

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 continues to stress the importance of fire departments, firefighters and Fire Chiefs keeping their FDMail accounts current and checking them often. This is the way the OSFM sends out updates related to training, grant opportunities and other important announcements. We encourage everyone to check our social media pages (facebook and twitter), our monthly newsletter, and our website for updates and announcements related to training, grants, and other important news as well. If you don't remember your password to FDMail or are a new Chief who has just taken over and needs help setting up or re-establishing your account, please reach out to the OSFM and we will make sure you are receiving our communications.

Community Risk Reduction Week was January 20-26th this year. CRR efforts continue to grow here in Illinois, and we are proud to say Illinois is being recognized as a national leader in CRR thanks to the efforts of our statewide taskforce.

The goal of CRR Week is to raise awareness among the fire service that implementing CRR concepts will make communities and departments safer. The idea of CRR week originated with individuals from various fire departments across the country. The focus of the week was on the five "E's" of CRR: Education, Engineering, Enforcement, Economic Incentive and Emergency Response. Any fire department or community, big or small, rural or metro, paid or volunteer can use CRR concepts to identify risks in their communities and start to plan how to reduce those risks.

Monday, January 20, 2025, is Martin Luther King Day and is nationally recognized as a National Day of Service and an opportunity for communities to reduce the risk in their community through a series of educational and other programs. Be on the lookout for more on the Illinois CRR social media pages on how you can start a CRR program no matter the size of your community. The taskforce is excited to continue to expand on our mission of promoting the importance of risk reduction in Illinois by inspiring community ownership and providing coordinated resources. The collaboration in 2025 between the Illinois fire service community will continue to yield amazing results and CRR efforts will continue to grow in Illinois.

The volunteer emergency worker credit (Public Act 103-0009) is a non-refundable credit worth up to \$500. It can be used to reduce your Illinois individual income tax liability for taxable years that begin on or after January 1, 2023, and before January 1, 2028. The credit is available to volunteer emergency workers who apply for it, meet the qualification requirements, and are awarded the credit.

Prior to a volunteer emergency worker being able to apply for the credit certificate with Illinois Department of Revenue, the volunteer emergency worker must be rostered and registered, and the Fire Chief of the volunteer emergency worker must submit an acknowledgement and attestation, utilizing the PSE WebAccess Portal, to the OSFM for each member of their fire department who meets requirements of Section 234 of the Illinois Income Tax Act.

The eligible volunteer emergency worker must submit an application with Illinois Department of Revenue to receive a required credit certificate. Only those members that receive a credit certificate from the Illinois Department of Revenue will be permitted to apply the tax credit on their tax return. Further information referencing the Volunteer Emergency Worker Tax Credit will be available on the Illinois Department of Revenue website <https://tax.illinois.gov/individuals/credits/volunteer-emergency-worker-credit.html>. Please note that the total amount of all tax credits awarded each calendar year cannot exceed \$5,000,000, and credits are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

James A. Rivera
Illinois State Fire Marshal

Illinois Fire Service Institute



The Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) had a wonderful 2024 marked with celebrations, growth and partnerships that fully embraced our mission of Helping Firefighters Do Their Work Through Training, Education, Information, and Research. As we look back on the year, we are grateful for those who supported IFSI programs and events, and we look forward to another productive year of serving first responders.

A LOOK BACK ON 2024: 100 Years of Training and Tradition

IFSI was proud to celebrate a century of training and tradition in 2024. The

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year-long salute recognized our past and present instructors, program growth and achievements, and the extraordinary individuals and affiliates that support our mission. Some recognition efforts were subtle and internal to the team. Other activities were forward thinking and public facing. All were executed with the intent of displaying gratitude for and pride in our ability to sustain a century of service.

The culmination of the centennial campaign took place in June during the 100th Annual Fire College. During the four-day event, we welcomed over 2500 students, staff, and special guests to the Champaign training grounds. Activities included a community open house, a 100-year dedication ceremony with guest speakers, staff socials, prop dedications, and a street fair social.

As we move into 2025, we are focused on carrying traditions forward and continuing to deliver premier training to Illinois students and departments.



A Year of Growth and Opportunity for Skill Development

In 2024, IFSI developed 12 new courses to further provide training opportunities for first responders. This brought the total number of courses offered during FY24 to 1244. IFSI reached 58,171 students and 1002 fire departments.

In addition, IFSI added 4 new Pro Board and 7 new IFSAC accreditation levels in the past year.



VIP Visits and Affiliate Meetings

IFSI was honored to host multiple visits and affiliate conferences in the past year. The visits included hosting the University of Illinois Board of Trustees for a facility tour and training demonstrations. Guests were able to view our instructors at work and obtain an understanding of the physical demands of the profession.

The University's Professional Staff Leadership Academy and President's Executive Leadership Program also visited IFSI in late 2024. The engagements were attended by members representing all three of the University system campuses and were great opportunities to highlight the IFSI training facility, courses, and instructors.

IFSI also hosted the North American Fire Training Directors and the Illinois Community Risk Reduction annual conferences. These meetings not only



provided participants with information related to their affiliate initiatives but increased awareness of IFSI programs and facilities.

Hosting campus and community organizations, like these, are an important part of fulfilling the IFSI mission. Sharing information about training and our critical role in emergency preparedness helps build support for IFSI and the entire fire service industry.

It was a great year for IFSI. We are refreshed from the restful holiday break and energized for the new year. As always, we remain grateful to the organizations, affiliates, partners, and individuals who support us in the fulfillment of our mission.

Jim Keiken
Director

Illinois OSHA
Sample Operational
Guidance Now
Available



After a year-long effort, IL OSHA is pleased to announce that a sample incident command, accountability, and mayday standard operating guideline is now available. IL OSHA worked with the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal, the Illinois Fire Chief's Association, IFSI, and MABAS to develop this sample SOG with the following goals:

- To provide a basic SOG (it is three pages) that fire departments without an incident command, accountability, and mayday SOG can easily adopt and implement.
- To provide an SOG that could be adopted verbatim, adopted with modifications, or used as a tool to compare a department's current SOG to the sample SOG.
- To strike the balance between firefighter safety and operational effectiveness.
- To combat the "NIOSH 5" fatal factors of firefighter deaths and injuries on the fireground.

To be clear, this is a *sample* SOG. While IL OSHA requires fire departments that perform interior firefighting to have *an* incident command, accountability, and mayday policy/SOG/SOP, IL OSHA does

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not require that fire departments adopt this SOG.



IL OSHA expects to present on this initiative at several conferences this year. We hope to see you there. Direct Link: [Sample SOG Structure Fires \(Command, Accountability, Mayday\) V1](#)

Questions? E-mail DOL.Safety@illinois.gov or call 217-782-9386. One stop resource: www.osha.illinois.gov/fire

Erik Kambarian
Chief, Division of Occupational Safety and Health (IL OSHA)
Illinois Department of Labor

Illinois Fire Chiefs Association

Over the past year, the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association has worked to refine our focus to assure our organization is effectively serving our members. We have updated our communications and continue to make changes to assure our members are informed. We have also initiated a review to ensure all of our programs are updated and providing our members what they need to serve their community. Possibly the most significant change was with our Assessment and Consulting services. Last year, we brought on Chief Ray Kay(ret), formerly with the Orland Park Fire Protection District. We focused our efforts on providing the best promotional assessments possible, customized to the needs of each specific Fire Protection District. We are committed to doing this at the lowest possible cost. Our goal this year is to expand our consulting services, to provide help to even the smallest Fire Protection District. Watch for these programs later this year.



The Illinois Fire Chiefs Educational and Research Foundation is running our annual scholarship program. This program began in 1983 and has provided scholarships to firefighters and fire officers since. To date, the scholarship program has awarded nearly \$2.2 million in scholarships to over 2900 firefighters. Last year, we were able to award \$63,000 to 70 fire service professionals. The 2025 Scholarship competition opened January 1st and closes March 15th. Scholarships are awarded for College Education, Fire Officer Certification and Fire Service Training. Encourage your members to consider applying for a scholarship today!

Donate to the scholarship fund in memory or honor of someone important to you. You might even consider donating in the name of an important event. The Foundation matches your donation and assures the scholarship recipient knows whom the scholarship is memorializing. If you are interested in helping fund the scholarship but are not ready to donate quite yet, consider bringing a foursome to our annual golf outing in Bloomingdale on July 16th. For more information, go to www.illinoisfirechiefs.org or give our office a call at 847-966-0732.

We look forward to seeing many of our IAFPD partners at the annual legislative day on April 30th in Springfield. Never hesitate to contact us at info@illinoisfirechiefs.org or 847-966-0732. Or you can email me directly at execdir@illinoisfirechiefs.org.

John Buckley
Executive Director, IFCA

IL Fire Inspectors Association

At our December Board meeting the new IFIA Board was sworn in at the Elk Grove Fire Department. The elected Board for 2025 will consist of Jason Staidl, Elk Grove Village FD – President, Dan Medina, Addison FPD – Vice President, Ryan Angelus, Plainfield FPD – Secretary, Dave Bricker, Homer FPD – Treasurer.

The IFIA has added another chapter, the Central State Fire Inspectors. Jeremy Mitchel from Champaign FD is President of that group. Welcome aboard. That means that the IFIA now has three chapters -



Central State Fire Inspectors, Will County Fire Inspectors, and the Illinois Fire Investigators Strike Force.

The full program of our Fire and Life Safety Conference is out. The conference is March 26 – 28, 2025 in East Peoria. Registration is open now. The full program with course descriptions and speaker bios is available at <https://tinyurl.com/IFIA-Conference>. Sign up now to get the early bird rate.

If your organization is not a member of the IFIA, join now for only \$100 *per department* to receive the discounted member rate. Remember, if your department is a member, all of the personnel receive the benefit of member pricing for all of our education offerings throughout the year.

Our opening speaker will be the Clark County Fire Chief at the time of the Las Vegas 2017 country music festival mass shooting. This case history will provide some good information that can benefit your organization, should a major event occur in or near your jurisdiction. Make sure you invite your police, EMA people, EMS coordinators, and emergency room directors/supervisors.

If you are a business that would like to support the education of fire inspectors and fire and life safety educators, there is a way to do that. The IFIA Board has developed gold, silver, and bronze level sponsorships. These are good for a calendar year. Specific details are available on our website.

We will be offering Fire Inspector 2 and PFLSE classes in Romeoville this year. Registration can be done now on our website. Note that if you need a **scholarship** to cover the registration fee, that application is also on our website. The dates of the Fire Inspector 2 are September 4, 11, 18, 25, October 2, and the PFLSE is July 28 – August 1.

On the IFIA website, on the right side of on the training tab, is a PDF for 2024 CEUs. It shows what we have a record of for people attending our seminars/classes last year. We have done our best on its accuracy, but the ultimate record is the certificate(s) you would have received. To make a copy of your hours, just scroll to you name and print a screen capture of your record. Due to the fact that the

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office does not receive faxes anymore, our fax line will be removed. Please make any necessary changes.

Just a reminder that we accept nominations for our awards year-round for anyone who is deserving recognition for going above and beyond. It is also possible to nominate civilians or businesses. Check out our webpage for the different awards and submit them now.

Upcoming events:

- Feb 28–Mini Seminar
- March 26 – 28 – Annual Fire and Life Safety Conference
- Jul 28 – Aug 1 – PFLSE Romeoville
- Aug 17 – IFIA State Fair day
- Sept 4, 11, 18, 25, Oct 2 – Inspector 2 Romeoville

Robert Morris
Executive Director, IFIA

Illinois Fire Safety Alliance

*First-Ever Statewide
Smoke Alarm Installation
Blitz Sees 5,000 Units
Distributed to 70 FDs
Across Illinois*



In conjunction with the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and the Illinois Community Risk working smoke alarms. The campaign was an extension of the Be Alarmed! Smoke Alarm Installation program, a fire prevention program which distributes fire safety education materials and 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms to fire departments in the state of Illinois. The participating fire departments deliver the education while installing smoke alarms in at-risk homes within their communities. Both the educational materials and the smoke alarms are provided to the fire departments at no cost as a result of funding from both Camp I Am Me and OSFM.

Blitz Data*:

- 71 Participating fire departments
- 5,232 Smoke alarms distributed to fire departments
- \$130,800 Equipment value provided to fire departments

- 2,351 Smoke alarms installed by fire departments
- 743 Homes protected with new, working smoke alarms
- 1,678 (989 high-risk) residents protected with new, working smoke alarms

**Reported by participating fire departments as of 11/06/2024.*

2025's Statewide Smoke Alarm Installation Blitz is scheduled for October 19-25. To learn more about the Be Alarmed! Smoke Alarm Installation Program, visit www.IFSA.org/alarms.

Fire Safety Advocates Honored at Annual Fire Prevention Week Luncheon

Camp I Am Me by the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance honored three fire safety and prevention advocates at the 83rd annual Fire Prevention Week Luncheon which was held on October 10th.

The event, which took place in Woodridge, included award presentations to Lance Nueses of the Rolling Meadows Fire Department, the O'Fallon Fire Department, and Illinois Senator Julie Morrison. Lance Nueses of the Rolling Meadows Fire Department was presented with a Life Safety Award as a result of his public education efforts, inspections and assessments of life safety issues throughout the community, and mentoring recruits and new members joining the department.

The O'Fallon Fire Department was recognized for their dedication to fire safety presentations, smoke alarm installations, "One Home, One Extinguisher" program, and work with community businesses to further spread their fire safety messaging. They too received a Life Safety Award for their tremendous efforts.

Illinois Senator Julie Morrison was presented with the Special Recognition Award for her ongoing commitment and always going above and beyond as an outspoken opponent on the expansion of fireworks sales across the state of Illinois. Her passion is always present when educating the public, and other legislators, on the dangers of these life-threatening devices.

A special thank you to our Keynote Presenter, Chief Michael O'Brian of the Brighton Area Fire Authority (Michigan). He addressed the 330+ guest audience on

emerging technologies such as battery-powered vehicles and energy storage systems and how this new technology is affecting the fire service and the communities in which they reside.

The generous sponsors of the 2024 Fire Prevention Week Luncheon included Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board, National Fire Sprinkler Association – Illinois Chapter, 1-800 BoardUp of Rolling Meadows, Battalion Board-Up, Chicago Water & Fire Restoration, Leopardo Construction, Promos 911, and Romexterra Restoration.

2025 Summer Camp Volunteer Requests Now Being Accepted

Even though the 34th annual Summer Camp will not be taking place until June of 2025, Camp I Am Me is already beginning to prepare for the signature event. Camp I Am Me's Summer Camp is Illinois' camp for young burn survivors, which provides a special and unforgettable one-week experience for approximately 60 children a year. Through the generosity of donors, supporters, sponsors, and volunteers, Camp I Am Me offers this unique experience at no cost to the campers, including lodging, meals, all of the special activities, events, and transportation to and from the camp.

Whether you have been attending camp as a volunteer for 10 years or are looking to become involved for the first time, completing the Summer Camp Request to Volunteer Form is the first necessary step to becoming involved in next year's camp. This allows Camp I Am Me to properly identify volunteers to staff the cabins and activities, ensuring the kids have the best week of their year!

If you are interested in volunteering at the 2025 Summer Camp, which requires being at camp for eight days and nights (Saturday-Saturday), complete the Request to Volunteer Form at www.IFSA.org/get-involved. The deadline to submit your request is February 7, 2025.

Philip Zaleski
Executive Director

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Firefighters' Pension Investment Fund



The Firefighters' Pension Investment Fund (FPIF) Board of Trustees met on December 20, 2024, and approved its Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. I am pleased to report that the Fund received an unmodified ("clean") audit opinion for the FY 2024 report. In addition, the Board released a special report marking its first five years, titled *The First Five Years*. This report highlights the origins of FPIF, the transition of Article 4 pension fund investment assets, and the Fund's activities following the transition. Both reports are available on the FPIF website.

Trustee Elections

FPIF held Participant and Executive Trustee elections in 2024.

- **Participant Trustee Election:** Matthew Kink (Springfield) was re-elected to a 4-year term beginning

January 2, 2025. However, due to a lack of qualified candidates, a vacancy remains, which will be filled by the Board. The appointed trustee will serve until January 3, 2027. A special election to complete the remainder of the 4-year term will be held alongside the 2026 Participant Trustee election.

- **Executive Trustee Election:** Mayor David Pileski (Village of Roselle) and Mayor Michael Troup (City of Quincy) were certified winners by the FPIF Election Panel at its meeting on December 9, 2024. Treasurer Karl Langhammer (Carol Stream FPD) finished third. Mayor Pileski and Mayor Troup will serve 4-year terms, starting January 2, 2025.

Quarterly Investment Update

For the quarter ending September 30, 2024, the FPIF investment portfolio returned 6.5%, on par with the policy benchmark of 6.5%. The one-year trailing return for the portfolio was 24.4%, outperforming the policy benchmark of 23.6%. All returns are net of fees.

The broad U.S. equity market returned 6.2% for the third quarter. Given the recent

market strength, future returns for U.S. equities may be more muted, though the backdrop for the space remains positive amid expectations for broad earnings growth and mostly constructive economic data.

The broad non-U.S. equity market returned 8.2% for the third quarter. Emerging market equities continued to deliver strong results, while developed markets were buoyed by easing inflation and interest rate cuts.

The broad U.S. fixed income market returned 5.2% in 3Q and erased the negative performance notched in the first half of the calendar year. On a year-to-date basis, the index is now up 4.4% through the end of September.

The U.S. job market showed significant strength in September, exceeding expectations with 254,000 new jobs added. This growth pushed the unemployment rate down to 4.1% and increased wages by 4.0% year-over-year. The Fed aims for a "soft landing" (slowing inflation without significant job losses) and the recent data on inflation and GDP growth suggests the U.S. may be on track to achieve this. ■

118th Congress Adjourns Senate Fails to Act on Special District Grant Accessibility Act

The leadership at the National Special District Coalition (NSDC) wanted to keep you all apprised that our SDGAA legislation did not pass this session - we were SO close! As we move into 2025, we will make sure to keep you all apprised to get this across the finish line.

Thank you for your support during this process - if you haven't had a chance, please go ahead and sign our support letter- we will all need this as we go into 2025. <https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/support-grows-quickly-view-list-of-hr-7525-s-4673-supporters>

Late into the night, the 118th Congress drew to a close as members of the House and Senate concluded their legislative business for the year. In the Senate, lawmakers failed to act on the *Special District Grant Accessibility Act* (SDGAA; H.R. 7525), which means the bill will need to be reintroduced in the new 119th Congress.

Despite broad bipartisan support for the legislation, a combination of politics, timing, and process considerations prevented H.R. 7525 from advancing in the Senate. In short, with very few bills moving through "regular order" in the upper chamber this year, the champions of SDGAA – Senators Kyrsten Sinema (I-

AZ) and John Cornyn (R-TX) – had to rely on achieving full consensus among their Senate colleagues in order to advance the legislation by what's known as a "Unanimous Consent" agreement. Those efforts fell just short of the mark in the waning hours of the legislative session.

Looking ahead, the National Special Districts Association (NSDA) will be working early next year with our House and Senate champions and bill sponsors to reintroduce SDGAA. NSDA would like it express its sincere gratitude to our special district partners across the country for their tireless work on this critically important bill.

Background:

The bipartisan *Special District Grant Accessibility Act* would codify a first-ever formal definition of "special district" in federal law. Additionally, the bill seeks to ensure that special districts are eligible for all appropriate forms of federal financial assistance. Specifically, the legislation would require the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to issue guidance to federal agencies requiring special districts to be recognized as local governments for the purpose of federal financial assistance determinations. ■