



The Blaze

A Publication of the Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association

1st Quarter 2017

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello ISFCA Membership,

Welcome to 2017! I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and finished 2016 strong. First and foremost, I want to thank the membership of ISFCA in electing me to serve a second year as your President. It is a privilege and an honor and I am humbled with your trust in me to lead this great organization for a second year.

We accomplished much during 2016! Here are just a few of the accomplishments:

1. Occupational Disease Legislation: ISFCA, IFCA, IVFESA and PFFI have worked together for many years on this piece of legislation. After much discussion we ALL agreed that the legislation should be equal to all firefighters in Idaho and volunteers must be included or the bill would never be supported by our association. An Occupational Diseases legislation was passed and signed by the governor which included volunteer firefighters, and also includes them in a Heart Attack section which previously had only been for career/paid firefighter. This goes to show what teamwork, give and take, and open communication can produce.
2. Training: As requested by our Membership, ISFCA hosted 7 regional training classes that over 140 Fire Commissioners, Fire Chiefs and secretaries attended. This was provided to member and non-member districts free of charge. We had the privilege of having excellent presenters like Jim McNall from ICRMP, Knute Sandahl, Idaho State Fire Marshal, and Bill Punkoney, ISFCA's Attorney with White Peterson. We also need to recognize our Executive Director, Krystal Hinkle, for the excellent work in making them all occur with great success.
3. Legislation also passed which provided a way for Fire Districts to reduce a five person board back down to a three person board.

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2017 ISFCA Board of Directors

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For further information or to contact the directors, please call 208-275-8870 or email questions to: office@isfca.org.

Continued ... President's Message

4. The 2016 Annual Conference in Lewiston was well attended and had new and exciting speakers. Part of the new format at the conference was due to your input as members and we want to hear more of your exciting ideas and suggestions. A few of the seminars are included for you to read about.

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As we begin 2017, I would like to encourage all of us in within our Fire Districts to have ongoing open communication, transparency and just plain old teamwork with our neighboring Districts. Remember your mutual aid agreements and keep them updated. Capitalize and participate in any joint training whenever possible, and remember that we all serve to serve others no matter what position we may hold.

During 2017, ISFCA will again be providing training through-out the State as well as identifying, evaluating and preparing possible legislation changes for your approval. We will be coordinating new seminars and areas of interest for you during our 2017 Conference in Boise, ID. In order for a great conference, we ask that if you or your District have a topic for training, or know of a possible conference speaker which could benefit all of ISFCA, please call or e-mail the office.

Speaking of teamwork and transparency, ISFCA continues to reach out and work with the Idaho State Fire Marshal's Office, Idaho Fire Chiefs Association, Idaho Volunteer Fire and EMS Association, Professional Firefighters of Idaho, as well as the regional Fire Chiefs and Volunteer Associations. By working together, we are able to approach legislators united when asking for a new statue or a change on behalf of those in the fire service and the constituents we serve. It makes it harder for the legislators not to listen and consider our requests with unity and determination.

In closing, I again thank you for your support of ISFCA's Mission, your Regional Directors and our Executive Director as we serve on behalf of the Elected Fire District Commissioners of Idaho.

Sincerely,
David "Rudy" Rudebaugh
ISFCA President

Liability, Governance and FLSA Regulations, *Jim McNall, ICRMP*

Pre conf. class on Liability and Governance -

This class was similar to what was provided at the regional training this last summer. Topics included:

Liability – a discussion of liability and the protections for public officials provided by the Idaho Tort Claims act.

Meetings – an overview of the open meeting law and what steps need to be taken to comply including notice, agenda, and records or minutes of the meeting. Also when and why to use executive sessions and the process to properly go into a closed session.

Records – a summary of the public records statute focusing on the role of the commissioners in establishing fees for larger requests and a records retention policy.

Conflicts of interest and ethics – review of Idaho statutes regulating what constitutes and conflict of interest and what steps must be taken to avoid a conflict or the perception of conflict. These include disclosure and in some cases stepping away from some decisions.

New FLSA Regulations – now on hold.

The discussion of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the proposed increase in the minimum salary level to be exempted from the hourly requirements has now changed. A federal judge has put the new overtime rules on hold until further notice.

ICRMP recommends the following courses of action, and any decision should be discussed with your agency's legal counsel:

- If you have already implemented the change – Just keep going with it.

If you haven't made the change yet – You need not make the change at this time.

If you have questions, refer to the [Department of Labor's FLSA website](#).

So for now an employee must meet the job requirements of being treated as exempt (most chiefs will meet the job duties test, office staff will likely not) and must be paid \$455 per week in order to be paid on a salary basis.

Discussion with Chiefs and Clerks.

A question and answer session with staff of Fire Districts about the role of staff in supporting and carrying out the policies established by the commissioners. Also when and how to provide input to the board as they make those policy decisions.

Communication, *Knute Sandahl, State Fire Marshal*

Communication is more than talking on the radio and has evolved over the generations. A presentation by State Fire Marshal Knute Sandahl discussed these generational changes and how, we in the fire service, can get the message to our up and coming leaders and firefighters.

One of the first aspects that needs to be addressed is acknowledging there are differences among the generations involving values, methods, and what is important. Once we acknowledge this, it is incumbent upon us to adjust our thinking and how we can communicate our mission, goal, or objectives to the ones we entrust in carrying them out.

Providing a comfortable means of communicating does have to be a two way street. Now days, leaders seem to hide behind the use of e-mails or other methods of communication. Some generations seem to respond well to this, especially the millennials. This might not be the best avenue for a traditionalist or baby boomer. There is still a great deal of value in good ol' face to face communication, but the tone, and message has to be carefully thought out.

Leadership now must convince themselves that they will not be around forever. Leadership must prepare our future leaders and help them along. By not doing so, we in the fire service are doing our customers a dis-service by not preparing the future generations to lead.

The Importance of All-Around Care -- *Rob Hilvers, MD, Emergency Responders*

Firefighters face elevated health risks based on extreme conditions and exposures they experience in the line of duty; their healthcare needs often exceed the basic services available in traditional primary care clinics. Emergency Responders Health Center (ERHC - Boise, Idaho) was established in 2004 to address the unique personal and professional healthcare needs of firefighters and other “occupational athletes.” ERHC currently supports more than 25 fire, police, and paramedic agencies across the state of Idaho.

Based on 12 years of specialized practice, ERHC has identified the Top 5 medical concerns among its firefighter patient population. These findings are consistent with numerous published research studies. Based on the illness and injury patterns prevalent among Idaho’s firefighters, ERHC has developed recommendations for advanced healthcare protocol to prevent, or promote the early identification of, potentially serious or side-lining conditions. These protocols are aligned with NFPA 1582, which outlines “an occupational medical program that will reduce risks and provide for the health, safety, and effectiveness of fire fighters.”

Musculoskeletal Conditions: The prevalence of injuries such as tendinopathy has highlighted the need for enhanced injury risk assessment, prevention, and rehabilitation. Recommended programming includes annual physical fitness testing, peer fitness training, and Functional Movement Screening (FMS). In response, ERHC has incorporated board-certified Sports Medicine and Physical Therapy providers into its primary care practice. While some fire agencies feel challenged to develop their own fitness programming, existing evidence-based resources are available. For example, the Wellness-Fitness Initiative (Fire Service Joint Labor Management) provides a “toolkit” for an individualized, non-punitive fitness program that promotes not only increased physical performance, but improved basic health indicators and positive mental health.

Heart Disease: Firefighters present a significantly higher risk of on-duty cardiac death (44%) than the general population (15%). Contributing risk factors include severe exertion, hyperthermia and dehydration, shift work, stress, inhalation exposures, heavy gear, and a reluctance to acknowledge and address symptoms. ERHC has developed a Wellness Exam protocol that features pro-active heart and lung health screening, to include a complete metabolic work-up, spirometry, resting EKG, Cardiac Stress Testing (treadmill or bicycle) and routine chest X-rays.

Mental Health: As many as 37% of firefighters experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as well as a high prevalence of depression and anxiety. Further, there is a high correlation between ADHD and fire service candidates. Firefighters may benefit from developing long-term relationships with family medicine providers who are familiar with the mental and behavioral health risks associated with their profession, are equipped to make appropriate referrals to specialists, are experienced with pharmacotherapy (i.e. anti-depressants) ... and are equipped to listen.

Cancer: Long-term studies have reported that firefighters experience a 14% increased risk of dying from cancer, and that 11% of firefighters diagnosed with cancer develop more than one cancer type. The cancer sites/types that present most frequently among firefighters include lung, gastrointestinal, colorectal, kidney, bladder, oral, and blood/lymphatic system. ERHC recommends advanced cancer screening including blood work, routine chest X-rays, and comprehensive physical exams.

Infectious Disease: Active-duty exposure among firefighters contributes to an elevated risk for communicable disease. ERHC recommends that fire personnel not only maintain all current vaccinations (Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Tdap, MMR, seasonal Influenza A/B, and Varicella), but that immunization records be readily accessible as part of each department’s fast-response post-exposure policy and procedure.

ERHC has incorporated these recommendations into a customized Annual Wellness Exam protocol, which features comprehensive testing customized to new recruit, incumbent, and retired firefighter populations. Standard procedures vary by department request and first responder assignments (for example, dive team or Hazardous Materials), and may include duty-specific health questionnaires; blood panels and urinalysis; vaccination updates; vision; audiology; spirometry (lung function); resting EKG; cardiac stress testing; chest X-rays; cancer screening; physical examinations; metabolic reports and FMS. Confidentiality is strictly maintained, and patients are notified of when, and which types of, medical disclosures are made.

Communicating to Win Ballot Measures, *Liz Loomis Public Affairs*

Liz Loomis delivered a lively presentation on how fire districts can improve communication with taxpayers to secure revenue for critical public services at the ballot box. The two-hour workshop began by providing an overview of the economy and why a cynical electorate makes it harder to pass tax increases.

Participants learned how to identify the assets of their fire district, as well as potential liabilities that could prevent them from being successful. The workshop also covered the various forms of survey research, which Loomis said was the cornerstone of any successful ballot measure.

From there, the class participated in an exercise to develop key messages about their ballot measure. They also learned how to develop a strategic communications plan for how they would share these messages with their respective communities.

Since 1997, Liz Loomis Public Affairs has provided strategic communication services for fire, school and hospital districts, cities and public utilities. Her business helps local government communicate more effectively with taxpayers to pass ballot measures for needed revenue or organizational changes, such as mergers and regional fire authorities.

Loomis has a 97%-win record for elections, and is knowledgeable of state law to maintain her clients' integrity with voters. New clients hire her firm because of experience, personalized service, accessibility, attention to detail, and the value they receive for the work that she does.

For more information, visit our company web site at www.llpa.biz, or contact Liz Loomis at (425) 308-6236 or liz@llpa.biz.

Update: Presumptive Cancer Legislation for Idaho Firefighters, *Rob Hilvers, MD*

The state Legislature has passed Idaho House Bill 554, effective July 1, 2016,[1] which provides presumptive coverage for 11 specific cancer types, including those of the gastrointestinal, respiratory, urinary, and blood/lymphatic systems. In this case, presumptive eligibility refers to the assumption of “proximate causation,” or an increased likelihood of developing certain cancers (and other conditions) based on occupational exposures and hazards. Based on this assumption, the legislation guarantees Workman’s Compensation Coverage for disability or death resulting from these specified cancer diagnoses. Eligibility requirements include serving as a firefighter in Idaho, length of employment/volunteer duty prior to cancer diagnosis (dependent upon cancer type), and verification that the condition was not present prior to employment as a firefighter (i.e. through a baseline health screening exam). Tobacco use disqualifies potential candidates from seeking presumptive eligibility status. During the annual ISFCA meeting on November 5, 2016, Dr. Rob Hilvers discussed suggestions for a modified Annual Wellness Exam protocol to rule out pre-existing conditions toward presumptive eligibility qualification, and to meet most NFPA 1582 requirements for baseline health screenings. These exams would be available at a lower cost than the full protocol, to ensure availability to those fire agencies with wellness budget limitations. For a list of eligible cancer types and corresponding duty requirements, visit: <https://legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2016/H0554Bookmark.htm> (pages 6-7).

2016 Annual Conference Awards

Regional Director Awards

Each Region nominates a Fire Commissioner to be recognized for going above and beyond and committing to ISFCA's mission.

Mark Bolduc - Hagerman Fire - nominated by Les Preader

Mark Bolduc has been instrumental in obtaining funding from Region IV Development and has been an excellent resource for other Commissioners in his Region.

Dave Halpin - Northern Lakes Fire - nominated by Larry Clark

Dave Halpin is a dedicated, well-informed public servant who is thoughtful and uses his intelligence, wisdom and comprehension of issues to further the purposes and goals of the Northern Lakes Fire District.



SERVICE AWARDS

Recognized at the conference at 5 year intervals as an Elected Fire Commissioner

5 Year-

Bud Beatty- Kuna Fire
Janie Bruffett - Elk Bend Fire
Wayne Cavender- South Boundary Fire
Mike Mager- Grangeville Fire
Doug Mayne - Mountain Home Fire

20 Year-

Andy "Holger" Petersen - Nampa Fire

30 Year-

Seren Chandler - Jackson Creek Fire
Leora Cutler - Jackson Creek Fire

Regional Fire Chief Award

This year, the board decided to recognize Fire Chiefs that go above and beyond and recognize the importance of ISFCA's mission. We appreciate their support and the commitment in our association.

Randy Sutton - West End Fire (30 + years of service)

Joe Robinette - Jerome Rural Fire (40+ years of service)

Legislative Awards

The Association recognizes members of our Legislative Committee and the Association for going above and beyond to ensure legislation is in the best interest of Fire Districts. These individuals dedicate their time by volunteering down at the Capitol and meeting with Legislators.

Gary Rohwer- Parma Rural Fire
Tim Vargas - Jerome Rural Fire
Stephen Rice - Wheatland Fire

THANK YOU SPONSORS AND VENDORS

To all of our Sponsors and Vendors, Thank You for supporting and believing in our organization. Without your continued support, ISFCA wouldn't be able to provide the educational and leadership training that we have.

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We highly encourage you, as Fire Districts, to support our Sponsors and Vendors throughout the year with your business, as they support us. Check out our website for their contact information.