



# The Blaze

A Publication of the Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association

2nd Quarter 2017

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings Membership,

Wow, can you believe it's already April and the weather has not found its normal pattern yet, snow in Kuna on March 30<sup>th</sup> wow! The positive side is the challenges this winter presented became a great opportunity to test some polices and guidelines already established and create some new ones as well as we push towards spring.

If you have not heard yet, Idaho has adopted the 2015 Fire Code. Make sure your District gets the new code.

It's Training time and the first commissioners training will be held in Coeur d'Alene on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017, we have an excellent lineup of classes and new areas of focus which was driven by membership's requests.

Some of the expanded topics are that fun topic of Ethics, and a few other corners of the statues that easily can be overlooked/ misunderstood which can create challenges, The State Fire Marshal will take us on an in-depth look at today's millennials within our work force and how to understand, motivate and train them across the decades of knowledge within the fire service. ICRMP will discuss those liability issues that commonly reoccur and provide examples on how they occurred and what could have prevented their occurrence.

Please see the Executive Directors message for details of the other upcoming training dates throughout the state. We look forward to seeing you and visiting during one of the training sessions.

A while back, the Executive Director sent out a request for information on what benefits, if any, are provided for your personell. This request was based on memberships request to see what type of group benefit(s) ISFCA could possibly offer in an effort to attract and retain volunteers within our districts. Please contact Krystal with that information so we can review and have a presentation ready for membership at our Boise conference in November.

Continued, Page 2

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For further information or to contact  
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208-275-8870 or email  
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## Continued ... President's Message

Legislation this year did not yield much for the fire service in Idaho. We need as a leadership team input from members so we can develop a plan this summer to work on clarification and cleanup of current statues as well as introduce some new ones. I believe that if our leadership works on the topics, does the background research, and develops a plan to carry it to the end, we can be successful. There are many areas which can be jointly supported with our fellow associations of the Idaho Fire Chiefs, Idaho Volunteer Association, and the Professional Firefighters Union. In today's climate, the ability to work together creates a positive sphere of influence within the fire service. Positive change for all hinges on strong relationships with our counterparts.

In closing, I hope each and every district has a safe and productive year as they faithfully serve day in and day out the citizens of Idaho and those that visit our state as well. Remember you're neighboring districts in all directions no matter their size, sponsor and participate in joint training as much as possible and finally, I challenge you to continue being one of the many (550-700) elected fire commissioners who serve their districts (approx. 165 districts) with pride and honor on behalf of the citizens within Idaho.

Thank you for your support of ISFCA and your trust you have placed in me as your president. See you at either the training or the conference.

Sincerely,  
David "Rudy" Rudebaugh  
President

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## Idaho City Fire Department Celebrates 150 Years, the Oldest Fire Department in the State! *Written by Eileen Capson*

The Idaho City Volunteer Fire Department has the distinction of being the oldest continuously operating fire department in the State of Idaho.

The original Idaho City Hook & Ladder Company #1 was authorized and organized March 26, 1867. The *Idaho World* documented this momentous occasion in an article published on April 6, 1867.

Idaho City was a boomtown back in that day, with buildings made of dry wood and everyone's attention was on gold mining. The town suffered two major fires, one on May 18, 1865. "The oldest department is still a volunteer department," chuckles Idaho City's Fire Chief, Terry Teeter. "Over the years we've gone from a hose cart to a Willy's jeep. Then I come along and I bought a 1947 Chevy fire truck," which Teeter fixed up with a tank and pump. Through the Idaho Department of Lands, they acquired three trucks dated from 1973 and 1974.

Lowell Burdell, Idaho City Volunteer Firefighter, said in speaking with members of the Masonic Lodge in Idaho City that historically the bottom floor was used for the fire department and the upper level for their meetings. There are 3 large double doors on the front of the building, which could be explained as the bays for the fire department and the bell tower was used to warn the town folks of fire.

The current firehouse, on Hwy. 21 in Idaho City, was built in 1997. This came through numerous donations of time, talent and resources in addition to a grant.

The community voted in favor of the Idaho City Fire District in May of 2016, but is not expected to receive money until the last half of 2018. In celebration of 150 years of service, some additional decals are being considered by Chief Teeter for the Idaho City Volunteer Fire Department Response vehicles.

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## Looking Back — *Tim Vargas, Consultant, Jerome Rural Fire District #1*

I've been a fire commissioner for approximately 25 years and when looking back I find it amazing how the job has changed over all those years. We do things much more professionally than when I first became a commissioner. Back in my beginning years we got together paid the bills, discussed maintenance issues, visited for a while and went home. There weren't many educational opportunities and there was much I didn't know about the duties and responsibilities of being an effective fire commissioner.

Sometime during the early 2000's, the economy and real estate development took off and suddenly we had large commercial processing facilities producing cheese and milk products setting up shop within the fire district. Soon after the milk processing blitz, a major commercial development, Crossroads Point, got underway at one of the state's busiest highway intersections, I-84 and Hwy 93. Housing took off and the lazy little community of Jerome and the Jerome Rural Fire Protection District #1 was faced with a rapidly expanding population, a huge increase in the number of single family homes and tripling of the commercial buildings for which we had to provide fire protection services. During this same time the roughly 12 miles of Interstate 84 and 18 miles of Hwy 93 within our coverage zone saw an equal increase in traffic and auto and trucking accidents multiplied. All of this took place while at the same time we processed 10 new district annexations. Needless to say, the demands and workload placed on the commissioners and department personnel shot through the roof. We met these challenges by adding personnel and purchasing new and good used fire apparatuses. We provided our firefighters with top notch tools of the trade and the latest in safety equipment. We secured land, planned and built a new satellite station to improve response times and provide better coverage for areas experiencing the heaviest growth. This presented many challenges for our fire district and the commission, but fortunately the commissioners had the foresight to get on board and become involved with the Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association during its revival period starting around 2003-2004. Preparing for and addressing much of what we had to do to meet these challenges would have been incredibly more difficult were it not for the guidance, education and networking opportunities with commissioners from around the state made possible by our membership in ISFCA. The Jerome Rural Fire Protection District #1 Board of Fire Commissioners have remained committed members of ISFCA for over 12 years. Two of our commissioners have served on the Executive Board and are past presidents of the organization.

Just as dramatic has been the growth of ISFCA as an organization. While the number of member fire districts has remained constant and steady the organization has done anything but. We have a highly efficient, enthusiastic and motivated Executive Director in Krystal Hinkle, top notch legal representation in William (Bill) Punkoney, White, Peterson, Gigray & Nichols, P.A., and an equally talented leadership body and Regional Directors are stepping up efforts to connect to fire districts within their respective regions, perhaps you have already been contacted by him or her. The Annual Meetings have evolved to the point that the information presented is cutting edge and applicable to the needs of fire commissioners wanting to keep up with old and particularly new legislation and regulations. For me personally, I plan on consistently attending the annual meetings and training programs for fear I might fall behind. There is nothing worse than being blind-sided by new regulations and requirements you know nothing about. New efforts to provide membership value has resulted in ISFCA taking Commissioner Training on the road. This year there are training courses planned for Coeur d'Alene, Eagle and Idaho Falls. Contact Krystal, [office@isfca.org](mailto:office@isfca.org), for more information on these training sessions. Finally, if you are not a member I encourage you to join, help grow the organization, and help yourself become a better Fire Commissioner.

## Update from the Executive Director

Hello Membership,

The Association has been very busy the last couple of months monitoring the legislative session, working with legislators and our attorney on possible statute changes for next session, upcoming training, membership renewals, our Annual Conference and other membership benefits.

We have been very reluctant to have a legislative session this year that didn't effect Fire District negatively. We are still working on relationships with the other state Associations to have better communication. The goal is to show more unity within the fire service when addressing our legislators. Please keep an eye on our ALERTS page on our website for updates on proposed legislation that could affect your district.

As an ongoing effort to "To inform, educate, represent, lead and serve the fire districts of Idaho in the preservation and protection of life and property", we are going on the road again this year to provide training to you as Elected Fire District Officials and your office staff. This year we are providing additional training in 3 locations.

1. North Idaho Fire Academy - April 8th in Coeur d'Alene
2. Eagle Fire District - May 6th in Eagle, Idaho
3. Idaho Falls - June 3rd (location to be determined)

Please keep an eye out for registration forms to come in your email and on our website.

Please mark your calendar for the 2017 Annual Conference. It is going to be held in Boise on November 16th –18th at the Riverside Hotel. This year it is later in November due to limited meeting/conference space at the hotel.

As we are working on the agenda for the Annual Conference, please let us know if there is anything specific you would like additional training on. Also, if you have any potential sponsors and/or vendors, please send their contact information to the office email address that is provided below.

The 2016 Fire Commissioner Handbook and 2017 Fire District Directory is updated on the membership page of the ISFCA website, [www.isfca.org](http://www.isfca.org). If you have not received the password, please contact the office via email and I will make sure you receive your password. Please make sure the password isn't shared with nonmember districts. These publications were created with the funding that comes from our Membership districts.

President Rudebaugh touched based on an additional benefit that Membership asked for at the 2016 Annual Conference. This was to possibly add a D&D Benefit for all firefighters within your districts. We sent out an email about a month ago and have only received a handful of responses. We need your input in order to move forward. Please look for a reminder email within the next week or two.

We are growing and offering so much more than we ever have. We want to continue to grow the organization and be unified as a state. If you have not paid your membership dues, please get those in soon. In order to continue to fight at the Capitol, offer training and so much more, we need your support.

Yours Truly,

Krystal Hinkle  
Executive Director  
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[office@isfca.org](mailto:office@isfca.org)

## Don't Forget The Grants!!! , *Wayne Cavender, Region 1 Director*

I come from a small town in Boundary County: Naples, Idaho. Population is 2600, all spread out. The economy here is like a lot of small towns - and even a lot of large towns – it's pretty poor. In Naples, we have a general store/post office, a bar, a restaurant, a cedar mill, and an elementary school. Of all the children at the school, 85% are a reduced/free lunch and breakfast. Unemployment is very high in this county and a lot of store fronts in Bonners Ferry, 8 miles north, are empty. There are a lot of homeless and there is a lot of drug addiction. Residents can't afford much!

In Naples, right next to the elementary school, is South Boundary Fire Protection District Station 1. Early on, we were a subscription based department, but in 2004 we became a taxing district. We have 7 fire agencies in the county, all volunteer, with budgets ranging from \$2,500 to \$200,000. Two are city departments, two are fire districts, and three are subscription based.

Even with the condition of the economy and unemployment figures, South Boundary Fire Pro. District has 14 pieces of equipment housed in 3 stations. One of which, Station 3, was acquired completely by a grant. Station 1 is adding on, to enclose the plow truck and the brush truck, which both came from an IDL VFA grant. The other two stations each have brush trucks; while Station 2 has 662, acquired with an IDL FFP grant; at Station 3, 663 purchased from IDL at reduced price.

We have 2 trailer mounted generators, both housed at Station 3, both from a IDL FFP grants. We also have interoperated simulcast county wide comms from a \$450,000.00 grant.

Safer grants include incentives for volunteers. We got a thermal imaging camera, all new fire hoses (2 sets for each engine!!), station exhaust systems from an AFG grant.

You can see where I'm going with this! The importance of grants and their availability is VERY important. The money is out there. Someone is going to get it. It might as well be you. Find someone who can write grants or learn to write them yourself. At the commissioner's conference in Pocatello two years ago, one of the workshops was grant writing. Be sure to attend the classes offered by ISFCA as they are limited each year.

If you have a need, there are places you can go for help. I've enclosed a list of potential funding sources for those who may need them or didn't know they existed. (this is a separate attachment with the blaze)

As I said, the money is out there and there are agencies who want to help, even as far as helping you write the grants themselves

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## Slash Piles, *Les Preader, Region 4 Director*

This time of year, a lot of folks are burning weeds and their "slash piles". I've also noted the increase in responses by fire districts and fire departments to reports of fires, smoke, unattended burns, etc. I've taken the liberty to use portions of an article by Chris Schnepf that appeared in the January 2017 issue of the Idaho Farm Bureau Producer magazine, titled "Ten Tips for burning slash piles". He includes a definition of slash as "organic material left on forest site after a harvest or thinning effort". My version includes canal banks, weed piles, essentially all open burning materials.

His enumerated list is:

- 1) Do you need to pile and burn? Right away?
- 2) Locate piles in good places (avoid building piles within 10-20 feet of driplines you want to keep.
- 3) Build piles tall and compact.
- 4) Keep dirt out of the pile, dirt can cause smoldering fires long after they are ignited. Build a 2-10 feet wide fire line around each pile to insure against fire escape.
- 5) Avoid putting coarse woody debris in the pile. Under Idaho law, the only slash that has to be treated to reduce fire hazard is material smaller than 3 inches in diameter, because small fuels ignite and carry fire more readily.
- 6) Keep the tinder dry.
- 7) GOT A PERMIT? DEPENDING ON THE TIME OF YEAR AND CURRENT FIRE CONDITIONS, YOU MAY NEED A PERMIT TO LIGHT FIRES. PERMITS ARE REQUIRED BY IDAHO CODE MAY 10-OCT 20. LOCAL JURISDICTIONS MAY HAVE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS. PERMITS ARE USUALLY SECURED THROUGH YOUR LOCAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OFFICE.
- 8) Got the necessary tools (eg, Pulaski, shovel, and ideally at least a 100 gallons of water in a tank.
- 9) Is it a good day to burn? (My notation here concerns wind, air quality, time of year, etc).
- 10) Multiple piles? Don't light them ALL at once.

Chris Schnepf is an area extension educator – forestry- for the University of Idaho in Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai and Benewah counties. He can be reached at [cschnepf@uidaho.edu](mailto:cschnepf@uidaho.edu).

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## Time to empower the Interim Successor? -- *Steve Frazee, Past President*

Have you ever had to cancel an important fire district meeting because you didn't have a quorum? Has not having a quorum and therefore not being able to make a decision create a costly delay in a project or purchase, or made you miss an important deadline? Our district has been there, and that has made me think that there has got to be a better way to do business. Wouldn't it be great if an interim successor (aka alternate) could fill in for their commissioner when they were unable to make it to a meeting?

Idaho Code 31-1418 requires each commissioner to appoint two interim successors for them. And that code section does allow for one of the interim successor to fill in for a commissioner and act in their behalf, but only if the commissioner is unable to perform their duties for at least 90 days. As far as I know, this provision is rarely used. In my years as a commissioner, within our district and the adjoining fire districts, I only know of one time it was used.

But what if the code was changed to allow for an interim successor to act for their commissioner at meetings when the commissioner was unable to make the meeting? Wouldn't that make life much better for all of us and make a fire district much more able to conduct business in a timelier manner and make us better stewards to our constituents? Being able to not having to cancel meetings due to a commissioner being absent would help us in our duty to protect lives and properties.

And while we're at it, maybe even take it one step further. If a commissioner retires or resigns, why not have the option of appointing the interim successor to the vacancy? In our district we've never had anyone respond to the vacancy notice that you are required to put into the local paper. Since you have an interim successor who is already interested in being a commissioner already in place, why not give the fire districts the authority to just go ahead and appoint them to finish out the commissioner's term? That would save time and money, especially for the smaller districts. As a safety net, you could retain the option to fill a vacancy with the current process.

Some legislators might make the argument that we would be bypassing the elections process. However, what is proposed above is not a whole lot different than when a county official retires or resigns. When that occurs, the political party that the clerk is affiliated with recommends three candidates to the county commissioners to select a replacement to finish out the clerk's term. Not exactly what is being proposed, but somewhat similar.

There's already some proposed state legislation to reduce the number of interim successors required for each commissioner from two to one, so now might be a great time to make the interim successor a valuable asset to our districts and make our job easier to protect the wellbeing of our constituents.

What do you think? If this looks like something worth doing, the Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association can work on getting the legislation introduced. One of the benefits of being a member of ISFCA is being able to propose changes like this, something that is well worth the cost of membership.

## **Changes in Eagle, Idaho, *Dan Friend, Region 3B Director***

There has certainly been a lot happening with the Eagle Fire Protection District over the past year. In July 2016 the Eagle Fire Chief announced he was taking an early retirement to pursue a business opportunity. The District advertised nationwide in search for a new chief in September. In October, representatives from the Union, Administration Staff and Board of Commissioners (BOC) interviewed three candidates. An internal interim Fire Chief was appointed the end of November. About this time, the President of the Eagle Local asked the BOC to consider contracting fire delivery services from Boise City Fire Department. Eagle Local believed the community would benefit from being part of a larger fire department and the employees of the District would benefit from better salaries and benefits by becoming Boise fire employees. Boise Fire Chief Doan put together a proposal and presented it to the BOC. A number of additional details needed more investigation so the District has contracted with Idaho Policy Institute at Boise State University to study and prepare a report on the benefits and implications of Eagle contracting fire service from Boise and the District has selected a new chief. Rusty Coffelt, currently the Deputy Chief in Anaheim California will take over the Department April 17th.

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## **How to Conduct yourself in Public, *Danny Renfro, ISFCA Vice President***

Hello everyone, I hope you, your families and districts are all doing well.

I thought for this article I would write some thoughts on how we present ourselves to the public. We as commissioner's are given the responsibility of wisely using the taxpayers funds to provide the best possible service, while at the same time trying to make sure that our firefighters are provided with all they need to safely and efficiently do their jobs. Sometimes we disagree with the views our public has on the fire department and laws.

Even so, we must remember that we would not have a department without the support from the public. We owe it to the public to respectfully answer their questions to our best ability. While in this process, we should not let our personal feelings influence the way we address the public. Ourselves and our departments should never belittle the views of concerned citizens.

Questions from the public gives the us the opportunity to have dialogue and explain both of your views and opinions. Addressing the public in a negative or contentious way never helps the situation. It only builds animosity and ends any possibility of having a productive dialogue. Even when dealing with a negative and aggressive individual, you should continue to create a respectful dialogue. If all else fails, a wise rabbit once said" if you don't have something nice to say, don't say nothing at all."

I am not saying to give in and not stand for what you believe in, but always take the high road by being civil and respectful. This helps keep a positive light on our districts and makes working with others easier and a lot more enjoyable.

Until next time take care and be careful.

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**Fire Trucks in New Zealand, *Doug Mayne, Secretary/Treasurer***


The firefighting business in Idaho is a fairly small industry and sometimes we get lost in our own little world. This issue I thought I would take a look outside of Idaho and see what another part of the world had to offer.

I recently took a trip to New Zealand and found a collection of firefighting equipment and apparatus that was collected by one family and thought I would share some of the pictures and stories.

The New Zealand National Toy and Transport Museum was put together and is managed by one family. Started in 1988 and opening in 1994 the Rhodes family has devoted their lives to collecting, preserving and sharing this extensive collection of transportation history to the public. The collection of firefighting equipment and toys is impressive to say the least. I spent several hours just touring the four buildings and grounds where the collection is housed. Mr. Gerald Rhodes worked for the International Harvester Company and spent over fifty years collecting and housing this collection. There are over 50,000 items on display. Most of the items are from New Zealand however there is a tender that came from Kansas. There are over 30 fire trucks and support vehicles. Dating from 1923 to 1975. There is also a collection of fire equipment toys on display. Their internet site ([ttmuseumwanaka.co.nz](http://ttmuseumwanaka.co.nz)) is a wealth of information on the museum. I hope that you find this article and web site as interesting as I have.

Enjoy this Spring and stay safe this fire season.





## Renault Fire Tender 1923/24


Ooh La La! La Belle Francaise! It is possibly the only one of its model left in the World and is the only Renault Fire Appliance ever used in New Zealand.

The original tender accepted by the NZ Importer was dated 13<sup>th</sup> April 1923 and it was originally displayed at the 1925/26 New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, in Logan Park, Dunedin, at the Carters Motors Ltd, Renault site.

In 1929 the Queenstown Volunteer Fire Brigade received it as its first motorised fire appliance and it remained in service until 1948. The cost of the new appliance was £600 of which the volunteers had contributed £100 (the balance being provided by the Queenstown Borough Council). It had taken nearly two years to arrange (the Volunteer Fire Brigade having advised the Council it would contribute their £100 on 29<sup>th</sup>

September 1927) – seems some things moved slowly back then, just like today! The appliance was later used as a Pump for a goldmine in the Skippers Canyon. In 1960's was purchased by the Maxwell's of Dunedin, who were going to restore it but that plan never materialised.

It was purchased unrestored by Gerald Rhodes (the Museum Founder) in the 1970's, who then sold it to a Mr Bill Lynn of Christchurch. It was then repurchased by Mr Rhodes and finally restored in the late 1990s. Unfortunately it was mistakenly sign-written with the date "1926". The Renault badge (see at top) was only in use in 1923 and 1924.





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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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