



The Blaze

A Publication of the Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy Spring 2018 fellow Commissioners,

Spring has sprung and the preparations for the upcoming fire season are, if like in my District, full speed ahead. In deciding what to write about, I reviewed past articles, have thought about what to write and have decided not to repeat any past topics for this issue (I hope).

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all elected fire commissioners throughout the state for your commitment to your fire districts. Without people such as yourselves, our citizen's valuable tax dollars and level of services we deliver would have challenges far beyond those we currently face. As with having properly trained and qualified firefighters and EMT's, it is equally important we become and remain trained as the elected representatives of the citizens alongside the members of our districts in the fulfillment of our responsibilities.

When we look at those responsibilities and preparations this year, one might be to take the time to insure mutual aid agreements are up to date and current with today's rules.

With the 2018 legislative session now over, I encourage you to visit the ISFCA website (<http://isfca.org>) go to the "Alerts" page and review the numerous pieces of legislation that was presented, passed and those possibly returning next session in 2019. ISFCA's Attorney, Bill Punkoney provided an article enclosed further in the Blaze which provides an excellent overview. Several of the recent changes took effect in February 2018. ISFCA will be updating the ISFCA handbook over the summer to reflect the changes and present it at during the annual conference in November to our member districts.

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Contact Information

Phone: 208-275-8870

Email : office@isfca.org

www.isfca.org

Continued ... President's Message

We are considering having 2 legislative seminars during the summer months. The purpose is for your recommendations and those of others to be discussed, formulated and ready to present for membership approval in November. We also want to work with the Idaho Fire Chiefs and the Professional Firefighters of Idaho in having teamwork on joint legislation when possible. Please send the office an email with your thoughts and ideas. office@isfca.org

Our membership committee is discussing and presenting ideas for the regional directors and executive leadership in retention of existing members and the value for non-members to become part of ISFCA.

Our education and seminar committee are asking for your input as to what training would you like brought to members, suggestions for conference speakers as well as sponsors and vendors who support the fire service and ISFCA's mission.

In closing, I hope everyone has a safe fire season, are able to attend the legislative seminar if we are able to put it together, provides ideas for your conference in November, and please remember that teamwork is not an option, but the only way our districts should operate .

I am very honored to represent you as your President and welcome your input. I also believe I have the pleasure of working with an excellent Executive Director Krystal Hinkle as we guide ISFCA forward.

Sincerely and Respectively,
David "Rudy" Rudebaugh
President, ISFCA



2018 Legislative Summary, *William Punkoney, White Peterson*

The legislature has finally declared *sine die* (the end of the session), and we can all breathe a sigh of relief. Krystal, Rudy and the ISFCA legislative committee worked very hard this session, and made some excellent progress on the objectives identified at the annual meeting. The following is a summary of changes to the law that impact the administration of fire districts:

Senate Bill No. 1216 amends Idaho Code Section 31-1421 as follows: Increases the amount from \$75.00 to \$100.00 per day the Board of Commissioners can fix for commissioner benefits and compensation for the fiscal year. Also provides for special compensation for commissioners by resolution in the event of a declaration of an emergency disaster called by a city, county, state or federal agency.

Senate Bill 1215 effective immediately amends Section 31-1427 of the Fire District Law making a technical correction regarding public notice of the Board's intent to pass an ordinance calling for a bond election. This law governs special elections called by the Board for general obligation bonding.

Senate Bill 1274a effective immediately. This legislation amends Idaho Code Section 74-102 Public Records Law to require public agency to designate the custodian/s of their records. This amendment includes adding a Subsection 16 to the Idaho Code Section 74-102 which reads as follows:

(16) A public agency, elected official or independent public body corporate and politic shall designate a custodian or custodians for all public records, which includes any public official having custody of, control of, or authorized access to public records and also includes all delegates of such officials, employees or representatives.";

House Bill 402 effective 7/1/18 this is the PERSI bill correct the following issue: Current Idaho Statute 72-1432 is not specific with regards to the transfer of funding requirements if a new fire district is formed and annexes another city or district's fire responsibilities. This lack of specificity could create a situation in which a city or fire district believes it can circumvent the funding requirement by forming a new entity to provide fire coverage for its geographical area. Adding clarifying language in this code section would clearly identify that the funding responsibility transfers to the annexing entity. This legislation is an issue on consolidation of fire districts and annexations of cities into fire districts.

House Bill 492 effective 7/1/18 provides a new property tax exemption: Provides disabled Veterans who have a 100% service-connected disability to receive a special property tax reduction of \$1,320, not to exceed the amount of the veteran's actual property taxes.

House Bill 524 effective 7/1/18 amends Idaho Code Section 31-1420 (3) affects Fire District and adds an option to exchange real property for other real property.

House Bill 559 effective 7/1/18 adds a new Idaho Code Section 63-1305C and amends other relevant statutes in order to provide exemption from property tax of any property that is under construction or renovation.

Senate Bill 1309a effective 7/1/18 amends Idaho Code Section 31-1409 affecting Fire District Board vacancies. Includes technical language clarifications to subsection 1 and changes the language in subsection 2 in regards to the procedure for declaring a vacancy and change the procedure in the event the remaining commissioners cannot agree on the selection of an individual to fill the vacancy. Adds a new subsection 3 to provide a procedure for the filling of vacancies on the Board by the County Commissioners when there is more than a 50% vacancy on the Board. This bill also amends Idaho Code Section 56-1018B to add fire districts to the Emergency Medical Services Fund provisions. This bill also repeals Idaho Code 31-1418 which means that "interim successors" are no longer required.

House Bill 611 effective 7/1/18 affects all districts involving the open meeting law amending Idaho Code Section 74-204 requiring that notice for meetings be posted on the District's website or social media platform and requires that all items on an agenda that requires a vote shall be identified on the agenda as an Action Item. Precludes any final action on any item that is added to the agenda after the start of the meeting without declaring an emergency.

Much of this legislation represents changes that will impact the way you conduct regular business at your meetings. I suggest that all commissioners, chiefs and board secretaries review the legislation I have identified and determine how best to accommodate the new mandates. If there are questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office. As many of you know, a benefit of your ISFCA membership gets you one hour of free legal advice from my office.

Best Regards,

Bill Punkoney
White Peterson
208-466-9272

Time to Start on the FY19 Budget, *Steve Frazee, ISFCA Vice President*

Yea, I know, it's only April, so why should we be worrying about next year's budget? Our district doesn't get to actually working on the next year's budget until June, so why am I thinking about the budget now?

It is because every year, a group of folks in Boise, who a recently retired State Fire Marshal likes to refer to as the "Crazies" (didn't take me long to figure out why), meet for a few months in Boise and make many of us wonder what in the world were they thinking of. I'm referring to the Idaho State Legislation and every year some bills get passed that impact Fire Districts, some are good, and some are definitely not so good, and some of the bills impact our budget process. A good example is a few years ago, the legislation excluded personal property from our property tax funding. To make up for that loss, the state now makes direct payments to us, very similar to the agricultural replacement payments we receive.

So how do we keep up on such on goings at the State House and know how to deal with them when putting our budgets together. There is a great resource in the state that can help us with that, and that is the Idaho State Tax Commission. About this time of the year, they go around the state and hold their annual Budget and Levy training sessions.

At their training sessions, they go over any new legislation that impacts special taxing districts budget process, as well as other district activities. They go over how the bill came about, what it is intended to accomplish, and how it impacts how we do business as fire commissioners. They also review how to fill out the L-2 for your fire district, and any changes in that process. The old-time commissioners should feel pretty comfortable taking care of the L-2s, but if you're a new commissioner or a commissioner who is asking themselves "what's an L-2" then this training session is definitely for you. (Spoiler alert, the L-2 is how you calculate the maximum amount of funding you can request from your county clerk.)

Here are when and where the 2018 Budget and Levy Training sessions will be this year:

Idaho Falls	May 1	College of East Idaho, Alexander Creek Building
Pocatello	May 2	Clarion Inn
Twin Falls	May 3	College of Southern Idaho, Herrett Center
Coeur d'Alene	May 8	Kootenai County Administration Building
Moscow	May 9	Latah County Fair Grounds, Exhibit Building
Nampa	May 17	College of Western Idaho

The training is broken down into a morning and afternoon sessions. For fire districts you want to go to the morning sessions which start at 8:30 in the morning and end at 12:00.

Our county clerk sends us the information on the training, but if you haven't received it, you can go the Idaho State Tax Commission web page as <https://tax.idaho.gov/> and look at their "Events and Due Dates" at the lower right side of the webpage.

I make a point to try and go to this training every year, and I've never came out of it disappointed. I've always learned something, especially when I was just getting started as a fire commissioner. An added benefit, I've meet other commissioners from fire districts in my area and made some contacts that have been beneficial to me as a fire commissioner. The instructors are very good at putting on the session and are more than willing to visit with you about any issues you might be having with processes their agency deals with. For example, one time our district was having problems with annexing some property, so I took time to talk to them during a break. In just a few minutes they had given me the guidance and information I needed to easily complete the process.

Hope to see you there.

The Case For Cost Recovery Billing, *Steven Kaufman, EF Recovery*

For the past decade, voter resistance to fire department bond initiatives has increased. At the same time, the demand for fire services has not wavered. If an at-fault incident takes place that requires an emergency response, the department incurs significant out-of-pocket expense. As populations grow and demand for resources keeps growing, how can a fire department continue to serve the public on an ever-shrinking budget?

Cost recovery billing is part of the solution. Backed by a local ordinance or resolution, fire departments and fire districts send a bill to a liable party or their insurance company for the cost of responding to an incident. With a robust cost recovery billing program in place, the recovered funds could represent a significant source of supplemental funds for first responders, without asking taxpayers for additional financial resources.

Because cost recovery programs are fairly new, there is a lot of incorrect information floating around about them. Statements like “My taxes already pay for the fire department” or “This will raise insurance rates” are commonly heard. In truth, taxes pay for department readiness. It’s the response that often goes unfunded, forcing the department to script in order to pay for its equipment, personnel, and consumables. Also, most insurance policies currently contain cost recovery reimbursement provisions, so policy premiums already reflect this service.

Cost recovery billing is based on the concept of “responsibility, not residency.” It shifts the burden of paying for a fire department response from the taxpayer to the liable individual. This is especially potent for incidents involving non-residents. These liable parties use local department resources, but they don’t pay for them because they don’t live in the area. Cost recovery billing seeks to level the playing field by holding the people who cause an incident to shoulder the responsibility to pay for it. It’s about helping fire departments recapture the money they spend on supplies they use in the field, and insuring that they have the best equipment and the best people to respond when there’s an emergency.

A good cost recovery program begins with the collection of data in the field: the responsible party, their insurance information, all of the equipment, consumables, and labor used during the incident, scene photos and a strong narrative. Robust claims management software is also essential to help billers organize and submit claims, provide analytics, and provide share data with your accounting system.

Another key to cost recovery billing is follow-up. Understanding how to present complete paperwork, refute denials and work open claims with insurance carriers is crucial to a high claim payment percentage. Also, making sure you have a strong ordinance or resolution in place that involved public input helps legitimize the program and add strong potency to claim appeals.

A strong cost recovery program can be an excellent new source of revenue for fire departments seeking to close the gap between the real cost of responding to an incident and a tight budget.

About the author:

Steven Kaufman is CEO of EF Recovery, LLC, a full-service billing company offering EMS and cost recovery billing, data hosting, billing software productivity tools, and consulting services. Since its inception, EFR has collected over \$1,500,000 for fire departments nationwide. For more information, please visit ResponseRecovery.com or contact Jim Clark at jclark@efrecovery.com or 253-225-5545.



Benefits of ISFCA, Roy Barrett, Region 6A Director

Had the opportunity to listen in on a teleconference a few weeks back with the officers of ISFCA. It was my first. I had nothing to contribute, but was impressed. Your leadership is knowledgeable and engaged. Their commitment was obvious. They are in-tune with events and challenges ranging across the state that affect ISFCA members. ISFCA is in good hands and we are fortunate to have such capable leaders.

Have read and thought about many of the reasons a fire district should be a member of ISFCA. Frankly, I cannot come up with a good reason why a fire district would not join. If you know of any, please enlighten me.

While the reasons to join are many, today I will focus on one. For years the Idaho Legislature met on a biannual basis. Many old timers will insist that the practice was good. It forced the legislature to come together and do serious work. Time dictated that legislators focus on critical items, and lack of time dictated that they could not delve deeper into peoples lives any more than necessary. Times have changed.

Like each of you, I have watched the legislature come together each year. I have drawn one conclusion. The legislature will either do something to you or for you. Think about it. Individuals and special interest groups set about each year to influence legislation that will impact you, your business, your fire districts and most other facets of life. You have a choice, you can either be docile and let the whims of others influence the legislature and hence your life; or you can get involved and exert influence to affect the outcome in a fashion that is agreeable to you.

ISFCA represents your districts interest.... solely. This year dozens of pieces of legislation that would impact fire districts came before the law makers. Some good and some bad. ISFCA fought hard to insure passage of the good bills and defeat of the bad bills. Without ISFCA, I have little doubt that districts would have been negatively impacted.

On a related matter, the pressure on all entities that provide public services is rapidly increasing. Why you ask? The answer is simple. Idaho has been re-discovered. Many "immigrants" are moving into our state daily. Some consider the influx good, others consider it dire. Regardless of your "take", the move has started, and suspect it will only continue.

These new citizens, in some instances, will likely demand services reminiscent of their old "home state". There in lies the rub and the likelihood of a clash.

I know of one fire district that came to a stand still due to the distrust and disagreements between old time citizens and the new. These new citizens will bring their opinions, bias, politics and desires to the legislature and the voting booth. You can anticipate that these new citizens will be expecting more from you and your organization. Are you prepared? If not ISFCA is the answer.

Knowledge, support, "strength of number", lobbying, education, technical and legal solutions are available with your membership. ISFCA sole mission is to support fire districts. Rely upon and use your membership.

Your membership and involvement are critical. Hope you are involved and ramp up your involvement even more. Also, I hope that you share the ISFCA story with non-member fire districts. Active membership in ISFCA is the best thing any fire district can do to help prepare for the new Idaho. Your district purpose is beneficial to all.

United our message cannot be ignored.

Fire and EMS Planning Approaches and Alternatives, *ESCI*

*The old adage is:
“If you fail to plan, you plan to fail”*

Fire and EMS agencies have many options when it comes to planning for their future. Each varies with the agency, its needs and the community’s conditions, including current or expected growth. Planning often needs to be completed at more than level and in more than one context.

In our travels, Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) has found that the various planning types are confused and terminology differs. This discussion is intended to clear the confusion and help you decide what kind of planning is needed in your fire department.

Typical planning types are:

1. Tactical/Operational Planning
2. Financial Planning
3. Master Planning
4. Strategic Planning
5. Standards of Cover (Deployment Planning)
6. Cooperative Efforts Planning

Tactical/Operational Planning

This type of planning is largely focused on emergency response. The elements typically include:

1. Dispatch Protocols
2. Automated Run cards
3. Mutual and Automatic Aid Plans and Agreements
4. Jointly Developed On Scene Procedures, ICS, SOGs
5. Shared Command Staff Practices

Operational planning must not be done in a vacuum, but rather as a cooperative venture between neighboring fire departments. If you are going to be working with each other on the emergency scene, adequate operational planning is essential to ensuring firefighter safety.

Financial Planning

You already do this at the most fundamental level in the form of your annual budget process. But effective financial planning also includes:

1. Annual Budget Process
2. 3 to 5 Year Future Budget Projections
3. Capital Replacement Planning
4. Monitoring/Projecting Revenue Sources

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Long Range Master Planning

This planning types is often confused with “Strategic Planning”. Master Planning is high level, big picture, planning that typically encompasses a time frame of 10 to 15 years and is most important in a community that is experiencing growth. The Master Plan answers three questions:

1. Where is our organization now?
2. Where will we need to be in the future? and,
3. How do we get there?

The process involves a detailed evaluation of current conditions in the agency, population and future service demand forecasting, and development of strategies that will be needed to meet future needs.

Strategic Planning

Master Planning is typically complete by a third party consultant who evaluates the fire department and its service delivery and provides a report detailing future needs.

In contrast, a Strategic Plan is a 3 to 5 year plan that, while probably facilitated by a third party, is internally driven. A planning team from within the department completes the following:

1. Development or updating of the agency *Mission, Vision and Core Values*
2. Identification of the departments most important goals for the next 3 to 5 years
3. Definition of objectives and action steps needed to achieve the goals, and
4. Establishment of means by which to measure accomplishment of the above

The terms strategic plan and master plan are often used interchangeably, but as explained, they differ substantially. However, it is ESCI’s opinion that at a minimum, every fire and EMS agency should have a current Strategic Plan in place.

Standards of Cover (Deployment Planning)

Another term that is sometimes used interchangeably with Master and Strategic Planning is Standards of Cover, or SOC. An SOC is similar to a Master Plan but is focused strictly on resource deployment – fire stations, apparatus and people. Is is a detailed analysis of deployment based on the elements of:

1. Service Demand by Type and Location
2. Resource Concentration
3. Resource Distribution
4. Response Performance
5. Response Reliability
6. Community Risk Assessment

The process is highly data driven and is needed if your fire department is seeking accreditation or simply wants a very comprehensive deployment analysis. If not, a Master Plan my better suit your needs.

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Cooperative Efforts/Shared Services/District Formation or Expansion

The term “consolidation” is often assumed to be the same as “merger” or other unification alternatives. In fact, the definition by statute varies widely from state to state and definition of the terms often cross over. There are actually many ways that fire departments can collaborate, not limited to forming a single agency. Some options include:

1. Administrative only consolidation
2. Functional consolidation to include programs like training, prevention and others
3. Operational consolidation under which agencies drop boundaries and respond to emergencies as one
4. Legal Unification or Merger

Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages depending on the community, so careful evaluation of options and planning of next steps is critical.

Summary

At a minimum, every fire and EMS agency, big or small, needs a Strategic Plan. A Master Plan or Standards of Cover may also be important to you. Please contact ESCI at info@esci.us for more information.

Lane Wintermute, Consulting Division Director
Emergency Services Consulting International
Direct Phone: 208.661.4865
Corporate Office: 1.800.757 3724
www.esci.us



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