

The **Bulletin**



Publication of the Illinois Firefighter's Association, Inc.

Volume 69, Number 1

January - February 2015

FIRE LINE - DO NOT CROSS

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Fire, Police, Public Health Officials Band Together To Oppose Legalization Of Fireworks



The Bulletin

January - February 2015 Volume 69 Number 1

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Please send address changes or articles to:

The Bulletin

Kerry Federer, Editor

PO Box 77

Glen Carbon, IL 62034

Office/Fax 618-882-4783

Home 618-654-3852

Cell 618-830-3961

editor@illinoisfirefighters.org

www.illinoisfirefighters.org

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Bulletin Deadlines:

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IFA Officers, Directors, Support Staff and Consultants

Officers

President (2016)

John Swan

23288 Green River Rd.

Colona, IL 61241

309.792.3011-work

309.792.4551-fax (work)

309.792.3231-station

309.792.3250-fax (station)

309.792.2793-home

309.314.0939-cell

Colonachief@AOL.com

Vice-President (2016)

Terry Ford

1214 Douglas Street

Alton, IL 62002

217.785.7487-work

618.977.2843-cell

618.463.5701-home

tford9@yahoo.com

Secretary/Treasurer (2015)

Kerry Federer

70 Arbor Crest Dr.

Highland, IL 62249-3899

618.654.3852-home

618.830.3961-cell

federer@charter.net

IFA Office

PO Box 77

Glen Carbon, IL 62034

Phone/Fax 618-882-4783

editor@illinoisfirefighters.org

Directors

Ed Allsman (2016)

1314 Gonterman St

South Roxana, IL 62087

618.781.4630-cell

618.254.1088-station

618.254.8802-fax (station)

eallsmn@srfire.org

Jeff Bryant Sr. (2017)

PO Box 165

Amboy, IL 61310

815.994.6184 cell

jbryant9962@gmail.com

Joe Heim (2017)

341 Gramercy Street

East Dubuque, IL 61025

563.599.3356 cell

edfire18@yahoo.com

Joseph Mandarino (2017)

24403 Arrowhead Dr.

Manhattan, IL 60442

815.680.6020 home

708.935.2893 cell

Corky2700@aol.com

Ronald Mulach (2018)

304 Wolf

P.O. Box 26

Hamel, IL 62046

618.633.2376-home/fax

618.973.5871-cell

samrjm10@aol.com

Edward Myers (2015)

2171 E. 221st Street

Sauk Village, IL 60411

708.983.9102-cell

708.758.2225 xt. 430-work

708.753.0901-work fax

acmyers502@comcast.net

Bill Offerman (2016)

600 Beattie St.

Elwood, IL 60421

815.423.6967-home

815.423-5224-station

815.423.6323-fax

BillCh601@krausonline.com

Robert Reason (2018)

55 North Street

East Peoria, IL 61611

309.694.6678-home

309.699.5252-fax

breason@sbcglobal.net

John Schott (2018)

609 Mayfield St.

Carlinville, IL 62626

217.556.2122 cell

jschott88@hotmail.com

Kevin Schott (2015)

17739 Macoupin Club Road

Carlinville, IL 62626

217.854.2179-home

217.971.8196-cell

schotttd@frontiernet.net

Jeff Stuck (2017)

404 Partridge Lane

Cartersville, IL 62918

618.985.8060-work/fax

618.925.4915-cell

stuck915@hotmail.com

Gary Turnbaugh (2016)

506 Maple Avenue

Roxana, IL 62084-1017

618.254.9820-home

618.531.2480-cell

greyhounds1947@sbcglobal.net

Support Staff and Consultants

Chaplain

Kevin Coffey

1117 N 1000 East Road

Onarga, IL 60955

815.457.2007 - home

kc9526@yahoo.com

Legislative Lobbyist

Margaret Vaughn

9211 Waterfall Glen Blvd.

Darien, IL 60561

217.280.0206-cell

630.908.7311-fax

mvaughn@springnet1.com

Attorney

Robert J. Britz

OBKCG&D, LTD

303 N. Main St.

Elburn, IL 60119

630.365.6441 Phone

630.365.6451 Fax

rbritz@ottosenbritz.com

www.ottosenbritz.com

Mission Statement

Dedicated to the advancement of the Fire Service by providing leadership. The Association will proudly support the community of firefighters in Illinois through education, training, benefits and information networking at the local, state and national levels.

President's Message



Dear Fellow Firefighters,

As you already know, we have a new governor in the executive office and that could lead to changes all over this state. I would like to welcome him aboard and hope that he will continue to support the fire service. We have a critical mission in protecting the lives and property of our citizens. As Firefighters, politics have very little to do with our primary job, but has everything to do with the support we receive to accomplish that mission. We have been very fortunate with the support we have received in the past and I hope that this new administration continues in that direction. Our State Fire Marshal, Larry Matkaitis, has shown that commitment and fortitude in protecting us and the citizens all over this state. I wish him well in his future endeavors. I also want to welcome the new State Fire Marshal on board, at this time I do not know who that may be. I hope that the new Fire Marshall will recognize that the Fire Prevention Fund can support our needs and not to cut the budget that protects us all. That money is not generated through general revenue but is collected from the insurance industry for the purpose of supporting the fire service.

In one of the past administrations, the budget had been cut, which created a artificial surplus and then those funds were swept and put into the general fund. This is a form of legalized theft, in my book which funds were generated for one purpose and then spent for another. Our residents generated those funds by paying their insurance premiums, of which a portion goes into that fund. We sure do not want that to happen again. The old saying of “stealing from Peter to pay Paul” will only increase risks that we all take as firefighters on a daily basis.

On another note, I just returned from Baltimore, Maryland, doing AFG grant panel reviews. There were over 7,000 grant requests this year and those grant funds can only go so far. This only goes to show that there is a need for financial support of this nation's fire service and that the need is great. We had somewhere around one hundred and eighty grant reviewers working on your behalf. I hope all of you that submitted a grant request are able to receive one, but I know that will not be possible. The only way I see this program to continue in the future, is for all of you to communicate with our congressional representative leadership on the importance of this grant program.

In closing, we all know that it is the firefighter at the end of the chain that makes the mitigation of the emergency go away. We risk all at times to see that our fellow citizens are protected and their property saved.

Many of us have had the opportunity to serve our community and retire from our life long commitment as a firefighter. I would like to remember all of them that have passed and now remember retired Chief Robert Stecher from West Peoria who just passed recently. Chief Stecher was highlighted in our Bulletin last year for his service to his community. Chief Stecher, like all firefighters whether chief or line firefighter, needs to be remembered and thanked for a job well done. I hope everyone of you are able to serve your community as those who have served before you.

As Always, God Bless and be Safe

John Swan President IFA



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Margaret Vaughn, IFA Legislative Lobbyist

LEGISLATIVE FORUM HELD CHAMPAIGN/DOUGLAS/PIATT COUNTIES

Although temperatures dipped below zero over 50 fire officials came out to attend the January 8th MABAS 28 Meeting held at the Allerton Fire Department. I attended as a guest and also invited local legislators to join us in order to educate both attendees and legislators on the latest fire service legislation. Sen. Rose fought the elements to attend and I met with newly elected State Rep. Carol Ammons (D-Urbana) and who previously served on the Champaign County Board and most recently the Urbana City Council, the next morning to go over the issues.



Pictured left to right is Illinois Fire Safety Alliance Executive Director Phil Zaleski, Champaign Fire Chief Gary Ludwig, State Senator Chapin Rose (R-Mahomet), Champaign Acting Deputy Chief David Ferber, IFA Lobbyist Margaret Vaughn and Pesotum Fire Department Official Robert Russian.

NEED to BATTLE OPPOSITION of LEGALIZATION of RETAIL FIREWORKS

Sen. Rose did make it clear that despite the opposition from the fire service he does plan to introduce legislation this session to legalize fireworks in order to increase state revenues. He said some of the money would be allotted to the fire service but we believe this is blood money and want no part of it. Please reach out to your legislators now to start educating them on the fact that it makes bad **public policy to support anything which will be guaranteed to increase injuries to thousands of Illinois children every year, lead to possible deaths, not to mention property damage for our residents.** Here are some additional talking points:

- Any additional revenue will be offset by increased cost to first responders for fireworks related accidents and injuries and increased Medicaid costs to treat injuries (burn injuries can be one of the most expensive to treat).
- States such as Missouri which have legalized Class C fireworks have seen 400 % increase in injuries.
- According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission fireworks injuries in 2013 increased by over 30% (11,400 injuries annually) from 2012 and resulted in 8 deaths
- Sadly 40 % of injuries occurring to children under the age of 14 and children under the age of 5 having the highest per capita injury rate (many who will have to endure the rest of their lives with scars)
- In testing by the Federal government over 30 % of imported fireworks don't meet federal safety regulations and fail to meet burn fuse burn time requirements, were labeled illegally and contained more explosives than were allowed.
- There is already a mechanism in current law if locals unit of government want to pass ordinance to issue permits for Class C fireworks and have local fire department inspect site.

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D I D Y O U K N O W ?

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's Firefighter Life Safety Summit developed a national program to reduce firefighter line-of-duty deaths.



www.firehero.org

In 2004, the Summit developed 16 initiatives aimed at achieving a 25% reduction in firefighter fatalities over the next five years and a 50% reduction over the next 10 years, including:

Initiative 15: "Strengthen advocacy for the enforcement of codes and the installation of home fire sprinklers."

To find out more about the Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives and home fire sprinklers, please visit www.HomeLifeSafety.com.



NIFSAB

NORTHERN ILLINOIS FIRE SPRINKLER ADVISORY BOARD

FireSprinklerAssoc.org

Tom Lia, Executive Director
Phone: 708-403-4468
Email: sprinktoml@aol.com

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Chaplain's Corner

Kevin Coffey - IFA Chaplain

The Cycle of God's Grace

Firefighters are men and women who are givers. Whether volunteer or career, or anything in between, fire service people give more than they are ever rewarded for: more effort, more training, more time, more heart, more selflessness, more commitment, more compassion, more risk for the sake of others. That's why I know that the Bible passage about being a "cheerful" giver (2 Corinthians, chapter 9) applies to firefighters. It goes like this: *"Each firefighter should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that when the tones sound at any time of day or night - sending you to any kind of emergency - having all you need, you will abound in every good fire service work"*.

Did you notice that it is God's grace that enables us to give so much? God's grace does not come to firefighters with an advertising label stating "this is God's grace", so often we don't recognize the form in which we receive it. Let me identify a few of those forms of grace:

First, God's grace abounds to you in and through the people He has placed around you in your fire department. People who have laid the foundation of service in the past...people who provide leadership...people who offer training...people who set the example...people who speak encouraging words...people whose friendship creates the bond of camaraderie that makes us willing to risk our lives for each other and our community. All these people around you are a gift of God's grace.

Next, God's grace abounds to you in the actual equipment, tools, rigs, and station that you have to work with. His grace has put all this into your hands along with training in how to skillfully and safely operate so that you will have everything you need to respond to whatever emergency He calls you to in your community.

Also, God's grace abounds to you in the individual experiences and talents that you bring to your fire department team by which He guides and directs you to make your unique contribution that no one else could give in quite the same way.

Most importantly, God's grace abounds to you by what He has placed in your heart. By human nature, we are takers, not givers. But when God makes His grace abound to us, our hearts are filled with a desire to give whatever is required in order to meet the emergency needs of others – that's why you found your way to the fire service. There was something in your heart that compelled you to join and that keeps you serving and giving regardless of what tangible rewards you do or do not receive. That something is God's grace.

Now God gives His grace so He can get something back. The Bible passage above continues like this: *"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the people of your community but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God...and in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"* God receives a return on His investment of grace when the members of your community give Him thanks and praise for what you do. He turns it around and pours out more grace to you, and on it goes.

Do you see the grace cycle? From God to you and your fire department, then to your community as you serve and respond, and then back to Him in the thanks and praise of the people you serve. Notice also that the grace does not begin or end with us in the fire service – grace begins and ends with God. The fact that we can be a channel of its flow is His indescribable gift! May your faith embrace that gift as you serve each and every day. If I can be of any help or encouragement to you or your fire department, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Kevin Coffey, IFA Chaplain (815-457-2007, kc9526@yahoo.com)



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*Have you returned your 2015 Dues
and Statistical Report?*

**2015
DUES ARE DUE**

Dues Notices were mailed mid-December

**If you did not receive your dues notice
contact IFA Secretary/Treasurer Kerry Federer**

email: editor@illinoisfirefighters.org

Office Phone: 618-882-4783

Cell Phone: 618-830-3961

IFA Members: Join the NVFC for the Extra Low Price of \$15

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) has partnered with the Illinois Firefighter's Association (IFA) to offer huge savings to Illinois first responders. Members of IFA can join the NVFC for just \$15 per year – that's half off the normal cost of Individual Membership.

You strive to be the best first responder you can be, and the NVFC is there to help you every step of the way. With benefits ranging from training and health and safety programs, to insurance coverage and national representation, the NVFC is here to support you.

"The NVFC provides volunteer firefighters, EMTs, and rescue personnel with tools, resources, programs, and advocacy to help them be their best on and off the job," said NVFC Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. "We are pleased to partner with IFA to provide Illinois volunteers with all of the benefits of NVFC membership at this incredibly low annual rate."

As a member of the NVFC, you will enjoy a variety of exciting benefits you can use all year long.

- **Stay informed** with NVFC newsletters and alerts.
- **Protect your loved ones** with a \$10,000 AD&D policy, eligibility for home and auto insurance, and access to a federal credit union.
- **Expand your knowledge** with on-demand training, education discounts and scholarships, and NVFC resource guides and manuals.
- **Access resources** such as sample documents, members-only giveaway programs, and more.
- **Utilize programs** such as the Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program, Share the Load support program, National Junior Firefighter Program, Fire Corps, and the Wildland Fire Assessment Program.
- **Enjoy discounts** on gear, equipment, grant-writing services, industry trade shows and publications, fire department background checks, travel, shopping, and more.

The NVFC is the only national association solely dedicated to supporting the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC focuses on issues critical to volunteers, including health and safety, standards and codes, training, recruitment and retention, funding, and more. By joining the NVFC, you will join the voice of the volunteer at the national level while gaining access to benefits and resources that impact your life. You can also join the EMS/Rescue Section and be a part of a group of individuals who are committed to volunteer EMS and rescue operations at no additional fee.

To take advantage of this special offer, please contact Federer at editor@illinoisfirefighters.org. Learn more about the NVFC at www.nvfc.org/BeYourBest.



Illinois Fire Service Institute Updates

Jim Keiken, Deputy Director



Program	Start	End	Location
Excelling as a Manager or Supervisor Workshop	2/1/2015		IFSI Urbana-Champaign IL
Command and General Staff for Local IMTs	2/2/2015	2/6/2015	Macomb
Fire Prevention Principles	2/2/2015	2/6/2015	Carol Stream
NWCG S248 - Status Check in Recorder	2/4/2015	2/5/2015	IFSI Urbana-Champaign IL
Management 4	2/6/2015	2/22/2015	St Louis Airport
NFA Intro to Wildland Urban Interface Operations for Structural Comp Officers	2/11/2015	2/12/2015	Buffalo Grove
Instructor 1	2/16/2015	2/20/2015	Carol Stream
F0457 - Decision Making for Initial Company Operations	2/18/2015	2/19/2015	Quincy Fire Department, Quincy IL
NWCG G-130 Wildland training for structural firefighters	2/20/2015	2/22/2015	TBA
Anhydrous Ammonia Emergencies	2/21/2015		IFSI Urbana-Champaign IL
Rope Rescue Level 1 - Blended	2/23/2015	4/19/2015	Blended - On-Line
Command and General Staff for Local IMTs	2/23/2015	2/27/2015	Marion
NWCG S-230 Crew Boss Single Resource Management	2/24/2015	2/26/2015	IFSI Urbana-Champaign IL
Rapid Intervention Team	3/2/2015	3/6/2015	IFSI Urbana-Champaign IL
Basic Firefighter/NFPA Firefighter 1 Academy	3/3/2015	4/17/2015	IFSI Urbana-Champaign IL
F0803 - Leadership I for Fire and EMS: Strategies for Company Success	3/5/2015	3/6/2015	Peoria Fire Department, Peoria IL
NFA Intro to Wildland Urban Interface Operations for Structural Company Officers	3/11/2015	3/12/2015	IFSI Urbana-Champaign IL

What is the quintessential firefighter? In my humble opinion the “quintessential firefighter” or “firefighters, firefighter” is one that is committed and passionate about the calling. One that has taken the time and made the commitment to not just show up and dress out but one that has invested in learning the trade. Their knowledge is of a depth and span to truly understand the environment, the science and the “job” of firefighting. They know not just what they do but they know all the parts of the job and have done many of them throughout their career.

They are committed to the mission and the team and are serious about not only success but that everyone on the crew goes home, “intact” when the day is done. They are aggressive when there is something to be saved and conservative when there is not. They are smart firefighters that know the difference between bravado and true leadership. They respect the environment and the challenges they face, with an understanding that mistakes can result in needless losses.

They are mentors of those coming up, sharing their experiences and lessons learned as well as the pride and ownership of the service. They remember what it was like to be new and just starting out and want those that follow to learn from their mistakes. They take pride in others successes, and feel responsible for their failures. They understand it is their responsibility to make sure others don’t make mistakes they can’t recover from as they learn how to be smart. They are examples of what we can be and respect each one of us for who we are, what we know in spite of our faults and differences.

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Quintessential firefighter are always “nice” and understand we are there to serve. Service to those we respond to no matter what the issue, no issue to big or to small. Calls are not an interruption or inconvenience. Calls are what we are here to do, no ifs ands or buts. They are also there to serve the members, always offering to help. Whether it’s a tasks in the station or projects off duty they always step up and are there.

They are the ones that leadership listen to when they add to a discussion because their perspectives are valued and they see a bigger picture than most. They are the firefighter that is always next to you and supporting you in the firefight or just in life. You know that when you are lucky enough to get them as your officer or Chief you know it’s a good year. For those that don’t get them you can be certain that they envy your luck and hope to get there in the future.

I challenge you for this New Year to be the quintessential firefighter, develop yourself, develop and help others. Commit to the mission and the crew to be the best you can be both at the department and in you personal life. Take the time to help the others that follow you as they achieve their success and provide the leadership and guides so they don’t make the same mistake you did.

Thank you John for the example you have been and the inspiration for this article, as well as your friendship...

New “Blended” programs coming from IFSI

A “Blended” class is a class that combines both online and in person activities. It is an option to take the classroom portion of a class when you want from your home, department or most any were with internet access. The practical activities or hand on skills of the class are taken at IFSI or an appropriate regional or even local training site. These two parts created the blending of online and practical training or education and is of the same high quality you have come to expect of an IFSI class but it allow you have a more flexible schedule of training to meet the time challenges that life presents.

IFSI has two new blended class offerings this year with more being rolled out throughout the year. The Fire Apparatus Engineer (FAE) Online course is a blended course in that all classroom materials will be delivered online through the IFSI Student and Staff Resource Center. Students will be provided instruction in 13 subjects under the close direction of an instructor. The practical portion of the course will be administered in three sessions at the IFSI Training Campus in Champaign. Classroom / Practical sessions will be on Week 4 (One day), Week 8 (One day) and Week 13 (Two day practical, state exam, and evaluation session)

The blended Rope Rescue Operations is an 8 week program. During that time, students will have weekly online studies including viewing online presentations, chat sessions, student activities, and quizzes. This course offers the student weekly live interactivity with their instructor via the online classroom page. Students are also provided with presentations that have step-by step directions on how to perform rope rescue skills. Students use this instruction to practice and become proficient prior to the practical session conducted on the final weekend of the course.

In addition to the above classes IFSI is working on Fire Instructor 1 and Haz Mat Operations. Both programs are in final development and should be available in the second quarter of 2015. Both classes will follow a similar format as the course above. We are also working on the development of Basic Firefighter and Advanced Firefighter Technician, with their roll out later in 2015. What IFSI’s web site for updates.

Agricultural Rescue at IFSI

Grain Bin Engulfment’s, Tractor Rollovers, Auger Entrapments, Livestock emergencies were does it end? The training that is necessary to meet the expectations of the public is an ongoing challenge for today’s fire service. One way that IFSI is working to meet those needs is to expand the Grain Bin Rescue program to the Awareness, Operations and Technician levels so that the training matches the level of the department. In awareness the students learn pre-planning and what can be done on the outside of a grain

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bin. From that point the training expands to the operations and technician level which includes entering the bin and removing the patient.

Tractor rollovers remain the most common of Ag related fatalities. IFSI provides an Agriculture Rescue Techniques class that is a combination of classroom and hands on dealing with tractor rollovers. A rollover prop is brought to the class and students learn about stabilization and lifting procedures that are different from the typical auto extrication. When possible a tour of an implement dealer is arranged and students can see the multiple types of equipment used in farming. As more and more first responders don't come from the rural community it can be an eye opening experience. All of these classes are available through the Cornerstone program at no cost to local fire departments, at local fire departments. Check out IFSI's web site or contact IFSI for more information.

IFSI Instructor of the Month

John Leonard is IFSI's January Instructor of the Month. He was nominated by Sean Burke, Assistant Director for Firefighting Program for IFSI.

Note: John Leonard passed away in January following a battle with cancer.

John joined IFSI as an instructor in 2005 when Associate Director Mac McCastland enlisted him to teach at the annual Fire College, when a firefighting class fell short of instructors. "I knew of John's talent and ability, and he was at Fire College as a student so hiring him was a battlefield promotion," McCastland said. "Since then he has been a true asset, always ready to work."

John has been a member of the Chicago Fire Department and is best known for teaching in IFSI's Chicago Intensive Officer Training Program. John also teaches in the HazMat program. "I met John 14 years ago in a class and was amazed at his dedication to the fire service. John bleeds fire department blue," Lew Lake, Director for IFSI's Officer Program, said. "I have never met a more humble and respectful human being in my life," Lake added.



Illinois Fire Service Institute Regional Representatives:

Northeast Region:	Randy Schlichter,	847-343-4039
Northwest Region:	Ray Palczynski,	563-468-8385
Chicago Metro Area:	Richard Stack,	773-988-0259
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Illinois General Assembly overrides veto, enacts FOIA reform

by Joseph Miller III & John E. Motylinski
Ottosen Britz Kelly Cooper Gilbert & DiNolfo, Ltd.

On December 3, 2014, the Illinois General Assembly overrode Governor Pat Quinn's veto and enacted House Bill 3796, an amendment to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") (5 ILCS 140/1 *et seq.*). Broadly speaking, the new law helps public bodies comply with FOIA requests by introducing a new "voluminous request" category and permitting public bodies to direct requesters to documents already posted online.

HB 3796 has been highly controversial. Proponents of the bill assert that public bodies are overwhelmed with expansive FOIA requests and that some for-profit groups are using large FOIA requests for commercial gain. Opponents of HB 3796, however, argue that the amendments will result in less meaningful public engagement and will deter average citizens from making FOIA requests.

The Illinois House of Representatives passed the bill on May 27, 2014, by a vote of 77 to 36. Three days later, the Senate passed HB 3796 49 to 1. Upon reaching his desk on June 27, 2014, Governor Pat Quinn vetoed the bill. In his veto statement, Governor Quinn criticized HB 3796, stating that it "reduces government transparency by limiting the ability of citizens to seek public records" and "make[s] it more difficult for citizens to obtain a large volume of records." Nevertheless, the House and Senate both voted to override the Governor's veto on December 3, 2014 — enacting HB 3796 with immediate effect.

The new law makes several changes to the FOIA. At the outset, HB 3796 introduces a new category: "voluminous requests." The bill then defines three types of requests that are voluminous: (i) requests that require the compilation of more than 500 pages, unless the request only targets a single record that happens to be over 500 pages; (ii) requests that contain more than five (5) individual sub-requests for more than five (5) different kinds of records; and (iii) five (5) separate FOIA requests for five different types of records made in a twenty (20) day period by a single requester.

The new law provides exceptions for the news media, non-profit groups, scientific organizations, and academic institutions. Indeed, requests made by these organizations cannot be voluminous if they are made for a permitted purpose. These permitted purposes include accessing and disseminating information "concerning news and current or passing events," as well as making requests for "articles of opinion," "features of interest to the public," or "academic, scientific, or public research or education."

HB 3796 also provides a procedure for handling voluminous claims. Public bodies are still required to respond within five (5) days of receipt of the request. Yet, if a public body deems a request to be voluminous, it must allow the requester ten (10) business days to amend his or her request. If the requester does not respond within ten (10) days, or if his or her amended request continues to be voluminous, then the public body must respond again. In this second response, public bodies must either provide an estimate of the fees to be charged, deny the request under an applicable FOIA exemption, notify the requester that his or her request is unduly burdensome, or provide the records as requested. This second response typically must be made within five (5) business days, but public bodies can now extend their final response time by ten (10) days if an exception applies under Section 3(e) (5 ILCS 140/3(e)).

The new law also allows public bodies to assess new fees on voluminous requests for electronic records. Under a newly-added fee-schedule, if an electronic document is not in a portable document

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format (“PDF”), public bodies can charge up to \$20 if the file is less than two megabytes; \$40 if the file is between two and four megabytes; and \$100 if the file is larger than four megabytes. Similarly, if an electronic document is available as a PDF, public bodies can charge up to \$20 if the file is less than eighty megabytes; \$40 if the file is between eighty and 160 megabytes; and \$100 if the file is any larger than 160 megabytes.

Furthermore, public bodies are now able to charge commercial requesters up to \$10 per hour for examining responsive documents and making necessary redactions. Before HB 3796 took effect, public bodies were only permitted to charge a commercial requester up to \$10 per hour in excess of eight (8) hours for “searching for and retrieving” documents. However, public bodies were not allowed to use this fee for the review and redaction of requested documents. Now, public bodies are allowed to be compensated for their time spent on “examining the record for necessary redactions.” Moreover, time spent reviewing records for redactions now counts toward the eight-hour grace period.

HB 3796 also changes the way public bodies can collect and assess voluminous request fees. Now, if a public body completes a voluminous FOIA request, assesses fees, and the requester does not pay, a public body can collect the outstanding sum just like any other “due and owing” debt. Additionally, public bodies can require requesters to pay voluminous request fees up front before it begins copying the requested documents.

Beyond voluminous requests, one of the most important changes made by HB 3796 concerns online access to records. Previously, public bodies were required to provide copies of records to requesters to satisfy FOIA — even if the information was posted online. Now, under the new Section 8.5, public bodies can simply direct requesters to a website where the records can be accessed; there is no need to provide copies. However, if the requester cannot reasonably access the record, then a public body must allow physical inspection or provide copies of the record. (5 ILCS 140/8.5)

The new amendments made to FOIA by HB 3796 have the potential to substantially reduce public bodies’ burden in responding to FOIA requests. In particular, the new provisions governing online records may significantly decrease the amount of effort needed to respond to typical FOIA requests. Additionally, the bill will increase efficiency by offering new mechanisms to handle voluminous requests, including new fees for copying electronic records, new provisions for up-front payment, and new response time requirements. Accordingly, HB 3796 will make it easier for public bodies to comply with FOIA requests — both large and small.

Joseph Miller, III is a partner with Ottosen Britz Kelly Cooper Gilbert & DiNolfo, Ltd. in Naperville, Illinois. Mr. Miller’s practice is concentrated in the areas of fire protection district law, local government law, and education law.

John E. Motylinski is a law clerk with the law firm of Ottosen Britz Kelly Cooper Gilbert & DiNolfo, Ltd. in Naperville. John currently attends the University of Illinois College of Law in Champaign and will graduate in May 2015. John received his undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Planning for the Future of the Fire Service

Chief Joseph Heim – East Dubuque Fire Department

Have you ever thought about where the future funding for your department will come from? Have you ever considered how to market your department and add to your membership? Have you ever thought about how your current operation and leadership philosophies will impact future generations of the department? If you answered no to any or all of the above questions, please read on.

I believe, we as the fire service in general don't do a very good job of looking to the future and marketing our departments. We need to sit back and take a good hard look at the services we are providing, not only to the communities we serve, but also the personnel in our organizations. The fire service provides great assistance to our communities. We continue to be the ones that people call when they can't figure out how to fix a situation. This is great and we do a good job, but leading a fire department is more than just emergency response. As leaders we need take time to analyze our departments, so we can define who we are for both our current membership as well as our future generations.

The future of the fire service is dependent on current leaders who are willing to sit down with their officers and firefighters to find out what they want from the organization and how it can be improved. This takes incredible courage as you ask the difficult questions and receive feedback that may be hard to hear.

Strategic planning is one such process that can be used to work through each of the above questions. It also is a process to facilitate development of a game plan to address needed changes and strategies for the future. In my opinion, it is time for the fire service to quit flying by the seat of our pants and begin planning for our organization's future.

If you are interested in this challenge, the first step is assembling a group of personnel that will give you honest answers and have a genuine goal of improving your organization. The next step is finding an outside facilitator who can assist in getting through the mountains of information and "feelings" in order to find the valuable information needed to put together a good plan. This is not an overnight process. It takes an incredible amount of time to develop a well-defined and constructed plan, that when implemented correctly, it will guide the organization for years to come.

The first step in the planning process is completing a SWOT analysis. This identifies the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to the organization. Once those are identified and clearly delineated, the next step is to develop goals and associated objectives that will address issues identified in the SWOT. It is also critical to identify who will be responsible for management of the various aspects of each goal. The final step is to identify the capital purchases that will be needed in the next 10 years along with completing a vehicle replacement schedule and identifying ways to implement a "sinking fund" for apparatus and large capital purchases.

The East Dubuque Fire Department has completed one 3 year strategic planning process and has just approved a plan designed for the next 3 year period. Chief Craig A. Haigh from the Village of Hanover Park Fire Department assisted us by serving as our facilitator. He was instrumental in assisting us with both plans. In our last 3 years, we were able to complete the majority of our

identified goals which included:

- Building a training facility
- Securing proper licensing and equipment for a city wide fire ground channel
- Instituting a Fire Text Response System,
- Implementing a Duty Officer program for weekend coverage
- Developing a stipend system for the on call officer
- Securing funding for a “Code Red” reverse 911 system

Most importantly, completing the plan gave us the confidence to start up our own ambulance service taking it away from a private provider.

The one key thing to remember throughout this process is that the strategic plan is a fluid document and that there will be situations that arise that cause you to modify the plan or will not allow you to complete everything that is in the plan. This does not mean that your organization failed, it means that you were able to adapt and overcome.

Planning is essential and the strategic planning process is a good tool that can help your organization successfully address the vast leadership concerns each of us face.

**The Illinois Firefighter's Association
is beginning to plan for it's
125th Annual Training Conference**

They want this year to be something special

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start planning NOW to attend**

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