

Iowa Firemen's Association
Board of Directors' Meeting
Sunday, January 18th, 2009 10:00 a.m.
Kanawha Fire Station

Present: President Mike McKinnon; 1st VP Cliff Renslow; 2nd VP Brian Hoffman; 3rd VP Ellen Hagen; 4th VP Jack Runge; PP Brian Seymour; Administrative Assistant Wendy Lensing; Joe Specht, Sherrill; Mark Ansel, Kanawha; Dean Nelson, Goldfield; Kevin Steenblock, Kanawha; Jon Schisel, Kanawha; Jim Morris, Kanawha; JR Langfill, Kanawha; Jayson Keiper, Kanawha; David Zimple, Ft. Dodge; Randy Novak, FSTB; Scott Hagenon, Lake Mills; Terry Jass, Garner; Chuck Bell, Algona; Mitch Ulrick, Algona; Bob Platz, Dyersville; Anna Hoffman, Lacona.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by President Mike McKinnon. He presented Chief JR Langfitt with a print for their station in appreciation of their hospitality. Chief Langfitt thanked everyone for coming.

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Cliff Renslow. It was seconded by Brian Seymour. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Ellen Hagen to approve the minutes of the last Board of Director's meeting held October 26, 2008 in Perry, IA. It was seconded by Brian Hoffman. Motion carried.

Administrative Assistant's Report: Wendy Lensing

Thank you to the Kanawha Fire Department for hosting our meeting today, we appreciate your hospitality. It has been a very busy time in the IFA office since our last meeting. Dues billing went out to the members the first of November and dues are delinquent February 1st. At this time, there are still about 250 departments that have not yet paid. Please get your dues in as soon as possible. There are also a lot of individuals that still need to pay their dues as well.

The website is a great resource for information between issues of the Firefighter. I have been a little busy with the dues and things lately but I do try and get things updated as soon as possible on the site and when things slow down a bit, I hope to be able to add a few more new things. If anyone has any ideas for new things for the website, please let me know and we will get those things added. I know we do have a page on there "Department Events" that if you have something going on, fund raiser or something for your department, we can put that on there. If you haven't checked it out, please do so. The website is www.iafireassn.org. The home page is updated with current information.

The credit card program is working, we just need to get more of our members to sign up. Past President Specht will have more information later on some of the incentive ideas that he has come up with, but I encourage you to apply for one of the cards if you haven't yet. If you have one, urge other members to sign up for one. The card has a low interest rate, a great rewards program, no balance transfer fee, and it will also generate money for the IFA which can be used to help you and your Association rather than benefit some other company. We hear people say "I don't need another credit card", but you don't need to add another credit card, you can just get rid of the others and use this one and it will help you and your Association that you are a member of. Another neat thing that one of our members told us about was www.igive.com and www.isearch.com. Both of these sites give donations back to organizations that sign up with them. If you

search the internet through www.isearch.com, instead of say Google or something like that, each search generates a penny for the IFA, and www.igive.com generates donations through online shopping. So, if you shop online and if it is a company that is signed up with www.igive.com, and a lot of them are such as Penneys, Sears, and a lot of the major companies are all part of this and they will give a percentage back from your purchase. I think Penneys is 1.6% or something. You can go online, shop with your IFA credit card and then we can earn money back through www.igive.com. We signed up for this in November and we have already got over \$50 that we will be getting back from them, so this is kind of a neat little thing.

Remember the Firefighter check-off is combined with the Veteran's check-off on the Iowa tax forms this year and the money raised will be split between those two funds. The share that the Firefighters receives will be used for volunteer training.

This year, we will start the Annual Report CD's rather than the IFA information that was previously in the convention book. These CD's will be mailed out with the department mailings for the mid-year meeting somewhere around the beginning of March. You can also request one from the office if you want one for your own records. This would be the minutes and financial reports for the year.

Past President Dave Zimple asked regarding departments not paying this year, how did we come out with the end of last year? Wendy Lensing stated that we moved the delinquent date this year from March 1st to February 1st hoping to speed up the process a bit and they have been rolling in pretty steadily right now. Last year it was in July when we finally deleted departments for not paying and I think we deleted 8 or 9 departments. Some of those were ones that have called me as they finally realized they were deleted and asked what they needed to do. I sent them an application and they are going to send theirs back in. I think there were a couple of the other ones that were deleted and added back in since. Memberships are down now about 100 members from what we were last year. We are right around 15,400 now.

There are copies of the Financial Report and Budget available here.
Current Assets of IFA Checking, Savings, CDs total \$434,986.66 and Current Assets of the Iowa Firemen's Foundation are \$79,160.03
Motion to approve the Financial Report was made by Jack Runge and seconded by Brian Seymour. Motion carried.

Proposed 2009 Budget: Administrative Assistant Wendy Lensing read through the highlights of the proposed budget for 2009. Estimated income is \$198,110 and estimated expenses are \$193,538 for an estimated net income of \$4,572.

Officer Reports:

1st Vice President – Cliff Renslow –

I would like to take my place in line and thank the Kanawha Fire Department for letting us host our meeting here today.

Last weekend myself, Vice President Bissen, President McKinnon, Past President Tom Campbell, and Past Presidents Kendall Warne, Ron Wilson and Bruce Damgaard went to Harlan and the Harlan Honor Guard were there. Past President Mike Schechinger received Volunteer of the Year award through VFW in Shelby County. We surprised him and were there to help honor him that day as it was quite an honor for Mike to receive that award.

Yesterday we had the budget work session at Wendy Lensing's. I thought it was a very good, productive day as we got a lot done. Thanks again to Wendy for your

hospitality as we appreciate your hosting this meeting. Last year the Iowa Firemen's Association Scholarship was brought up but the budget had already been done and we had a lot of expenditures going out for other items so this was not done. We were able to put in on the proposed budget for \$500 for the Iowa Firemen's Association a scholarship for a student going into fire science. I have to tweak the criteria just a little bit and will have the final revised version of that at mid-year and with the budget being approved hopefully that will come into play this fall and we can have the application process open so if you know someone going into fire science they can apply for this. We are going to do this like our other awards. Application process will be August 1 through December 15. At the January work session, the board will decide. I think this is something we can try to recruit people to stay in fire science.

2nd Vice President – Brian Hoffman –

We did have a meeting with the State Fire Committee in Jewell on November 30th to kind of wrap up last year's State Fair Hall of Flame booth and prepare for this next year. We welcomed Paula Ingle from Grinnell as our coordinator and thanked Michelle Spear for all her help. A couple of things we are working on with this booth this year is a 911 simulator and Sparky's head. Set up this year will be August 11th, tear down August 24th. The fair is a little bit later this year. We are brainstorming some ways to get people to come help us. We are going to be doing a mass emailing this year and hoping to get that out with the mid-year mailing. We are also going to include a pamphlet that we have showing what the booth looks like today. We are also going to do the \$250 challenge to raise some more funds for the booth. One of the incentives we did come up with was if we can get a department to produce ten volunteers for at least a four hour shift that day, we would in turn give one of our IFA 125th Anniversary Commemorative statues for your department. A couple other things we are looking at is an IFA Past-President's Day and an IFA Current Board Day for a day.

We are looking at some educational promotional items we can pass out this year. We have not done this for a couple of years and will go back and look at a couple of those things. When you see letters coming through the mail, talk to your departments, and urge them to come down and work with us.

We did have a convention meeting in Coralville on December 6 and I did pass notes out to the board what we did there. As you remember, last year was the first year we did the Convention Equipment Contract. Everything went really well in Maquoketa. Maquoketa had probably between \$5,000 to \$6,000 worth of repairs to the equipment. In our meeting, basically what we did is Maquoketa passed information to Dyersville. Dyersville was already on board with everything and they worked together. Dyersville has informed me that they will not allow golf carts outside of their camp grounds.

They will still have a Convention book this year. They are going to keep it the same size as the old books but it is going to be a lot smaller due to the fact we are going to put all of our business as a board on a CD and that CD will be mailed out to each individual department. The cost of the production of the book will go back to the host department and will be significantly less than what they have had in the past. The other thing we talked about was one day registration for neighboring departments that want to come for one day. We also talked about maybe pro-rating the kickback to the Association and we are still working on that issue. Not quite sure how that is going to come back. Maquoketa felt we had only about 50 people last year who would have utilized the one day pass, so we are not sure how that is going to work out. Our Board visit to Dyersville will be May 2, Convention is September 9th through 13th and hope to see you all there.

Lastly too, I would like to thank the Kanawha Fire Department for hosting us today and Wendy Lensing thank you for allowing us to intrude on you yesterday.

Correction from last meeting, Maquoketa sold the equipment to Dyersville for \$31,000, not \$30,000.

Administrative Assistant Wendy Lensing stated she would like to see if we could change the date of the Pre-Convention Meeting in Dyersville as she has a conflict with that date. She will give Al Wessels a call to see if that is possible.

3rd Vice President – Ellen Hagen –

I too want to thank the Kanawha Fire Department for hosting this meeting and thanks to you people for traveling today. Thanks also to Wendy Lensing for hosting yesterday.

Brian Seymour and I attended the Governor's Address on Tuesday and it looks like it is going to be a hard time trying to get any money this year. Everyone we talked to said "Please watch our training fund", so we hope that stays. As you know from reading our articles in the Firefighter, our 2009 top priorities for the Iowa Firemen's Association are to establish a 40.5 cent minimum tax levy, focus on retention and recruitment, monitor the regional Emergency Response District Pilot Program and we talked about that and Mike is going to do a little work on that with the Senators, maintain funding for the Fire Marshal's Office and Fire Service Training Bureau, banning novelty lighters and we want to talk about job protection for volunteer fire fighters.

Yesterday we judged the 2008 Fire Fighter Safety Posters.

Winners for third grade:

- First Place - Pocahontas Fire Department
- Second Place – Camanche Fire Department
- Third Place – Mason City Fire Department

Winners for fourth grade:

- First Place – Lynnville Fire Department
- Second Place – Griswold Fire Department
- Third Place – Fontanelle Fire Department

Winners for fifth grade:

- First Place – Carroll Fire Department
- Second Place – Blakesburg Fire Department
- Third Place – Searsboro Fire Department

We thank departments that do the posters. The numbers are down, so hopefully we can get them back up again next year.

Please contact one of the board members if there is anything we can do for you. Let us know when you are having fund raisers, benefits, etc. so we can take part.

4th Vice President – Jack Runge

Thanks to the Kanawha Fire Department. You have a wonderful station here. It is always an honor to come into a station like this and see the pride that is put into the fire department, fire service by its members. You can certainly tell that here when you walk into this building. Thanks to Wendy Lensing yesterday for her hospitality. Roger and I did come in and audit the books and it would be appropriate to say that we found no additions or corrections were needed and everything seemed to be in order.

Going back to just prior to the last board meeting, the States Networking meeting that we have is always an excellent opportunity to find out what surrounding states are doing for benefits. One of the things that stuck with me a bit was the benefits that some

of our surrounding states are doing for surviving children of a Line of Duty Death. Hopefully we never have to use it, but possibly work with the Board of Regents as some of the states do have full ride scholarships for children of a Line of Duty Death. This is something that I think we can work on in the future. They said legislatively there is not going to be a lot of money. They are hoping for a short session. I don't feel we can set back with that. If you are having coffees with your legislators coming back into your community, I think that is the time that you usually can sit down and have a one on one with them and that is probably the best time to talk about issues that you may have. Or, get our legislative agenda and go over key points with your local legislators. We'll talk a little bit later about some of the things we are working on with the benefits side.

5th Vice President – Roger Bissen – ABSENT

Past President – Brian Seymour

Thanks to Kanawha for your hospitality. Wendy Lensing, thanks for doing all you did, we did appreciate it.

I did attend the Governor's Address and that is going to be challenging as usual and we will just have to plug away at that.

Missing Persons Search and Rescue Committee that I have sat on has not met since last March so we are still waiting for that to come around.

First Responder's Advisory Council that I sat on met two times last year and has been quite a challenging endeavor. What I really need discussed, and hopefully will get some input from the Board, there are a lot of things happening. First Responder's Advisory Council was developed back in 2002 or 2003 to help to assist the state in dispersing federal dollars that come in through grants, etc, on Homeland Security side. Obviously since 911, a lot of dollars have come to this state. Some of it was spent wisely, some not so wisely. They have had some say in the past, but as years have gone on, they have had less and less say to the point of last year they had pretty much no say. We were advised at the November meeting how the dollars were going to be spent and so we are a little frustrated with that. EMA is very frustrated with it, and maybe some of you have seen some emails going around on that aspect. A lot of the dollars have to be used as pass through to the locals and that is not happening. It is pretty much being utilized at the state level now. They are doing that by some of the committees that work together making decisions on where the dollars were going were people from local communities and so they took that as the locals passing it back to the state. Most of the funding this past year has gone back to the state teams. I need some input from several would be helpful as to what their feelings are on state teams that are there, how we should be funding them, do we continue them, are they a benefit to the state, are they a benefit to you I guess is what I am looking more to, and being able to provide information back. We do have the ear of the Lieutenant Governor through Senator Hancock to be able to express that we, as locals, are not seeing much benefit of where those dollars are going. If it is supposed to be passed through the locals, it is not happening. To help us build our local plans better, if anybody has any thoughts or knows of someone who has some frustration that we can speak with and try to iron out some of those things, I would be happy to hear that so I can represent departments across the state well and not just my opinion or the board's opinion. Obviously, those dollars are going to dry up eventually, but while they are there, why not spend them wisely.

President – Mike McKinnon –

I met JR in 2000 at one of the Chief officer classes that I taught. I think JR had been chief for a month or so and I also had the pleasure of meeting Coop who had been the chief before. You could just tell the level of energy between them was extremely high. You can tell certain things about people when you meet them, I could tell that JR was a very energetic and ambitious person. When the Presidents pick their locations for meetings, many things go through our mind. I wanted to go to JR's department to see what he has been able to accomplish and to thank him for his dedication to the fire service.

Ellen brought up legislation, there are a lot of things happening. Tax credit or minimum township levies, we are not going to see that move this year. But we are hoping to get some things done. Interoperability is a big problem. The state has an interoperability board and this group is spending millions of dollars and there are no volunteer fire fighters on this board. Senator Hancock has worked on bringing forth a bill that will change that, and instead of the Governor appointing these people, it will be recommended by fire service organizations and one of the people must be a volunteer fire fighter. We are going to try real hard to get that bill pushed through so we have some say so. Right now, the only people that are really getting a say so are the big communities, state patrol, DOT, and those kind of people. We want to start getting our voice in there.

Senator Hancock called this morning and said there is a new bill that is coming out, House File 9, wireless communication. What this is going to do is ban the use of wireless devices while you are moving in a vehicle, cell phones. I think that is the intent of it. It says you can use this wireless device to contact a law enforcement agency for help. The concern is, would that also apply to volunteer fire fighters that may be using a hand held radio in a car, calling back to the fire department or something? We are going to do some looking into that to make sure it is right.

Job Protection Act is something that we are going to try to work for but it is an uphill battle. What we are looking for is something to protect volunteer fire fighters if they are late getting back to work. This is a double edged sword and we have a lot of concerns.

The pilot program that everybody has heard about, my county is the lucky county. We have run into a few snags and it needs some legislation fixes.

Budgets are tough. Training Bureau, Fire Marshall's office have already been hit. Volunteer Fire Fighter Training has already been hit. I think we lost 1.5% already. Rumor has it that the Volunteer Fire Fighter Training fund is gone, they are going to take it. If we let that happen, training for volunteers is shot. I know my budget can't withstand bringing that in and doing this training. So we are in trouble. All of us, and I'm looking at everyone in this room, you have got to talk to your legislator and say "don't let it happen". We have to protect the funding for the Training Bureau. We have to protect the training for the Fire Marshal's office. We've got to protect the Volunteer Fire Fighter Training Fund.

Tax exempt status is another hot item right now. As I have written in my article for the Firefighter, all departments need to make sure they have their Iowa tax exemption but also have the federal 501c3 exemption. Many departments have not taken that step. If you go to the IRS' site and search for the word "fire" in Iowa, there are less than 300 departments registered. If you are not registered, you must pay federal tax just like a corporation would. This could get you into a lot of trouble. My county has ten departments and they all thought there were, there is only one department that is. There is a fire department in western Iowa that has just been audited by the IRS and they have to pay back ten years of back taxes on all the money they have received.

We have been very busy over the past couple of months and have a lot more things scheduled for the next several months. We love to go to county meetings, annual

dinners or award ceremonies. If you would like one of us to attend something, let us know. We are your Board. We work for you. Please let us know if we can do anything for you.

Committee Reports:

NVFC – Delegate Bob Platz

Regarding the two-hatter issue; since the last meeting in Perry, the NVFC was going to write a letter to the union people. We had a conference call but I was not able to attend that conference call and I don't think Mike was either. Basically we are going to put the whole thing on hold, we don't want to get the fire services fighting amongst each other, so we will be debating this at our meeting coming up in March and find out where we are going with that.

Election of officers – In the Midwest we are very fortunate as we had gentlemen from Nebraska, Missouri and Michigan on our Executive board and they were really good friends of mine. If I had any big problems and needed something lobbied, I would talk to them and they would get my issues squared away. Now, we have lost them, Missouri due to death, Michigan due to death and Nebraska is stepping down as second Vice-Chairman of the organization but he is running for Executive Committee so hopefully we can keep him. Mike is on that committee to deal with nominations so that should be an interesting situation.

Memberships – there are some states that would like to get more than one organization to get a vote on the National Volunteer Fire Council. Example would be the Iowa Firemen's Association and Iowa Fire Chiefs would have two voices. I visited with the Georgia delegation a couple months ago and they were really against it and I, right now, feel that it would not be fair to us small states. States like New York would probably have about four or five organizations and we would probably get this shoved all over the place. That will also be discussed this year.

When I was in Denver, Colorado, I talked with Dr. Onieal with the National Fire Academy and he said one of our big things was the administration, to make sure you get a good fire administrator so I think we will really have to be looking at that to make sure that happens.

FEMA and Homeland Security – the Obama Administration right now is looking like they want to take it out of the Homeland Security. We think that would probably not be a good situation. All of these things will be handled at our meeting in the spring when we go out to DC.

Grant writing and peer review – I received an email two weeks ago and I did sign up for that again. Senator Hancock asked if I would put his name down and I did. Whether we get approved for that or not I don't know. In that email also, if anybody on the board, a past-president or any body would like to go through the National Volunteer Fire Council to read grants, let me know and I will put your name in. I have until the 21st of this month to do this. There are three groups, I don't have my calendar with me but I think it is May 4 through 8, May 11 through 16, May 18 through 22nd. I did put down for the 18th through the 22nd for myself and Senator Hancock as he wanted to make sure he was done with his legislation.

I met with the board yesterday. September 23 through 25 is going to happen this fall. We were going to put on the conference for the NVFC and everything is starting to fall together. We will have lots more on that at Mid Year.

Memorial – Chairman Mike Reuman - absent

Legislation –

President McKinnon: The board has been wrestling with the idea of having a red coat in Des Moines. Several years ago, we would pay one of the Vice-Presidents or a person from the Association to go and do our day to day lobbying for us down at the Capitol. They would wear the traditional red coat. We moved away from that a couple of years ago, we had been paying a professional lobbyist and so we just moved that money away from that at that time. We have been getting some feedback from legislators that think we need a red coat back, at least on a part-time basis a couple days per week to keep floating around and the lobbyists would still handle all the big push but we would have that red coat there for the warm, fuzzy feeling type, the PR stuff for us. We did discuss this yesterday and we have two people who have shown interest. We are going to be making contact with one of those people and see if they are willing to do this for us and we will make an announcement on that shortly. What we are looking at trying to do is two days per week, have someone float at the Capitol to be there to represent the Fire Service in case we need something.

Guests:

Fire Marshal Jim Kenkel – ABSENT

Bureau Chief Randy Novak:

I will be combining Jim's report with mine. The first thing Jim had asked me to mention is that this is not starting out to be a good year. We are at eight fatalities for civilians. Jim said that to me on Friday, and I believe that since then, we have had one more in West Des Moines so we may be at nine now. This is not a good start to the year for us in Iowa. Apparently, a lot of them were multiple fatalities so it is not just one here and one there.

Jim said I could mention the word "budget" and that would be sufficient. We are going to be looking at some struggles. First round of budget cuts that we took the end of last year was really one of those. Travel has been restricted so we have no more out of state travel unless someone else is paying for it. I just came back from Oklahoma but again yesterday's board executive meeting was paid for by Oklahoma State University so it did not cost us anything. We went into a hiring freeze but prior to the start of the hiring freeze, we did hire an accountant. One of our students came to us from the Department of Revenue. Besides the travel freeze and hiring freeze, we have been asked to drastically reduce in-state travel. For us, the fact that we teach and pay travel expenses for field instructors, that will continue as long as we have funding. Where we are going to be looking at of some of the in-state travel reductions is instead of sending two to three people to a meeting or event, we may only be sending one. If it is a day long trip, there is no difference in expenses of two people, three people or more, just as long as they can fit in one car. If we don't do an overnight we won't get reimbursed for lunch or anything so that is not an expense for us, it is just time out of the office.

Jim's note that was in the last issue of the Firefighter, overtime has been restricted. Therefore, he has had to truly make some tough decisions and prioritize how his investigators will go out doing things. That has caused a brand new set of issues. If fire departments are going to, in some regard, have to do some initial cause of origin investigation, they are asking about training. Jim and I are working on strategies that we may be able to get our two day National Fire Academy course back out in the field and use our National Fire Academy funds to do this. With that, I cannot hire investigators from the Fire Marshal's office to work for me part-time. This means that we have to use

other than investigators. If there is a chance we could hire Mike Keefe back, but as I told Jim, I can't get reimbursed for a National Fire Academy class from the National Fire Academy if Mike doesn't teach the material from the National Fire Academy class. That creates some complications that we are going to try to work through as we should have some people out in the field to try and help those departments with that initial cause of origin.

Since second round of budgets, we took the 1.5% so at a certain point in time if you look back in history, since I have been here (by the way I have been here eight years in February), we took budget cuts when I first came here and we really have never gotten that money back. So, where we have some salary saves, if you recall, we were transferred out of the university with twelve FTE's. Our budget cuts really equal about two FTE's so we are back down to ten and since then, the budget has adjusted so if you ever look at a line item, it is also says ten FTE's. That money is gone for the other two so we are running out of places to take 1.5% budget cuts. Do I see travel restrictions going beyond June 30th, yes I do. Do we see furloughs, I have a feeling we will see furloughs. Again, those are just my predictions. I will caution, and several of you have already mentioned that, I'd keep a very close eye on the training fund. You all fought very hard to get that. Past board members said that in the past you had to fight very hard to get that, and I am assuming that you will have to fight hard again.

As I mentioned, we did hire a new staff member, so we are back up to ten full-time staff people.

We have a couple new courses that we are working on. Inspector I - IFSTA just released the book. I did get an advanced copy of the curriculum so I can start the process of reviewing what IFSTA has put together for a curriculum and make the necessary modifications. We don't have the time or staff to write curriculum from scratch so we really are in a position to have to look at something different.

We will be adding a new certification level in March. We will be certifying fire investigators based on the NFPA 1033 standard. We will in essence pilot the testing process with the Fire Marshal's agents over the next couple weeks, then we will pilot test the entire certification process during the first two weeks of March with the Arson school and then once we have gotten through that and have had a chance to validate the test bank, then we will turn around and make it available for anyone from past years who have taken the arson class. We will also have built in equivalencies for arson investigation and people who wish to be certified. We are trying to make certain we have opportunities for people to do that.

We are still working with Fort Dodge about the ethanol response, it is just taking longer than we thought.

You had mentioned federal dollars from Homeland Security. It is kind of funny how when we ask Homeland Security for Federal dollars, they say we have passed it all on to the locals which is the exact opposite of what you are seeing at your end and what the locals are seeing. We have extremely limited dollars coming in. The dollars that we have are earmarked for first priority of making sure state agencies are trained and second priority for responders. When we get a request for ICS300, for example, from the regional offices or from one of the local counties, we go "well we are going to have to charge you." Then they say "we don't have any money." We are being told that money is being passed to the six Homeland Security regions and some of that is training dollars and yet they are not releasing any of those dollars so we are in a catch 22. The good thing is Mike Burke up at Iowa Central has received some federal dollars and so we are again utilizing some of those. What they are doing is basically, if it is true they are getting some training dollars, they are not spending it. They are hoping somebody else is spending money. At a certain point, you are going to run out of fiscal year and if you

have not spent the money, somebody is going to eventually say if you are not going to spend the money send it back to us and we will put it back into the treasury because we have a big national debt.

We have mailed the Regional Fire School posters, hopefully everyone has seen it. Cliff and Ellen both said nice things about the posters. I said I think Dawn is challenged with the posters because if you think about it, the poster doesn't change. They give us the exact same information except the dates change and so it is taking the same stuff and trying to make it look different every year. But, the poster again looks very good and we are very pleased.

We have some National Fire Academy courses including one coming up at Winter Fire School. Winter Fire School is the 24th and 25th of January, next weekend. Numbers look pretty good. The forecast looks okay so far also. We put on the schedule that if the workshop was available from the Feds, that we would do a grant workshop as a conclusion of fire school on Sunday. I have heard from the FEMA office in Kansas City that they expect to have it on time. I have already told them down there that if I have it in time, we will run it, if you bring the workshop with you, you will run the workshop on that Sunday, so we will see. We are planning on doing two additional workshops on the ICN and it will be the last two weeks in February, I do not have the dates yet but we will make that announcement and send letters to all the fire departments with the schedule for ICN locations. We will again review grant narratives prior to submission and help that process also.

Rescue Skills Weekend February 28 through March 1st. Fire Arson Investigator school is March 2nd through the 13th. I really have to question why we went to the effort to print brochures and mailing them, we post this on the website and we are over half full. Sending stuff to the law enforcement, we probably could have done that electronically. That will be full, we expect we will have a large waiting list. Right now, we have some departments with four or five people in them and as that class starts to fill up and we start to make the final determination who is accepted, we may be calling fire departments and tell them there is a waiting list that you have two spots, you won't get four. We have been asked and are contemplating putting together a second fire arson investigation school on the eastern part of the state. This one becomes a budget issue because fire marshals teach at this and the Bureau covers their travel costs because the Fire Marshal's office has limited funds for that.

Volunteer Chief Workshop is March 14th. The guest speaker will be Phil Stittleburg from National Volunteer Fire Council

Pipeline Emergency, we are running a second train-the-trainer Pipeline Emergency Course. It is free of charge. The US Department of Transportation funds this through the National Association of State Fire Marshals. We are distributing and marketing this but please note when you see your form if you get one, **do not** return the registration forms to the Bureau. We are not collecting those, they go directly to the National Association of State Fire Marshals. You can do this electronically or by fax. They will tell us who is registered. Mike McKinnon will also be at the Volunteer Chiefs as he has in the past, since we started this.

Training Officer's Workshop is May 9th. We had somebody lined up for that and that person had a major stroke and they may not be recovered by May 9th so we are in the process of lining up a second person in that person's place.

Live Fire Skills weekend will be May 30th through 31st. We also have some other announcements as we open up other courses. We mail those individually. These are also on the website and we have had some very good success with posting on the website. Apparently a lot more people signed up for the automatic email notification and I think that is what prompted the Arson School filling up so quickly as it did as people got word that the brochure was out there first. The Volunteer Chief Workshop brochure is not here

as we just finished that up and sent to the print shop so that will be coming out shortly. Volunteer Fire Chief Workshop is a cooperative effort with our partners in the Iowa Fire Chief's Association and the Training Officer's Workshop which will be in May is a cooperative effort with the Iowa Society of Arson Instructors partnerships.

Past President Scott Hagenon: On the legislation side, in my opinion pare it down and keep the training fund and let the rest go.

Past President Brian Seymour: Am I correct that the training fund comes out of RIF dollars?

Randy Novak: No, The VFFTF comes exclusively from the General Fund. That fund keeps getting tighter and tighter. Training Center funds come out of RIF and nothing additional was funded out of RIF for the training centers.

PP Hagenon: It might not hurt to do a mass email on the training fund, putting it out there so people know.

Pres. McKinnon: I think we are going to have to.

PP Dave Zimple: If you lose that fund, how many departments are going to be able to afford training? What is a FFI class now, \$3200 or \$3400?

Randy Novak: Maybe more like \$3600 with the additional material we've added. The bottom line is our numbers grew from FY'08 was 9% increase in attendance both in number of courses and students that had been trained from the previous fiscal year. Again, it goes back to the various funds. We transferred simply because we didn't have an even amount of money to invoice at the end of the fiscal year, we transferred a couple hundred dollars from the previous year into the new fiscal year from the training fund which meant everything was spent. Please keep in mind the year before, we probably transferred six to seven thousand so that means we spent all of last year's training fund plus the surplus from previous years that we were carrying over. It is an oddball amount simply because we didn't have any invoices that matched perfectly with that so we transferred a couple over. We used all of the income tax check-off. Now there is money sitting but I think January is the month that it gets transferred over from revenue to us so we will have a fresh amount of money to start with but again we have been using it for rescue related skills training and that goes pretty fast too. In the fall, those are not big amounts that go in there so we use that for special areas. I think my gut feeling is that we are doing analysis right now of what we submitted and what we have committed to for the rest of this year and we may be forced into a position of saying from our commitments, we are going to uncommit the following because it is a different priority. That priority we talked about was basic level training would be funded first and then supplement other training will be funded as a second priority. We may be in a position saying, I am going to cut #2 priority classes and focus exclusively on the top priority which was basic level. Add to that, when those positions were made, the minimum training standard was still in a discussion phase but now we are getting much closer to that and basic level training is critical to the success of that minimum training standard so we have to reinforce that priority that the advisory group had put together for this. We think it will be several weeks to finalize this. We are in the position now to make decisions.

Pres. McKinnon: The training fund is a priority and that is what we will be focusing on. Some of these other things are not budget items so they are just going to be as they come up, but our focus and our push will be the training fund.

PP Zimple: Are you having the Firefighter Day on the Hill and evening reception?

Pres. McKinnon: Yes, it will be March 11th. Last year these were moved together due to the ice storm. It was a good thing so we have decided to have the Firefighter Day on the Hill during the daytime and that evening is our legislative night. That way if you are making a trip to Des Moines, hopefully you will stay. We get you for both events and see what we can get done that way.

Unfinished Business:

Name Change Committee – Mike McKinnon

At the convention meeting, it was tabled the name change of the Association to the mid-year meeting. At that point, it was suggested that we have a group look at whether a name change was necessary, should be done or not, and what the name change should be. The tabled motion at mid-year was the name change to Iowa Firefighter's Association. This Committee's first job is going to be, do they recommend a name change or not? Second part is, do they accept that name or not? If they don't accept that, that is going to have to be dealt with in a motion and then bring forward what the name change should be that they have decided to do. The Committee is Chris Youngbluth from Okoboji, Jacob Moore from Perry, Robert Shrader from LeGrande, Dustin Huston from Norwalk, Rebecca Green from Denison and I believe I am waiting for final confirmation from Shanna Lamb from Onawa. We have sent out several articles that have mentioned this several times that if you were interested being on this committee, get your name in. These are names of people that sent their names in. I have asked Ellen Hagen to be the facilitator for the group. Her job is going to be setting up the conference calls, emails and directing things. If you have input, questions, comments, you want to be heard on some things, send it to Ellen and she will make sure that gets to the committee. The committee has a tough job. They have only got a month to get something moving forward so we can have it discussed at mid-year.

Credit Card Program – Joe Specht

The Credit Card Program was kicked off in September at the Convention. Today we have 105 cards. We need to have some kind of incentive. I think if we market by department, so if a department signs up 25% of their roster, we will rebate a check for \$10 per member who signed up. If a department or individual pays their dues, they will get their dues back for a year is basically what it amounts to. We need to push this as an association, be at town meetings and hand these out and get going. I hope we can put some fliers in the mail and with your permission, I will discuss with the newspaper and the credit card company about some type of advertising program. Hopefully we can make it a benefit that for the card holders and the IFA if they are using that card and they come to a function such as Mid-Year or Convention, they would get \$5 off the Convention Meeting or something like that. Given your permission, I will talk to Dyersville, Wendy and with the credit card company what kind of accounting nightmare that may or may not be. President Mike McKinnon asked if there were any issues, and there were none. President Mike McKinnon told Joe Specht to do so. President Mike McKinnon added, our goal is that if you bring this back to your membership and you get 25% of your roster to sign up for the credit card, once you get that confirmation they have done it, they come and show you the card, we will come up with a form where you can write the people who signed up and send this form to Wendy, she will verify this with the

credit card company and then say if you had 12 members sign up she will give you \$120 back that you paid for their dues. Basically, you are out nothing.

President Mike McKinnon stated that this is easy to sign up for, takes about two minutes. It has the IFA logo on it, when you sign up the Association gets \$10 and that is why we are going to rebate the money back to you. Every time you use your card there are transaction fees that the retailer pays, some of that transaction fee is going to come back here. Every time you use that card if you pay interest on it, a percentage of those fees come back here. A lot of rewards with this, they double the insurance, they price match. Wendy Lensing stated that the credit card company had also mentioned to Joe that they could do a promotion, for example over the winter MasterCard was doing a double point promotion. They said that if we had an event coming up, they may be able to do double points at that hotel, or something like that.

Benefits – Jack Runge

One of the things we have been working on over the last year was a way to add benefits to the IFA. One of the things we are going to start working on is the hotel or lodging savings. We will look for one that would cover most towns in the more rural parts of Iowa. The Four Choice Hotels International is Comfort Inn, Comfort Suites, Quality Inn, Sleep Inn, Clarion, Cambria Suites, Mainstay, Suburban, Econolodge and Roadway. We are working with them as they have a significant organization savings program and we are trying to see if we fit into it. If it is a not for profit organization with a membership over 5,000 you may qualify to be part of their program. We are working with them to see if we can go a little further with that. It might be something where you could walk into one of the Four Choice Hotel systems, show your IFA card and get some sort of a discount. We are also working with AmericInn because they do have a presence, I think, in rural Iowa. They don't have a specific program but they are much more local. They are a Minnesota based company so they may be a little easier to work with. Hopefully we can put something together with one of these two chains and offer some member benefits for being a member of the IFA.

PP Zimple stated that now if you show them your fire department ID they will give you the government rate which is pretty significant in most cases.

President Mike McKinnon stated that Ellen Hagen is going to be going back to the National Benefit Summit and she will be talking with the other states about what they do, such as a clearing house of benefit programs and list them on their web site or something and state that if you use this, you get this percent discount. Not that we would endorse any of the companies and she will find out what the pros and cons are if any of the other states have done this.

New Business:

Chuck Bell asked if the requirement for dual sensor smoke alarms is still April 1st and at that time, will the stores take the single sensors off the shelf?

President Mike McKinnon stated yes, they are supposed to.

Chuck Bell also asked if the Fire Department or Fire Chief is supposed to go in and make sure they are selling the correct ones. President Mike McKinnon answered I don't think you have the legal responsibility to, but as the fire prevention person of your community I think it would behoove us to be the ones going in and say something. The law does state that after April 1st, you are no longer able to sell the single sensors and if they don't comply, then you could pass that onto your local agent and they will follow-up with that.

(Note from Adm. Asst. – Since the time of the meeting the effective date has been changed to October 1st, 2009 for the dual sensor detectors)

Chuck Bell asked if the state has any electrical inspectors hired. President Mike McKinnon answered that they have a few. Randy Novak stated that they have run into some snags in the backgrounds and that is where the holdup is. They are scheduled to start some training for them this week in our office and they cancelled those. President Mike McKinnon stated that is why most communities have backed off in their local ordinances on electrical inspections. We have pushed ours back to July 1 and we are going to continue doing them anyway but that is why we have pushed them back and not adopt state fees until July 1 and see what happens.

President Mike McKinnon states another big issue out there for New Business maybe is safety vests. Please make sure you are wearing them. My understanding Iowa OSHA is looking at a Fire Department that did not have them on. OSHA's new rules are instead of it being a general PPE violation, they can now fine for each person in violation.

Good of the Association:

PP Zimple stated on behalf of the Iowa Pipeline Association, the Safety Meetings are going on around the state. They have been well attended so far except for a couple of nights because of weather. There have not been any that have cancelled but the weather conditions have definitely kept a few people from showing up. If you don't have the schedule, I did put some of the posters back on the table. The closest to this area would be Clear Lake. This is also linked on our website. I want to thank Ellen and Randy who sit on the committee and we had great Safety Summit in November.

Mid Year: Dave Zimple states that it appears that the main hotel is all sold out. There is an AmericInn right next door to it so I will see tomorrow if we can reserve rooms there. There is a Ramada a little further up the road. Those are probably the nicest in the area. Back in October, I know there were ten rooms that one fire department had booked at the waterpark hotel there, so I will find out more on that tomorrow. We just received catering information so we will start working on that. I think we will have a good meeting. I know we have a lot of business on our plate. The racquetball club on the north side is gone, that is now part of an events center and that is where we will have our banquet and our meal. We will actually split the room in half so they don't have to move things around. During the meeting for lunch, they are going to have a ballpark theme where there will be areas where you can purchase hot dogs, maid rites, etc, so you don't have to try to find somewhere to go and eat or go sit in the dining room.

Brian Seymour stated that he has not heard of anyone yet running for Convention City 2011 or for 5th Vice President. So we need to start getting that information out there.

Adjournment: President Mike McKinnon adjourned meeting at 11:20.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy Lensing
Administrative Assistant