

ASSOCIATION UPDATE



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The True Value in Attending Conferences

Throughout the year and in recent weeks, it has been a pleasure representing the IAFFPD at meetings, conferences, and special events. The time spent out of the office, on the road, and visiting with people in the fire service community not only allows great conversations and a chance to hear fun firehouse stories but also the opportunity to learn from people serving at all levels of leadership, who are working hard to make a difference a pave the way for a better future.

Listening and applying something I heard to our work as an association for the members is the intent, which ultimately leads to a sound educational program or other resources, such as this publication, *The Fire Call*. As the primary means of communication with our members, we aim to publish content that is interesting, relevant, and, most important, that brings value to your membership with the Association. If you have a topic you would like to see us write about, please reach out to me directly.

This issue includes timely content, starting with the **Illinois CRR Conference** in Chicago. Since the original focus group in the fall of 2017, IAFFPD has delivered its message here in *The Fire Call*, with conference presentations, and on our social media platforms regularly. The 2023 CRR conference highlights are on the facing page. This recap does not show the actual quality of the educational program nor the exceptional speakers

who have embraced the CRR concept and started a conversation with their department. A huge thank you to Marvin Hill for being involved with this top-notch working group responsible for this great conference!

Understanding CRR is not to create a burden for anyone, but rather focus on areas that run down fire department resources is key. For those who are fiscally responsible, preparing the budget and supporting those who are responding to the needs of your local community, there are ways to implement change without blowing the budget or adding personnel. While I could use a few more pages to share the positive impact and numerous ideas I have learned by attending and playing a small role in the planning, the point for our members is to consider a visit to their website (illinoiscrr.com) to learn more, find free resources and practical methods for starting that conversation.

The Camp I Am Me: **Fire Prevention Week Annual Luncheon** was held in October with 350+ fire personnel and all statewide fire service agencies in attendance. It is an excellent place to support their work and a great platform for networking. Their keynote speaker was from NFPA and shared a message about program evaluations. While evaluations differ between the Association and a fire district, there is value in understanding what is working and what is not and using the feedback to improve.

The most recent event was the **IFCA Symposium**, which replaced their traditional conference held in October before the combined conference partnership with IAFFPD this year. The Symposium invited the opportunity to interact with many fire chiefs and leaders of their organization and to acknowledge a few special recognitions. Congratulations again to John Buckley for assuming a new role as Executive Director and to Chief Tom Styczynski for his role as President. We are grateful for the partnerships developed under the previous leadership and look forward to continued work in the year ahead.

While there are plenty of valuable reasons to belong to an association, one of the most appreciated benefits I hear about is the community the organization brings together. Listening and learning from one another has a unique value that can bring new insight into challenging situations when utilized at its fullest potential. Please consider attending one of the upcoming **IAFFPD Trustee Training Sessions** to allow you the same opportunities I mentioned. Or, invite IAFFPD to attend one of your upcoming training events or meetings. The IAFFPD Board and Committees are always aiming to better serve the needs its members and appreciates your ongoing support.

Enjoy the season upon us and thanks for what you do in your community. ■