three brothers. Dennis proudly served his community for 35 years at Northwest St. Clair County Fire Protection District in Belleville, 14 of those years, he was the Fire Chief until his retirement in 2015. Dennis, better known by firefighters, close friends and family as "Skippy



**Rev. Glenn Bergmark** (88) passed away on March 13, 2024. He lived a truly remarkable life dedicated to faith and service. Most notably, he devoted 56 years to the Lemont Fire Protection District, serving as Volunteer Firefighter, Chaplain, Commissioner, and Trustee. He played a crucial role in the development of the LFPD from a volunteer department to the thriving FPD it is today. Reverend Bergmark leaves behind his loving wife of 65 years, MariLynn.



**Charles William "Bill" Watts** (89) of Havana passed away June 4, 2024 He married Marla in 1960 and she preceded him in death oin 2019. Bill is survived by his two daughters, 5 grandchildren; and 6 great-grandchildren. Bill joined the Navy in 1954 and later served in the U.S. Marines as a Medical Corpsman. He worked as a mail carrier and later as maintenance for Chataqua Refuge for 30 years. He served as a fireman for 60 years and was former chief of both the Havana City and Rural Fire Departments, where he was named Chief Emeritus in 2009.



**Michael A. "Hiko" Simmons** left this earth on June 27, 2024. He was an active member of the Galena Fire Department for 30 years and served 13-year on the Illinois Firefighters Association Board.



**William "Bill" Heyde** passed on June 26, 2024. Bill Heyde was an integral part of the Marion Fire Department and began as a firefighter in August following the path of his father. Heyde spent time as a Lieutenant and Captain before landing his place as Assistant Fire Chief. He retired in Sept. 2022. Heyde also served on the original MABAS 45 Technical Rescue Team and in several rescue deployments.



**Wendell Lee Verkler** (83) of Cissna Park passed away on May 5, 2024. He married Donna Hari on April 11, 1963 in Cissna Park and she survives. Other survivors include two sons, one daughter, six grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and three brothers. Wendell was owner of Verkler Construction since 1970. Wendell was a member of the Cissna Park Fire Department for thirty-six years. He served as a fireman, Assistance Chief, Fire Chief and Trustee/President of the Fire Protection District.



**William (Bill) Hoffmeister** (88) of Frankfort passed away on June 15, 2024. Bill was employed at Rock Island Railroad and then left to enlist in the Coast Guard at Cape May, New Jersey. He also attended Machinist Mates School at Great Lakes, Illinois. He was also involved for over 37 years as a trustee with the Frankfort Fire Protection District and past President of the Northern Illinois Alliance. Through these organizations, he met so many people who then became dear friends for life.