

IFFA Voice

Merry
Christmas
and
Happy
New Year!

Founded 1917 By Fire Fighters For Fire Fighters

www.indfa.com

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2018 IFA OFFICERS





Every Year the
Evansville Fire Department
puts on a dedication ceremony for
those that have given it all to the job
and community.

These pictures are from this years
service.

Columbus Fire Department

The Columbus Fire Department plans to build a training facility on the Columbus AirPark campus that will be used for simulation exercises and other functions.

The proposed facility, which would be located near Verhulst Drive, would replace an aging garage that currently exists on the site, Fire Chief Mike Compton said. Currently, the fire department trains in the basement of Fire Station No. 2 on Arnold Street. "It's not really an ideal situation," he said. The new building, which will include classroom space, is estimated to cost more than \$500,000 and will be used as a regional training facility for other entities to also utilize, Compton said. "We're looking to expand and have more opportunities for firefighters," Compton said. "We want to have something we can use year-round." Funding for construction will come out of the fire department's capital fund.

Compton said he anticipates the building will be open by January 2019 with a groundbreaking expected to take place next month. A site plan and design for the building are being developed. The Columbus Board of Works on Tuesday approved a contract not to exceed \$15,000 with consulting firm HST Solutions LLC to oversee construction-related work of the facility.

Compton also said he hopes the training center can be self-sustaining through fees the city would charge to other departments that use it. Columbus City Council members on Tuesday gave their initial approval in a 6-1 vote to create a fund that would be used to accumulate any revenue generated from the training facility.

Councilman Frank Jerome said he was opposed to the ordinance, saying he wanted the project to look nice rather than having a pole barn-type of building. "I want a nice facility and have it done well," Jerome said.

The non-reverting fund would collect revenue based on classroom rentals and fees that are collected, allowing the fire department to defray the costs of operation and upkeep of the facility, according to the city.

Submitted by Roger Johnson

FIVE FIRE DEPARTMENT SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS

There are conditions outside the department or organization that can adversely impact the ability of a department to fulfill its mission and grow. Economic downturns, changes of political leadership and local agendas are just a few.

However, many of the deficiencies fire and EMS departments experience are self-inflicted.

There are five key organizational wounds fire departments often inflict upon themselves. There are also steps fire chiefs can take to prevent this self-harm.

1. Failure to plan

Planning should come from the top. However, it should be formulated by and endorsed by the organization's frontline members.

Vibrate, growing governmental organizations constantly seek new opportunities, then put detailed and sound plans into place to leverage the opportunities that meet three criteria.

- Be aligned with future demand for products or services.
- Be something the organization can do well.
- Be in line with current political direction.

A recent U.S. workforce poll asked, "What should you expect from your leaders in 2015?" After respect and being valued, they want leaders to have a vision of where the organization is headed and what role they will play in taking it there.

Planning is not separate from budgeting. It is in fact applying numbers to vision and goal development. Accordingly, planning becomes a vital part of organizational management and must include both short-term and long-term funding streams.

If we begin from the premise that planning is linked directly to budgeting, what should follow is the process of measuring return on investment.

Planning demands we answer two questions:

- What conditions (technology, demographics, development or political landscape) will change in the near future?
- How will these changes positively or negatively impact the department?

When drafting responses to the forecasted shifts include internal leadership, financial expertise, subject-matter experts, line force (union, association leadership) special interest groups and political leadership or staff. Identify what will change and if the new initiative is the right fit for the department.

Finally, measurable outcomes aligned with the department's vision and goals is critical to ensure the success of the initiative and to determine if the initiative is sustainable.

2. Whack-a-mole management

This is when a problem occurs, we deal with it as a one-time event and move on. For example, two firefighters are burned at a residential fire. The injuries are managed, the firefighters return to work and nothing more is done.

No one contemplates that there may be a training issue that is prevalent throughout the operations division. There may be personal protective equipment that fails to meet the specifications called for in the contract. Other contributing factors may be in play and need serious review.

Many departments create a planning and research branch or division. Their purpose is to constantly scan the internal and external environment. For this to work, four conditions must be met.

- It is a part of all critical decision making in regard to policy and procedure development.
- It receives data from all segments of the department.
- When bad things happen, it is included in the reporting and review to determine if current policies and procedures are in place to manage, mitigate or prevent a reoccurrence.
- It is changed with constantly monitoring service quality.

The point is that individual accidents, personnel injuries, violation of ethics, mistakes or unique incident management failure may be a sign of a more intrinsic problem throughout the department or organization.

That is not to say each occurrence must be studied over weeks and months. The important step that must be taken is to ensure someone is watching and looking for trends in erosion of performance and quality of service

3. We don't listen

Fire and rescue organizations are floating out there in a sea of change. These organizations are also in a high-risk and legally vulnerable position primarily due to the nature of their business.

Accordingly, paying close attention to and constant monitoring of the environment surrounding the organization is vital. People to listen to include the political leadership, civilians (especially those who have political influence), firefighters, mid-level command staff and front-line supervisors.

Winston Churchill said, "Listen to everyone, for even fools are correct occasionally." This means, of course, we will have to hear and sift through some remarkably bad opinions and advice.

Beneficial listening occurs when the chief is skilled in information triage. Not long ago, getting communications from the outside and from the line force was a challenge. Today the challenge is sorting through the immense amount of communications to draw the critical information the chief needs to manage and move the organization.

Shutting diversity out of policy development leads to group think and down a dangerous path toward gaps in rational for policy decisions. Finally, the organization is afloat in a sea of change. If we do not remain in tune with the outside environment we will fail.

4. Allowing mediocrity to prevail

Colin Powell said about success, "Any time you tolerate mediocrity in others, it increases your mediocrity." John Grubbs, owner of GCI consulting group, said, "Leaders understand that risk equals return. Mediocrity is following a policy blindly. Excellence is when we understanding exactly how to apply that policy to a particular situation."

I had the privilege of serving in a top performing organization for a long time (34 years), coming up through the ranks to become fire chief. I have been asked on many occasions, what made our organization great?

After contemplating and analyzing the organization and the people responsible for standing it up, I came to the following conclusion. The department was first organized by trainers and educators.

People who train work really hard at analyzing demands placed on individuals and organizations, then develop mechanisms to ensure the members of organization obtain and master the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully fulfill their mission. Those original few who stood up the organization had to constantly look forward.

Managing change isn't easy; however, if it is managed well, it becomes an inherent character of an organization and is expected by all the troops. The question then boils up from the troops 'why are we not using this new thinking or technology?' rather than 'why are we using this new thinking or technology?'

Holding to high standards of behavior and performance leads to a culture that provides a safe, healthy, productive and non-hostile workplace environment.

5. Failure to provide the next generation of quality leaders and firefighters

Succession planning and programs prepare the organization for the future and insure against a loss of consistency in top-quality performance. Succession planning facilitates the ability to recruit, hire and promote top-quality people to fill critical positions.

It also must include a strong commitment to two critically important programs: a commitment to training at four levels and a mentor program to attract the best candidates.

The first training level is maintaining fundamental skills and knowledge at the front line level. The second is preparing those who aspire to hold a supervisory level position. The third is preparing this who desire to move on to senior management positions. The last is maintaining compliance with federal, state and local regulations and laws.

Mentor programs must be formal, closely managed and performance measured. Mentor programs can increase morale, motivation and productivity. It can also reduce turnover and absenteeism, as well as talent within the organization.

There are other associated benefits to mentoring including reduction or elimination of outside recruitment costs for senior manager position since most of the senior positions will be filled from within.

Included in the PricewaterhouseCoopers, 12th Annual Global CEO Survey, 2009 more than 1,000 CEOs were asked, "How important are the following sources of competitive advantage in sustaining your growth over the long term?"

The number-one response — chosen by 97 percent — was "access to, and retention of, key talent."

GARY — Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson is no longer seeking to create public safety positions in which a person would perform both firefighting and police duties. Freeman-Wilson first proposed the idea in 2015 and along with other city officials, including Samuel Abegg, who was then president of Gary Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 61, traveled to visit Kalamazoo, Michigan, to learn about its public safety department. The city, with a comparable population of Gary, has a fully integrated police, fire and emergency medical services department. Last year, the city went so far as to put money aside for funding 30 public safety positions in the current year's budget. Earlier this month, however, Freeman-Wilson said her administration is no longer looking to create such positions after holding a number of joint sessions with police and fire officials.

She said one of the driving forces behind creating the public safety positions was to increase wages.

"Once we realized that we could provide the raises without necessarily making those combinations then we deferred to the men and women of the Fire and Police departments and opted away for that," Freeman-Wilson said. The city over the past three years gradually increased the salaries for police officers and firefighters by a total of \$10,000.

Freeman-Wilson added that police officers and firefighters both are in a lot of demand in the area. Freeman-Wilson had always emphasized that no one was going to be forced into the public safety roles. Any current police officer or firefighter would have had to volunteer if they wanted to assume those jobs.

When she first proposed the idea of public safety officers, Freeman-Wilson said creating the positions also had the potential to increase police presence on the city streets. She said this month, however, that officials believe they can do that without creating the new positions. The city, Freeman-Wilson said, just needs to get their numbers up in each department.

"We've got to get our numbers up at least to 200 (each)," she said. "And that really is my goal for early 2018 to get our numbers up to 200."

Terry Peck, the current head of the Gary FOP, said the Police Department currently has about 170 active members. He said the Police Department needs at least 200 officers and probably should have closer to 220 to 230. Right now, he said, the lack of manpower is preventing the department from being proactive when it comes to crime.

Peck said the public safety officer idea could have probably worked if it was done similarly to those in communities like Kalamazoo, but indicated what had been talked about in Gary was, in his opinion, not well planned out.

Greetings, Men & Women of the IFA

The 2017 Terre Haute Fireman of the Year was awarded to Charles Karr by the Kiwanis Club. Charlie and others of his team are heavily involved in the Children's Toy Drive. Each year fund raisers are held to purchase toys for the needy children of the area, who otherwise would go without. Thank you Charlie and all of his helpers for all they do for this worthy cause.

Both Judy and myself were invited to the Terre Haute Fire Department Retirement Party held on the 5th of November. Judy was a bit under the weather so I attended alone. This years retirees were Captain James W Utz and civilian Kim Monroe. Wishing you both a long and a happy and healthy retirement.

This year at the IERC Joseph Kruzan was of Schererville was elected Vice President of the Northwest Region. Joe wears many hats and is also the biggest boy scout I know and one of the kindest gentlemen you will ever meet.

Hector Zaragoza of Lafayette was elected Vice President of West Central Region at the IERC Convention. The IFA and its board members are looking forward to working with these fine men.

With the coming Winter Holidays I wish all of you a Happy Thanksgiving and continue to pray for our country. A Merry Christmas as we all need to remember what the true meaning is and a very Happy New Year hoping and praying the 2018 will bring good health and Happiness to all.

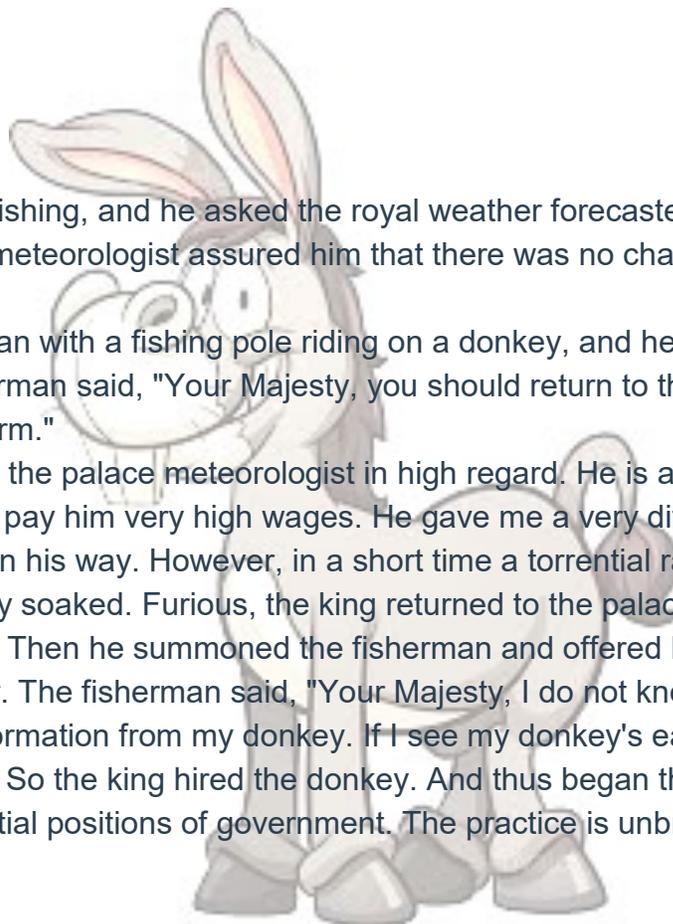
Sincerely Warren "Butch" Kracy

District Director

The king wanted to go fishing, and he asked the royal weather forecaster the forecast for the next few hours. The palace meteorologist assured him that there was no chance of rain. So the king and the queen went fishing.

On the way he met a man with a fishing pole riding on a donkey, and he asked the man if the fish were biting. The fisherman said, "Your Majesty, you should return to the palace! In just a short time I expect a huge rain storm."

The king replied, "I hold the palace meteorologist in high regard. He is an educated and experienced professional. Besides, I pay him very high wages. He gave me a very different forecast. I trust him." So the king continued on his way. However, in a short time a torrential rain fell from the sky. The king and queen were totally soaked. Furious, the king returned to the palace and gave the order to fire the meteorologist. Then he summoned the fisherman and offered him the prestigious position of royal forecaster. The fisherman said, "Your Majesty, I do not know anything about forecasting. I obtain my information from my donkey. If I see my donkey's ears drooping, it means with certainty that it will rain. So the king hired the donkey. And thus began the practice of hiring dumb asses to work in influential positions of government. The practice is unbroken to this date.



JEFFERSONVILLE — U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth met with local fire service members Wednesday to discuss a bill aimed at tackling increased cancer rates among firefighters. The Firefighter Cancer Registry Act, co-sponsored by Indiana's 9th Congressional District representative, would provide the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with the funding and capability to collect and analyze data related to cancer incidents within the profession. It would create a national, voluntary registry for firefighters who have been diagnosed with cancer. A 2010 study by the CDC of almost 30,000 career firefighters across the country discovered they had a 9 percent higher rate of cancer diagnoses and 14 percent higher rate of cancer-related deaths compared to the general population.

"We need to make sure that we do everything we can to support them, increase awareness about this and do research into what we can do to prevent a spike in cancer for those who are fighting fires," Hollingsworth, R-Indiana, said Wednesday at Jeffersonville Fire Station No. 2.

The Congressman hosted a roundtable discussion to hear concerns about this issue and others with representatives of the Jeffersonville, New Albany and Clarksville fire departments as well as state and local firefighters' associations. Other topics included maintaining federal grants for agencies and addressing mental health and stress among firefighters.

"I hope this will be the beginning of a dialogue ... about how we can continue to support at every single level and every single way those that put themselves in harm's way for the benefit of the rest of us," Hollingsworth said.

CDC data on cancer rates among firefighters tells the story of what many have witnessed for years. To Thomas Hanify, president of the Professional Fire Fighters Union of Indiana, it's personal.

"I can tell you dozens of my coworkers that died early deaths right after retirement," Hanify said. Firefighters are not only more likely to be diagnosed with certain kinds of cancer, but also their chances of getting lung cancer and dying from leukemia directly increase as exposure to fire increases over time, the study found.

Twice as many firefighters in the study as the general population were diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma, a very rare cancer caused by exposure to asbestos.

"We're not fighting fires in wood and paper any longer. It's all plastic ... as it burns, [it releases] carcinogens," said Joe Hurt, president of the Jeffersonville Firefighters' International Association of Fire Fighters Local 558. "Everything that comes off these fires is a carcinogen. It's getting in our skin, it's getting in our clothes, it's getting in our gear, coming back into our firehouses."

Decades ago, firefighters weren't taking necessary precautions against exposure to those carcinogens, Hanify said. Service members would wear their gear into their bunk rooms and store it there, which Hanify called a "death wish."

"Finally, we're recognizing this is an occupational hazard for firefight

"Finally, we're recognizing this is an occupational hazard for firefighters and for years ... we're too foolish, too ignorant, too macho to say, 'Hey, let's take care of this, and let's do it right,'" Hanify said.

The Jeffersonville Fire Department has taken steps to reduce risks over the years, Chief Eric Hedrick said. Firefighters no longer store their gear in places of exposure like bunks and kitchens. The department is working to buy a second set of gear for service members so there is one available while the other is being sanitized.

"We're doing small things to try to eliminate the risk," Hedrick said. He believes the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act could "move the needle" to achieving bigger solutions.

The bill recently passed out of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and now awaits approval from the full House of Representatives.

POLITICALLY CORRECT DEFINITION

A term used for whiney overly sensitive **pansies** who need everything sugar coated for them

To Officers and Members of the IFA

The IERC in Indianapolis was a great success as usual, a lot was accomplished. My congratulations to Jerry Reynolds who was sworn in as a Director, to Joseph Kruzan who was sworn in as Vice President / Northwest Region and Hector Zaragoza sworn in as Vice President / West Central Region. We are looking forward to working with them in their new capacities.

I have been in Florida since October on personal business and a little bit of a vacation. While in Florida I visited with Vince Rork and Dave Cook, both members of the IFA. Vince is a retired Asst Chief from the Gary Fire Department and also a Chief in a small suburb of Bradenton Florida. He recently fell and injured his pelvis and now in recover and recuperating at a rehab center in Bradenton. Dave Cook also is a retired Asst Chief from the Gary Fire Department had surgery and is recuperating nicely.

At this time I would like to wish all of the Officers and Members of The IFA a prosperous and healthy New Year.

VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

Thank You
Jay Massa
Director



THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS SAFETY!



PRO TIP Turn off the electricity to the supply outlet before working on outdoor wiring.

1 Clean your chimney. Dirty chimneys can cause chimney fires.

2 Make sure your outdoor lights are meant for outdoor use. Follow labeling for number of light sets which can be connected end-to-end. Discard any string of lights with frayed cords, cracked lamp holders or loose connections.

3 Use safe ladder practices when hanging lights.

4 Be careful when getting decorations out of a low attic. Watch for exposed nails, wires, low-hanging rafters or cross-beams. In addition, openings between truss chords can present a fall hazard.

Turn off all indoor and outdoor lights before you go to bed.

Place candles on steady, non-flammable surfaces and away from curtains and other flammable items. Keep them out of reach of children and pets. Blow candles out when you leave the room.

6

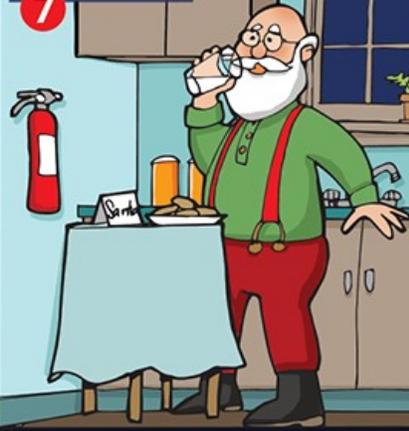
5



PRO TIP Install working smoke alarms on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area.

Always have a working fire extinguisher in the house and keep it easily accessible.

7



With so much holiday cheer, don't get distracted and leave cooking food unattended.

8



PRO TIP Before setting up the tree inside, trim two inches off the stem diagonally so it can absorb water. Add water each day to ensure the tree is well watered.

Keep trees away from heat sources like radiators and fireplaces.

9



Do not overload electrical circuits or extension cords.

10

Always turn Christmas lights out before leaving home or going to sleep.

11



PRO TIP
Don't shoot your eye out!

PRO TIP Purchase lights that have a label from a recognized testing laboratory, and follow instructions on cord labels regarding connecting lights strings and extension cords.

SANTA'S TIP

Don't drink and drive. Santa would call a cab!



Keep sidewalks & steps shoveled and de-iced to prevent slips and falls.

12

According to the NFPA, U.S. fire departments respond to an average of 230 home fires that start with Christmas trees each year. Electrical failures or malfunctions are a factor in 1/3 of all Christmas tree fires. A little safety can go a long way for keeping the HAPPY in your HOLIDAYS!

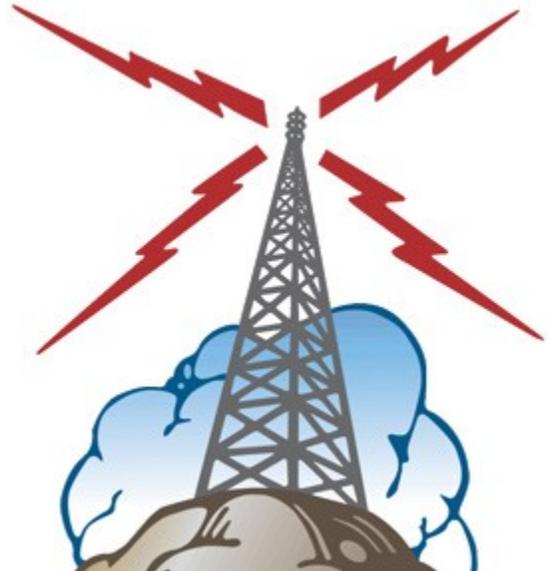
"The most important responsibility of our organization is to protect the health and safety of our members and the citizens they serve," "Assuring an effective interoperable communications network is a critical component to fulfilling our mission."

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) also put out a call to action for firefighters to learn about FirstNet and how the process is currently playing out in their states.

"The IAFC believes that FirstNet, by providing dedicated, interoperable, mission-critical data communications, will enhance emergency response operations throughout the fire and emergency service for years to come," the IAFC said in an official statement.

States are given 90 days to review their specific FirstNet plan and can opt-in at little to no cost, but if

they choose to opt-out, they will be responsible for building and maintaining a reliable wireless network for the next 25 years. And those networks will require a measure of compatibility with FirstNet.



Imagining an average day of cell phone use by customers and businesses under contract with a particular carrier provides a very large picture, but when you add in the overload of a disaster or emergency, it's easy to understand how a wireless network can become bogged down by all that communication. The issue for first responders in this scenario is that they are, for all intents and purposes, simply another user on that overloaded network.

There are several documented cases where data access was not available to first responders," Worrell wrote. "For example, in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, the large concentration of people all trying to communicate simultaneously caused congestion in the commercial systems."

In the wake of the communications problems first responders experienced during the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the 9/11 Commission recommended the state-by-state implementation of interoperable communications for all U.S. first responders and their agencies. Such a network could increase response times by offering first responders more information in real time, thereby potentially saving more lives.

Arizona and Kansas recently opted in on FirstNet, bringing the number of states joining to 14, along with the US Virgin Islands. The other states opting in are Arkansas, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

So how will FirstNet benefit the fire service and firefighters in particular? Firefighters using the network will be able to easily share photo and video data across agencies, track assets and personnel, and utilize mapping applications that can provide lookout positions, escape routes, safety zones and water sources.

And that's just scratching the surface. Beyond the tactical and operational advantages, FirstNet provides administrative services such as record keeping and medical information, among many other applications.

You can learn more about FirstNet and see where your state currently stands at firstnet.gov.

A dedicated wireless communications network for first responders answering the call on a large-scale incident is something most citizens might assume is already in place across the country.

The unfortunate truth is that they would be wrong, but efforts are ongoing to present all 50 states with plans and options surrounding The First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), which was designed to help public safety agencies coordinate their efforts amid emergencies and major events such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods or terror attacks, to name just a few scenarios.

FirstNet is an independent authority established by Congress comprised of officials from the public safety, government, technology, finance and wireless sectors. In partnership with AT&T, the aim is to design and implement tools for fire, police, EMS and other emergency services to share data during significant events. The ultimate goal is to implement the first high-speed public safety broadband network in all 50 states, the five U.S. territories and the District of Columbia. Both cities and rural communities stand to benefit from the superior level of data communication.

"FirstNet's job is to establish a network that offers incredible value to users," Mike Worrell, FirstNet Senior Fire Services Advisor, wrote in a 2016 exclusive for Firehouse. "If we provide a compelling network that does what it should, we believe public safety users will adopt the FirstNet network and come to rely upon the network for their mission critical needs."

"It's our belief and what we're encouraging the governors to do is to try and get the best deal that the possibly can," Kevin O'Connor, the IAFF's Assistant to the General President for Governmental Affairs and Public Policy, told Firehouse.com in a recent interview. "However that's done, whether it's through competitive negotiations or through a (request for proposal)."

One of O'Connor's chief concerns is that a good portion of firefighters and their leadership are unaware of what FirstNet does, and more importantly what it does not do. Getting the facts right will only help, he says.

From Concept to Reality

Governor Holcomb's October 11th announcement that Indiana would be the 25th state to join the FirstNet national public safety broadband network signaled a huge transition for public safety professionals in Indiana. We are now moving from concept to reality. In a few short months – if not days – Indiana's first responders will have access to capabilities currently available through FirstNet, as well as the new world that will be created by the first public safety-driven communications platform.

It's difficult to comprehend the significant, positive impact that this network will have on public safety communications in the state and across the entire country. We look forward to partnering with each of you as we usher in a new era of efficient, cost-effective public safety communications.

House Approves Firefighter Cancer Registry Act

(September 13, 2017) – On Tuesday, September 12th, the House approved by voice vote [H.R. 931, the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act](#). The bipartisan legislation, introduced by Congressman Chris Collins (NY-27) and Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr. (NJ-9), creates a specialized national registry to provide researchers and epidemiologists with the tools and resources they need to improve research collection activities related to the monitoring of cancer incidence among firefighters.

Studies have indicated a strong link between firefighting and an increased risk of several major cancers, including colon, lung, melanoma, mesothelioma, non-melanoma skin cancer, stomach, multiple myeloma, and brain cancer. The heightened risk of cancer among firefighters has been attributed to their frequent exposure to a range of harmful toxins.

Unfortunately, studies examining cancer risks among firefighters have been limited by the availability of important data and relatively small sample sizes that have an underrepresentation of women, minorities, and volunteer firefighters. As a result, public health researchers have been unable to fully examine and understand the broader epidemiological cancer trends among firefighters. A specialized national cancer registry would expand access to vital epidemiological data and improve research outcomes.

The bill will now be sent to the Senate for consideration.



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For years, firefighters have shed their masks and other gear after flames were knocked down, not knowing they were breathing carcinogens and exposing their skin to chemicals that could lead to cancer. Today's firefighters are learning more about that risk

It's a generational effect. We're behind the eight ball from lack of education," was stated during a forum Wednesday about the occupational cancer risk firefighters face. "For a long time it's been lack of information. It's a lack of understanding. And what we don't know, we don't fear."

The forum, co-sponsored by The Dispatch and the Columbus Division of Fire, brought 80 firefighters, chiefs, lawmakers and others to the Columbus Fire Training Academy's John Nance Auditorium.

In an October investigative series, "Unmasked," The Dispatch detailed the threat of cancer for firefighters and the steps that need to be taken to reduce the risk. The series has led to calls for change as firefighters and chiefs battle a firehouse culture that looks down on safety precautions, a lack of national standards to prevent cancer and too few resources to combat the epidemic.

One precaution is to decontaminate after fighting a fire, That includes bodies and equipment.

Lawmakers could require more decontamination efforts, but said firefighters also have to accept responsibility and take steps to do it on their own.

"We as legislators can listen and try to define these problems," said Hagan, a co-sponsor of Ohio's presumptive cancer law. "I think having better data collection onsite is not a bad thing."

About half of firefighters now believe that cancer is their biggest risk on the job.

A survey found that 1 in 6 firefighters has been diagnosed with cancer during their careers. Firefighters are at least 14 percent more likely to develop cancer than the general public.

Most fire chiefs who responded to the survey agreed that cancer is the greatest occupational hazard for firefighters, but only half provide training or established rules — such as required cleaning of gear following a fire — to prevent it.

But the firehouse culture traditionally has celebrated dirty gear as a trophy for a job well done, and smaller departments often lack funding to provide decontamination facilities.

If your turnout gear was clean, you weren't working hard enough.

In many cases firefighters are exposing themselves to chemicals to escape the heat inside their gear. Then they throw the gear in a truck where they ride along with it, absorbing carcinogens along the way.

At the end of your day, you have to rank your priorities. Is 20 minutes of comfort worth your life?"



What's the average firefighter salary at the nation's largest departments?

Why did you want to become a firefighter?

Chances are you wanted to help people — most of the time under the worst of conditions. But even dream jobs have pros and cons.

While a **firefighting career** may be satisfying, does it pay the bills to support you and your family? Here's a breakdown of the average firefighter salary, according to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, at the largest departments across the nation.

1. LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

LAFD firefighters are among the highest paid in the United States. During academy training, according to the **LAFD**, recruits receive full pay. The department also gives a bilingual bonus.

Average annual salary: \$76,576

2. LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

The LACFD serves 4 million residents in a 2,300-square-mile area. The competition is tough in landing a firefighting job in both the Los Angeles County Fire Department and LAFD. For the LACFD, nearly 95 percent of applicants are turned away. May the odds be ever in your favor.

Average annual salary: \$72,744

3. FIRE DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

In 2015, **Forbes magazine** named the Fire Department of the City of New York as the No. 1 government employer in the country. The FDNY also ranked 17th overall in the magazine's list of best employers.

Average annual salary: \$72,730

4. PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

The PFD is the largest department in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It also has the busiest EMS division in the U.S. — a single ambulance, according to the department, responded to almost 9,000 calls in 2013.

Average annual salary: \$48,315

5. CHICAGO FIRE DEPARTMENT

Millennium Park, Navy Pier, Wrigley Field, oh my! The Chicago Fire Department is the third largest municipal fire department in the U.S. And in case you need to know for your next department trivia game, it's also one of the oldest organized fire departments in the nation.

Average annual salary: \$47,598

6. HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Houston is the fourth largest city in the U.S. And with that, comes great responsibility for the fire service. The department serves more than 2 million residents in a 617-square-mile area. The HFD is also the largest department in the state of Texas.

Average annual salary: \$45,442

7. DALLAS FIRE-RESCUE

Most recently, [Dallas Fire-Rescue's troubled pension plan](#) has drawn a lot of criticism and finger-pointing among fire officials and lawmakers. Nonetheless, DFR employs 1,800 firefighters and has 58 fire stations in the city – plenty of houses to potentially work in.

Average annual salary: \$44,589

8. PHOENIX FIRE DEPARTMENT

Phoenix is the fifth largest city in the U.S. The Phoenix Fire Department serves more than a million residents in a 519-square-mile area. The PFD has an annual call volume of 171,000 – 88 percent being for EMS calls.

Average annual salary: \$44,499



Last spring we ran an article about the baby boxes and how they could save a newborn life and how much trouble they were having in getting the state to recognize the benefit of these boxes. Now we have State Senator Holdman pushing for new state laws covering BABY BOXES

Last week's successful recovery of an hour-old newborn baby in a Safe Haven Baby Box at a fire station near Michigan City has fueled interest in expanding state law to allow for more of the hotly debated devices.

State Sen. Travis Holdman, R-Markle, said he plans to pursue legislation during the upcoming session of the Indiana General Assembly that would allow for use of the baby box drawers at staffed fire stations.

The law currently restricts new baby boxes to hospitals, in addition to grandfathering in the two existing boxes, including the one used last week at the Coolspring Township Volunteer Fire Department, he said.

Holdman had teamed up last year with Monica Kelsey, creator of the Safe Haven Baby Box, to defend the use of the devices against challenges from the Indiana Department of Child Services. Holdman said while the devices have safety features, including multiple calls to E-911 when anything is placed in the box, he understands the concerns with having them located at an unstaffed fire station like the one at Coolspring Township.

The drawer is designed to silently contact 911 when it is opened, Kelsey said last week. Motion sensors contact 911 a second time when the baby is placed inside, and the person leaving the baby is given a third option of pushing a button to contact emergency officials.

The drawer has a heater to keep the baby warm and can only be opened from inside the building once it is closed with the baby inside, Kelsey said. The recent change in the law also removed the threat of prosecution for women who leave babies behind in the baby boxes, Holdman said. They had faced a criminal charge for abandonment before the change.

Holdman said his battle to preserve the boxes paid off last week with news that a baby was saved, a newborn who could have been dumped elsewhere. "I had actually had cold chills," he said.

Holdman said he became emotional as he broke the news to his wife.



Parting Shots

Detroit Terminates Firefighter Who Brought Watermelon to Station

At first I thought this had to be a fake story, but it appears to be true. A probationary firefighter in Detroit was let go because he brought a watermelon with a pink ribbon on it to his new firehouse as a welcome gift.

The gesture offended those at the firehouse, and Robert Pattison was fired last week. The incident involved Engine 55. According to a statement released by Fire Commissioner Eric Jones, Pattison “engaged in unsatisfactory work behavior which was deemed offensive and racially insensitive to members of the Detroit Fire Department.”

Fire lieutenant charged with recording female firefighter in showers

James William Baker II faces a charge of invasive visual recording, a state jail felony punishable by 180 days to two years in jail and a fine of up to \$10,000

Calif. firefighter recruit sues for sexual harassment retaliation

Nicole Pappas claims male members of her recruiting class criticized her weight, commented on her butt and forced her to look at penis drawings

Retired fire chief who inspired ‘Backdraft’ character dies

Not many people have had Robert De Niro star as them in a blockbuster film, but that is the case for a former Sandwich Fire Chief who passed away, this year.

Donald Rimgale was 77 years old when he passed away peacefully in his Elmhurst home. WSPY reported in July of 2016 that Rimgale retired as Sandwich Fire Chief. Chief Jake Pruski has served in the role since that time.

Prior to coming to work in Sandwich, Rimgale was an arson investigator and fire marshal for the Chicago Fire Department. Mr. Rimgale, who served two stints with the Sandwich Fire Department from 1999 to 2003, and then serving as chief from 2012 through 2016, was the inspiration behind Robert De Niro’s character, "Inspector Don Rimgale," in the 1991 Ron Howard directed film, *Backdraft*.

Chaplain's Corner

This is a marvelous time of year! As I write these few words it's not quite Thanksgiving. Already Christmas trees are out! Christmas music is playing and "Black Friday" started as well. It seems each year that the seasons blend together more and more; pretty soon we will be celebrating "HollowThank as" and have one long continuous holiday. Just joking of course. It is good for us to separate the holidays and celebrate each one. Let me caution us to slow down and enjoy the different seasons instead of being so intense that we miss the reasons for the seasons. For me, I am preparing to give "thanks" in a few days; to enjoy my family and just relax; then I'll prepare my heart for the coming of the Christ. Oh yeah, then there's New Years! In it all may you sense God's presence and experience His peace. Blessings!

John A. Lefler, IFA Chaplain



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