

# 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 OSFM Stresses Preparedness and Safety for COVID and Home Heating This Winter

The pandemic has impacted everyone, and the fire service has not been immune to this. COVID-19 numbers are rising again across the state and the nation, and the OSFM wants to remind everyone to take the proper mitigation measure whether that is on the job, in the firehouse or at home with your family. If we as first responders are not able to respond and help those in our community, who will? The winter months are going to be extremely difficult and that is why it's so important that we protect ourselves and take these precautions.

"We have lost several brothers to this disease that continues to impact the entire world. I want to personally thank all of you in the fire service and EMS community. Your work during this difficult time has been extraordinary. I am proud to say that Illinois has the best and most highly trained fire service in the entire country. Keep fighting and working hard and we will get through this together. Remember our motto: One Team One Fight," said Illinois State Fire Marshal Matt Perez.

The CDC has updated COVID guidance documents for firefighters and EMS personnel that can be found by clicking on this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/firefighter-EMS.html>.

The OSFM, MABAS, Illinois Fire Service Institute, Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois and the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association

worked together to produce a forum focused on helping departments create or review their Continuation of Operations Plan (COOP). Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6nBLmRpFwc&t=1164s> to view the video. It is more important than ever to ensure that your COOP is current, and you have plans in place for not if COVID-19 impacts your department, but when it does.

The winter months are here and that means heating season has arrived once again. Heating is the second leading cause of home fires according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Half of all home heating fires occur during the months of December, January and February. Heating equipment is a leading cause of home fire deaths. The leading factor contributing to ignition for home heating fire deaths (54%) was heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattress, or bedding. This year it's going to be even more important for residents to understand the importance of heating safety. People will be staying home more as the pandemic continues.

Failure to clean, principally from solid-fueled heating equipment, primarily chimneys leading was the leading factor contributing to home heating fires. Have home heating equipment and chimneys inspected annual by a professional to prevent fires. Make sure that all vents are clear of debris or snow and ice during the winter months. This will help to prevent carbon monoxide from building up in the home. Keep anything that can burn at least 3ft from heating equipment (furnace, fireplace, wood stove, portable heater). Most home heating fire deaths

(86%) involved stationary or portable space heaters. Give space heaters space! They account for 4 out of 5 home heating fire deaths. If using space heaters, make sure to plug them directly into an outlet, do NOT use extension cords or power strips. Ensure that those heaters have an automatic shutoff feature and create a 3-foot kid/pet free zone around them. Test all smoke and CO alarms monthly and inspect to ensure they are not expired. If you find a broken or expired alarm, replace them with a new 10-year sealed battery smoke alarm. Everyone can do their part to reduce the risk of fire and lower the number of tragedies that take place during the cold winter months.

**State Fire Marshal**

### Illinois Fire Chiefs Association



Welcome to 2021. I hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday with family and friends while maintaining your close circle. Different I am sure, but hey, we did end 2020 with the opportunity to get a shot in the arm. 2020 was a year of change and full of cancellations but also a year of unknown opportunities. I am immensely proud of the way our team responded. Many internal enhancements were made which will assist us in reaching out to our members mor expediently when it needed along with the ability to meet virtually. So, what is ahead in 2021. I would say still many unanswered questions, but that will not hold us back from meeting

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our mission. I urge all of us to enter this new year with a sense of promise and hope. I look forward to being able to hold more in person meetings and events than virtual. I look forward to this year allowing us to return to a small resemblance of the old norm. Be assured however that no matter what, IFCA and myself are here to support and promote the fire service in Illinois.

*IFCA President Don Shovelin [2020-2021]  
Harlem-Roscoe FPD*

Winter is upon us and with that starts the planning season for our symposium and conference along with the opening of opportunities for education grants through the IFCA Education and Research Foundation, please see my insert below.

### **Scholarship Application Period Open**

Please help spread the word that the application process is Jan. 1-Mar. 15, 2021. Chiefs, the applicants will need your help. A letter of recommendation is needed from the Chief Officer to complete the application process. For the Chief Officer, a letter of recommendation is needed from your superior (i.e., Trustee, Mayor, Village Mgr., etc.). The application will be posted January 1 on our website at [www.illinoisfirechiefs.org](http://www.illinoisfirechiefs.org). Good Luck to all.

This past year, we converted to a new data management system that has gained great momentum with from our Area Representatives and Directors gathering local information related to the membership. This system will also be used to register for classes and events.

**What is next?** [Worth repeating] I wish my magic 8 Ball had the answer, but all it says it ask again later. With that said, the IFCA will plan for 2021's symposium and annual conference knowing that there will be changes needed and necessary, and are committed to bringing current, informative programs delivered in a safe and professional manner.

**Still in the works:** Our Annual Symposium scheduled for May 12-15, 2021 in East Peoria with keynote speaker Chad Williams USN proud member of Seal Teams 1 & 7. Chad will draw upon his SEAL Team

experiences and instructive perspective on teamwork resilience, leadership, and self-motivation. Chad will share his experience and what lead him to his calling as a Navy SEAL and a man of faith. Our conference is scheduled for October 17-20, 2021 in Peoria.

The IFCA assessment team has expanded its delivery to include virtual assessments/testing. I could not be any prouder of our leader Dave Slivinski who is taking our services to a new level of professionalism. His team is ready to serve the members of the fire service with promotion testing, new hire interviews and consulting services. If you are currently using our services, we thank you and we will continue to bring you a professional process. If you have not used our services, please give us the opportunity to provide you with our services. We feel we will deliver you quality and professionalism in every aspect. Contact Dave Slivinski our Consulting Manager via email at: [dslivinski@illinoisfirechiefs.org](mailto:dslivinski@illinoisfirechiefs.org).

Worth repeating: The IFCA Education-Research Foundation will be restarting all levels of classes directly related to The Fire Officer levels. Information will be available on our website. [www.illinoisfirechiefs.org](http://www.illinoisfirechiefs.org) If you are interested in IFCA apparel and or novelties, please look at Eagle Engraving website and go to the at the top of the page Chief Corner for IFCA items [www.eagle-engraving.com](http://www.eagle-engraving.com).

The IFCA sends 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).

Teamwork – The Illinois Fire Service is a great team, moving forward as a true team committed to Excellence, Professionalism and Safety.

**Jim Grady III**  
Executive Director

### **Illinois Fire Service Institute FY2020 Annual Report**

The FY20 Annual Report: *On Our Watch* is now available online. This document captures key data points for the Institute to include course deliveries, students and counties served,

program reach, unit accomplishments, financial statements, and affiliate support. The document can be viewed at [fsi.illinois.edu](http://fsi.illinois.edu).

If you would like a printed copy of the Annual Report for your records, contact Jill Sauer via email at: [jillks@illinois.edu](mailto:jillks@illinois.edu).



### **97<sup>th</sup> Annual Fire College**

Save the Date for the 97<sup>th</sup> Annual Fire College, scheduled June 3-6 in Champaign. Planning is underway for this premier training event. Complete program and registration details will be posted on the IFSI website in early spring.

### **18<sup>th</sup> Annual Explorer Cadet Fire School**

IFSI is looking forward to welcoming back future members of the fire service this summer. The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Explorer Cadet Fire School is moving to June in 2021. The event will take place June 10-13 in Champaign. Registration and program details will be available in April.

### **Updated Training Props, Apparatus, and Facilities**

During 2020 and 2021, IFSI experienced or will experience significant upgrades and additions to our training props, apparatus, and facilities in Champaign. Each of these upgrades and/or additions will continue the IFSI tradition of improving our ability to deliver; realistic, high fidelity, and safe training. Additionally, they will enhance and improve the support functions needed to ensure that training is delivered effectively and efficiently. Some of the more significant upgrades and improvements include;

- Completion of the new 2-story resident burn prop. (October 2020)
- Completion of the SOTP rescue prop which will allow for training to new NAFFPA standards relative to cell tower and wind turbine rescue, high rope angle rescue and additional confined space requirements. (Fall 2020)



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- Completion of the last aspects of the new Collapse Rescue Operations prop. (Fall 2020)
- Delivery of our second new engine from Pierce. (December 2020) See above photo.
- Relocation and improvements to the LP training area and props. (Spring 2021)
- Building of a 40' x 80' 3-sided covered pole building for mobile training props and heavy equipment storage. (Summer 2021)
- Phase-1 of apparatus exhaust capture system for the fire station. (Summer 2021)
- Headquarters building (0294) expansion and connection to the Learning, Research, Resource Center (LRRC). This \$1.5mil addition will add 2,800 square feet of office/support space to building 0294. (Completed Fall-Winter 2021)

In the pursuit of our mission accomplishment, IFSI will continue to; listen, work with our fire service partners, and work tirelessly to meet the needs of firefighters and first responders in 2021.

**Jill Sauer, Director of Marketing and Public Relations**

### Illinois Fire Safety Alliance

#### 2021's Camp "I Am Me" Scheduled\*



The Illinois Fire Safety Alliance is excited to announce the dates for Camp "I Am Me!" "Burn Camp" provides a special and unforgettable one-week experience for children and teenagers who have experienced injuries from burns. Through the generosity of donors, supporters, sponsors, and volunteers, the IFSA continues to offer this unique, week-long experience at no cost to campers! Everything is covered!

2021's camp is tentatively scheduled (all based on health conditions at the time) for Sunday, June 20 to Saturday,

June 26, with the Fire Apparatus Parade, Appreciation Day, and Fun Fair taking place on Wednesday, June 23.

Planning information and any changes that may occur along the way between now and June will be provided to fire departments and volunteers and will be disseminated via the IFSA website, newsletter, and social media pages.

### Boot Day for Burn Survivors Fundraising Campaign

For 30 years, members of the fire service and others from across the state have worked relentlessly collecting donations on behalf of the Boot Day for Burn Survivors campaign to support young burn survivors across the state.

Two options are now being provided to groups looking to host Boot Day fundraising events for the IFSA. The traditional on the street/in front of store option as well as a virtual option, which is social media and email-based.

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# We Respond Because You Do.

Firefighters and EMS teams are dedicated to protecting those in need; saving lives and property.

And while you protect others, we respond with **Fire & Rescue Pro**, an insurance and risk management program designed for the unique needs of Fire Protection Districts and EMS operations.

Fire & Rescue Pro is offered through Bliss McKnight, Inc. and the local independent insurance agent of your choice.



Contact us for more information or an insurance review.

Bliss McKnight, Inc.  
2801 E. Empire, Bloomington, IL 61704  
phone: 800-322-3391 | info@blissmcknight.com

This insurance is underwritten by continental National Fire and Casualty Company and other fine companies, and provided through Bliss McKnight, Inc. and local independent insurance agents.







**ARE YOU PROTECTED FROM HAZARDOUS EXHAUST FUMES IN THE STATION?**

Hazardous diesel exhaust emissions in a fire station are a firefighter's most significant cancer health risk. Did you know these emissions could even be a serious legal liability for your fire department?

Eliminate this hazard from your station with Plymovent code-compliant vehicle exhaust capture and removal systems. Our totally automatic start-up and disconnect source capture systems are the recommended method for controlling exhaust emissions at your station.



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**FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:**

Doug Young at 800.236.8450  
dougyoung@hastingsair.com

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Whether your collecting donations at intersections and storefronts this year, or creating social media and email campaigns, your commitment to support those impacted by burn injuries will make a significant difference.

A new addition to this campaign and a way to further support the IFSA mission, organizations will have the option to receive 10% of the funds they raise to use towards fire safety and burn prevention programs in their communities!

For more information and details, visit [www.IFSA.org/bootday](http://www.IFSA.org/bootday).

**Philip Zaleski**  
Executive Director

### Illinois Fire Inspectors Association



In December, the Officers of the following IFIA Board for 2021 were sworn in: President Jamie Brown, Vice-President Jay Atherton, Secretary Mary Ludemann, and Treasurer Mike Rons.

Our annual Fire and Life Safety Conference will be held in March 22-26 as a virtual conference.

We know that learning from a computer for most of day is difficult, so we will present 3-hour sessions each day. The plan will be a general session on Monday, followed by two days of Fire and Life Safety programs, and that will be followed by two days of code enforcement programs.

The topics for the conference will be What's the Big Deal About CRR?, Motivating for Behavior Change – Why Don't People Do What We Want Them To Do?, Effective Social Media, Vision 20/20 and IL Model, Solar Plan Review, Fire Pumps, Flammable Refrigerants, and Update to NFPA 72.

A flyer has been e-mailed out, and is available on our website at [www.IllinoisFireInspectors.org](http://www.IllinoisFireInspectors.org) with all of the particulars and more detailed program will be available soon.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal held a special meeting of the fireworks committee in December. Following testimony from approximately 12 people,

the committee reversed their earlier vote, and **firecrackers are still on the prohibited list of fireworks** within the State.

Note our upcoming February mini seminar. On the 26th there will be a class on Clearing the Air: How Nitrogen and Automatic Air Venting Are Used to Control Corrosion in Sprinkler Systems. These classes are in conjunction with the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board.

Now that the IFIA has a way to track hours of people on our virtual training sessions, we will award certificates only to those people who were on line for 80% of the hours. For a 2.5-hour mini seminar, that means being on line for two hours. The 80% is also what the OSFM uses for attendance for their courses.

The IFIA continues to offer State certifications. In January we had 25 people signed up for a Fire Inspector 1 class. Classroom layout allows this class to be taught safely. In May we will be offering a Public Fire and Life Safety Educator class in Downers Grove. This class is needed if someone desires the Basic Fire Prevention Officer certification. Registration for this class is on our website.

The International Code Council and the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) have established a new task force on pandemics. Recognizing the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on new and existing buildings and construction, this task force will develop resources to help prepare buildings and communities for disease-related threats.

The task force will analyze all aspects of the built environment to find solutions that reduce the risks posed by pandemics. The task force will consist of a broad cross-section of building, code, design, insurance, plumbing and public health environmental experts appointed by the Code Council Board of Directors. In addition to the creation of the task force, several workgroups made of task force members and other interested parties will be established. For more information, visit [www.iccsafe.org/pandemics-task-force](http://www.iccsafe.org/pandemics-task-force)

As a reminder, the IFIA has two bookcases full of NFPA, IFSTA, Delmar, Jones and Bartlett, and Thompson books that we are looking to get rid of to free up some space. Some of these are current

editions, some only one edition old, and some quite old – going back to the 80s. While the majority are fire related, there are many EMS books. The cost of the books start at \$3.

### Upcoming Events

**February 26** – Mini Seminar: Clearing the Air: How Nitrogen and Automatic Air Venting Are Used to Control Corrosion in Sprinkler Systems

**March 22-26** – Virtual Annual Fire and Life Safety Conference

**May 3-5, 10 & 11** – Public Fire and Life Safety Educator class – Downers Grove

**Robert Morris**  
Executive Director, IFIA

### Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts



**Fire Districts were unable to garner enough votes to win a board seat on the Firefighters Pension Investment Fund (FPIF)**

The new Consolidated Firefighter Pension legislation became law in Illinois in January 2020. The stated purpose of the new legislation was primarily to increase investment returns for the Firefighter Pension Funds and reduce administrative expenses. The Consolidation also enacted enhancements for Tier 2 firefighter retirement benefits (Tier 2 firefighters are those who were hired after 2011) and the new law also turned over the fiduciary responsibility for preparing and distributing the annual actuarial contribution report, which is what is used to determine each agency's annual pension contributions.

The legislation was developed by a Pension Task Force appointed by the Governor. Representatives of labor and municipalities were invited to participate and contribute to the legislation which eventually became law. Fire Districts did not have a voice, nor were they even consulted in the development of the proposal. Once the law passed, a transitional board was appointed to oversee the newly created Firefighters Pension Investment Fund (FPIF) until permanent trustees could be elected. The election to permanently seat the Board was just completed and certified by the

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FPIF election committee on December 4th.

Three (3) Board positions were available in the election for Agency Representatives. John Perry, Lisle Woodridge FPD, and David Geary, of the Wauconda FPD, ran in the election in an effort to have our voices heard and have Fire Districts represented on the Fund's Board. Unfortunately, John and David were unsuccessful in this attempt. Mr. John Perry gathered 91 votes for the 4 year term and was only 3 votes shy of winning, while Chief David Geary collected 83 votes for the 2 year term, only 6 votes short of winning.

Qualified voters in this election were Presidents of Fire Districts and Mayors, whose organizations had Firefighter Pension Funds. Eligible Municipalities outnumbered Fire Districts by a 2 to 1 margin. Approximately 80% of Fire Districts participated in the election, which was outstanding. Unfortunately, only 7 more districts voting would have resulted in 2 board seats represented by Fire Districts!

John Perry explained that "he was disappointed for our constituent group - the Fire Districts who have funds to be overseen by this new board. It is important that every local pension fund sees the FPIF as an effective vehicle to grow assets to pay pensions." After the election, John shared ideas with some of the winning candidates on 'how we can judge the success of the FPIF'. John added that "We as Districts welcome the opportunity to discuss and solicit ways to make the FPIF a showcase."

Dave Geary stated "by not having a seat at the FPIF Board specifically for Fire Districts, there exists a very unfair and misrepresented population across the State. I know that as a result of this election Fire Districts will be better recognized as a force in these issues and that when need arises we (Districts) will be better prepared to engage and support common causes. Who knows, maybe one day legislation will be enacted to get a more fairly representative FPIF Board into legislation, or even a designated seat for Districts."

The Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts (IAFPD) and the

Northern Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts (NIAFPD) created a partnership of support for the two Fire District candidates in this election.

Cheri Breneman, the Association administrator for the IAFPD stated that "the cooperation between IAFPD, NIAFPD and all the FPD's that have pension funds will be even more important in the future. We made great strides in informing and involving Districts of the process through email blasts, newsletters and personal calls. While we may not have won a seat, I am honored and proud to be part of what is still an amazing accomplishment of pulling together. Even without a win, we have proven plenty! We have a voice and we will continue to be heard by those who need to hear it."

"This election proved our ability to garner great cooperation among Fire Districts and demonstrated just how successful we as Districts can be when we work together on common issues. With a little extra effort next election we will surely have an even stronger voice so we

can become more fairly represented on the FPIF Board" stated Denise Kaufman, Executive Director of the NIAFPD.

The boards of both the NIAFPD and IAFPD would like to thank John Perry and Dave Geary for their time and commitment to the process. They both exhibited concern for the future of our Districts' pensions by personally stepping up to enact representation. Candidates Perry and Geary spent a great deal of time personally calling Districts to ask for their vote and solicit input and concerns. Thank you gentlemen.

Both organizations expressed the same sentiment that 'We are all proud of the terrific Fire District support that was requested and received'. Because fire protection districts didn't get a seat at the board table, it shows the enhanced need to band together for legislative action and representation for our Districts statewide. Fire Districts as a group, led by IAFPD and NIAFPD will work for further outreach, cooperation and the needs of the districts with the new FPIF board. ■

### **IDOL Provides New Safety Resources for Fire Service Employees** *State Fire Officials Join in Promoting IL OSHA 101 for Fire Departments*

Firefighting is a dangerous profession that requires well-serviced equipment, safety protocols and regular, ongoing training. To assure these safety standards are being met, the Illinois Department of Labor's Illinois OSHA regularly inspects public fire departments across the state.

Now Illinois OSHA has compiled a comprehensive safety and health compliance guide as well "OSHA 101 for Fire Departments" videos to provide guidance and take the mystery out of Illinois OSHA inspections.

"Our fire service first responders work in some of the most dangerous conditions. We have developed these training materials to both educate them on OSHA standards and to protect these essential workers," said IDOL Director Michael Kleinik.

The 88-page Occupational Safety and Health Compliance Guide for Fire Departments is the most comprehensive assistance resource Illinois OSHA has ever developed for the Illinois fire service. It is available here on their website and a three-part video series is also available on IDOL's YouTube channel.

"The ultimate goal of Illinois OSHA is to ensure that public employees, like firefighters, finish their shifts safely and finish their careers healthy," said Kambarian. "It is the hope of Illinois OSHA that these resources lead to greater fire department compliance with occupational safety and health standards and that leads to a safer and healthier Illinois fire service."

The Illinois State Fire Marshal's office and the Illinois Fire Service Institute welcomed and encouraged the use of the new materials by fire departments and fire protection districts across the state.

