

The **Bulletin**



Publication of the Illinois Firefighter's Association, Inc.

Volume 74, Number 1

January - February 2020

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Nomination form on page 19

The Bulletin is published digitally every other month and placed online at www.illinoisfirefighters.org.

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Bulletin Deadlines:

January 15, March 15, May 15, July 15, September 15, and November 15

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Mission Statement

Dedicated to the advancement of the Fire Service by providing leadership. The Illinois Firefighters Association will proudly support the health and welfare of 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

I hope everyone had some great Holidays and now we're deep in our winter activities. I shouldn't need to tell you but, this is the time of year that you have a greater chance of slips and falls. Please, be very careful around the home and fire scene with slippery conditions. Slips and falls makes up the greatest types of injuries that firefighters face and we must be aware of those conditions. Winter conditions also increase the risks along highways. Make sure you're properly protected from passing vehicles, even with Scott's Law in place. If you haven't taken a TIMs (Traffic Incident Management) class, please consider doing so. IFSI has that class through the Cornerstone Program and it is very possible that it could help save your life or your fellow Firefighter.

In other business, IDOL has been very busy inspecting fire departments around this state. Many of their inspections involved structural firefighting gear that is over ten years old. They have been citing these departments for not being in compliance with the NFPA standard. As you may know, the NFPA 1500 standard has been adopted by IDOL many years ago and they also have been enforcing those standards. The question came up " what is a small department to do if they do not have the funds to meet all of these standards"? The revenue is just not there and they can barely stay ahead on these mandates .

The IFA is taking a lead approach on at least one of these issues in regards to the structural firefighting gear. The NFPA 1851 is a standard for advanced inspection and testing of structural Firefighting turn-out gear. I have already taken that class which teaches the advanced inspection and testing criteria. The IFA endorses and supports the safety and protection of firefighters and the PPE they wear. We want firefighters to be safe in their turn-out gear that they wear whether it is one year old or over ten years old. The only true way to know that your gear is in compliance is doing advance testing and inspection of that PPE that meets the NFPA standard. The cost to do this inspection and testing will greatly reduces and outweighs the cost of replacement of fire gear. To be able to do this testing and inspection requires to have a properly trained individual doing those inspections. It also requires a piece of specialized equipment for the testing procedure. In Illinois the employer is required to certify that their employees meet or exceeds the IDOL requirements in protection. We will be working very hard on your behalf to help resolve this safety and protection issue. We hope that working with IDOL and our fire service partners we can come up to an agreement that will mitigate this important issue.

This is also the time to look ahead and get your annual refresher training, health screenings, fit testing and other mandatory requirements completed. Remember record keeping is a very important part to be in compliant.

Well, if this isn't enough to do, please

"Train Smart, Be Safe"

God Bless

John Swan President



Legislative update

By Margaret Vaughn, IFA Legislative Lobbyist

Senator Harmon Elected Senate President

Since former Senate President John Cullerton announced his retirement back in November there had been a firestorm of jockeying taking place within the Senate Democratic Caucus to take over his position. Though he was not the original front runner, Sen. Don Harmon (D-Oak Park) eventually secured enough support among his colleagues and was elected by a vote of 22 to 17 on January 19th. Sen. Kim Lightford (D-Maywood), his opponent will remain in her position of Majority Leader (or second in line to the senate president). I feel we are very fortunate to have Senator Harmon in as Senate President, he is very astute and, in my experience, working with him, takes a common sense approach to public policy issues.

OPENINGS on ELEVATOR BOARD

Please let me know mvaughn@springnet1.com 217-280-0206 if you know anyone who would like to serve on the Elevator Safety Review Board. The Board is supposed to be 4 times a year but realistically only meets once or twice. They rotate meetings between Springfield and DesPlaines. There are openings in the following categories:

1. Municipal representative population under 25 000
2. Municipal representative population 25,000-50,000
3. Higher Education representative
4. Building owners/managers representative

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED TO LEGALIZE FIREWORKS

Despite the fact that over the New Year's holiday a 5 -year old Chicago boy and Oak Lawn man in his 20s both lost their hands because of fireworks injuries; legislation has been once again been introduced to expand the sale of fireworks in Illinois. Rep. Joe Sosnowski (R-Rockford) has introduced HB 4128 which would remove the licensing and training requirements for Class 1.4 Consumer fireworks, lower the age to 18 and tax them. HB 3862 introduced by Rep. Allen Skillicorn (R-Crystal Lake) would provide that firecrackers, skyrockets, and Roman candles are not "fireworks" within the meaning of the Act. I will be meeting with both legislators and sending out alerts for members of the fire service to contact their offices. Because there has been such a huge turnover of legislators the past few years and will continue to be, we must stay diligent with getting to know new lawmakers and educating them on the dangers of fireworks and the need for them to stay illegal.

HB 4080 – Choice of Health Insurance for Family

Sponsored by Rep. Daniel Didech (D-Buffalo Grove) and Rep. Tom Weber (R-Fox Lake) This legislation provides any full-time law enforcement, correctional or correctional probation officer, or firefighter that suffers a catastrophic injury or is killed in the line of duty, as well as their spouse or child, shall be offered by the employer of the law enforcement, correctional or correctional probation officer, or firefighter the choice of any health insurance plan available to currently employed full-time law enforcement, correctional or correctional probation officers, or firefighters.

Additional Bills Impacting Fire Service

Since the bill introduction deadline is not until February 14th, expect thousands of bills to be introduced in the next month which I will be reviewing to determine their impact on IFA.

LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR for 2020 SPRING SESSION

Jan 24th – Deadline to Get House Bills Drafts Submitted

Jan 31st – Deadline to Get Senate Bills Drafts Submitted

Feb. 14th – Deadline to Get Bills Introduced

March 27th – Deadline to Get Bills out of Committee in the Chamber they were introduced

April 24th – Deadline to Pass Bills of Chamber they were introduced in

May 22nd – Final Passage Deadline



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Contact : Sr - jbryant9962@gmail.com or Jr - jbryant@firenuggets.com

2 Day Workshop Offerings

Coordinated Fire Attack – Hands On & Live Fire

Instructor: Jeff Bryant Jr. – Aurora FD & Fire Factory Staff

21st Century Fire Officer Workshop

Instructor: Tim Leidig

Saturday Offerings:

Truck Company Operations - Hands-On

Instructor: Lt. Mike Ciampo – FDNY

1st Rung Recruit Training - FF for the newbie- Hands-On

Instructor: Lt. Kucaba - Northwest Homer FPD

Auto X Extrication Training-Hands-On

Instructor: Captain Mike Huffman – Harlem-Roscoe Fire

Rapid Task Force – Hands-On and Lecture

Instructor: Mercy Health Prehospital and Emergency Services

Strategic Planning for Creating Future Excellence and Juggling Hats- Lecture

Instructor: Chief Craig Haigh, Hanover Park Fire

555 Fitness - Hip Boots to Bunkers, Recliners to Rowers, the motivation to create a fit fire service.
(Bring Reasonable Workout Clothing)

Instructor: Pip - 555 Fitness

EMS Topics for the next generation- Lecture

Instructor: Retired Chief of EMS Operations, New Orleans Ken Bouvier

Thermal Imaging & Max Firebox Demonstration- Hands-On

Instructors: Andy Starnes - Insight Training & John Schott - Max Fire Training

Managing the Risk (TK) & Aggressively Positive (RP) - Lecture

Instructor: Lt Tim Klett - FDNY & Ryan Pennington – Charleston, WV

Sunday Offerings

Engine Tactics- Hands-On

Instructor: Lt Tim Klett - FDNY

Command Tactical Priorities - Hands-On (Recommended Day 2 of Strategic Planning for Creating Future Excellence and Juggling Hats)

Instructor: Chief Craig Haigh

Pride and Ownership (Recommended Day 2 of First Rung)

Instructor: Chief Rick Lasky

Large Vehicle Extrication- Hands-On

Instructor: Captain Mike Hoffman - Auto X

EMS the WOW- Lecture Only

Instructor: Retired Chief of EMS Operations, New Orleans Ken Bouvier

Taking Care of Ourselves - PTSD, - Lecture Only

Teresea Milton, Thin Bent Line

Firefighting in Hoarder Conditions – Lecture Only

Ryan Pennington, Charleston – Charleston, WV

To Register - www.firenuggets.com

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Please support IFA's advocacy efforts by donating to our Political Action Fund. We need to continue to strengthen our voice at the Capitol but can only do so with your help.

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Thanks for your generosity!

Office of the State Fire Marshal

OSFM on Social Media



The Office of the State Fire Marshal is working to increase its outreach through social media by utilizing Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Each week, OSFM highlights a topic and posts fire prevention, fire safety, public safety and other important information on Facebook and Twitter. The goal is to create a fire-safe state and provide tips for residents to use to help create a fire-safe home.

OSFM is committed to helping spread the fire prevention message and promoting news from departments and districts across the state. If your department or district

has something you would like to share, please tag us in your post or send us information and OSFM will share! You can follow OSFM: **Facebook:** @IllinoisStateFireMarshal

Twitter: @ILFireMarshal

YouTube: Illinois State Fire Marshal

Coffee with the Chief

OSFM has started a new segment called Coffee with the Chief. The focus of this segment is to highlight smaller departments and fire protection districts across Illinois. Many departments and districts face similar challenges or have unique challenges or qualities. Fire Marshal Perez is dedicated to telling the story of the Illinois Fire Service and some of the challenges that face different departments and districts across the state. Highlighting these challenges could help to show other departments or districts that they are not alone. This gives an opportunity for Chief's, who are proud of their departments or districts, to showcase what they have accomplished and what the future holds.

How this works...Fire Marshal Perez will visit the department or district and do a sit-down interview with the fire chief. Here are a few sample questions that Fire Marshal will ask:

- Tell us the history of your department or district?
- Talk about the geographic area (size) of the department or district coverage area?
- Tell us about the demographics.... who are you serving?
- What apparatus do you have and are there any stories about them?
- Community outreach is important, what do you do to reach out and educate the people living in your area?
- What are some challenges your department or district faces?
- What would you consider your biggest challenge?
- What does the future hold and where do you see your department or district headed?

Once the interview is shot OSFM's PIO will get video and photos of your department or district and may ask if you have any other photos that could be used. Photos could be of the history of the department, big events that have occurred or other interesting photos you would like used in the segment. The segment will be edited and once that is done will be posted on OSFM's Website under Coffee with the Chief and on OSFM's social media channels Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

If you are interested in highlighting your department or district you can contact Fire Marshal Perez at matt.perez@illinois.gov or OSFM's PIO JC Fultz at jc.fultz@illinois.gov.



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Chaplain's Corner

Firefighter Suicide and Faith

A firefighter who is contemplating suicide is experiencing some difficult circumstances. However, it's not the difficult circumstances that are making suicide look like a possible option – maybe even looking like the best option. No, he/she has faced difficulties before, maybe even more challenging than the current ones. Rather it is often *what*

that firefighter is believing about the circumstances that is sending his/her soul to such a dark place that suicide would even be a consideration. And if he/she believes things that are not true...lies...falsehoods...then that firefighter is still exercising faith, but faith in lies that can send the soul on a downward spiral of darkness and despair. That's why faith is so vital to address when it comes to firefighter suicide – faith speaks to the soul of the firefighter and mounts an interior attack on what ultimately is a spiritual battle of life and death proportions. A firefighter whose soul is wounded becomes very vulnerable to certain lies that rise up and present themselves to his heart and mind in difficult circumstances...lies that seem so believable when we are in pain and not finding our way out. Here are three of the biggest lies:

1. *There is no God...or...God has abandoned me.*
2. *My situation is hopeless...or...I am hopeless.*
3. *My family/friends would be better off without me.*

The truth is that God is there in the midst of the difficulty and darkness. He knows you, loves you, and invites you to reach out to Him by faith even from the pit of your frustration, pain, and despair. He even promises that He will give you the gift of faith to do so and then will somehow demonstrate his love, presence, and grace to your soul so that you can trust Him to walk with you and bring you through your circumstances. He is the God of all hope and His resources are limitless. You must also know the truth that no one has ever been “better off” in the wake of suicide. Every family member and friend has been heartbroken and devastated by suicide – and that's long term and unrelenting pain and grief.

Please, please, please, if you are in a bad place and these types of lies seem like the truth, it's not time to be tough and isolate...it's time to reach out. Reach out to others and reach out to God. This Suicide Prevention Prayer will give some content for your soul to use if you don't know what to say...

O God, my soul is wounded and desperate. I see only darkness inside and I feel that I am approaching the very doorway of death. Please Lord, give me your gift of faith that I might reach out and find you in this moment. All my efforts to fix and control my life have failed and I am hopeless on my own. I place all my hope in you, O my God, show me your way. My relationships have become painful and I am tempted to believe the lie that my family and friends would be better off without me. Please bring forgiveness, hope, and restoration so that I may love and be loved again. Please Lord Jesus, shine your light into my darkness, forgive my sins, and restore my soul and my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

I have this prayer, the lies, and the corresponding truths printed on 3x5 cards and would like to get one into the hands of every member of your fire department. Just contact me and we'll get that done. If possible I will come to your fire department meeting to briefly talk along the lines of this article, facilitate a discussion if desired, and hand out the cards personally to your members.

The National Suicide Hotline number is 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Kevin Coffey, IFA Chaplain
773-455-4393
kc9526@yahoo.com

Potential federal legislation would allow retired or disabled first responders ages 50 to 64 to buy in to Medicare

by Michael B. Weinstein
Ottosen Britz Kelly Cooper Gilbert & DiNolfo, Ltd.

A Senator and Congressman have recently introduced legislation that would provide an option for qualified “first responders” to buy in to Medicare (Parts A, B and D), as well as Medicare Advantage Plans that provide qualified prescription drug coverage (MA-PD). The two pieces of proposed legislation, each entitled the “Expanding Health Care Options for Early Retirees Act” (S. 2552 and H.R. 4527), were simultaneously introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Congressman Tom Malinowski (D-NJ) on September 26, 2019.

Each bill defines a qualified “first responder” as a firefighter, police officer, or EMT (as defined by the United States Code) between the ages of 50 and 64 who has separated from service as a result of retirement or disability. More specifically, the proposed legislation provides that an individual who is a citizen or alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence; who is not otherwise eligible to be enrolled in Medicare; between the ages of 50 and 64; and is a “first responder” as defined by the legislation, shall be allowed the opportunity, pursuant to rules to be established by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to buy in to Medicare (Parts A, B, and D).

Beginning one year after the enactment of the proposed law, the annual premium to be charged for enrollment would be determined using a formula that estimates the average, annual per capita cost for benefits and administrative expenses for all individuals who are enrolled under this provision. The monthly premium would then be equal to 1/12 of the annual premium. If an individual chose enrollment in a Medicare Advantage Plan or a prescription drug plan that requires an additional premium, the individual would be responsible for paying the additional premium.

The proposal also addresses the relationship between the Affordable Care Act (i.e., ObamaCare) and the requirements contained in the legislation. Medicaid beneficiaries would generally not be allowed to apply for coverage under the proposal. Employers would be allowed to pay or reimburse covered individuals for premium costs and such payment or reimbursement could be excluded from gross income for federal income tax purposes.

Additional sections in the proposed legislation address outreach and enrollment activities; monitoring and implementation of the proposal; premium assistance and cost-sharing reductions under the Affordable Care Act; and a requirement that regulations be promulgated only after consultation with interested parties, including groups representing beneficiaries, health care providers, employers, insurance companies, and organizations representing first responders.

Obviously, if this proposed legislation were to become law it would greatly enhance the health care options for retired and disabled first responders in Illinois. Note, however, that the proposal does not define the term “disabled” so it is unclear whether it would apply to non-duty disabilities. Additionally, there is no guarantee that this legislation will be adopted by Congress and signed into law by the President. Indeed, the fact that the current congressional session will largely be pre-empted by the election season suggests that passage is unlikely, at least in the coming year. Nevertheless, lobbying one’s Congressperson or Senator to support this legislation is encouraged.

Michael Weinstein is of counsel with the law firm of Ottosen Britz Kelly Cooper Gilbert & Dinolfo, Ltd. in the firm’s Naperville office. Mr. Weinstein has over 40 years of municipal law, public pension law and appellate law experience representing local governments and public pension funds.

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IFA Members Can Enter to Win \$5,000 Worth of STIHL® Tools from California Casualty

California Casualty wants to thank Illinois first responders once again with a new Work Hard/Play Hard Sweepstakes. IFA members can enter for the chance to win \$5,000 worth of STIHL* tools at www.contest4heroes.com.

First responders depend on the right tools to reduce their risk of injury and to get the job done quicker. That's why California Casualty, the trusted auto and home insurance provider of firefighters, EMTs and law enforcement officers across the country, is offering a prize pack of STIHL tools, the equipment that first responders count on.

"We're 105 years strong," said California Casualty Sr. Vice President Mike McCormick. "Our strength comes from the dedicated professionals who protect our communities. We owe them this thank you for all that they do."

California Casualty also congratulates Pennsylvania firefighter Kyle Albrecht, who was presented with a [\\$7,500 Garage Makeover](#) from California Casualty in December. Kyle, who volunteers with the Nancy Run Fire Station, serving Bethlehem Township, is also a full-time 911 dispatcher. The award couldn't have come at a better time – Kyle and his wife recently bought their forever home and purchased a storage shed so that he could make the garage more useful.

Other Work Hard/Play Hard sweepstakes from California Casualty have awarded public safety personnel Liberty Safes, DeWalt Tools, motorcycles, and cash. Past winners include an Oregon Police officer, Colorado Sheriff's captain, Firefighters from California, Nebraska, Ohio and Pennsylvania, and a California Highway Patrolman.

With a selection of chainsaws, trimmers, blowers, drills and safety equipment, what tools would you choose? California Casualty wants to give you the chance with the Work Hard/Play Hard \$5,000 STIHL Tools Giveaway. The drawing is open to police officers, EMTs and firefighters – American heroes who work hard and risk their lives. Entries are being taken now through October 31, 2020, at www.contest4heroes.com. One lucky \$5,000 STIHL tools winner will be announced in November.

Headquartered in San Mateo, California, with Service Centers in Arizona, Colorado and Kansas, California Casualty has been providing auto and home insurance to firefighters since 1974 and to IFA members since 2002. Founded in 1914, California Casualty has been led by four generations of the Brown family. To learn more about California Casualty, or to request an auto insurance quote, please call 1.800.800.9410 or visit www.calcas.com/IFA.

* STIHL does not sponsor or endorse this promotion

Get your department involved with the Be Alarmed! smoke alarm installation program to install 10-year battery smoke alarms in homes in your community.

This program combines fire prevention education and action to help keep Illinois citizens safe.

Help make your community safer by becoming a partner for local smoke alarm installation today.

Details are available at: www.ifsa.org/programs/alarms



Illinois Fire Safety Alliance



IT TAKES TWO...

TO PROTECT OCCUPANTS & FIREFIGHTERS FROM FIRE.



Fire Marshal Mary Kay Ludemann & Fire Chief Jon Stratton
of the Plainfield Fire Protection District

BOTH SMOKE ALARMS AND HOME FIRE SPRINKLERS SHOULD BE PART OF PUBLIC EDUCATION OUTREACH

There is no better opportunity to have an effective educational impact than at the fire scene or immediately post fire to explain the impact of both fire sprinklers and smoke alarms working together to prevent fire deaths and injuries. Be prepared to educate the media by keeping a fire sprinkler in your command vehicle and hand it to them to reinforce the message.

Following fatal residential fires, fire officials of the past would often talk about smoke alarms with the media and say, "Smoke alarms could have prevented the fire death." Those types of statement generally get the full attention of the public, but doesn't fully describe the other combined potential.

Smoke alarms are important because they alert occupants of a fire, reducing the chances of dying in a fire by half. Fire sprinklers actively work to control or extinguish the fire while it is small and provide occupants with the time to escape. The life and property protection benefits of fire sprinklers cannot be ignored.

Now imagine the impact if the fire officials also held up a fire sprinkler and stated, "When smoke alarms are combined with fire sprinklers, the risk of dying in a home fire is decreased by 80 percent."

Smoke alarms and fire sprinklers together are the perfect fire protection duo. Keep both in your command vehicle.

**NEED FIRE SPRINKLERS FOR YOUR
PUBLIC RELATIONS OUTREACH?**



Please call 708.403.4468 or email
NIFSAB@NIFSAB.org to request one at no cost.



HomeLifeSafety.com



FireSprinklerInitiative.org



HomeFireSprinkler.org



FireSprinklerAssoc.org

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To-Do List

Get everything ready
for tomorrow

Eat a healthy breakfast

Set alarm for
tomorrow morning

Boost Your Health: Start a Morning Routine.

For more tips just for firefighters
visit www.MyCalcas.com/Fire

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