



The Blaze

A Publication of the Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

My Fellow Commissioners,

There's no bells or whistles, no flashing lights here, nothing to attract your attention or keep it for that matter, but I think if you read on, you'll find your time well spent.

Over the last two weeks, I have talked to many Commissioners throughout the state who their District used to be members of ISFCA in the past and at some point left. To many, it was confusing why they left ISFCA, they couldn't remember an exact reason, or a feeling that they were not getting represented, or they were not getting their money's worth. But the one that surprised me the most, was the mix up in billing, mail, secretary info or they just didn't get the billing information, but they never did anything to fix the problem. They didn't make an effort to call the office and rectify the billing information, they just left.

Some of the small organizations have tight and small budgets and the dues can be a big deal in a small budget. Midsize districts are having growth pains and struggling to figure out how to deal with those pains, and large districts and Union districts have their own set of challenges unique only to them. The more I talked to people, the more I saw reasons to be part of this great organization and to take advantage of the benefits it offers and the strength you glean from talking to other members who have been there and done that. I was even more perplexed that people in these situations of need would leave the very organization that can offer the help they need.

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3rd Quarter Blaze

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Continued ... President's Message

I've talked to member districts as well and tried to find out what we as an organization can do to be of better service to them. I think Sadie Noah of McCall Fire Protection District said it most clearly, "We just need straight talk communication". I believe her, and I agree with the idea of straight talk communication.

This spring as we spent our time in Boise fighting and supporting different legislative bills, we tried to keep you informed with the ISFCA website and Legislative Alerts. I'm not sure if any of you checked out the 2021 Legislative Session section that shows the bills we are following and ISFCA's stand on them, but it is always there and you can jump in any time to offer your opinion or help. For those unfamiliar, our web page is www.isfca.org. Check it out anytime. We try to keep it as current as possible.

We have a Blaze Newsletter that should let you know the latest information we know. If something has changed, like HB 389, you should hear about it here or on the legislative alert. You'll find out about the latest training videos that we all need to watch whether we've been a commissioner for a few months or a few years. Even some Commissioners with seniority (is that politically correct enough for everyone) can learn some things watching these training videos. See even I am trying. You will hear about the upcoming annual conference scheduled for March 24-26, 2022 in Boise and can be making arrangements to attend. It will be the 40th Annual Conference so anticipate a good one.

The bottom line, we are only as good as you make us. If I thought I could do this by myself, this would be a thriving organization, but this organization needs each one of you to step it up a notch and participate. Not to any great level, but if we all do a little then we can move mountains. That's what we needed this year to fight HB 389. We needed mountains, and your legislative leaders didn't get that message strong enough from you. So take a moment and commit to do just a little more to make this organization the great leadership organization it has to be to preserve Idaho and the way of life we have all grown to love.

Sincerely,

Todd Belnap
ISFCA President

Levy and/or Bond Success - *Paul Wagner, Vice President*

Kootenai County Fire & Rescue (KCFR) was established in 2001 following the consolidation of the Kootenai County Fire Protection District #1 and the Post Falls Fire Protection District #1. The district is located in northern Idaho, serves an estimated population of 45,000 and encompasses approximately 113 square miles in Kootenai County. We currently have 4 fire stations and staff all four fire stations seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and employ 86 career personnel. Five office personnel and 4 vehicle maintenance and repair personnel contribute to our mission of serving the citizens and visitors of our district. We provide a wide range of emergency and support services throughout the district's boundaries, including fire suppression and rescue, support, training, education and administrative services.

Due to the explosive growth we have seen here in Kootenai County over the last several years, the fire commissioners for KCFR approved placing on the May 2021 election ballot, an item to vote on issuing a bond for \$14.9 Million. If approved the money would be spent on the following:

- replace station 4 at a new location leased from the county
- build a new station 3 at our current training grounds along with new equipment storage building and an outdoor classroom
- build a new sta. 5 at a district owned property in northern part of the district
- purchase a new ladder truck

On May 18, 2021, the district voters approved passage of the bond levy by almost 78%. This amount of support is almost unheard of here in Idaho where a 66 2/3 majority is needed to pass a permanent bond levy. The primary reason we were successful in accomplishing this, was due to the hard work and cooperation among the KCFR Command Staff, the Union Local 2856 and the Fire Commissioners.

The KCFR Command Staff spent just over 1200 hours on bond work in the six months leading up to the election. It is important to understand this time was spent on simply giving voters information, not encouraging support of the bond.

Command staff made 63 presentations, from groups as small as 4 people to over 300. Every civic organization that would have us, political organizations, city council and county commissioner meetings was accommodated. Members of the local were usually present at these meetings to encourage support for the levy.

The district spent about \$11,000 on bond material including posters, mailers, flyers and AV presentations. The bond material provided by the district was purely informational and fact based. A district is not legally able to promote passage of a bond, but may provide information only. It is very different with a union, however. Local 2856 spent over \$30,000 of their own money on material and the design of what they printed and the design of what the district looked very similar, thus keeping the unified message. Every member of the union was expected to participate in some manner by being on sub-committees that focused on different aspects of the campaign.

Several times, citizens would request a meeting with the Chief to ascertain the facts and ask questions. They were cheerfully accommodated. Two different citizen groups were provided financial documents at their request.

The Bond Committee (staff, Union, BOFC) met every other Monday for 5 months leading up to the election.

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Continued — Levy Success - *Paul Wagner, Vice President*

As is common in any campaign nowadays, social media was used. Regular posts and videos were made to help get the facts out. Two videos were made in which the Chief answered questions that were asked at presentations and presented information. These videos were posted on Youtube and on our Facebook page. Finally on election day, many members stood on street corners with signs encouraging the public to support passage of the bond levy.

Our very positive outcome was due to a total team effort by the staff, Union and BOFC which offered a unified message during the entire campaign.

At the end of the day, we at KCFR are proud to serve the community whether the bond passed or not, but we were very fortunate that the community provided the district with the necessary tools to provide a better service for our growing community.

If you need advice or guidance to start the process, please reach out to me at paulw@kootenafire.com, or 208-771-0432.

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The Importance of Insurance – *Larry Scarborough, Region 3A Director*

On July 21st Cascade Fire/EMS was dispatched to a multi vehicle accident with multiple injuries on Highway 55 at mile marker 90. Upon arrival, they requested 3 air ambulances. They also requested a County Deputy to go South on 55 past the accident to set up a landing zone. No Deputies available.

Valley County Search and Rescue Commander, Larry Mangum was South of the accident and advised the EMS Director where he was. The EMS Director asked him to set up the landing Zone for Lifeflight. Larry got the area cleared and ready for Lifeflight. After Lifeflight landed ,two medics approached Larry to see where they were needed. As they reached him, he collapsed with a Cardiac Arrest. They immediately started life saving measures, but were unable save him.

Two years before this incident, the Search and Rescue Unit purchased the Volunteer Insurance Policy with VFIS. The cost was \$1690 a year and covered everyone in the Unit. The members paid \$35 a year and the Unit covered the balance. We filed a claim for Larry's wife and we were able to collect \$40,000 in benefits for her and it only took 2 weeks for the claim approval.

For those who don't have this insurance, you should look into it. It has a great benefit package. Accident Coverage starting from the time you leave your home, on scene and return back. There is also a sickness section in case a member comes down with an illness while on a call. And lastly, a death benefit section. This policy pays even if the member is covered by Work Comp or other insurance.

With out this policy, Larry's wife was facing large costs involved. It was great that we were able to help her in a time of tragedy.

Welcome our New Regional Director

Helen Muffly—Regional 1 Director

Hello, my name is Helen Muffly and I am currently a Fire Commissioner with the St. Maries Fire Protection District in St. Maries, Idaho. I was asked to serve by a fellow Commissioner and have served concurrently since July 2013 and am the Chairman of our Board. I am a veteran of the United States Marine Corps and my MOS was air traffic control. I earned a Bachelor's degree in Geography from San Jose State University. I started my years in public service as a California State Fish and Game Warden and retired from that position in 2002, with almost 12 years as a warden and Lieutenant. I had a myriad of experiences as a warden, but I specialized in the agency's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Unit, responding as the law enforcement branch to oil and hazardous material incidents. During my years working for the state, I was also a member of the California Hazardous Materials Investigators Association (CHMIA). Another role, I was a CSTI (California Specialized Training Institute) instructor for Hazmat and Hazwoper Training for our Department, along with First Responder Training, that included Incident Command Training. My many responses to spills and incidents involved the coordination with other federal, state and local responders, often times working closely with the local fire departments.

I retired in 2002 and relocated to North Idaho, where I currently reside. I can't say I truly retired, I started to work for the local school district and eventually for the Coeur d' Alene Tribes Department of Education. I still work as a substitute teacher and my passion is working with the youth.

Welcome our New Regional Director

Jeff Ramey—Regional 3B Director

Hello, my name is Jeff Ramey. I moved to Idaho in 1978 from a little beach town in Southern California. Believe it or not, 43 years ago I was ready to find a better place to raise my family. My dad had spent several years of his youth in Idaho. In 1972 we visited one of his sisters in Paris Idaho, went up through Yellowstone and ended up in Riggins visiting another of his sisters. That's really when my Idaho migration began. While in Riggins a piece of property my dad always dreamed of owning, as a teenager, went on the market. I remember jumping in the car, driving 20 miles up the Little Salmon River, meeting with the owner and filling out an earnest money agreement right then. The property is still in our family. Vacationing in Idaho was great, but in 1978 my wife and I decided to make Idaho our permanent home. We thought we might miss the ocean, but we never looked back.

I grew up roofing and remodeling kitchens with my dad, so it only made sense to do what I knew and started my own business in Boise. In the fall of 1981, two close friends of mine who were Boise Firefighters convinced me to take the Boise Fire entrance exam. I was hired on January 1, 1982 and worked there until March 30, 2008. I am one of the very few Boise Firefighters to wear the badge of every rank on the department. I started as a Firefighter, promoted to Driver, then Captain, and Battalion Chief, Division Chief, Deputy Chief, and interim Fire Chief for 5 months while the city hired a new chief.

During my 26 years, I served on the Dive/Rescue team for 15 years, I was Captain of an Aircraft Rescue Firefighter (ARFF) crew and was promoted to ARFF Battalion Chief and then Division Chief of ARFF. I taught ARFF certification and live fire training to several departments in the western United States and Canada. I participated with the FAA in developing curriculum for ARFF certification and had an opportunity to teach Incident Management in Norfolk Virginia to training officers from 60 plus departments. Other than a small stint in Operations, as a Deputy Chief I spent most of my 10 years as Logistic Chief, where I spec'd and purchased apparatus, worked as project manager on station design/build and remodels, worked with the department budget team, supervised the Maintenance Division and Stores/Supply Division.

When I retired from Boise Fire, I worked 3 ½ years with a fire apparatus manufacturer. In 2008 I became a Fire Commissioner for North Ada County Fire and Rescue (NACFR). I am in my 14th year as a commissioner. This January will be 40 years in the fire service. I hope to finish this current term and plan to run for election one more time.

Well, that's a little bit about my time in the fire service, and as I look at what I wrote it seems like I was pretty busy. But, the important part of my life occupied much more time. My wife and I have 6 Kids and soon to be 29 grandchildren. There's never a dull moment, and Christmas is really expensive at the Ramey house.



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