



The Blaze

A Publication of the Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association

3rd Quarter Blaze

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

My Fellow Commissioners,

At our annual Convention and meeting in 2019, we as a body of commissioners voted to move our annual Conference from November to March of each successive year. March of 2020 would have been our first spring conference, but Covid 19 changed the world and we went two years without an annual conference. We finally had our first spring conference this year and I think there are some updates you need to know that resulted from this meeting:

- Overall attendance was down 3% compared to the last 3-year average
- Conference income was up 5.9% compared to the previous conference
- Hotel rates were up 17% over previous years held in Boise, yet hotel stays were comparable
- Business conducted in 3 days plus, one day filled with tours, received good results
- In-Person Sponsor participations were comparable to previous years
- Special invitation to Firefighters for special training resulted in disappointing turnout with firefighters, yet after the Special speaker and training, we had overwhelming requests to have Mr. Green come back and do regional trainings.

I have drawn my own conclusions to this change in calendaring, but I would like you to respond and tell us your thoughts on the spring Annual Conference.

1. Spring or fall, harvest or planting season, hunting or fishing season, legislators in session or not, YOU as a group of Commissioners are devoted and committed to fulfill your elected duty and participate in the Annual Conference to stay current on what is happening and what we need to do to be successful in this business.

2. Inflation, Covid or the next big thing will modify hotel pricing, but the details of our job require us to stay on top of current improvements in the business and current legislation requiring our attention.

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Contact Information
Phone: 208-275-8870
Email : office@isfca.org
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Continued ... President's Message

3. The annual conference is not designed to be a large revenue source. This convention is financially close to breakeven most years +/- enough of a cushion to make sure we can cover the expenses of the conference.

From what I can see, the commitment to serve mitigates all other factors and so we move on and do our job regardless of spring or fall annual conferences.

Please correct me if I am wrong!

Our next annual conference is March 2-4, 2023 in Coeur D' Alene. We will have Mr. Silouan Green as the main speaker yet again, back by request. What you may not know, is that we are trying to set up regional trainings with Mr. Green throughout the state before and after the conference as schedules permit. We will be including Firefighters, staff, as well as opening it up to ALL other first responders. If you have a group that needs to hear from Mr. Green on a regional basis, please contact myself, Krystal or your Regional Director.

One last thing before I close. We have a great number of new Legislators that will be new this coming session. Please take the time to get acquainted with them. We have many Senators and Representatives that don't understand the Fire industry and we need to gain more influence within the legislature to Serve and Protect those within our stations that Serve and Protect our communities.

I know much of Idaho is on fire as I write this, so PLEASE do your best to protect your staff that we all have taken an oath to support.

Sincerely,

Todd Belnap
ISFCA President

National LOSAP ^{PLUS} HERO

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What is it?

The HeroPlusSM Program is the National LOSAP program—Length Of Service Award Program.

It is designed specifically for emergency services volunteers, including volunteer firefighters and EMS to reward volunteers for their service to the community as a supplemental retirement plan after they have attained an annual active service requirement.



How does it work?

The HeroPlusSM Program brings together a suite of services from several different providers into a single offering to help reduce costs and provide flexibility for both plan sponsors and participants.

HeroPlus can be customized at the local level to meet the specific needs of the plan sponsor, without having to amend the plan document.



What are the benefits?

When a HeroPlusSM Program is adopted by sponsoring community or department they are agreeing to provide a supplemental retirement plan to their volunteer emergency services personnel for their service to the community.

For the participant, the tax deferred earnings accumulate on a compound basis until withdrawn—providing tax deferred income benefits for retirement years.



How can I get it?

Ask your chief or your administrator if this is available for your department.

If you are a plan sponsor and interested in bringing this retirement reward to your home town heroes.

For more information call:

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Save the Date



2023 PTSD Workshop

For those of you who attended the ISFCA 2022 Conference in Boise, you will be familiar with Mr. Silouan Green, and his presentation on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Injury. The ISFCA Members were so impressed with his presentation, the Members agreed to bring Mr. Green back to the 2023 ISFCA Conference in Coeur d' Alene, Idaho.

Shortly after Mr. Green's presentation, I turned to my associate (Chief Mark Wendelsdorf) and we decided Silouan Green's Message needed to be shared with more First Responders. Getting Everybody to Coeur d' Alene, would be "Financially Impossible", so, we needed to figure a way to bring Silouan Green back to the Boise area. We contacted Krystal Hinkle and requested her help and information, which she understood and agreed to our requests. The three of us have been taking the steps to set a "2023 PTSD Workshop" in Boise. We are hoping we may draw as many "First Responders" from a 2 hour driving radius (Twin Falls, Burley, Rupert, Council, Cambridge and Midvale, McCall, Cascade, etc.). We decided we should include Dispatchers, EMS, Paramedics and Law Enforcement, since Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Injury is a common problem for ALL Emergency responders.

We are making Progress!! Silouan Green has committed to coming to Boise around the ISFCA Conference. **The dates of our workshops will be offered March 6, 8, 9 for Full day Sessions and on March 7 for an Evening Session.** We hope to offer enough sessions to cover the different shifts schedules. We have secured a commitment from Saint Alphonsus Health Systems for the workshop location! (Big Thank you to St. Al's). On a regular basis , we are meeting to work out ALL of the remaining details for registrations, attendance counts, contingencies (OH, Lets not forget how items like "COVID" can throw a wrench in the works!). One of our most critical concerns is timing and number of attendees! Please let your board, Chiefs, and employees know THIS IS COMING!! As we are able, more information will be offered. We hope to gain sponsorships to help with costs and open registration before November 2022.

SO, Save These DATES in March of 2023!!

L.V. "Buzz" Beauchamp, ISFCA At-Large Board Member



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The Evolving Role of Today's Chief Officer,

Rick Gurba, Director, Paramedic/FF, VFIS Education and Training

The Chief of the Department has both operational and administrative responsibilities for most emergency service organizations across the country. In some cases, the operational and administrative duties are split into two or more positions. There is little doubt if the chief officer role was solely focused on operations, it would be less challenging. But today we live in a different time. Today's chief officer serves as the CEO in many departments and with that title comes immense responsibility.

Many chief officers come into the role with little formal training. Others have the formal training but lack the resources to execute their plans. And in smaller departments, the individual is elected in some cases without any evidence of qualifications. Regardless of how this individual entered into the role of the chief officer, they are now the person everyone looks to for answers. Individuals in this position will tell you it is challenging, rewarding, and requires embracing the concept of being a lifelong student. And in turn, a teacher and mentor.

The importance of training and educating your aspiring leaders is critical to the long-term success of your organization – regardless of whether you are a paid, combination, or volunteer department. The lieutenants, captains, training officers, and assistant chiefs seeking to be a chief officer of the future need a written guide or roadmap to follow. Just as important is providing 1-on-1 time to share and discuss the plan with those aspiring leaders. This process is critical to filling the voids left when a chief officer resigns, retires, or is voted out of their role.

One of the challenging issues facing today's chief officers is everything related to personnel. The critical function of retaining and developing your current staff should be the focus of retention efforts. Any business will tell you costs less to retain an individual rather than hire a replacement. The replacement may have the same qualifications but the institutional knowledge lost by the departure of the individual is often difficult to replace. And the money you spend on disposable items could be better spent on personnel development.

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC.org) published research in August 2020 titled the Volunteer Retention Research Report which supports the thoughts mentioned in this article. Throughout this research, leadership actions or inaction was mentioned frequently. The report is worth the read to better understand the findings. To summarize, chief officers did not spend any (or enough) time with their personnel, did not understand or care about their needs and their family and work demands outside of the department, and did not communicate effectively or timely for individuals to understand what is expected when and given enough time to plan effectively.

In summary, the chief officer role deals with interpersonal communication and relationships which may be just as important as the operational functions of the department. Consider the areas where you, as the chief officer could improve. Take small steps to make improvements. Each of those small steps and successes build to a better department.



**You're there for your neighbors
on their worst days...**

...let us be there for yours.

Your crew doesn't just take risks while serving and protecting your community—sadly, some of them quite literally risk it all. Talk to us about how you can better protect your most important assets—your members and their families—with crucial benefits for their worst days like Accident & Sickness, 24 hour on-and-off duty Group Term Life, Critical Illness and Accidental Death and Dismemberment.

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Caldwell Rural Fire District's NEW Brush Truck and Boise Mobile Equipment Tour — L.V. "Buzz" Beauchamp, ISFCA At-Large Board Member

On July 25, 2022 Caldwell Rural Fire District and Caldwell City Fire Department was given a tour of the Boise Mobile Equipment (BME) facility in Boise. On the Tour at the former Morrison Knudsen/ Motive Power plant, the Caldwell Contingent saw the New Brush Truck that was ready for delivery.



If possible, I recommend contacting Boise Mobile Equipment for a tour. This is an event well worth the trip, to see how the BME products are manufactured and assembled. Their facility is still going through an expansion, since they are removing some of the Huge Machinery left over from the Motive Power plant acquisition. One of the many improvements BME is moving forward on, is increased Assemblies Inventory. It was amazing to see all the boxes of pumps waiting to go to assembly or to fill a customer's replacement order. One of the interesting advances "BME" is practicing, the use of CAD Engineering to standardize many of the parts and assemblies used in ALL the BME products. An example would be, if a customer's part (Supply Tube with Flange) is damaged, BME could ship the proper replacement quickly, based upon what is in inventory or might need to be manufactured.

Boise Mobile Equipment must be doing things "Right", since they repeatedly receive large orders from the Bureau of Land Management and CAL Fire. If you get to inspect any of the BME pieces, be sure to have one of their Representatives point out many of the design features ANY user will benefit from. Whatever "Chassis" your district may prefer, that is no problem for BME, since they can source from most of the major vehicle manufactures.

You may already know all of what I am offering in this article, yet it is always good for a "Refresher". and BME is always looking to offer New and Improved Products to offer to Fire and Emergency Services.

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- Training**: Interface for tracking 'Assigned Training' and 'Completed Training' with a 'Training Completion' button.
- Pre-Incident Planning**: Map interface for planning, showing a fire location and 'Map'/'ESRI' options.
- Assets & Inventory**: Interface for managing equipment, showing 'IN SERVICE' status for various assets.
- Scheduling & Personnel**: Calendar interface for scheduling personnel, showing a weekly view from Sunday to Saturday.

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