

OPENING CEREMONIES

JOHN SWAN:

If everybody could take a seat and shut the doors. We're ready to start our annual meeting. Before we start, I'd like to have the Madison County Honor Guard Presentation of the Colors. Can you all stand.

At this time I'd like to welcome all of you to the oldest and longest running Firefighter Association in the State of Illinois. This is our 120th Conference. Quite a milestone. Over the years this fire association has made great strides in the fire service and it continues today. Being here this weekend will be no other than quite an occasion in training and education of our firefighters; we'll meet our mission. I'm hoping that everybody here today will enjoy, not only the conference, but will have a real learning experience. With that, I want to do our opening invocation and introduce our new Chaplain, Lee Gatzke. If you will give us your invocation at this time, I'd appreciate it.

CHAPLAIN LEE GATZKE: Let us pray. Almighty and most holy Lord, in the bible from the book of Ezekiel, the 36th Chapter and the 26th Verse, I will give you a new heart with a new desire and right desire. I've put a new spirit in you. So, Lord, as we are about to open up the 120th Illinois Firefighters' Association Conference, we not only ask that you give us a new heart, but also give us a new desire to learn the new and innovative ideas that have come about through the fire science technology. We thank you for all the board members who diligently work year after year to put this conference on with the new and right desire for the fire personnel. We thank you God for the innovative instructors that will present their portion of training, but most importantly, thank you for the participants that will attend those classes with a new and right spirit, and a desire to learn. God, as you give us a new sweet spirit, we ask that you help us to retain the sweet spirit that is in this place and walk together by the brotherhood and sisterhood of firefighter personnel, also known as the Brave and the Proud; those who are truly ready to take on the task of fighting fires and saving lives, in your son, Jesus, precious name. Amen.

JOHN SWAN: Thank you. We appreciate it very much. At this time, on a sad note, our state has already lost six firefighters in the line-of-duty. Our State Fire Marshal is here today, and I'm going to ask him, because he'll be leaving to go to Hindsboro for the funeral. Fire Marshal Larry Matkaitis. Give him a big hand.

FIRE MARSHAL LARRY MATKAITIS: Thanks, John, and thanks for the invitation. The Governor appointed me, not for my public speaking ability, and Mike Deckelmann is here from

the Chicago Fire Department, and he's a retiree and he knows me real well. So he knows that I have to make sure that I watch what I say all the time because I can do stupid. I try not to, though. I'd like to make a couple general comments before I go to updates. The updates are easy.

Let me give you a short bio about me. Could I have a show of hands, but I'm pretty sure I know what the answer is. How many of you are volunteers? Mike, you haven't volunteered for anything. The reason why I asked is this; obviously you can tell from the accent that I'm from Chicago. A short bio on me, I was born and raised in Chicago. I attended Northern Illinois University, and I was in the army in the late '60's and early '70's, and then joined the Chicago Fire Department in 1975. For the first 15 years I was in the union, in union leadership, in the Chicago Fire Department, and then somebody figured that maybe I knew something. I spent the last 15 years in management and I retired as a Deputy Commissioner in '05. I didn't do that very well. I actually retired for two days; Saturday and Sunday. Monday, I started a new job and for the last four to five years after that, until the beginning of this year, I was a Regional Administrator for the State Fire Marshal's Office and Fire Prevention in Chicago, and then the Governor saw fit to appoint me as the State Fire Marshal in January. I've been very involved with the fire chiefs all over this state for a long period of time. I know a lot of volunteering chiefs, a lot of the full-time pay chiefs all over this state. A number of them originally told me that when I was appointed, there were a few mumblings about the guy north of I-80 and he didn't care about the people, or wouldn't care about the people south of I-80. Well, that's a mistake. For those of you that know me, and you will, because I'm going to be around for the next two days. We have, roughly, around 45,000 firefighters in the State of Illinois, split between paid and volunteer. I care about every single one of you every single day. My job is to move this forward with your help. One of the bad things about this job and one of the sorrowful things happens to be the line-of-duty deaths. There is no rule in the State Fire Marshal's Office that says that I have to attend any funerals, wakes, or anything else. I can get proclamations, send letters, and that's good. Larry's rule says that I will make every single one that I can make. So far we have had six this year and I've made five. I drove from the north

side last night after an event so I could attend Chief Tom Innes wake and walk through last night before coming here, and as soon as I get done talking, I'm going to go out for his funeral as well, too. Everybody counts, especially

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after 9/11. What really counts is that we all need to work together. It doesn't matter whether you're a volunteer, or paid, or etc. As a matter of fact, to a certain extent, you as volunteers, are probably more noble than those of us who are paid. You do it because it's the right thing to do and the good thing to do. The full-time pay departments do the same thing, but I gotta tell you, we get paid for it. We get overtime, holidays, we get all sorts of great things. But, you that are volunteers, do it because it's the right thing to do and because you want to do it. And I think that's tremendous and I salute you for it. Having said that, one of the things I would like to point out, I was recently at an event with Mayor Daley, and it was funny because his board person gave him his speech as he walked in. He started, he had about ten pages, and he kept flipping through the pages and he never looked at them. It wasn't because he memorized it. He just started talking and that was it. I thought it was pretty funny. I do that also.

One of the things before I go into updates is, as John mentioned, line-of-duty deaths. The sad part of this job is that when we have line-of-duty deaths, and unfortunately, we've had six this year.

I want to point out something to you, and quite honestly, I will comment further on it in my comments. In 2004 we had seven line-of-duty deaths. 2005 was a good year, none; 2006, four; 2007, five; 2008, six; 2009, two; and we've already had six this year. What I'd like you to do in your thoughts or prayers, is remember Kurt Meusel, Brian Carey from Homewood, Lieutenant Fouts from Kankakee Fire Department; Christopher Wheatley, Chicago Fire Department; Mark Johnson, Hinsdale Fire Department; Thomas Innes from the Hindsboro Fire Department.

Most of my life I've spent in uniform, and to me going to funerals happens to be the saddest part of the job. Frankly, I hate it. It's one of the things to respect and honor those folks that have given the last full measure whether it happens to be military, or whether it happens to be in the fire service. So, please, please, be safe out there.

Let me get to the other parts. I thought about starting with the old poem that says, "It was the best of times and

the worst of times," but frankly, the first part is not the best part. On the fire service end we have been pretty lucky this year. I came into the office in January, the Marion office was closed. They had eliminated the funding for MABAS, a number of other things that have been eliminated. I finally came in and found a way to do it. We were able to re-open the Marion office which we intend to keep open. We, additionally, I was able to find the

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money to restore the money for the MABAS support in Marion. In addition to that, and I was able to fast forward on Monday, to the Illinois Fire Service Institute as well, too. So, we were able to restore most of the programs. We had to quip a few things which you won't even see, because it won't affect you, except on arson, because we had to pull back because of overtime and a number of other things as well, also. And the bottom line is that if you need an arson investigator, and you really, truly got an arson fire, and you suspect it, you'll get one. But, what we can't do is just because somebody thinks that we might need one, to send one out. We just can't afford it; it's simple as that. In order to maintain the arson force that we have, that is one of the areas that we got to cut back on.

This year, though, overall on the legislative end, we didn't do too badly. There was some legislation passed for spring's list for campus sororities. In addition to that we were able to, as a matter of fact, with Colonel Jaehne, who is not here today, he and I were a tag team to make sure with Representative Moffitt, who I have the highest praise for, make sure we were able to make permanent Cornerstone Funding. Cornerstone Funding was set at a level of about \$475,000, and with the rest of the bill and signature by the Governor, it's probably going to add about \$60,000 a year depending upon how much we take in on insurance policies. This is going to be permanent, which means that they are not going to be able to take it away from you anymore. And regardless of who happens to be Governor, or what have you, I mean, we are obviously in bad financial times. Just as I walked in they said that the unemployment rates stayed at 9.6%. They don't expect that to go down. Quite honestly, for a couple years it's going to be tight. One of our major challenges is going to be funding, funding, funding, funding, funding, funding. And what I'm going to need is the support from every single organization that we have out there to maintain what we already have.

Now, when I was in the army I had a drill sergeant who had just returned from Viet Nam. And he knew most of us were going to go over there. All he yelled was "training, training, training, training, training." Of course he yelled at me a lot, too. The training part of it was that the harder that I'm going to train you out here, or running around Missouri, is the more chance you are going to have to survive in Southeast Asia, and he was right. How many people have seen Full Medal Jacket, the movie? Does everybody remember the drill sergeant? My drill sergeant was the guy who played it and he was the staff sergeant, and actually became a gunnery sergeant. Well,

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he was my drill sergeant with a different name. I saw that movie and I said, "he's back." 15 years later I said, "holy cow." Quite honestly, he saved my life and a lot of other lives. Quite honestly, my job is to make sure that we are able to provide the training and the funding to make sure that you're a success. I intend to do that. That's my approach.

Now, let me go through a couple of things that I've already touched on, and then I'll open it up for questions if you have any. We restored the MABAS money in the Marion office. We have helped make Cornerstone Funding permanent. We're changing our training certifications. One of the things that I've found when I came into office is that we had one process for Certification Programs for all of the organizations to try and streamline our training to make sure that we are getting more bang for the buck, and to make sure that these certifications, those of you that get them, are going to be done in a timely manner so you are able to get them and get them easily. My goal is to make it low or no cost if we can. I wish I could swear to it, but I can't. That's one thing about those of you who know me is that what you see is what you get. If I promise you something, I'll do it, or I won't promise you something I can't provide. Courage to be Safe Program. That has been added to the basic firefighter package. When I originally came into this office, I was approached by a number of chiefs -- is everybody familiar with The Courage to be Safe Program or not? Can I see a show of hands? The Courage to be Safe Program is a program that's designed to have you take a look at yourself and make sure you are going to be safe on the fire grounds so that you don't take unnecessary risks. I think it's a great idea. The bottom line happens to be that you have to do it at the front door risk analysis of

whether or not you can be successful at that fire and make sure we don't have any more line-of-duty deaths. Quite honestly, you're going to see it, and it'll be around the state, and there is a lot of training going on right now. We incorporated it in because I'm a believer and it's something we need to do. So if you get an opportunity to see it, please see it. It's a 16-line safety life initiatives and they call it Courage to be Safe. New Website. Please get an opportunity to go to our new website. I had them change it. I didn't like it when I was an employee, but I like it better now as a State Fire Marshal. We have attempted to make it easier for you to use. I didn't think that it was all that easy to use and I think that what we've been doing right now is a lot better, however, if you think that it can be better, please, please give us a call, give us an email, or

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whatever. If we can improve it, it's your website, not mine. It's yours. So the bottom line is that if you've got improvements, please, please send them to us. Facebook. How many here use facebook? It's all younger guys. That figures. I didn't have facebook. I know what it is because I have kids. As a result of it, I actually have a facebook page that nobody will see because I'm under an alias. I don't want anybody to send me anything on facebook. I'm afraid of what's going to happen. But, we have a facebook page, and quite honestly, there's a link on the website, and you younger guys use that stuff, and I think you will find it interesting. We're making a lot of announcements. Not only on line-of-duty deaths, but also other programs that are going on out there and other events that I think you may be interested in. What I'm trying to do is push as much information that doesn't have a conflict of interest. Information is power, and I intend for you to have all the information that you can handle. So, we're doing a lot more with that kind of stuff.

So, those of you who are facebook advocates, and it looks like a lot of you are out there, we are going to end up probably using it a lot heavier as well. Again, if you have any suggestions, please give us a call, or give us an email and let's hopefully make it better for all of us. Fire Equipment Exchange Program. See that guy in the corner over there. Terry Ford, well, Terry was on a Fire Equipment Exchange Program, and he's one of your directors as well, also. Terry has informed me, so you can beat up on him, not me, but the Fire Equipment Exchange Program at

this point, they are still revising it on the website and what have you, so as soon as they tell me it's ready to go, and we are rushing it through, we'll be back on it. I firmly believe that if in the Fire Equipment Exchange Program, if you got pieces of equipment that are serviceable or what have you, give it to us so we can give it to somebody else who needs it.

I remember in Chicago early before we had this program, we had a ton of air tanks that were all serviceable, and we were switching over, and we could not get the legal authority to give them to anybody in the State of Illinois, let alone in the country. They ended up going out of country to another country who needed them, but at the same time we weren't able to give them to needy fire departments in the State of Illinois, and I think that's wrong. So, bottom line is that if you have serviceable equipment, please give it to us and we'll give it to somebody that needs it.

As a State Fire Marshal's Office we are not going to propose any new legislation this year; I think this is a

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bad economy. If something pops up maybe we will. But there are two issues that are going to be coming up very shortly. Is anybody aware of the medical oxygen incident that happened in Homewood? I was out at the Homewood fire the day after the fire had occurred and after Brian Carey lost his life, and I walked into the fire scene with the neighboring chief who actually was at the scene. There were three oxygen bottles there. For those of you that don't know, it was a house fire, it was early in the morning, and Brian Carey was with the Homewood Fire Department and lost his life while entering to save a 98 year-old, I believe it was 90-something year-old, a veteran of WWII. He was on medical oxygen. One of the medical reporters at the scene found out there was medical oxygen, mainly for two reasons: #1 there was a sign on the front of the house that said there was medical oxygen inside, and the firefighting crews, when they responded, were told that medical oxygen was inside. There was a decision made at the front door, as there always will be, to decide whether they were going to go in or not. They thought the risk was worth it. One of the reporters at the scene went and saw the sign and picked up and indicated that he thought that the medical oxygen was the reason for a flashover or what have you. Well, after seeing the NIOSH reports, they are not leaning toward it. Although, what they left out was this: There were three

oxygen tanks that were there and none of the relief valves were off of them. Not only that, there was no indication any had leaked. So the bottom line is that we're pretty 100% certain that the medical oxygen didn't have anything to do with it. However, the NIOSH report left it out. And the reason why I'm leading into this is that there was a sudden push from the legislator because, you know, elections are coming up and the rest of it, to ask for some medical oxygen legislation, which I thought was probably the wrong thing to do immediately after the incident until we sat down and got the NIOSH Report and took a look at it. Now, we think, and I brought it and John's part of it, part of the Fire Advisory Council -- I used to be a member of it representing the Chicago Fire Department, and John Schuldt that represents your organization, is to advise me as a Fire Marshal about which way we should go. Quite honestly, we put that on the docket to see whether we could come up with common sense legislation to fix problems; not legislation that's well intentioned and well meaning, and then we have to fix it later. So, we may see some legislation regarding medical oxygen, hopefully, legislators at this point, I think they are going to listen to us and come up with stuff that's common sense, that makes sense and it works.

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There is another issue that's coming up as well, too, that we may hear about. There was an organization that wanted to attach autism training to fire certifications, they believe, and then again the wrong intention, they believe attaching this training, mandatory by the way, to the certification programs; that they would automatically get all 45,000 people in the State of Illinois, Firefighters in the State of Illinois, and everybody would get autism training. I pointed out to them that not everybody gets certifications, and as a result of it, they realized that the target audience they are trying to get, they probably wouldn't get. My wife is a special education teacher and she deals with autism and autistic kids every single day. What was proposed, she told me, didn't make any sense. What we are trying to do is we are trying to shape that as well, also.

I have a concern, also. I'm still licensed as a paramedic in the State of Illinois. If we do it for autism, then we'll have to do it for every other disease or concern out there as well, also. I think we can do this a better way. But I don't think that we are going to do it as Certification Programs. We may see that as well, too.

Those are the two biggest initiatives that we are looking at out there right now. Certainly there are going to be issues that come up with Fire Protection Districts, and everything else, and we'll take a look at it. We'll support the ones that we can and recommend changes on the ones we can't. So that's all I have on my agenda at this point.

As I said, once I get done with the funeral, I intend to come back. I'm going to go out to the yard out there if Roger let's me and take a look, and I want to see the training. I've been on that yard many times and I'd like to go out there and see what we are going to perform and whether it works or not. I think that Roger and Dick Jaehne, and the rest of the IFSI crew out there do a super job. I know as I've been traveling around, especially in the country, they have a great deal of respect for both IFSI, MABAS, and you as a group. As a matter of fact, it's a privilege to be able to be the State Fire Marshal for the greatest firefighting force in the world. As far as I'm concerned, you're my heroes, all of you. That's all I have. So, any questions? Hopefully I have answers. Mike, not even one from you.

JOHN SWAN: Now is the time guys.

Joe Heim, East Dubuque, Iowa. On the certification, I know the way it goes is they can challenge the test. Is there anything down the road for looking at reciprocity for people if they got the document training and everything, that they can get their own certification?

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LARRY MATKAITIS: I'm not adverse to doing that. I understand it's been that way for a long period of time. One thing you'll find about me is I'll always look for better ways. Quite honestly, I'm not afraid to change things. I know Mitzi is over here on our personal standard. She's in our next room over here. I'd like to take a look at that, because I was just approached by somebody from the Chicago Fire Department who actually is in airport training and has military certifications. I'm a veteran myself. What he wanted to do was get credit for training and certifications that he had. I don't know that we need to have somebody challenge those exams in the State of Illinois, especially if you received the training on a federal level. That, I think, is adequate. That's actually on my agenda to take a look at, and right now as a matter of fact, they took all of the certifications and sent them to Mitzi and we are going to take a look and see what we can do with it. That would apply to other things

as well, also. If you go and get training some other place, I don't think we ought to make it a real obstacle course in order to get the certifications. It's on my agenda and we're going to take a look at it.

JOHN SWAN: There's got to be another question guys.

LARRY MATKAITIS: If I don't get any I'll be out there if Roger gets me a pass so I can get out there on the floor. I'll be back later tonight. The one thing that I had about a Fire Marshal's job that I really do like, I found out that as the State Fire Marshal is in charge of safe cigarettes and cigars. I gave up smoking cigarettes 35 or 40 years ago. However, I do like cigars. I have given the safe cigarette program to someone else. I personally test the cigars to make sure that they go out. Quite honestly, I like that part of the job a lot. You may very well find me with a cigar later tonight, standing out in front of the place shivering with everyone else. It's very funny when you see it in Chicago with the highrise buildings and everybody with their parkas on and the rest of it smoking their cigarettes or cigars. That's the part that I really like about it. So, I'll see you around. Be safe, be careful, and go Bears.

JOHN SWAN: Before I go any further there is one thing that you don't want to forget, and that is the wives. At this time I'd like introduce Vicki Gatzke, this is our Chaplain's wife. If there is anybody that sits in here, and if you're not married or have a close girlfriend, don't think you got a little anchor tied on the side there. In that anchor is a positive. Correct? You know you guys would say that it is a positive anchor. Man, I'll tell you, if my wife wasn't by my side, without her, I couldn't do this. And, Vicki, glad to have you on board

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with us, also. Give her a big hand again.

We'll continue the introductions here. Colonel Jaehne couldn't make it. I still say "colonel" because I come from a military family. I'm going to have to get away from that. He'll be here tomorrow. With that, colonel did tell me that the Deputy Director Roger Lunt will go ahead give his report, so Roger, if you could come up.

ROGER LUNT: Thank you. I hadn't planned on those comments on the wives. I hadn't planned it, but rarely do you see me without mine. That's because she truly is the better half. And that is also because for many years she hears "no," and the fire service always heard, "yes." So, she sits at home and worries while we go out, and though we take the risk, we enjoy the risk we are taking. We

should never forget the other half. Director Jaehne asked that I always introduce myself, a little bit, before any group, but I have met many of you. But he's my boss and there is a very good reason we call him "colonel." Before I can do too much of an update, I have to share a little bit about who I am and bring you up to speed in what's going on in the Deputy Director's position at the Institute.

I'm Roger Lunt, in 1977 I tested for the Urbana Fire Department. Actually, the very site that I'm working 30 some years later. In '78, I joined the Urbana Fire Department. I have to admit the first five years were most certainly the best. I think being 25 had something to do with that. The first five years was Urbana Fire Department. After that, I realized this is what I want to do, but I want to serve the part of the state that I grew up in, it's sort of my way of giving back. So, in '83, I joined the field staff at the institute, but I moved to the Macomb Fire Department. I spent the next 21 years on the Macomb Fire Department. That's a small career department. We had a couple two or three students who lived in the station at the time. I don't think it was enough to really consider as a combination department. Over those years right up to the day, I'm still involved in all the State Fire Marshal's Office Programs, peer reviewer, a number of times with the AFG program, which I should mention that's the reason the director is not here today. He is flying back from working on our next round for AFG Grants.

In '03 I joined DMORT. DMORT is a Disaster Mortuary Operation Response Team. So on September 12th, I responded with that team and worked in the micro-examiner's office in New York. The task was identify loved ones and return to the loved ones. You know, that was '01, so '02 I believe it was, '03 I joined DMORT. The way the world was changing we realized we wanted to return

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loved ones to loved ones, but at times it may be too contaminated to return the loved ones. This was the only group within the nation that wasn't regionalized, meaning assigned to a FEMA region, but we would respond wherever there would be contaminated remains. Our job was to make sure that any contaminations didn't travel home with them to their loved ones.

So, in that role I found myself in Katrina, Sacred Heart Parish Convention Center, and predominantly doing the recovery efforts down there. In '04, I went to

Taylorville Fire Department as their Fire Chief. I never had an ambition to be a fire chief, it was just one of those things that kind of fell into my career, and I was very privileged and honored to find myself in that position. It was actually an opportunity to maybe challenge myself in all the counseling and talking I've done all these years, is it really as easy as I have tried tell all those others it is, even though I've never worn those shoes? Actually, it's not as easy, but it's every bit as challenging and rewarding as I always thought it was.

Then three years ago I found myself as Regional Coordinator for the Cornerstone Program for the Fire Service Institute, full-time position. I had left three or four years as a Chief for Taylorville, and just this summer came on as Dave Clark's replacement as the Deputy Director. The interesting thing for me is I now live within two blocks from where I first lived when I moved over here from Macomb. I work at the place that I first grabbed the first fire hose and coupling in my life. I walked those steps every day. I sat in the chair of my instructor at the academy, and I'm also renting his house. I'm eating his candy out of his candy dish. I've already called Dave and asked what do I do if I run out of candy. Is that included in the rent or what happens? But anyway, Dave is doing very well with his retirement in Virginia, and I'm very privileged to find myself in his position. The promise I made to Dave, and he said there is always questions with what's the new guy planning on doing. And he mentioned to me something that is going to stick with me as a goal, and that goal is the main thing; and to always keep the main thing the main thing. For me, the main thing is we got to maintain our basic skills and take care of ourselves. If you start with that as the foundation, I think everything else, it comes. It's going to be good things for us, and we'll take care of ourselves and the folks we are serving. On a positive note, I think a real good note on fire service, to give you an idea of what training does for us, I think, of working together and the basics. I don't know

if too many of you have heard, a little over a week ago, probably a week or two ago, Taylorville Fire Department made a rescue, did you hear about that? Taylorville Fire Department is a combination department. Combination in that they have 14 career and a roster of 30 volunteers. So obviously, the career guys will be there first. They

heavily count on the dedication of their volunteer side of the department. They typically would have a three or five-person response in the initial response. This evening they had seven. They responded to a two-story structure, with fire and fully charged with smoke, described to me as chunky smoke. Some of us have seen that. When they pull up there is a family calling for help from a couple windows on the front of the building. Those three people happened to be a 12-year old I think, I think the male was in his 30's, and then another lady that was also pregnant. When they arrived the captain stepped out of the rig, twisted his ankle, as a result of that he's on eight weeks disability. They were all calling for help. He saw his captain laying on the ground, but as soon as he saw him move and he said to go ahead, he'll be all right and then we'll take care of business, but his captain did join him and help with the rescues. They say those three people, and I would count it as four since the lady was pregnant, but the other crew also went up the back steps and did their primary search and found a fifth person. A 50-year old, I think, that ended up going to the hospital with smoke inhalation.

So I know that's a training fire department, and they contacted me all excited, and I was pretty proud of them. They know what I think about fire scene chaos. They commented that, you know, Roger, it was little chaotic. In fact it was real chaotic when they got there. I have got their tape and we talked about it, and it really wasn't. Excited, yes; chaos, no. They were organized with what they had and it even got better once they knew that the only people in the building are us. So I know there are other stories like that around the state, but, I'm especially proud of that department.

Okay. Let's move on to talking a little bit about the institute. This picture was taken about two or three days ago. The important thing is the highlighted areas are all of the things that have changed if you haven't been there in the past year. The one in the upper right is the new LLRC building. If you have seen the director you would probably notice that he always carries his PC with him, and if can get you cornered he's going to open that up and show you all the floorplan of that facility. I strongly encourage you to get out and visit the institute and see what we are doing with that building right there. We are

going to talk about these others. That's the overhead view of about 30 acres of your State Training Academy.

And, of course, the Fire Marshal is welcome as well as every firefighter in the state because it's your state academy.

I don't think I can ever get in front of a group and not discuss Cornerstone. Your organization was one of the strong partners who got this accomplished. We have to remember that it's not free. I think there is a silver lining in some of the struggles we've had over the last years. We realize it's really not free and there are guidelines that we need to follow to get the most for the buck. Those guidelines are 15 in the class and a minimum of 2 organizations in that training session.

Okay. A couple things I wanted to point out. We have a new registration form, and this is a list of classes that you had on the old one. The new one has this list. Something else that has changed in Cornerstone; you probably didn't notice it on the old form. Those are in four, six, eight, and twelve-hour formats. Any of these topics are in one to sixteen formats. Now, don't ask for a four-hour class to cover everything you want when it is twelve hours. Don't ask for a twelve-hour class of four hours. But, I know as central coordinator a lot of departments that have said that, you know, we would just like to be refreshed at our next meeting and have our training session at maybe an hour or an hour and a half on ventilation. That's great. Pull your folks together and they are going to have the numbers because it's a regular meeting night. Invite your neighbors to this one. So this stuff is now available that way. And certificates are available for each one of them online.

I did mention with the other side, over the past year, in 2009, there was over 60,000 students registered with the Fire Service Institute Program. Fire departments from 102 counties, that's all of our counties, and over 400 classes were available at no cost to folks.

Okay. Next one. The Illinois Firefighters' Association you can see all these listed on these. These are the Down and Dirty, DVD or CDs. Those went out to every fire department. If you don't have them, get these to augment what you are already doing.

What we are looking at is that the SCBA part of that is dated. We've added ventilation, search and rescue techniques have been added too, plus 150-page instructional guide to kind of help you with what you're doing with those topics as well.

We also have online learning which is our ethanol, AFG, I'm hoping all of you are writing the AFG Grants. I'm hoping every one of you are asking, no matter what you ask

for in the AFG Grants, that you ask for money for training. I've helped with a lot of departments over the years and with some of them, it's kind of like pulling teeth. Just put \$500 in there for training. It's not going to hurt you, but it sure makes training in Illinois, and training dollars go further. \$1,000 dollars is not going to hurt you. In some cases that doubles their training budget.

We just completed the pilot FAE online as 13 weeks, and it comes in on one of the regional sites or the institute. It will be a single/overnight, two days of getting the practical out of the way and the testing. So, FAE at one time, was something you had to come in for a week at the institute, and it's now online.

We refer to those as blended learning. We are working on other classes that way. The Firefighter II has changed like the Fire Marshal said, and we're upgrading that, so it matches up with the Fire Marshal's Office new program, and that's online. Okay.

Department College Credit. Our goal, our mission is to have every class that we have, that we do, anywhere in the state, is a college credit. Now, you won't know it. You just do it like any other class. On our end of it we are forming everything on department college and if at sometime down the road you're looking at a college degree, you've already started to develop a transcript for college credit at a community college. Now be it between that college and other colleges, that will be transferable. In most cases it's no different than any other student, in part, from college who is taking a class and now they are going to transfer to Western, Eastern, or whatever the case might be.

With regards to props, we have a number of props and we'll touch on a few of these. I just want to show you some pictures. This is our new Streetscape. That is 25 sea/land containers, 3-stories high. On the front you're going to have different businesses. I'll show you a couple of pictures there. There's a back view of it. We want a large floorplan here to practice the large-area search type things. I've been in a lot of SCBA and search-type training out in the field. Typically, it's the boxes of a house that we are working in, as opposed to what we do when we have the gymnasium or we have the floorplan of the store. Second and third levels will be apartments. Bottom levels will be businesses. This is a restaurant. This is a layout of one of the apartments. That happens to show mail boxes that tells you that there are apartments up above. Again, starting to work on a laundry mat. This one is the insurance office, hardware store, we're starting to put some shelves in there. We

have an exercise room, and looks like things are going on as well.

We are working on a trench prop. This is something if you've ever attended trench training in Champaign County, especially FSI, after about five feet, you are in water. So it becomes a challenge when you need this trench to be open a couple of days, even just for the day we are getting those skills so that when we go off site and dig an excavation for a trench, you've got the skills to start getting ready to do a trench while the integrity of the trench is still there.

16 sea/land containers, anywhere from 8 foot to roughly 17 foot of trenches. L's, T's, linear trenches, 16 foot.

You're always available if there is any problem, you just walk out. There is another top view.

Not so much new, I don't think, as far as something happened with this past year, but I just wanted to throw in a slide on this to remind you of the confined space high line or vertical rescue prop that we had. Again, that's 16 sea/land containers, five-stories high. We actually have two elevator shafts.

Some changes in this area, this is rescue city. This is where all of our, in fact, the last 3 props you've seen, that's where all of our TRT teams throughout the state come in, and that validates it and we challenge their skills and refine their skills with that. Over here is a light-weight construction, three-story collapse; this four-story masonry, and there is actually a tanker inside there, there is an airplane inside there, there's cars under there as well as apartments under there. That is all removed every year, and shored back up properly, and laid out differently, so if you have trained on it last year and get in there this year it won't look the same. The next one is we have an Ag area on site. Ag is just getting bigger and bigger out in the rural areas. We have a couple new props that are these grain bin props. In fact, Ag rescue and grain bins, as far as training, there is a real strong interest in that training.

Auto Extrication. The program director wanted me to make sure that I let folks know that in the past we have had the 40-hour classes, the vehicle machinery operations, and vehicle machinery technician level, and you need to come on site. He's trying, and he thinks there will be interest. If there is interest out there he'll do it on two weekends. So he'll bring those two certification levels, the operation and technician level to your department. I'm not exactly sure the numbers he needs for that, but he'll bring it to you. If you are interested in that, it is Joe Drennan. I will give you his phone number afterwards if there is anybody interested. Of course,

it's on the site.

The LP Program. The LP program is still very busy. You got to get those requests in early. That's in cooperation with the IPERC, the Illinois Propane Education Research Council as well as the Illinois Petroleum Research Board. They invest \$65,000 a year as a partner just to make this training available. Another, roughly, \$90,000 a year to cover the fuel costs for the training out there. So, keep that in mind. It's available.

And I think this is the last one. I want to remind all of you that the Illinois Fire School is scheduled for January 29th and 30th. The longest running fire school, and guess who we partnered with back in 1925? It was this organization. So the partnership from working to get Cornerstone, to the Down and Dirty, to the longest running fire college in the nation, you've been a part of. Something pretty awesome, I think.

I'm sorry I gave you the wrong one. That was fire college. Winter fire school is January 29th and 30th. I do want to point out on that that this would be the first time that winter fire school will be completely on site. With the new LLRC Building, if you get an opportunity, get out there and walk through. We'll be able to do classes there as well as the classes that we're opening up in our own building. This year, I believe, we are planning the dedication of that building. The fire district will also host their first trustee meeting there this year. We have Fire College June 12th, and lastly, June 23rd through 26th is the Explorer Cadet School. Those are kids from 14 to 21. It's important to mention them because they are the next ones. And that means a lot to me because, it's taken me awhile, in fact when I left Taylorville, I did my best to join every volunteer department that surrounded Taylorville because I thought I was going to miss something. My wife figured out what was going on. I was talking to the third department, and she asked, what are you doing, and I tried to explain it to her, and the better half knew better. But the bottom line is, I've come to the point in my career where I realize if I'm able to get in there and crawl around and do the overhaul and do the searches, I am probably slowing somebody down. I'm glad that I was part of a generation that supported that next group. Many of you in here have a responsibility to support that next group. Explorer cadet is one way that we do that. The explorer school typically has kids from Canada, Alaska, California, 11 states, and a couple countries. 250 to 350 kids that begin on June 30th, as

soon as this one ends, they start doing fund raisers so that they can fly here next year. So keep that in mind. And I think that's my last slide. Questions or comments

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from anybody?

Audience Member: The question I have is on technical rescue stuff. The MABAS teams they got the operations technical part of it. Is there any thought in putting together and eight-hour Down and Dirty class on trench and structural collapse? So the departments are waiting on MABAS teams to go ahead and do something without getting in trouble.

ROGER LUNT: Yeah, there is discussions and there, actually, there are some pretty strong valid views on both sides of that. I come from the career where I do believe your first tool box, if you will, is in your head. It's not the things we can't afford to buy, so we don't belong there. So we have to look at the awareness, TRA, is that addressing those needs? Now, if it's not, then we got to do something about it. I also come from the school of, I want to watch that department who just wants to learn how to repel. Because then, we can get people in trouble. So you are talking to one of the right guys, Ray, and Chief McCastland are the two lead people with that in trying to decide how far do we want to go with it. That's our concern. I think it's alright to show people the skills that they may need but, we don't want to go to the point that they believe they can make a trench rescue. I know I rode the fence in answering that, but that's really where it's at. Anything else? Thank you very much.

JOHN SWAN: Before we get to the regular business meeting, Roger referred to the organization as one of the primary organizations that partnered and worked with the Illinois Fire Service Institute. This Association not only partnered, we were part of the mechanism that established the statute that started the Illinois Fire Service Institute. With our long history, the firefighters of Illinois saw the need for our training academy. I've been here 33 years in the fire service. 33 years ago when I was sitting out there, and the officers at that time was referring back to the original time that the institute was started, and how we were instrumental into starting our fire academy and working with the partnership with them. We continue that onto today. I'm very happy with the Down and Dirty Program that we partnered with the university over the years, and with the CD and the DVD program. How many of you guys know about those DVD's out there?

Let me see a show of hands. Okay. They are in our department and they're in your department. You need to continue to utilize those. And as we talk later on today from my report, they may be instrumental to use those later on with some other continued training that we may have referred to here in my report. At this time I'd like to start our 120th Conference

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Opening.

OPENING REMARKS. I'll start with our President's Report. You know one of the main goals of our association is sticking to our mission statement. What are we here for as firefighters? What are we supposed to do as an association to provide things back to you? What benefit are you going to be as a firefighter in Illinois and belong to the Illinois Firefighters' Association? You've seen and heard some of it already. But, you know, our mission is to help train and educate our firefighters and incorporate the benefits and also to network at a local, state, and national level. We have done all of that. In this past year we have worked with you in the local organizations at the firefighter level with the scholarship program, at the firefighter level department, at the regional level; supplied grants to fire departments throughout the state and those things that we continue to want to accomplish as we go along. We, also on a state level, it has been part of the Illinois Fire Services Association, the member of the Fire Marshal Advisory Board, Illinois Fire Service Institute, attending the meetings throughout the year on your behalf. Those things we need to hear back from you on the things of interest and what concerns you, primarily your training and education, and safety is paramount to us, and we want to continue those efforts as we go along. Over the years, and Margaret will respond to some of the legislative initiatives that we accomplished over the years, those things were brought back to you as a benefit; anywhere from the job security bill, and so forth along with the Cornerstone, which she'll probably talk to you about, also. We have attended not only the National Benefit Summit every year to try to bring benefits back to you, also, our regional networking with Midwest Networking that hosted in Des Moines, Iowa. We are going to be going out there at the end of this month. I will be meeting with approximately about eight or nine states in the Midwest and we will be discussing issues that concerns the firefighters and the fire organizations throughout the

Midwest. You'll be surprised, and probably won't be, but, basically some of our same concerns we have here in Illinois, goes back nation wide. Our neighbors have the same issues that we do right here, and we need to find what we can do to join forces and try to solve some of those issues. There has been some very good ideas nationally and into the Midwest to help resolve some of those issues and bring better benefits to you. As you know as reported, that the Cornerstone Program was like the shot that was heard around the world. When we lost that funding, I mean, we lost our training at the local

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level. A lot of the money and resources that we had for our training came out of the Cornerstone Program as Roger referred to. I considered that this organization probably is the organization that took the lead in helping to restore that. And with the help from Margaret, and the Fire Marshal's Office, and the other fire organizations, we were able to get that restored this last year. I'm sure that Margaret will probably talk about that a little bit in her report.

Again, we have the legislative summit coming up here at the end of this month. I plan on attending the legislative summit. If there is any initiatives that you guys would like to see implemented, please get one of our board directors and let them know what's going on. We are going to be having a meeting tomorrow at 10 o'clock trying to set the agenda for this coming year. Some of those may be legislative initiatives. We would like to hear from you. Get back with your representatives or board of directors so we can discuss that in this meeting tomorrow. You've heard that "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." Sometimes the reason why you can't make him drink is maybe you didn't know the water was there. That's some of our problem in this organization and all over the state. I'm telling you that I'm from the old school and I just hate computers. I got one. I even put my emails in the wrong boxes. Wiz emails over here and I come back with, "well, I emailed you. What did you do with it? It's here somewhere in a filing cabinet, and I got to find it." The point being is this, you young guys and gals grew up with this technology. I didn't. I didn't want to accept it until later on, but I had to. Now you got facebook and all these other things going on. My sons are all firefighters, and they all have their face page. I was really surprised to see the hands raised that have facebook. We need to, some way in this organization,

tie our communications, not only to the region and to the fire department, but right down to you. We can send the bulletins out to you, but if you've never see them you can't read them, so you may not know what's going on. I guess the way we are going to look at it is, and Kevin Wiwczaroski will probably report on this, too, but I'm looking into implementing a new website trying different methods of reaching you and one of the things is facebook is another means. So just to let you guys know if there is a way that we can contact you directly, we have Terry Federer and he has group emails now. Every once in awhile we'll do a group email. And that goes right down to individuals too. That's what we want to get. We want to get you, because if it takes the time where we ask you to make a phone call to your legislator or his office,

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that you are going to be able to do it the next day, not a month later when it's too late. We need to do it right away. We did that when it came to the Cornerstone Program. That was the shot that was heard around the world, and you guys reacted quick and if not your chiefs, then your district did, because you know there was money there. And when we lost that, not only the money, but the training. That was something that was acted on real quick. I'm glad that we were all able to accomplish that. You know tomorrow, as we go along, one of the topics of discussion is that I sit also on the Minimum Standard of Training Committee, and let me tell you, since that started last January, I have had more comments on that issue more than anything else. Because, you know, that's the heart of what you guys do is training initiatives in your department. Where are we going with this? If this is going to be a mandated minimum standard training, how is it going to affect me? The bulk of the volunteers out there, their saving up to 30% to 50% that are over 40 years old. I don't go into burning buildings any more. I drive a truck. I do this; I run the support group. Do I have to do be a certified firefighter to do that? Do I have to have the entry level? These are questions and concerns that we have. Am I'm going to have to quit the fire department? This organization is supporting something like that. In our association, our June meeting, or when it was already passed, a resolution stating that we have non-refundable mandate, so if we have a mandate on minimum standard training, there's also going to be funding behind it or we will not support it. So, whatever we do, we are going to work in this organization

on your behalf, not to run firefighters off the department, but to gain that training that you need and give you a route to accomplish those goals, and then if you are already properly trained and you have documented training, to try to work with those issues and try to resolve those things. I plan on having a meeting the 25th which is the day before the summit. We'll meet again, and the purpose of that meeting is putting a questionnaire together, and we're asking the State Fire Marshal's Office to send this out statewide and to send back to us to get your input on what impact the Minimum Standard Training may have on your fire department. It's going to be a lot of Q and A questions to get back to us. We don't plan on trying to push anything down anybody's throat 'til we get some answers and to find out where we're going. I wanted to touch base on that a little bit because I know there's a lot of firefighters out there that are concerned on that. Quite honestly, and I don't have to preach to the choir, you guys are here for the training. All the

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firefighters that I know want that training. They want to go home at night. Without that, we don't want to have the statistical report saying that we lost another one tomorrow. I don't think the training is at issue, but how are you going accomplish that?

As your President, I gave you a synopsis of what was going on, and hopefully we can make some more strides in this organization. The biggest concern I have and I think the officers have in our association is communication.

Without the proper communication getting to us, we can't get the word out. If we can't get the word out, we're not getting it back. We have the opportunity with technology today to try to have a better direct link to our firefighters.

At this time I'm going to turn it over to Terry Ford.

Terry, do you have anything on your end?

TERRY FORD: If everybody got a copy of your bulletin this past month there are some By-Laws changes that we are proposing. Most of them are very cosmetic, just clarifications. We noticed when we were looking at the By-Laws, that actually, the board was called three different things in different parts. So we've changed that to make it pretty much one thing. So when we start talking about the board, we know who in the heck we are talking about. I wasn't going to give a report, but the Fire Marshal was talking about the Fire Equipment Exchange. I got an email from a fire department that has

100 brand new dress shirts. They're still in the packages and they are short and long-sleeved, so if any fire department needs dress shirts please see me and I'll make sure that I get your name and contact information and once we get these shirts, get everything going. We'll make sure that you get the dress shirts. I know that's kind of a little perk that does cost the fire department, but if you can get them for free, that's a hell of a lot better than paying for them.

The other thing, and I'll have to read my text message. On the way up here, I got another email about some exercise equipment that's available. I know nothing about exercising. I have a fire department that has a used disassembled Batca X-4, 4-stack, multi-station gym. That's four weight stacks, accommodates four users, single station design, advanced adjustability, super smooth smart lock cable system, and a whole bunch of other crap on here. They got rid of it because it's taking up too much space and you need an area of about 15X15 to accommodate this equipment. So if you need exercise equipment in your station, please see me and I'll be over in the Fire Marshal's booth or around the conference the entire time. Basically, that's all I have. Thank you.

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JOHN SWAN: Thanks Terry. At this time we'll have our Secretary/Treasurer give his report.

KEVIN WIWCZAROSKI: Good morning. Is everyone still awake? This morning I'm going to give you a real quick synopsis of what's been occurring over the last year as far as our fund balances. As you can see the top fund is the general fund and that's what we use to take care of the business in the association over the course of the year. At the beginning of the year the balance on January 1st, was \$33,099.85. The balance as of October 1, 2010, is \$40,039.45. Of that amount, \$10,575.00, is restricted until 2011. Those are dues that were paid for 2011 and 2010. Foundation balance of January 1, was \$19,069.64. The balance as of October 1, 2010, is \$24,243.76, with current investments of \$244,127.14. Current fund value, both cash-on-hand and investments \$268,370.90. The indemnity fund balance on January 1, 2010, \$14,684.67. The balance as of October 1, 2010, \$23,111.39. Our current investments for the indemnity fund is \$114,771.78. The total funds value for the indemnity fund \$137,883.17. PAC fund, January 1, 2010, was \$2,727.71. The balance on October 1st, 2010, \$24.49. The current value is \$25.49. I'm going to let you know that everything that we've done

since the first of the year as far as bills, payments, income, and what not, is in this black folder up here on the table. You are welcome to come by and ask to take a look at it. Obviously, it can't leave my possession because that's a record for the audits, but your welcome to take a look if anybody is interested. Also there are audits from 2009 for the foundation and for the general fund and the indemnity fund sitting up here on the front table as well. If anybody is interested I have about three or four of the copies for 2009. You are free to take those with you. Does anybody have any questions? Let me ask you a question. How many fire departments here know what the indemnity fund is for the Illinois Firefighters' Association? Okay, so we have two or three. The ones that do not, are you interested in finding out what that is? A real brief description of the indemnity fund is that it is a fund that is self-funded by the firefighters, each one of you individually. If you join that fund, what that fund does is provides an accident indemnity amount of \$10 a day if you're injured while firefighting, going to or coming from the fire. If you've lost time and it's a lost time-injury of seven days or more, you can collect \$10 a day up to a maximum amount of \$3,000.00. To participate in that you have to fill out an application, request an application from me either by email or telephone and I'll send one to your department. I'll help you get through it and then the amount of the

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assessment, we have four assessments a year, they range from .20 cents a member to \$1.00 a member. It's all based on your population and the number of firefighters. Very simple, very clean, very inexpensive. We've had departments in it since its inception, I guess, in the 40's. If you got a line-of-duty death, the family gets a check for \$3,000.00 immediately from the fund. So I would suggest you take a look at the Redbook this year when you get it. Everybody's department should have gotten a Redbook by now. They were sent out about week and or week and a half ago. Any information on the indemnity fund is in there. If you are interested, talk to your chiefs. Chiefs, if you're interested, give me a call and we'll talk about it and we'll make it happen. Any questions? A couple other things real quick. We have been working on revamping the website. It should be quicker. It should be easier to use, it should be more dynamic. We will be including our vendors on the website, and links to their services or companies. We'll be providing several

different things on the website that we haven't had before. It will look the same on the face page, and on the home page it will look identical, but there will be some new advancements. It's a lot easier to post things for you guys to be able to access. Also we'll have, obviously, the bulletin will be updated more regularly and quicker, and quite a bit more information, so we look forward to launching that for you. That should happen in the next 30 days. Like I said, you really won't see a face change, but what you will see is a lot more information.

Don't forget that the winter fire school is in January next year. Our conference dates for next year are October 7th, 8th, and 9th, 2011. So, the first weekend in October, basically. Our winter fire school is January 29th through the 30th. We talked about the audits, and that's really all I got. Does anybody have any questions? Thank you.

JOHN SWAN: I'd like to have somebody entertain a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Jim Stecher, West Peoria, so moved. Motion. Alan Naney, Long Lake. Any other discussion on the motion. All in favor, aye. Nay, the same. A unanimous vote of aye. Thank you.

We're going to go ahead and start Committee Reports, the Bulletin, and Redbook. Kerry Federer.

KERRY FEDERER: Good morning everybody. The bulletin is a bi-monthly publication of the Illinois Firefighters' Association. It is mailed to each member department. Usually after it's mailed we try to get an electronic form of it on the website usually within a few days or weeks after that. It does have a lot of information in there. We try to keep you updated as best we can. If you don't

see it in your departments, try to look online to see it. It's usually done on a bi-monthly basis. We are talking about doing a new feature. We are going to start featuring a department or two every month. I probably sent out an email to departments requesting information, pictures, about your department. We are trying to do whatever we can to make this more pleasurable to you guys hoping you will read them. If there is anything that I can do or any of the officers of the association can do to make things more pleasurable, just let us know. The Redbook is mailed out annually. The Redbook is basically what happens at this conference every year. It's a full detailing of the accounts of the conference. It also has all the By-Laws of the organization, the general By-Laws, the Foundation, and the Indemnity Fund. If you want to

know anything about this organization, get a copy of that Redbook. It's got just about everything you need in it. Does anybody have any questions about the Redbook or the bulletin? There should be copies of the bulletin in each one of the packets. Get a chance to look through them. I really appreciate it. Thank you. Have a nice conference.

JOHN SWAN: Thank you Kerry. It's customary also before we start a meeting to appoint a Sergeant-at-Arms. Jim Stecher, West Peoria, to be our Sergeant-at-Arms. Credentials Committee. Wiz, why don't you report on the Credentials Committee.

KEVIN Wiwczaroski: Good morning, again. Credentials: You'll see that we have different colored registration badges this year. The yellow ones have "delegate" written on them. If you have a yellow badge, your credentials have been sent in from your department for this conference. If you're going to be voting for your fire department and you do not have a yellow badge, and you think that you're a delegate, you may want to see Gary here up in the front seat. He has a book of credentials, and if your name is listed per your department, and you have no more than one other person listed for your department, you may vote, but you have to verify your credentials here. We are having two elections. One is for three positions on the board: President, Vice-President, and one of our Directors. The other election we'll have today, is two issues. One is for dues and one is for By-Laws changes. There are going to be two separate ballots. The first for the officers we can do by affirmation because none of the officers that are running are being challenged. So we'll take a look at that when it's time. The other one for the By-Laws and dues will both be on the same ballot. That's a yes or a no vote. Again, during the course of the next ten minutes prior to that election time, if you think that you're a delegate

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and you don't have yellow badge you need to see Gary. All the credentials are up to date as of Wednesday of this week. If you don't have paper in that book, you can't sign and fill it out today because it needs the fire chief's signature as well as your secretary's signature from the department.

Does everybody understand that? Does anybody have any questions? Thanks.

JOHN SWAN: We will have an election whether it's uncontested, but we still have some votes to do on our By-Laws changes and so forth as Wiz was talking about. We

are going to need to appoint a couple of people to be our election judges. Could you raise your hands. What department are you with? All you're going to do is count ballots. Any delegates on this side.

Why don't we go ahead and have the two in the back.

Holland, raise your hand. You are going to count ballots. Who's the election judge. Gene Coe, Holland, and Matthew Krogman, Colona. You two will be counting ballots along with our judges here.

Education and Training Committee

JEFF STUCK: Good morning. I'm Jeff Stuck with Carterville. I've recently took over the education and training portion for board. I worked closely with the institute and spent a couple days there and read, over twice, the information that the last class filled out at the last conference. So those things are all being looked at. As you can see we had fires on the farm in AG, and grain bin rescue added to that and that is a direct reflection of what you guys wanted last year. If you look at the white brochure, the Down and Dirty brochure, the times for the buses are a little bit off. We need to start training at those times and not getting on buses. So the buses will be outside today between 12:15 and 12:30, so when they finish here, grab some lunch, get your stuff and get downstairs, because we want you to have the 12 hours of training and not have that taken up with the bus ride. Not everybody is here. Get with the people from your department that are not at the meeting and get them to the buses on time. We don't have a van this year so we are going to have a hard time picking up stragglers. Everybody who is going to the institute needs to be on the bus so that we can direct you to where you need to be when you arrive on campus. If you have any questions I'll be at the door at the back, where you can speak with any other director. Thank you very much.

JOHN SWAN: Thanks Jeff. That brings us to our Legislative Committee. I'm going to ask Margaret Vaughn, our lobbyist, to come up and give us a report. I'm going to let you know that Margaret has been our right arm in

the association with our legislators, and all our legislation that we were able to accomplish over the years. I really admire Margaret for what she has done. She puts her heart right into it and she's done an excellent job over the years.

MARGARET VAUGHN: Real quick, our big accomplishment this year was the Cornerstone Funding. I took a relaxation

class one time, and they had a Buddhist saying which said that "crisis brings opportunity." I think that was really true in our case a year and a half ago when the Cornerstone Funding was cut out of the budget completely and all the classes were cancelled for three or four months. And fast forward up to today, 16 or 17 months later, not only did we get that funding restored and those classes up and running again last fall, we changed the law this year so that now the Cornerstone Program is mandated by law. They have to fund it. Before it was just a discretionary program that had kind of evolved over the years. It was just something that the state could fund, but there was no mention of it in the law that they actually had to do it. So that's what we did this year. We changed the law and it was in the form of House Bill 5412 sponsored by Representative Moffitt and the State Senator Lisa Dugan, and in the Senate, Senator Mike Frerichs, who is actually from Champaign. The Governor signed it and now two and a half percent of the Fire Prevention Fund will be directed off the top right towards Cornerstone, just as 12.5% is directed to the institute every year, and 10% is directed to the City of Chicago. So Cornerstone now is way up there with those other entities that they have to get funded. I'm hoping that, too, since it's based on a percentage, we might actually get a little more funding next year. That was our big accomplishment this year.

We also worked on legislation. How many of you people are with a fire protection district? Well, there is a real archaic law on the books since 1909 that requires fire protection districts to publish their annual budgets in the paper. Now just about every public body has to publish an annual financial statement, but it's very rare that you have to publish both your budget and your financial statement. Which, just talking about this, may not seem like that big of a deal, but you are talking about these ads in newspapers that no one reads that are costing maybe anywhere from \$500, to \$1,000, to \$1,500, depending on what part of the state and the market and how expensive it is. If you multiply that by the 800 and some fire protection districts in the state, and that's about \$1 million dollars that we're spending every year. That's taxpayer dollars on newspaper print versus fire safety.

So we took that on this year. IFA took the lead on it. In the past the bill never even made it out of committee. Not only did it make it out of the senate committee

unanimously, it passed the senate, 49-4. And then the Press Association made it their #1 issue to kill this session, so we got a lot of mileage out of it. There were about a dozen editorials that popped up over the state against it. I think one of the people involved with the revolutionary wars said never get in a fight with anyone that buys ink by the barrel. That was the case in this situation. And the Press Association website, it said, first there was the financial bail out, now there's House Bill 3336. So they made our bill out and then they said that revolutions were started over things like this. The next thing you know these fire protection districts are going to be hiring their relatives, people will be rioting in the streets, and what it came down to, and no one wanted to say it, was that were going to lose advertising dollars. They would never admit it. They tried to spin it, and they tried to make Senator Wilhelmi, the sponsor, into this horrible person. They would write back to back editorials every week in the paper against him. He really took it on the chin for us and we appreciated it and we actually gave him the Helmet and we made him an Honorary Fire Chief back in June. When it got over to the house, Representative Franks wanted to sponsor it, and then he was really getting the heat from all these papers, and it was a tough election this year so he decided to slow it down for the time being. So we are going to talk about it at the summit. This is an issue we don't want to continue to pursue with the Fire Services Association. It's an issue that I feel very strongly about, but we have to kind of weigh our sides, too. It's one thing for these legislators to be on our side when there is no opposition, it's another thing when their faces are being plastered all over the newspaper and they are making real negative publicity on our behalf.

Again, it's an issue you kind of have to weigh, but again, it's \$1 million a year, just on a one-time shot. It's \$1 million every year that could go back in the fire service that's being wasted on newspaper print that no one reads. Our option was to put that online, and to take out a smaller ad in the paper listing the website address with the phone number. But, we're the first agreeing with politics is that logic is your weakest argument.

We'll see how that goes next year.

I put in the bulletin an update on all the bills, just really quick, we passed legislation requiring all the fraternities and sororities they will have test sprinklers in them over the next nine years. Representative Moffitt

got a bill through to increase the fees for serious traffic violations an additional \$35.00, and \$15.00 of that is going into the Fire Prevention Fund, and \$15.00 is going into the Fire Truck Revolving Loan Fund. And then Representative Braley and Senator Demuzio sponsored legislation making it easier to consolidate your Fire Protection Board, going down from seven to five members, and from five members to three. And then there is an update on all the other bills if you just want to pick up a bulletin.

Again, I don't want to bore you but those were some of the issues that we worked on this past year. We are going to be going to the summit to get other ideas for legislation and if you have any ideas for things that you want fixed, and it can be done legislatively, just let us know. We do want be sure that Fire Prevention Fund is not raided this year as it has been in the past. So sometimes that is something that you take for granted until it does get raided. And last year was the only time it had gotten raided since I have been representing you. So I will do my best to keep that fund protected and again, I appreciate the opportunity to represent you.

JOHN SWAN: I can guarantee you that I have been with Margaret many times in State Houses throughout the state. She is a hard one to say no to. You do a fine job for us. Membership. Terry Ford is the Membership Committee. I don't know what he would like to report on, but the only thing I can do is let you know is that one thing that we discussed, we'll probably discuss it tomorrow, is communication is going to be a key to all of this is where we are headed. And that's one of the things that we will be working on along with some extra benefits.

I know that we were directed by our board and through the benefits, no use in going to these networking conferences if we don't bring something back to you. So we are researching credit unions, and what we can do to tie our organization, hopefully, to an established credit union with our name on it. These things we are investigating and something we can do to bring some benefits back to you in statewide, just to let you know that right up front. Mike Simmons, Mike is the Chief from Galena, the hometown of Obbie Hurst.

MIKE SIMMONS: I'd just like to make the announcement that the Memorial will be Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. It will either be in this salon or the one next door. If none of you have been to a memorial, it's a real somber remembrance, so, I invite all of you to show up. We do have, like the Fire Marshal said, we will be reading off five line-of-duty deaths. The deadline for names for the memorial is set October 1st throughout this year. So,

anybody that has passed since October 2nd of last year to October 1st of this year, their name will be read off. Any people that are in here, if you have any names to add to that memorial, or if you want to get a hold of me, we'll read them off Sunday, so we will have the list. I personally would like to thank Mr. Deckelmann from the Chicago Fire Department. He has done a fabulous job getting the names of the Chicago firefighters to me. Mike, I'd like to thank you for that. That's all I have. Thank you.

JOHN SWAN: National Volunteer Fire Council, we have two representatives from our board to the National Volunteer Fire Council that most of you may not know that the Fire Council represents a vast majority of the volunteer groups throughout our nation. They have been instrumental in changing a lot of the national laws that have come through. There has been some big issues such as the 'two-hatter' issue that's still trying to be rectified nationally and so on, and the firefighter health and safety issue that's going on. Bob Reason is one of our directors back there at the back, and Bill Offerman also, who couldn't be here today. He called me and I didn't know it was Bill. He's on some antibiotics and couldn't come. Do you have any report on the NVFC? By the way, those issues from the NVFC we are going to incorporate on our website to try to get those reports out to you. They send those out periodically on what's going on with the national end of it.

Registration. Ron, do you have anything? I want to really thank Shirley and Sandy with helping us out on the registration. I think they are doing a fine job. Those of you that don't have your badges with your credentials, especially you delegates, to be able to vote you are going to need that badge. If you don't have your badge on, go out and grab it and come back in.

Resolution, Gary Kasper.

GARY KASPER: Thank you Mr. President. Today, we'd like to recognize three individual groups, organizations, or personal people who have committed and dedicated numerous hours and in participation. WHEREAS, Madison County Firemen's Association has been instrumental and actively involved as an annual donor at the Illinois Firefighters' Association's Conference since 1989 and WHEREAS, for many years the Madison County Firemen's Association has been involved with the Illinois Firefighters' Association Conference, and WHEREAS, they have donated many thousands of dollars to support firefighter training, and WHEREAS, their members and board have worked tirelessly to support all firefighters in the State of Illinois. And now therefore, let it be resolved that the Illinois

Firefighters' Association recognize and appreciate the efforts of the Madison County Firefighters' Association with many a sincere thanks, resolved this 8th day of October, 2010, John Swan, President.

The second one: WHEREAS, the Honor Guard of Madison County has been involved with the Illinois Firefighters' Association Memorial Service since 2002, and WHEREAS, the Madison County Honor Guard have performed at the annual Memorial services in a professional manner, and WHEREAS, their involvement in the ceremony has impacted the Illinois Fire Service in a somber remembrance. Now therefore, let it be resolved, that the Illinois Firefighters' Association Incorporated appreciates and recognizes their presence in setting the standard of excellence resolved this 8th day of October, 2010, John Swan, President.

One final one. WHEREAS, a young man that attended the Illinois Firefighters' Conference in 1984, and WHEREAS, he was approached by an individual named Obbie Hurst, and WHEREAS, he was asked to read the names of the annual memorial necrology list, and WHEREAS, Michael Deckelmann agreed, with no reservation, to be an integral participant in the ceremony, and WHEREAS he has read the names of many fallen comrades including some of his own, with honor, pride, and tradition. Now, therefore, let it be resolved that the members of the Illinois Firefighters' Association Incorporated, with honor, recognize his efforts and support to this organization. Therefore, it is resolved this 8th day of October, 2010, John Swan, President.

JOHN SWAN: We appreciate everything over the years that you have accomplished. There is nothing anymore than in the resolutions that we stated of what you have done for us and we appreciate your high professionalism and communication skills with our association.

Is there any unfinished business at this time?  
Scholarships.

KEVIN WIWCZAROSKI: Okay. Real quick. These are the scholarship winners for 2010. We offered 30 scholarships this year. We offered 25 to our 12 applications. Four were denied for cause; 8 were accepted. The winners and scholarships this year is Highland/Huron Fire Department for \$1,000, and that's a fire department scholarship fraternity, Joe Falaschetti, with the Elmwood Fire Department, individual, \$500.00; Shawn Bloemker, Godfrey Fire Department, individual, \$500.00; Rich Atwood, Sauk Village, individual, \$500.00; Mat Preston, Hartford Fire Department, individual, \$500.00; Steve Stecher, West Peoria Fire Department, \$500.00; Ramona Baldoni-Lake,

Harlem Roscoe Fire Department, firefighter/individual,  
\$500.00. We appreciate everyone's efforts in filling out

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the scholarship applications. Honestly, we wish we had 35 to 40 in instead of just 12. But, to those who were awarded congratulations. I'll be sending out letters in the next 30 days notifying each department and/or individual of their scholarship. That's the Annual Scholarships awarded for this year. The other scholarships are for conference next year. I'll type that up and get it out and have it in the hospitality area by this evening and those departments will have the opportunity to send two firefighters from each department to the conference next year. We'll pay their conference expenses as far as the training cost which was \$50.00 to \$100.00 this year, depending on when you paid it. It will be about the same next year. We used to pay for the hotel and it got a little bit expensive, so we backed out of that. The thing I'd like to say is last year we had two departments respond. And the letters are sent out, like I said, within 30 days of the conference, and then they're sent out 60 days ahead of the conference again, to notify each department that they won. This year we had two departments respond for the conference registrations for the scholarship. I just found out about half an hour ago that another department that was sent this scholarship, they sent in the registrations, they paid for the registrations, and it's always a special form letting everybody know that it's legitimate from the IFA, that it's the scholarship winner. They did not send those in. It's really difficult to explain. What it comes down to is, they sent the registration in, they did not forward the free registrations for the conference participants that showed up here today, and were upset because they weren't going to get classes. You need to let your folks know in the department when you get a scholarship that you got that free scholarship for two firefighters, and we need to make commitments. The registration requirements are the same for the scholarship as it is for the paid attendees. It has to be done by a certain time. That department lost out on two free scholarships. If your department gets it, take advantage of it, use it. It saves you \$50.00 per person, so it's an opportunity. Thanks.

JOHN SWAN: I don't know of any organization in the State of Illinois that gives scholarships like we do. It's the most simplest form there is. Nobody has to write an essay

of a thousand words or less or anything like that. It's a two-page scholarship form with some basic information. It's really basic stuff, but the information that we do ask on the scholarship form has to be precise. If it's precise we can pretty much give about every scholarship out. That's the bad thing, if we aren't precise, we can

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not give the scholarship out. So we want to give some of this money out on our scholarships through our Foundation. It's not doing us any good sitting in the bank. We do need to have our reserves, but we do dedicate a certain amount of money which Wiz was talking about that. We've down-graded a little bit and have become a little more conservative so we wouldn't be wasteful either. Some of you guys may not even know about our scholarships. Now you do. So go back to your department and ask, because it's in the bulletin. We announced that, and the forms are in the bulletin, and it will be on the website. These are things we are going to do in the near future. So go back and ask questions so you have a little responsibility for that when you get back home.

New Business. Do we have any new business to come before the Association's Annual Meeting? The only thing I want to mention in new business, as I stated earlier, tomorrow at 10 o'clock, we invited the Regional Firefighter Association Officers to the meeting that we are going to have tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock along with our Directors of Board and our State Fire Marshal will be there. Colonel Jaehne will be there and we are all going to discuss the agenda and we want to set our new future agenda along with some legislative initiatives for the well being of our association. We want to get some input and to try to put something together for our future agenda.

Report from our Credentials Committee. Wiz and Ron do you have anything to report on. I think you already did on the election. We Appointed the election judges and appointed election officers. I'm going to turn it over to Wiz and our Credentials Committee.

KEVIN WIWCZAROSKI: The Illinois Firefighters' Association has three director's positions. One is the President, and that is John Swan, and one is Vice-President, and that is Terry Ford, and the IFA Director is up for re-election, Chief Michael Stoffa. At this time, we can do this one of two ways. Since they are unopposed, a motion is in order from the floor to elect those directors by acclamation. Tim Hasamear from State Park, motion. Second, Randy

Barnett, Collinsville. With that done, will the delegates please stand up. If you have a blue badge, you're not a delegate unless you can verify with Gary that you are a delegate from your department. An if you got yellow badge, you are a delegate. I see a blue badge back there. Any others with a blue badge? You've got Alan Naney with Long Lake. Tim, are you going for State Park? All in favor say, aye. There are two gentlemen in back with no badges. All those in favor, aye. Nays the same. Ayes have it. So Ordered. The delegates

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cast a unanimous vote of "Aye" to re-elect the three men as officers. Congratulations Mr.Swan, and Mr. Ford, and Mr. Stoffa. Thank you.

JOHN SWAN: I've been your President I don't know how many years now. I always look forward to serve you another year. I also look forward to someone taking the initiative and say, okay, I'm going to step up and run for election. We really need new blood periodically just like any other time. I know that when we have a vacancy, a lot of times it's hard to get them filled and we appoint a vacancy due to the fact that we don't have anybody that is running for that position. So, as the years come, if there is somebody that's interested, and a position comes open, and you meet the criteria of our By-Laws, submit your name. Okay.

Okay, we have By-Law Changes. That will be the next one.

KEVIN WIWCZAROSKI: Again, so everybody understands this. One is a proposed By-Law change and the other is a proposed annual dues change. Again the delegates will vote. This time you will come up and see Gary. Where are my two election judges? The ones John appointed. Come up and sit with Gary. Gary will hand out a ballot to each certified delegate. You will vote for your department. Each department represented here has two votes. Those two votes are split between two delegates. If you only have one delegate here, you can only vote once. Does everybody here understand that? The By-Laws.

Form a line down the center aisle. See Gary, and he'll give you a ballot and then turn your ballots over to the election judges. The two election judges, if you're voting for your department, please get in line. After that, all of you come through.

JOHN SWAN: We review these periodically. Some of these By-Laws just don't make sense.

I say this to my own firefighters, about six to eight years ago when they were doing a survey about the most

highly respected positions being held. Do you know what the number one was that people came up with? Firefighters. Your chaplain or pastor was down at three or four. It was up there, but not right at the top. The firefighter is number one and the police officer was four or five, and the doctor wasn't way up there, either, it was like six or seven. That's telling you what the public thinks of you. Character, we have it. We are getting close to the end of our Annual Conference. Sunday morning at our Memorial Service, I consider that our highlight of the conference. Many of you attended the Memorial Service for some of you here it will be the first time. I think you'll be very impressed with our Memorial Service. I consider that one of the best services in the

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State of Illinois. I believe we do a fine job during that ceremony. I'm hoping all of you are there. If you have a uniform, please put your uniform on. Try not to come in T-shirts or anything like that. We like to have proper attire. We welcome you to be part of that ceremony, so I hope that you guys attend. Also, we'll have some of the families of the fallen firefighters in the line-of-duty deaths there. They will be presented an encased flag from association. Again, it is the highlight of our association and we hope to see you there. Kevin Wiwczaroski will report the findings.

KEVIN WIWCZAROSKI: On the two issues changes in the By-Law. Shall the Illinois Firefighters' Association make the changes to the By-Laws as proposed and published in the IFA publication, bulletin, and the July, August, 2010 issue. Yes-32, No-0. So that motion passes and the By-Laws will be changed.

On the IFA proposal for annual dues changes shall the Illinois Firefighters' Association make the changes to the annual dues as proposed and published in the IFA publication, the bulletin, in the July, August, 2010 issue from \$95 per year with option two years in advance for \$150.00 to a flat \$95.00 per year with no discount or prepaid option. Yes-28, No-4, so that proposition passes. Thank you.

JOHN SWAN: That also brings us to closing remarks during our Annual Conference. One of the things that we leave with from this conference here today, Down and Dirty Training is what we are going to take back; what you gained and what you take back. And I'm asking you, as our members, to take back not only the knowledge from training that you received here, but also take back the

communication that we need to go back to your fellow firefighters in your department. One of the reasons that we are changing some of the By-Laws, is that we need to. We need to for financial reasons, and also it doesn't make sense. We are changing the format of this conference and we are trying to figure a way to actually figure you guys out.

You know, 33 years ago we used to have a banquet and we would have 500 people at that banquet. We all would be in jackets and ties and we would all be sitting down. You young guys don't want to do that anymore, and we know it. We have to change the way we operate. We need to think what you are thinking. Well, maybe not everything. We need to get in your heads and try to find out what you guys need. And this is something that you need to tell us what you want to see. We were going to do a "Texas hold'em" this Saturday night, and then we found out our attorney in the City of Urbana does not appreciate gambling in this

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town. It takes a special permit with some liabilities and it just turned into some really bad things. So, we decided not to do that. Then we thought we would have a mouse race, and I like that, and I thought that was kind of neat. I had never seen a mouse race before. That didn't develop.

We don't mind spending the money, we just don't want to waste the money. The banquet was costing us \$4,000.00. We were getting a minimum of 100 people to attend. I know we had the people, we were just not getting the attendance. We can host what you guys like to do. The things that we can do to make it interesting for you to keep you here, for a Saturday night -- tonight is going to be on your own. Saturday night we don't have a lot of things, but you know I was really happy to see some of the things that you guys invented over the last few years. These are the things that interest you guys. If there's something that we can do that your interested in, we are willing to spend a little time and cash to get people in.

We also talk about entertainers and that type of thing, but we don't want to spend that type of money and not get you guys here to enjoy it.

Let us know what you enjoy and what you want to see, and if we can do it, we want to give you something back. So, let the directors know what you would like to see for some type of entertainment.

In closing, is there anything from the floor that anyone wants to bring up at our conference at this time.

MIKE DECKELMANN: John just said something I have to comment on it. A year ago we sat in a meeting with the State Fire Marshal's Office with Margaret Vaughn and a few other leaders of the state. The big discussion was the Cornerstone Program. At that time your President, John Swan, asked the question, we won't mention any names, he asked the question, how can we get back the Cornerstone money, or what are the odds of getting that Cornerstone money back. The answer was given to him, and I feel he is owed an apology for this answer. It was less than zero, and thrown very snidely at John. The first thing that went through my mind was something that John just said a little while ago. "He doesn't know the fire service very well." Like it or not, you are the last of the American Heroes. The impossible just takes a little bit longer. In four months John Swan, pushing along with Margaret Vaughn and a lot of other people in this state got your Cornerstone Program right back into position. I think that this organization, I think you guys owe yourselves a round of applause under the guidance of John Swan.

JOHN SWAN: Thank you, Mike, and by the way, I'm a Swede and I'm hard-nosed, but not as hard as the Italian

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Stallion right here, though. Joe, do you have some announcements?

JOE MANDARINO: If anybody hasn't picked up their name tags up at the desk front, do it before we get done here because you'll need them to get into class. We've got quite a few sitting on the table. Try to pick them all up. Next year the conference is October, 7th, 8th and 9th. We hope it's going to be bigger and better, and if anybody has any suggestions on what kind of classes you would like to see, my email address is in there. Email me so we can take it into consideration. Thank you.

JOHN SWAN: Thanks, Joe. The last thing is, I don't like to hear "no." Everybody, pretty much, don't like to hear "no." But, at the same token, these are some of the worst times since we've had the great depression for some of us. Some of the best things in the world come out of these depressed times. So just because we have some depressed times, does not mean that we can't have some good things happen. And to make that happen, is like Mike said, it's going to take all of us to do it. We've got some good ideas coming up down the road here. I think we are going to make these things happen. And that's going to be a very good benefit for all of you.

In closing we seek a motion for adjournment.

KEVIN WIWCZAROSKI: Okay guys, this is your conference, this is your time right now in this moment to tell us what you think or tell us what you want next year, or tell us what you're looking for out of this conference today. There is not a firefighter in this room that won't sit around tonight and raise Cain or tell the guy next to him, that you know, if this was a great class and you need to take it this year. Let's hear it right now. For the last several years we have not held an open forum. We talked about this at our director's meeting and we've got time today do that. Are there any issues that we need to address for you as an individual firefighter, as member of a department, as member of an association? Is there anything that we can do? Speak up now and you are not going to be crucified and no one is going to hold your feet to the fire. It's a time to toss personal ideas into the center of the room. It's like throwing a beach ball. You hit it and it moves and it moves and it floats. Are there any issues that we need to handle for you today? Speak up now, please.

Jim Stecher, West Peoria. I was talking with Director Reason yesterday, and we were discussing how to get more involvement. If anybody has gone to any of the other big conferences, you registered and you put your email down there. Kerry does a great job with those emails going out to the people that are registered. If you go to the big

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conferences, I get stuff from a lot of other organizations, and again, technology is there today. Firefighters have to take a look on twitter, they are going to take a look on facebook, their going to look in their emails, and you may only have five minutes or ten minutes, but if you click on something and read it, it's going stick in your head. Go with an email format, get on that list so they can get the information out. We can get a little impromptu poll in Madison County hospitality room. Guys are on emails, that day. They were on twitter, they were on facebook that day. How many have ever seen or never seen a bulletin? You know, take that bulletin format, and maybe even one of those articles comes out once a month out of the blue from IFA. It's getting to every firefighter. At the firefighter level, chiefs change, secretary of the association changes, and changes don't always follow what's going on. But if you as an association member, are here today, get on that list so that you can get that email so that you are aware of what's going on.

JOHN SWAN: I agree. And that's the reason why I mentioned earlier in my report that when Kerry has a group email list, what we can do is add that email, hopefully to our registration form list. Can we do that? So for all the firefighters, so that's where he's getting it. So we are getting it off the registration form, I assume. I know mine is on there. Yes, I think that is something, and if you don't have your name on our email list, then we need to put that on. Your right, the twitter, facebook, and things such as that, that's the wave of the future whether you like it or not. If you're willing to be part of that, I think we are probably open to try to incorporate that into our communication format. Kerry, does that sound good.

KERRY FEDERER: Yeah. My email in on the Illinois Firefighter's Website. Shoot me an email, I'll add to the list. Or you can give it to Wiz or whatever. I always put on the bottom of my emails that if you don't want to receive anymore of this stuff, tell me you don't want to receive it, and I'll take your name off the list. It's not like we are going to hit you with 100 emails a day. It's usually once a month or every couple months. It's usually stuff of importance that we send out to you.

JOHN SWAN: One of the things at the National Summit, Terry has been investigating this, especially if the firefighters looking at maybe a better route to go for the financing and funds and the credit union is something that we are looking at to join forces with. We haven't made any commitment. We are in the research stage of that. Do you firefighters see that is a benefit to you? Other

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states really take big advantage of a credit union established in our name.

JOE MANDARINO: You might reassure that these email will not be sold or shared.

JOHN SWAN: Yes, they will be confidential. I don't know how emails about some fancy bra keeps coming to my email. I have to keep deleting it. I don't know how they got my email. I think we all get some of these emails that turn into spam and we're reluctant to do something. But, those things do happen.

KEVIN WIWCZAROSKI: One last thing we decided as a board, and it's a financial thing. We tried it for the convenience of our members, credit card payments. This year so far we took in \$661.00 in credit card payments. We paid out \$447.00 in charges for those credit cards. So, effectively we gave away two-thirds of what you guys

paid for credit card services. There is no business in the United States that will sit there and look at something like that and let that keep going on. There is not enough interest in credit card payments to carry on our credit card services. So as of this week, we will no longer accept credit card payments, it's cash or check. That way we don't have any problems, we don't have any lawsuits and your funds go to pay for our programs, not to put money in some credit card processing service's pocket. I hope everybody understands. I think we had a total of 23 credit card charges. It's in your best interest we've decided just to stop taking credit cards.

JOHN SWAN: Is there anything else from the floor that's pertinent to our association ourselves, as far as the open forum here? There has got to be something that you have a concern about.

Well, we know there is a lot. We'll continue to work on some of those issues. But, as your President on our board, we know what's going on within the state, and what's going on in the nation. Whether it's the retention or the recruitment, your finances, anything that we can do to assist.

You need to do more of an open format. That's what I hear most of the comments they get when we were in the hospitality room. When you got done with the training last year I had a lot of my guys, you know, say this was easy. Where I've had in the past years guys come out of there with blisters on their knees and then we got the younger kids coming up saying that was nothing. This was easy. So, I think you are getting more from these guys after they sat in your classes and after they've had the training, and you'll probably hear a little bit more about what they want or what they need.

JOHN SWAN: Okay. Well, you know that the training issues,

and probably 90% percent of you guys are down here because of the Down and Dirty Training. Really. And that's some of the format that this association is working on at the conference level has changed over the years. They are trying to bring those classes of the training to you and then the other issue is you, personally, as firefighters in your department, in this state, what impacts you as a firefighter. Those things are a concern for us. What impacts you at a local level, and your department, and so on and so forth. It's one of those issues regarding to local statutory requirements, state training, what impacts you, what can we do to help resolve some of the stresses

and the safety, and, of course, benefits. Because, remember last year or the year before, we changed the By-Laws in our mission statement to include benefits. We needed to do that because we know that firefighters today are here for a reason. I'm getting old now and Mike Deckelmann has been here a long time, also, and a lot of us old guys when we first started, especially in the volunteer group, started for a different reason than a lot of your new guys started today. Not that you aren't here to serve your community, you're doing that. But, back then my wife didn't work, and she don't work today. Don't tell her that though. I mean with her own job. If I told her she didn't work, I wouldn't be able to go home. The point being is that it takes a two-family income today in most households to survive, and we understand that. That wasn't the case when I started 30-some years ago. So we know you got a lot more stresses personally than when I started 33 years ago. That's my opinion, and I think we can all buy into that. When I leave this world, or I leave this position, I'd like to think that my sons, my grandsons, my kids, are going to have it better than I when I left. I say that with almost tears in my eyes, because, I know, sitting here seeing you guys, it's not as easy as it was when I started. I think it's harder. I really do. So these are the things that I'm asking you guys, is there something we can do to help you out. I can't bring your paycheck home, I can't take care of your kids, but if there is something that we can take care of for you as a firefighter, that we can look at. Do you guys understand what I'm saying? You guys know what I'm talking about. If there's something out there that we can do to help you, we're going to try to do that. That is something that's important to all of us. Okay. And I know that we can't resolve all these issues, but you can bring issues up, and see if whether we can work on them, at least we know about them. Anything else from the floor? Like I say, we are going to meet tomorrow at 10 o'clock. We can't have everybody there

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because what we are trying to do is to get back to your representatives, get back to your chiefs, get back to your directors. If you can think of anything between now and 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, get with them and bring that up, because these are the things we want to address tomorrow. We've got other issues tomorrow, but we want to address some of your concerns, also. If not, I think we can entertain a motion. Mike Wilson, Colona, make a

motion to adjourn the meeting. Second, Jim Stecher, West Peoria, end discussions on the motion. All in favor Aye. And nays the same. Ayes unanimous. Motion carried. Guys be safe, and enjoy the conference and the Down and Dirty Training.

(Business meeting commenced at approximately 10:45 p.m.)