

The **Bulletin**



Publication of the Illinois Firefighter's Association, Inc.

Volume 72, Number 2

March - April 2018

FIRE LINE - DO NOT CROSS

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PAXTON FIRE CHIEFS: LONGEVITY AND FAITHFULNESS TIMES 2 !!!



In a time when longevity in the volunteer fire service is ever more rare, IFA member Paxton Fire Department's Chief Dennis Kingren and Assistant Chief Maurie "Big Mo" Saldeen have both exceeded 40 years service for a combined running total of 80+ years! The photo above shows Chief Kingren (right) presenting a 40-year service plaque to Assistant Chief Saldeen (left) at Paxton's annual Award Ceremony in January. Congratulations to both chiefs and thank you for your service and the inspiration you provide to all who follow after you!

The Bulletin

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The Bulletin

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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

We're almost through our first quarter of the year and all we have heard on TV and throughout the media is about the primary elections. The candidates have stated their case on what they felt the direction of this state should go under their leadership. After March 20th, I will be sending out positional letters to those candidates that will be in the general election in November. This letter will be directed toward their support for the Fire Service and the Fire Prevention Fund. As you may know, last year, the legislature swept 10 million dollars out of the Fire Prevention Fund. Many of the Fire Marshal's programs were not funded and the Small Equipment Grant Program was cut in half. This is the only

money that helps support us from this State other than local tax dollars. This is the time to get a commitment from them in our behalf. Our Fire Association is a sleeping giant, all we need to do is network together and we can have the power to change things. Social media has come along way in touching each other and having instant response. We will be using our Facebook page and the Bulletin in the future giving you the results from that questionnaire on that positional letter. In our profession, there is no political parties, only our elected representatives that support our needs. Keep this in mind when you go to the polls this fall.

In other business, we are finishing up on this year's Conference Program and flyer to be sent out in the next month or so. Last year's Conference attendance grew over 25%, one of the reasons has been a greater partnership with IFSI. This flyer will be going out to *every fire department* in the state, whether they are a member of this Association or not. I want to challenge all of you to contact your neighboring department and get them to attend the Conference. I will be attending our Fire Marshal's FAC meeting next week (Fire Marshal Advisory Commission). At this time, we will be discussing operational activity and possible future initiatives. Our Fire Marshal has done an excellent job representing us through out the past years. Also during this time period, we will be getting together with the Illinois Fire Services Association and discussing where we are with the legislative initiatives that we are supporting. Hopefully, we will be able to see many of those initiatives come into law.

This is the time to start thinking about attending the Medal of Honor Ceremony, Tuesday, May 8 at 10 am. This year is a special year, being the 200th Anniversary as a State. Along with the Medal of Honor Ceremony, there will be the 25th Annual Fallen Firefighters Memorial Muster out in front of the State House. Please consider bringing a piece of fire apparatus for display. If you have never been to this Ceremony, it will be a touching experience and you will be able to view our Firefighters Memorial on the southwest corner of our Capital.

The last thing I want to promote is the partnership that our Fire Marshal has with the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance in the Smoke Detector Program. This past year was devastating in home fire deaths. If you have not signed up with this program, you should, if all possible. We are pushing the new 10 year smoke detector and there are still many homes that do not have one. There is no better way to be involved with your community than with this program.

So "Train Smart, Be Safe"

God Bless

John Swan President IFA



Legislative update

By Margaret Vaughn, IFA Legislative Lobbyist

TWO BILLS INTRODUCED TO LEGALIZE FIREWORKS

Legislation has been introduced by Rep. Dave Severin (R-Benton) HB 5630 and Rep. Dave Welter (R-Morris), HB 5637 which would remove the licensing and training requirements for Class 1.4 Consumer fireworks, lower the age to 18 and tax them. HB 5630, also does the same for 1.3 professional grade explosives, which are not legal in any state to the public, but it was a drafting error. Because there has been such a huge turnover of legislators the past few years and will continue to be (over 30 new ones coming in next year), 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. We generated quite a few phone calls from the fire service to their offices and Springfield Fire Marshal Chris Richmond and I met with them both to explain the history in Illinois and how any new revenue generated would be offset by the increased cost for first responders, insurance and Medicaid claims for injuries. We also explained the homeland security concerns. If they are not going to move forward with legalizing them, the legislators said they would like to see more being done to educate the public on their dangers. We will be meeting with them again on Fire Officials Legislative Day in April.

LEGISLATION INTRODUCED to CLEAN UP CHIEF APPOINTMENT LAW

Several pieces of legislation HB 4791, SB 2619, SB 3050 have been introduced as a follow-up to the law that passed last year mandating that in order to be appointed a fire chief you either had to have at minimum of ten years' experience at the fire department in the same jurisdiction you were being appointed OR OSFM Basic Certification or Firefighter II Certification along with Firefighter II and OSFM Fire Officer I and II Certifications and an associate in fire science or a bachelors degree. The certifications that were spelled out in this law were not consistent with the NFPA certifications and an amendment is being worked on so that the concerns will be addressed in one bill and will encompass the proper NFPA certifications.

IFA OPPOSES BILL to MANDATE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPTS PAY INTO CAREER FIREFIGHTERS PENSION FUNDS

In other attempt to go after Two-Hatters, AFFI is working on SB 1335 which would mandate that if a career firefighter volunteers or is POC at another department, that volunteer or POC department would have to pay a percentage to the pension fund for that firefighter to his career department. IFA is adamantly opposed. It is totally ridiculous and from a cost perspective, rather than making a Volunteer/POC Fire Dept pay into a pension fund of a career fire department, which could cripple these fire departments and take whatever little money they have away from public safety, it would be more lucrative to go after the private sector secondary employers (construction companies, etc.,) of career firemen and make them pay into their pension funds. I spoke with the sponsor of the bill Sen. Melinda Bush (D-Grayslake) and she does not plan to advance the bill any further unless there is an agreement and promised to keep IFA in any stakeholder meetings on the issue, but it is one we need to stay on top of.

SAVE THE DATE – WED APRIL 11th FIRE OFFICIALS LEGISLATIVE DAY

The various fire service organizations are putting together a collaborative Legislative Reception once again in Springfield. The reception will be held Wednesday, April 11th from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Abe Lincoln Hotel in Springfield. IFA along with the IL Fire Safety Alliance, the IL Fire Chiefs Association, the IL Association of Fire Protection Districts and the Northern IL Alliance of Fire Protection Districts are co-hosting the reception along with the IL Association of Chiefs of Police. Please let me know if you plan to attend mvaughn@springnet1.com 217-280-0206.

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California Casualty Helping Illinois First Responders with Their Home Security

Are your personal items and hard to replace collectables as safe as you think? California Casualty wants to help IFA members protect their valuable possessions and documents with the “Better Safe Than Sorry” Work Hard/Play Hard Sweepstakes. Three winners will each receive \$2,250 to purchase the Liberty Colonial Safe of their choice, and will be able to fill them with a collection of 5.11 tactical gear that includes a carry bag, backpack, RAID Glasses, flashlight, hats and more. The entire package has a value of \$2,950.

Enter now at www.contest4heroes.com. The deadline to enter is November 12, 2018, with winners announced in December.

California Casualty protects American heroes like you with auto and home insurance tailored to your professional and personal needs. The “Better Safe than Sorry” giveaway offers another layer of security for your important possessions and personal protection that law enforcement officers and firefighter/EMTs need. These safes are fire and water-resistant, providing an extra safeguard for important documents and home inventory lists.

“First responders do the hard work keeping our communities safe,” said California Casualty Sr. Vice President Mike McCormick. “This Work Hard/Play Hard giveaway allows us to say thanks and offer some extra safety for their families.”

California Casualty’s auto and home insurance provides special benefits to firefighters not available to the general public: the Fallen Hero Survivor Benefit, paying the premium for the current year and the next year for surviving spouses or partners of a firefighter who loses his or her life in the line of duty; \$500 coverage for personal belongings (including uniforms and turnout gear) taken from an insured vehicle; and \$5,000 coverage for firearms (with higher amounts available).

Learn more about why California Casualty is a company that first responders can trust at <https://mycalcas.com>.

Now, members of IFA and other public safety organizations can get protection for hard to replace items by entering California Casualty’s “Better Safe Than Sorry” Work Hard/Play Hard Sweepstakes. The deadline is November 12, 2018 and rules and details are at www.contest4heroes.com.

This article furnished by California Casualty, providing auto and home insurance to firefighters since 1974 and to IFA members since 2012. Get more information at 1.800.800.9410 or www.calcas.com/IFA

*Liberty Safe and 5.11® are not participating partners in or sponsors of this contest.

Annual Memorial Program



Each year, in conjunction with the annual training conference, the IFA holds a Memorial Service honoring those firefighters that have passed on. We honor *ALL firefighters*, not just IFA members. If you know of a firefighter

that has passed, they can be honored at the memorial service if you send their name to the memorial committee. Please send any names of firefighters that have passed between September 1, 2017 through September 1, 2018 to memorial@illinoisfirefighters.org.



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Illinois Firefighters Association, Inc.

Office of President



NEW VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER TIRE BILL

The volunteer Firefighter Tire Bill was signed into law this past year. What Now? Many of the tire vendor companies around this state are still not aware of this new piece of legislation. It is a good idea to have your Fire Chief call your area local vendors and announce to them of this law allowing you to purchase tires.

This new law allows a volunteer firefighter in Illinois for buy a set of 4 tires for their personal passenger vehicle every three years. The firefighter must be a volunteer firefighter with no compensation. Each Firefighter is still required to pay for all the local, state and federal taxes that apply to that purchase. Listed below are bullet points that you and your fire Chief may want to follow.

- Have your Fire Chief call the tire vendor ahead of time that you will be purchasing tires from them.
- The Fire Chief has the authorization for you to purchase tires for your personal vehicle. It may be that you are not compliant with your fire departments requirements to purchase those tires.
- Take a letter from your Fire Department on their letter head, that is signed by your chief with this suggested information.
 1. What vehicle those tires are going on with Illinois License Plate number
 2. Date and time of purchase
 3. Fire Department, District or City EIN number and possible W9 form
 4. Make copies and file for your records. Its not the tire vendors responsibility to keep track of your tire purchases.
 5. Not following the requirements for purchasing tires could lead to liabilities for you and your employer.

Attached: Sample letter on your Fire Departments Letter head

John Swan

President, Illinois Firefighters Association

It would be a good suggestion to pass this by your legal counsel

SAMPLE

(Your Letterhead)

Volunteer Firefighter _____
NAME (Print)

is an active member on this fire department and meets all the requirements to purchase one set of four tires every three years on his personal vehicle.

The state of Illinois signed into law HB 771 which listed the statutory language allowing volunteer firefighters to purchase tires. Local, State and Federal taxes **do apply** to the purchase of these tires.

Tires are going on this vehicle: _____
Make Model Year

Illinois License Plate number: _____

Fire Department, District or City EIN # _____

Date of purchase: _____ Tire Size/Make: _____

Fire Chief Name (Print) _____

Fire Chief Signature: _____

Firefighters Name Print: _____

Firefighter Signature; _____

Drivers License #: _____

The Bulletin



In light of recent and ongoing incidents, the need to improve the safety of our schools is a top priority. Establishing new school security procedure based on lessons learned, without compromising existing standards for fire safety can be complicated. The OSFM has been working with local and state level law enforcement and educational organizations, under the umbrella of the Illinois Terrorism Task Force, to reconsider past school safety practices and make recommendations for the future.

Behavioral threat assessment, response protocols, hardening of facilities, school staff training and emergency planning drills and exercises are topics of which recommendations will be made to the Illinois State Board of Education for their consideration to be implemented across

the state.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the students, teachers, families and first responders at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida. The devastation left in the aftermath of these incidents demands that all public safety agencies review their involvement to see what more can be done to protect our children.

In the fire service, change has traditionally been spurred by catastrophic events. Fire safety codes are a compilation of lessons learned at incidents such as the 1958 Our Lady of Angel's fire in Chicago where 92 children and 3 nuns died. These incidents created the demand to adopt national fire prevention standards in order to eliminate risks of school fires and ensure the safe egress of all occupants. Thanks to these efforts, school fire deaths are now nearly non-existent.

Although these activities are occurring at the state level, I would encourage all first responders to take a more active role in their relationship with the schools in their districts. There are many opportunities to interact with and increase your presence: attending school emergency planning meetings, conducting school inspections, Fire Prevention Month, evacuation drills and working with local law enforcement to participate in their yearly drills at the school.

A problem of this magnitude demands an all hands on deck approach as it cannot be eliminated by any one group or addressing any single issue. Protecting our children from these threats will require all of our effort and cooperation. We look forward to releasing our recommendations and continually working to improve school safety.

New CWG® Fire/EMS PAK Illinois State Director!

We are pleased to announce Tyler Devonshire of Weber Insurance & Realty Brokers Inc. in Robinson has been appointed CWG Fire/EMS PAK State Director in Illinois.

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**The IFA Board has decided to discontinue printing
of The Bulletin and
just publish the electronic version.**

**The Bulletin will still be published bimonthly
but will be online only and you will be advised
by email when the issue is uploaded**

**If you want to be notified by email, send your email address to
editor@illinoisfirefighters.org**

The Board apologizes for any inconvenience



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Chaplain's Corner

FIREFIGHTER CANCER

Firefighter cancer. It would be difficult today to find a firefighter anywhere whose life has not been impacted by the pain, suffering, and loss of cancer – either personally, in family, or in fire department. The statistics and reports seem to be everywhere I turn, a constant reminder of what was once a lesser known threat to firefighters, but today is the greatest threat to health and to life itself. And we can all be thankful for the fire service

leaders and organizations which are addressing firefighter cancer with support, education, and preventative procedures/equipment – as well as the many fundraising efforts to help families manage the overwhelming treatment costs.

I, like so many of you, could tell the stories of the firefighters and their families that we have known – and know right now – fighting a courageous battle against cancer: the courage and the fear, the hopeful diagnosis and the bad news, the good days and the painful ones, the healing and the loss, the faith and the despair.

And every firefighter cancer diagnosis raises difficult faith/God questions – many that are just plain unanswerable when we get honest. I won't try to address all of them here, but I do want to offer some solid faith truths that are non-negotiables. First, God knows. He knows and He cares. Jesus, in His calling to rescue others, drank deep of the full cup of human pain and injustice. Next, God is present. He rose victorious over death and now lives forevermore present in our experience. He is with you in your struggle. Also, God can and does heal, sometimes medically and sometimes miraculously. But sometimes He doesn't. Will he heal you? Your firefighter brother/sister? Your spouse? I don't know. Should we pray? Yes. Does God hear every sincere prayer? Yes. Does He answer? Yes. Do we always understand or like His answers. No, not always. But He is a loving and compassionate Savior, and ultimately He gives the gift of faith to trust Him even through the most difficult times.

As usual, I offer to you the following prayer for firefighter cancer. You are mentioned in there somewhere and so are the rest of your firefighter brothers/sisters. Join your faith with mine and theirs and feel free to pray this prayer often as all of us called to the fire service face this battle with cancer:

O God, You are the Creator of our bodies and the Designer of every organ and cell. It is by Your grace that we enjoy the gifts of health and healing. But, Lord, we have responded to the fire service call in a day when every firefighter's health is under attack from enemy carcinogens which we are regularly exposed to. So, Lord, we pray for all firefighters, that You would protect the gateway of their cells from any toxin that could produce cellular damage and initiate cancer. Give them wisdom to avail themselves to all their protective equipment and procedures – and grant that further research yield even better protections and safeguards. We pray for early detection for any firefighter whose health is currently under cancerous attack but is as yet undetected and undiagnosed. We pray, O God, for all firefighters who have been diagnosed with cancer and are currently in treatment. Please give them strength and grace – and bring them to remission and healing. Please meet the physical, emotional, and financial needs of their families throughout this stressful time. Surround them with love, support, and prayers. We pray, Lord, for those firefighters who have been given a terminal diagnosis. Please ease their pain and give them and their loved ones a gift of great faith by which they may take hold of the eternal life that You have purchased for them by Your cross and resurrection. Lord, we pray for those families that have lost their firefighter husbands and fathers, wives and mothers, brothers and sisters. Sustain them through their loss and grief and grant them renewal and hope in Your time. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

My wife and I pray regularly for firefighters battling cancer. Please contact me if you would like us to pray with you or for you or someone you know. Also please let me know if you would like someone to talk through those difficult faith questions in your circumstances.

Kevin Coffey, IFA Chaplain (815-457-2007,)



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Volunteer Emergency Worker Job Protection Act

by Thomas J. Gilbert
Ottosen Britz Kelly Cooper Gilbert & DiNolfo, Ltd.

In August 2004, the Volunteer Emergency Worker Job Protection Act ("Act") (50 ILCS 748/5) became the law in the State of Illinois. The purpose of this Act was to afford certain protections to volunteer emergency service workers whose performance of volunteer duties conflicted with their employment. That law was amended by Public Act 100-0324, which became effective on January 1, 2018.

By way of review, the Act was first enacted to protect volunteer emergency workers who were absent or late from their regular job. Pursuant to the Act, no employee may be terminated due to absence or lateness caused by attendance at an emergency call initiated prior to the start of an individual's employment shift.

Certain safeguards were included in the original Act to prevent abuse by the volunteer emergency worker. For instance, the employer is entitled to deduct time spent at an emergency from the worker's regular pay. The employer also has the right to request that the employee provide a written statement from a supervisor of the volunteer fire department or government entity indicating that the employee was actually responding to an emergency on the specific time and date in question. The statute also imposes upon the emergency worker the duty to make a reasonable effort to notify his or her employer of the anticipated tardiness or absence caused by the emergency. It is also interesting to note that the Act uses only the word "termination" and is silent with respect to the ability of the employer to impose less severe discipline.

The Act was recently amended by Public Act 100-0324, which specifically provides that a public or private employer may not discipline an employee who, as a volunteer emergency worker, responds to an emergency phone call or text message during work hours calling for that worker's volunteer emergency services. However, this exception does not apply to an individual employed by a public or prior private vehicle service provider who is in the course of performing emergency medical services at his regular employment. The Act also provides that this new amendment may not be used by an employee to supersede or diminish an employer's written workplace policy, a collective-bargaining agreement, administrative guidelines or other applicable written rules administered by the employer. Consequently, the use of a cell phone for a telephone call or text message must be granted where the employer - public or private - has not already adopted its own rules, policies, or regulations with regards to the use of cell phones, text messages or telephones during employment.

It is important to note that Public Act 100-0324 leaves the remainder of the Act intact. Accordingly, the employer is still barred from terminating an employee whose absence or tardiness is necessitated by a volunteer emergency service being initiated prior to the start of his regularly scheduled work shift. It is strongly recommended that, if one is not already in place, employers establish a clear policy regarding cell phone use in the workplace.

Thomas J. Gilbert is a shareholder with the law firm of Ottosen Britz Kelly Cooper Gilbert & DiNolfo, Ltd. in Mokena. Mr. Gilbert focuses his practice on public safety, employment, pension, and administrative law as it relates to fire departments and local governmental entities. You can reach Mr. Gilbert by e-mail at tgilbert@ottosenbritz.com



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