



The Blaze

A Publication of the Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello - I'm Steve Frazee, the incoming ISFCA President. First, a little about myself. I was born and raised in Salmon, am a retired civil engineer and the chairman of the Lemhi County Fire Protection District. My wife of 43 years, Cindy, has been a pillar of support for me as a member of the Salmon Volunteer Fire Department (from which I retired from the first of the year), chairman of the fire district, and my endeavors with the Idaho State Fire Commissioners' Association (ISFCA).

Let me introduce you to the new ISFCA Officers for this year. In addition to myself, our new Vice President is Todd Belnap from the Minidoka County Fire Protection District and Tris Moore of the West End Fire Protection District is staying on as the Association's Secretary/Treasurer. I think we have a good slate of officers who are eager to accomplish a lot this year.

The convention this fall was a good one, and for those who weren't there, you don't know what you missed. The next convention will be in Boise, and then the one after Boise is scheduled to be held in East Idaho. There have been some serious discussions about changing the convention from November to March. The driving force behind this is that March would be a better time for most of you in the agricultural business to be able to attend the conference and it will help with timing of potential legislation. Please let us know your thoughts on this proposal by contacting me, your local Regional Director, or Krystal Hinkle our Executive Director.

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Post Conference Blaze

2020 ISFCA Board of Directors

Steve Frazee, President
Todd Belnap, Vice President
Tris Moore, Sec./Treasurer
David "Rudy" Rudebaugh,
Past President
Wayne Cavender, Region 1
Charles "Hoey" Graham, Region 2
Jack Hellbusch, Region 3A
Bud Beatty, Region 3B
Mike McCall, Region 4
Mike Taylor, Region 5
Vacant, Region 6A
Doug Martin, Region 6B

At Large Seats:

Tim Vargas
Paul Wagner
Frank Wolfkiel

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Krystal Hinkle, Executive Director

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Continued ... President's Message

Most of ISFCA's time and effort is devoted to dealing with state legislative issues. The Idaho State Legislature is back in session. Last year they didn't do much routine house cleaning, so during this season they will have to make up for that. Looks like the routine work will take closer to five weeks this year rather than the usual two weeks. Also, this year is an election year, and in an election year, the Legislators like to get out early so they can hit the campaign trail. This cuts into the time spent on other legislative tasks, so for now I don't know what to expect.

Each year when the Legislature is in session, it seems like we have surprises that sneak up on us. Sometimes they are actually good for fire districts, but many times they are not. For those that are not good for the betterment of Fire Districts, ISFCA will work hard to either fix the proposed legislation, or try and kill it. ISFCA will be keeping a close eye on what is going on and will keep everyone advised while the legislature is in session. To see what is happening with proposed bills, you can go to the ISFCA website (www.isfca.org) and click on the alerts tab. This will show specific bill information, the bill number (bill number shows whether proposed in house or senate), description of the bill, latest action taken on the bill, and ISFCA position on the bill (support, oppose, neutral or monitoring). There is more happening in the legislature than most commissioners are aware of and keep in mind most of the proposed bills affect all fire districts, even yours. Last year, ISFCA was keeping track of 24 proposed pieces of legislation.

If your fire district is struggling with an issue with a state law, let us know about it, ISFCA will check into it and see if there is anything ISFCA can do to help you out. For assistance you contact either me, your local Regional Director, or our Executive Director.

During last year's legislative session, senate bill S1028 Workman's Compensation, PTSI, was passed to provide help to those first responders suffering from stress, depression or other mental issues.. The bill allows for those with PTSI to file for Workman's Compensation to cover the cost of dealing with these issues. I think this was a major victory for all first responders, however, I also think that there should be some sort of provision to allow for those first responders who are in the beginning stages of PTSI to have easy access to counselors and other mental health providers. Having that help available could make the difference to someone who is contemplating suicide and doesn't have the fortitude to start the steps needed for getting help from workman's comp. Unfortunately, I've seen what a tragedy suicide is to families, friends and departments, and I wouldn't wish that on anyone. It is a goal of mine to get some sort of proactive assistance in place; in addition to providing for help from workman's comp.

In addition to the usual issues and problems fire districts have dealt with, fire districts are facing a new challenge, and that is the unprecedented growth we are experiencing in our state. Fire districts need to be making changes on how they do business in order to deal with this growth which is putting increased demands for emergency services providers across the state. You, as commissioners, have a choice. You can accept the fact that change is coming and deal with it, or, ignore it and get ran over. Make the right choice for your constituents.

One final note, ISFCA is still planning on providing regional training throughout the state. Once the details have been worked out, the training information will be emailed to all the fire districts as to when and where a training will be held in you part of the state.

I look forward to serving you as the President in 2020.

Sincerely,

Steve Frazee
President

PROSPECT RESEARCH & GRANT READINESS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY GRANTS
IN IDAHO - *Allison Shirk, Founder & Executive Director, Spark the Fire Grantwriting*

www.sparkthefiregrantwriting.com | Email: allison@ sparkthefiregrantwriting.com

Workshop Summary

WHY GRANTS?

Grants can help provide funds for expenses such as the equipment, apparatus, training and salaries necessary to protect and serve communities. By the end of this session, you will have resources and knowledge on where to find grants and how to be ready to apply for grants.

Grantwriting is a specialized form of writing. Today, we will touch on some common grantwriting pitfalls and you will learn where to find more information on how to write grants.

GRANTWRITING DOESN'T WORK IN A VACUUM

Grantwriting is a team effort. Your grantwriter should be someone who is able to:

- Gather information from all levels of your organization (board to constituent).
- Present the information in a way that is clear and compelling.
- Make sure your application meets all the requirements of the grantmaker.

BASELINE DATA

Consider what data you need to track now to be prepared to apply for grants. A baseline can describe the level at which an organization, a department, a process, or a function is operating at a given time. When examining operations, some set of data must be established as a means to create a baseline against which to compare or measure changes from one period to another.

Examples may include:

- Percentage of on-duty members equipped per compliance standards.
- Average age of equipment, apparatus, and vehicles
- Metrics around community risk reduction (decreased incidents, number of individuals trained)
- Code enforcement/ awareness (inspections, community outreach efforts)
- Fire/Arson investigation (determine cause, arrest/conviction) • Number of firefighters trained
- Percentage of volunteers in department and improved statistics on volunteerism (more overall, more of certain types, better skilled, more active)
- Successful interventions, reduced injuries/deaths
- Response time

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Continued ... PROSPECT RESEARCH & GRANT READINESS FOR PUBLIC**PROSPECT RESEARCH, IS IT A MATCH?**

- Geographic Limitations: Does the grantmaker provide grants in the geographic region to which you are headquartered or in which you provide services?
- Field of Interest: Does the grantmaker provide grants in your particular field such as public safety?
- Qualifications: Does your proposed project meet all the grantmaker's qualifications? These qualifications are inflexible so make sure there is nothing to disqualify your project.
- Mission Alignment: Does your organization and the grantmaker share a similar mission?
- Funding Patterns: Has the grantmaker given previously to projects that are similar to your proposed project? Is the grantmaker's average grant amount similar to the amount you plan to request?

GRANTMAKERS ARE PARTICULARLY LOOKING FOR ORGANIZATIONS OR DEPARTMENTS THAT:

- Are responsible for protecting local critical infrastructure.
- Support automatic and/or mutual aid agreements.
- Serve high-risk groups more likely to sustain fire-related injuries such as children and individuals with access and functional needs.
- Serve a geographic area with above-average fire risks.
- Are doing research that will yield results that can be readily applied to improve firefighter safety, health, and wellness.
- Have a high percentage of volunteers.

GRANTWRITING TIPS

- Read the instructions carefully. And then read them again.
- Call the grantmaker and ask questions.
- Request information from team members in bullet format.
- Appeal to head and heart with statistics as well as storytelling.
- Answer the question first, then add detail.
- Write with brevity; strike duplicate information.
- Use key words from the question and fully answer each question.
- Do not refer the reader to another section or question in the proposal.

Hard truths About and Possible Solutions to the Failure of Leadership and Training of Firefighters and the Subsequent Volunteer Crisis in the United States

By: *R. Neal Cook II, M.S., MBA-PM*

The current fire service as we know it is dying. It is dissolving from the inside out with the loss of volunteers, career departments having to expand coverage, and the politicizing of the emergency services. Tribalization is occurring at some departments and academies, leading to false confidence in superiority due to ego and the proverbial echo chamber which in turn will drive away many actually skilled and experienced firefighters. Do I have the answers to these problems? Of course not. I do have some ideas to help address some of the issues, but the number one thing that we as a service must do, is recognize the problem, take ownership of it, and then we can begin to attack the real issue facing us. See Figure 1 for the forecasted decline of volunteers per 1,000 population, noting that this is built with no additional assumptions beyond modeling with the current trend. The reality is that this trend will most likely accelerate when rural flight (urban migration) is taken into consideration.

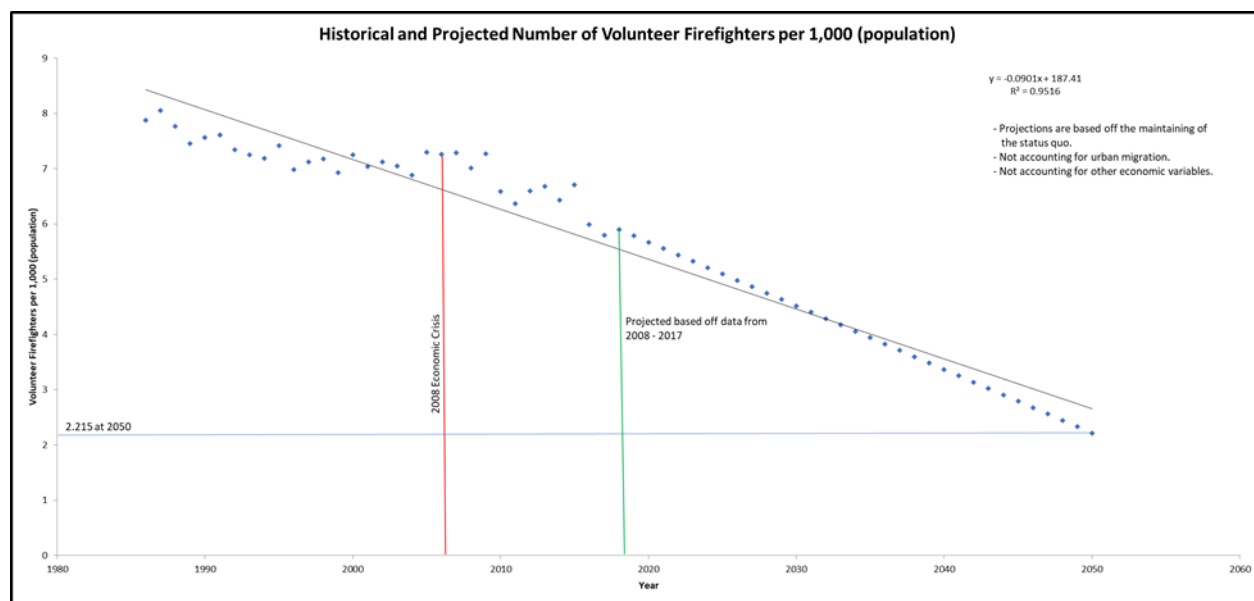


Figure 1: Historical and Projected number of volunteers built with data provided by the NFPA March 2019 Fire OSFD profile

With the aforementioned being said, let's begin to unpack the issues, and please note, that what I will discuss are not absolutes because there are great departments out there as I have worked with many a great department, and many a great instructor in my time; but rather, the trends that I have observed that are leading to the death of the service as we know it.

Problem one: It is a volunteer organization not built for volunteers anymore.

At any given time approximately 65% of all firefighters are volunteers with approximately 91% of all departments being all volunteer or combination departments. Considering these numbers, it would be thought that the academies and training programs that offer certification tracks would cater to these individuals. Unfortunately, this is not the case in many parts of the country. Traditionally, training programs are daytime events, with most programs requiring between 24 to 80 hours of training time, and using the IFSAC Hazmat Technician Certification path as an example, requires approximately 156 hours to complete; with departments that run EMS as well, requiring 150 hours and 1500 hours for EMT's and Paramedics respectively, not including the refresher hours for recertification cycles. See Figure 2 for approximate training times, noting that it does not factor in prerequisite training.

TABLE 2. National Standard Training Modules

TRAINING MODULE	AVERAGE LENGTH OF CLASS IN HOURS	APPROXIMATE TIME TO COMPLETE FOR VOLUNTEERS*
Firefighter		
• Firefighter I	100 hours	4 months
• Firefighter II	100 hours	4 months
• Instructor	45 hours	1 month
• Officer I	40-60 hours	1 month
• Officer II	40-60 hours	1 month
• Officer III	40 hours	1 month
• Officer IV	40 hours	1 month
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)		
• First Responder	48 hours	2.5 months
• EMT--Basic	136 hours	4-6 months
• EMT--Intermediate	125-300 hours	4-6 months
• EMT--Paramedic	350-1,500 hours	6 months-1 year
Hazardous Materials		
• Awareness	25 hours	2 weeks
• Operations	40 hours	1 month
• Technician	40-80 hours	1 month
Other Courses		
• Vehicle Operation	20 hours	2 weeks
• Pumps/Hydraulics	60 hours	2 months
• Aircraft Rescue	50 hours	1.5 months
• Vehicle Extrication	25-50 hours	2 weeks
• Silo Rescue	35 hours	1 month
• Farm Machinery Extrication	25 hours	2 weeks
• Water Rescue	16 hours	1 months

*When taken several nights per week and/or on weekends

Figure 2: National Standard Training Modules provided by the U.S. Fire Administration: Document FA-310 2007

With the current model, a new volunteer would have to spend significant vacation time or spend almost two years to be brought up to speed as a full fledged and credentialed firefighter (Assuming for Firefighter I, II and Hazmat Awareness and Operations). I myself used all the vacation time I had my first few years in attending classes and traveling to DHS/FEMA sponsored trainings to locations such as Mercury City, NV, the Center for Domestic Preparedness, New Mexico Tech, and the Joint Emergency Services Training Center in Baton Rouge.

Simply put, in the current economy, most individuals cannot afford to take the time necessary to fast track and a multiyear onboarding process is hard to comprehend with very limited reward for an individual and difficult for a training officer as at any given time there may be multiple individuals at various levels of progression needing different types of training.

There is a two-part possible solution to this. Taking a page from the information technology (I.T.) industry, make the majority if not all the classwork online. Progression tests can be proctored at a trainee’s respective department. The infrastructure for this is already in place with some classes being provided online by the NFA, CDP, FEMA, and so forth. Universities have been migrating to similar systems over the past few years (the Doctorate at CTU I am pursuing is 98% distance). I.T. uses this almost exclusively through sites such as Pluralsight, Udemy, Wintellectnow, and so forth.

The second part to this would be that for the hands-on coursework, have the classes scheduled during evenings and weekends with multiple offerings of times. In this format, a registered student can choose which times to take the coursework. However, this will most likely increase the load on the adjunct instructors, therefore building a deep instructor pool is paramount to success. Additionally, the online migration should reduce cost overhead and redirect funds to the additional face to face offerings and additional instructors/adjuncts.

Problem two: “It isn’t a job; it is a passion”

There are some leaders that feel that firefighting has to be a firefighter’s primary passion, with the mentality that “if it isn’t your passion, then show yourself out”. While passion for one’s job and dedication is good; to be blunt, this is toxic leadership in action. Thinking from the perspective of a new volunteer recruit who is going to try juggling being a volunteer with a day job, family, and possibly school; operating from that or a similar mentality, and/or opening with a remark like that just shut your new recruit down and you will lose many of them after the first meeting. Being an emergency responder is not the same as being in the military and should not, and can not be treated as such. New recruits, testing the waters, need to be shown what the job is about, what will be required of them to preform said job, and on board them just as they would be on boarded at any other job. Granted, this job is higher stakes than the average job, with more risk, but mitigating as much of that risk as possible while balancing protection of life and property come with training and with discipline increasing as the complexity of the training, tasks, and responsibilities increases.

“It isn’t a job, it is a passion” is true in many respects regarding the emergency services. I myself am passionate about the fire service and there isn’t much more satisfying than making a solid stop at what looked like a complete loss just minutes before, or making a good save. However, we must be careful in how we use this statement. It is often used as a copout by politicians and leadership to justify bad conditions, understaffing, and low pay for everything from teachers to EMS to Fire and Law Enforcement. Just because someone feels strongly about, and loves their job, doesn’t mean they can be treated in a lesser manner or subjected to lower pay. Simply put, it is a job, it just happens to be one that many people love.

This mentality appears oftentimes in quiet conflict between career and volunteer agencies. I have personally been offered career positions at some departments, but turned down for volunteer positions at other combination departments. The undertone being “you’re not dedicated enough to work here”. That is absolutely not the case; I am simply on a different career path.

The question becomes, how do we get around this disconnect? It has to fall on the leadership of the departments in their respective regions. It is paramount for the leadership of departments that have mutual aid agreements to communicate and train together. In districts where there is a career or combination department that often works with volunteer departments, allowing volunteers from sister districts to volunteer a shift at an active fire house on occasion will help build rapport and cooperation between agencies and also give volunteers experience, especially when said volunteers are in a low call volume district. This will not only build confidence in the volunteers taking part, but also build the career department’s confidence in the ability of the volunteers as well as develop better unit cohesion.

Problem three: Politicization of emergency responders and the mental separation between emergency responders and citizens.

The IAFF recently made an announcement of its support for a candidate for the 2020 presidential run. As a public service this is problematic on two fronts. One, due to the current polarization of the political parties and the waning of the moderates, siding with any candidate will alienate part of the IAFF’s base. Secondly, once an organization opens itself up to politics, it is open to being played by politics. A current example is what is happening in Houston with the firefighter layoffs and demotions associated with Prop B.

It is no secret that the days of one income families and good manufacturing jobs are long behind us and in reality, will never return. Automation and narrow artificial intelligence have seen to that. The income base of the baby boomer generation has effectively been spent and due to the inverse demographic profile of the U.S. along the with majority of the world, funds and taxes are shrinking. Ergo, municipal coffers are slowly drying up with some having to pull back on staffing and pensions. See Figure 3 for a visual representation of global manufacturing job decline.

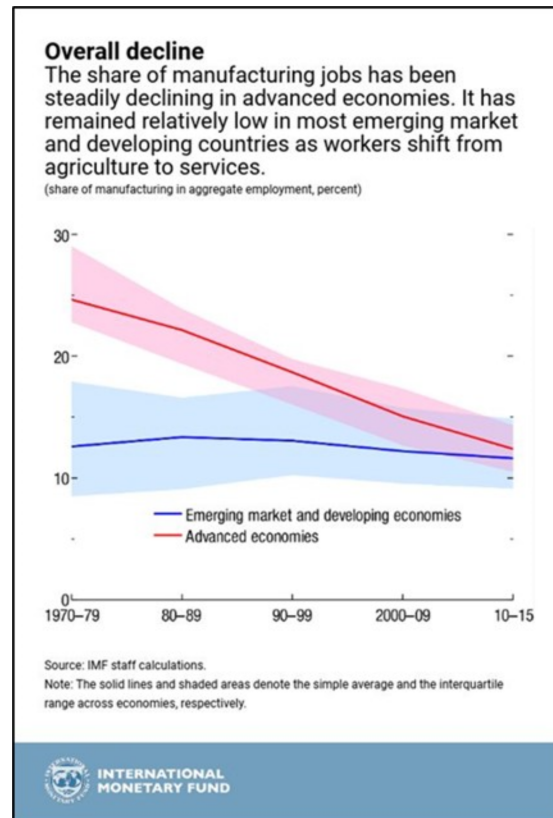


Figure 3: Global manufacturing job decline provided by the International Monetary Fund

With this knowledge, it is tantamount that the fire service, but in reality, all emergency services, maintain a neutral position politically or else, be used as political fodder as seen fit by fiscally troubled districts. What needs to be done, is the development of financial leadership in the emergency response leadership teams, that knows how to interact and work with the districts they serve to not just be able to budget to but better justify the budget being requested. With a simple example being; “What is the net present value (NPV) of maintaining the status quo verses that of spending capital for better equipment/staffing and getting a better ISO rating thus lowering insurance rates considering that the money saved by lower rates will effectively act as a perpetuity assuming that the rating is maintained?”. That example does not even account for the intangible benefits, which would be many.

In regards to the mental separation between emergency responders and the citizens they serve; I have found is typically more an issue in the military and law enforcement communities but have also started seeing it drift into EMS and the Fire Service. It is good to take pride in what you do, and what you do to protect your fellow citizens, however, the development of the “Sheepdog” and “thin _____ line” identification is dangerous in the sense that it subconsciously draws a line between the “sheepdog” and the “sheep”. When looking at social identity theory, while this can be good for morale, it can slowly transition to a view of seeing those we serve as being lesser individuals than ourselves. It is vital that we check ourselves on this regularly, otherwise, while it may not consciously translate it can easily be read by tone and body language.

Problem four: Smaller pools due to urban migration.

This issue has been a readily growing problem over the past few years. The urbanization of society (roughly 80% since the 2010 census) among other things, has put a strain on recruiting efforts. The decline can be seen in the latest NFPA U.S. Fire Department Profile found here: (<https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/Emergency-Responders/US-fire-department-profile>).

While there are multiple reasons for this decline, urban migration is the rate that we as a service are least able to impact. Therefore, recruiting efforts need to be increased to identify and court promising individuals. See Figure 4 for Non-Metro population loss.

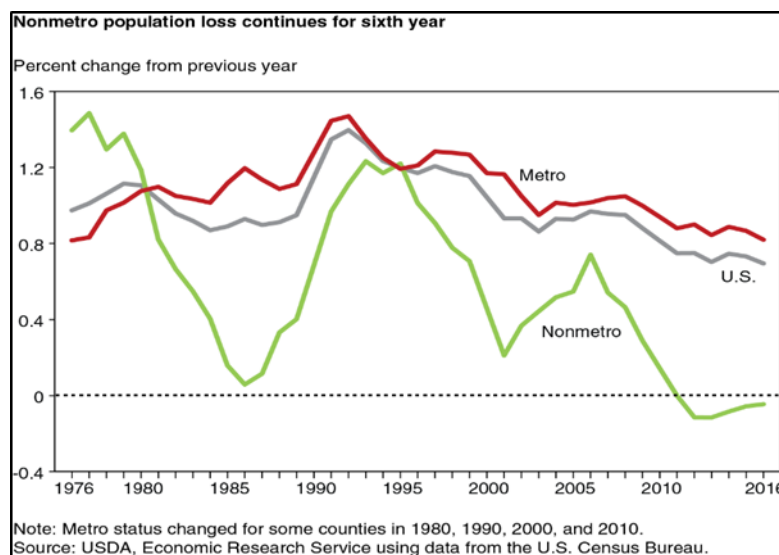


Figure 4: Rural population loss, data provided by the USDA and U.S. Census Bureau

One way to do this is to implement and expand existing junior firefighter programs and building a working relationship with schools. This provides the respective department, the opportunity to increase awareness while making recruiting efforts to youth that may one day join the department once the mandated minimum age is reached. Secondly, a junior firefighter transitioning to a regular firefighter will require less training and also is more likely to stay with the department than a new recruit with no prior service or experience. While this may require more work on the front end, the benefits to the department, the youth, and the community in general may payoff on the backend as the first juniors are graduating into full firefighters.

Closing thoughts:

The trouble facing the fire service is effectively a perfect storm of shrinking funds, urbanization, department and knowledge siloing (which arguably is compounded by urbanization), the echo chamber effect from said siloing, and the tribalizing effect thereof, are all major factors contributing to the problem. In regards to the latter issues, the enemy we face is human nature itself with the afore mentioned social identity/identity theory (which I encourage leadership to read up on). The question is how to address these issues.

The fire service needs to focus on leadership development, not just in regards to being competent at the station and on the fire ground, but competent in the human resources, finance, and political arenas as well. All agencies effectively live and die by their constituency and the representatives of said constituency. It is important to be able to know how to communicate in terms that are understood and bring our stakeholders into the conversation.

One of the greatest mistakes we humans make is living under the assumption that other people think like we do, and simply put, that is not the case. Different people have different priorities and value sets. The goal is to bring these different people who all think differently to the same conclusion regarding the fire service and fire protection. As a service we have a commitment to our communities to serve and protect; however, what is often over looked is that our communities have a commitment as well, and that is to enable us to be able to safely and adequately protect them which comes in the form of resources and funding.

Lastly, when dealing with new recruits and/or rookies; it is on leadership to make sure they are performing adequately. Yes, there are some people who are not made for this line of work and will not make the cut; but oftentimes, when a new member enters the department (especially if he or she is one that has worked at previous departments) that recruit can receive a less than warm reception. If the new person is struggling and has not been thoroughly coached and given the opportunity to improve, it is not on the new person. It is on YOU as a leader. To quote Jocko Willink (which I encourage everyone to read his books as he is a former SEAL Task Unit Commander and now CEO of Echelon Front, an executive leadership consulting firm) "There are no bad teams; only bad leaders.". We as a group, whether in leadership, or just the senior person on the ground, it is on us to interact with our communities, to foster our new recruits, and to develop working relationships with the municipal and district officials that we operate under.

For more information about current issues, as well as topics including the mechanization and automation of emergency services, reading lists, and so forth, please visit <https://valkyrjaconsulting.com/news-blog>



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Past President's Message

I would first like to thank the members of ISFCA for allowing me to serve as your President for the past 4 years. I can say it has been an eye opening and educational process in the diversity of the fire districts within the State of Idaho. When I speak of diversity, I'm not only referring to the wide range of people we work with, the uniqueness and similarity, but also the different challenges faced daily as we serve our respected communities. In this process, we have seen our rural area's experience a drop in available qualified volunteers, a blending of combination departments and the growth of our larger department's full time firefighters. We all know that the year after year influx of new residents to Idaho are causing the demands to generally outpacing the ability to deliver emergency services within the current available taxes allowed. What we use to know as a fire department is now become a combination of Fire and EMS providers of many districts. With this enhanced training, in not only fire, but also EMT related training must occur. Idaho is still averaging about a 70% volunteer to a 30% career ratio. We have been successful the last few years of working with the Idaho Fire Chiefs and the PFFI (Local Unions) on most issues. Legislation is and should be one of the main focuses within ISFCA. As we work with legislators and the special interest groups, we need to insure quality legislation is brought forward and passed for all fire districts with the Elected Fire Commissioner being involved up-front rather that after the fact. Over the next year and afterward, ISFCA will continue to fulfill our mission statement and remain active on our member's behalf.

Leadership is dynamic and progressive within ISFCA. I look forward to the growth and leadership our new President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer, alongside our Executive Director, in the continuation of forward progression on behalf of membership. As I mentioned during our conference in November 2019, ISFCA's Executive Director, Krystal Hinkle, is an unquestionable asset to ISFCA's growth in meeting the members needs and that of your leadership of Regional Directors and the executive team. She has also proven to be a respected voice on behalf of ISFCA in legislation and with our sponsors and vendors.

In closing, again, thank you for allowing me to serve on your behalf and I am looking forward to what 2020 brings.

Sincerely,

David "Rudy" Rudebaugh
Past president 2016-2019

Regional Director Awards

Tim Crawford - Kuna Rural Fire District

Commissioner Crawford has been a vital part of the Budget and Negotiation Committees. He has helped in the process of securing impact fees for new construction. This was instrumental for determining the districts future needs. He is an active member in many civic groups and supports many community events through his business. Tim is a dedicated board member that sets the bar high for all members to follow.

- Nominated by Bud Beatty, Chairman of the Kuna Rural Fire District

Thank you for going ABOVE & BEYOND your Elected Duties and committing to the ISFCA mission.

“To inform, educate, represent, lead and serve the fire districts of Idaho in the preservation and protection of life and property.”



SERVICE AWARDS

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

5 Years

Nick Kingery - Parma Rural Fire Prot. District

10 Years

David “Rudy” Rudebaugh - Timberlake Fire Prot. District

15 Years

Bob Bulkley - Castleford Rural Fire Protection District

20 Years

Steve Frazee - Lemhi County Fire Prot. District



2020 ISFCA LEADERSHIP



Back: Tris Moore, David “Rudy” Rudebaugh, Steve Frazee, Charles “Hoey” Graham, Mike Taylor, Jack Hellbusch, Frank Wolfkiel, Wayne Cavender, Paul Wagner, Doug Martin, Mike McCall and Bud Beatty
 Front: Tim Vargas and Todd Belnap



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.