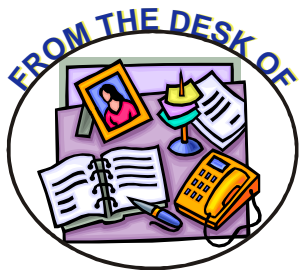


FIREFAX

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Becky Nelson
SECRETARY/TREASURER
FIREFAX EDITOR



Incorporated". Director O'Brien has been working diligently to get the Chapter incorporated and is finalizing details with the IRS to get the Chapter our 501 (C)(3) designation. This will help businesses wishing to sponsor events within the organization, as it will make their donations tax exempt.

I want to encourage each member to make sure their personal profile is up to date by going to the website <http://www.iowaiaaichapter.org> and logging in.

For those who have forgotten how to log in, use your last name as your user name and your membership number as your password. If you have any problems, let me know and I will get your access taken care of. With the rising cost of postage it is vital that the Chapter have a valid "mailing address" for each member. Also, please update your e-mail so we can keep you up to date on breaking information.

I hope this finds everyone having a wonderful spring. I know I am personally ready for warmer weather and to be outside enjoying the beautiful sights that Iowa has to offer.

The Iowa Chapter is now officially "Iowa Chapter of the International Association of Arson Investigators



27th Annual Investigation Seminar and Annual Meeting September 29 – October 2, 2009

Your Officers and Board of Directors are hard at work in preparation for the 27th Annual Investigation Seminar and Annual Meeting. The 2009 and 2010 seminars will be held at the West Des Moines Marriott, 1250 Jordan Creek Parkway, West Des Moines. Brochures will be mailed by the end of May, so watch your mail box. Early registration can save each participant over 10%. With the budget constraints big and small departments alike are dealing with, Past President Clark and Director Hufford have worked diligently with the hotel on getting us the most "bang for our buck".

Due to the hard work of your staff, this year your registration cost will remain the same as last year, only \$250. This will not only include the seminar and one year membership, but also include Wednesday and Thursday's noon meals, the annual banquet and added to that is a wonderful bar-b-que for Wednesday night. The meals alone are a great savings. The room rate at the hotel is only \$94 a night and that price is negotiated for the next two years, so it is sure to keep the tightest budget balanced.

Seminar 2009 (Continued)

The line up of speakers for the seminar is once again top-notch. If your department is limited on funds for training, why pay the high price to go out of state to seminars, when the Iowa Chapter brings the highest of quality speakers right to the center of your state?

The 27th Annual Seminar will kick off Tuesday night with “Report Writing” by Virginia Barchman and the evening concludes with the hospitality suite hosted by President Hutcheson. Wednesday starts with class covering “CSST (Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing) in Fire Damaged Buildings” by Duane Wolf and Todd Hartzler and the afternoon class is “Active Fire Protection Systems: What You Want to Know” by Scott Futrell. The day will conclude with the bar-b-que and after you’ve had your fill of the wonderful food you can go and enjoy the sights and sounds of West Des Moines. Thursday’s presentation is Elayne Pope and she will be teaching “Fire Effects on a Body”. Thursday night will end with the annual banquet, which has a menu full of scrumptious eats. Friday the seminar winds down, but not before Ron Tunkel discusses “Arson/Bombing Profiling”.

Keep your eyes on your mailbox for the brochure.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND NEEDS YOUR HELP

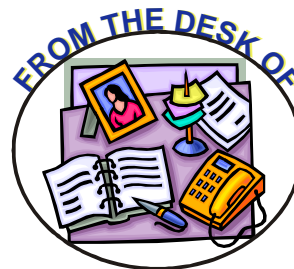


The Iowa Chapter IAAI Inc. would like to continue to fund our two annual scholarships and are asking for the member’s involvement. I challenge each of you to get one donated item from your local business to be placed on the silent auction table to raise money for our scholarship fund.

The scholarship fund will also be having a “show your college spirit auction” as Director Spykerman has obtained a signed ISU football by Coach Rhoads, Iowa Chapter Member McAvoy has obtained a signed Iowa football by Coach Ferentz and Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company’s Senior Vice President Larry Jansen has obtained one from UNI’s Head Coach Farley . After the annual banquet attendees will get their chance to raise money for the scholarship fund by bidding on the footballs. Let’s see who has more school spirit and raise lots of money for our scholarship fund.

COFFEE BREAK SPONSORS NEEDED

In order to keep our seminar and training costs at a minimum the Chapter relies on the generosity of supporting businesses. Each year we solicit various businesses in our industry and offer them the opportunity to sell their business merchandise or market their business in our break room, as well as to sponsor a coffee break. The cost to sponsor a coffee break is only \$250. If the sponsor would like an exhibit table as well, the combined cost is \$350. If a vendor is unable to sponsor a coffee break but would like a table to display their product in the break room the cost is \$100 per table. This is a wonderful opportunity for businesses involved in the fire related field to show their material. If you know a business who might be interested in sponsoring a coffee break or displaying their merchandise at this years seminar, please let Becky Nelson know at bnelson@gmrc.com. Coffee break sponsors will be recognized during the seminar, as well as during the banquet.



Alan Clark
PAST PRESIDENT/
LIFE MEMBER



ELECTIONS

I am asking each member to look to see if they have what it takes to serve as an Officer or Director for the Chapter. Potential candidates need to realize the positions require a time commitment and it is vital that each person have their company or organization’s support as all Officers and Directors are expected to attend the scheduled board meetings and seminar.

This year the positions of: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer are up for election at the annual meeting and will be voted on by the body. These positions are one year terms, beginning immediately after the election. To be eligible to run for office you must have been an active member of the State Chapter or the International for at least two years. To hold the Office of President, the candidate must have previously served for at least one year as a board member or other officer position. All officers and directors must be, or immediately upon election, join the International.

Elections (Continued)

The positions of Director at Large-West and Director of Detection are also up for election. The Director at Large-West must reside west of Interstate 35. These positions will be voted on during the appropriate sectional meeting.

To see all the information relating to "Election, Terms and Offices" visit the Chapters website <http://www.iowaiaaichapter.org> and go to "Membership Information" and then "Bylaws". The information relating to elections is Article III.

If you have any questions concerning holding office, please feel free to contact any Officer or Director.



Chris Van Vleet
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT



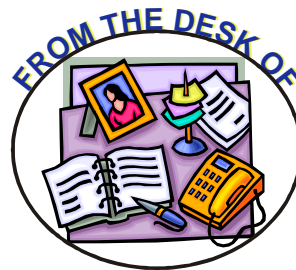
LUNCH AND LEARN

I thought I would take a few minutes to tell everyone about a concept your board has been discussing lately. As you may remember we have discussed the fire investigation task force concept and have been trying to figure out a way that we, the Iowa Chapter of the IAAI, Inc. can help promote it around the state. The task force concept has been well received here in the Des Moines Metro area and we think it could be of great benefit in other parts of the state. The great thing about the task force is that it does not have to focus on scene investigations. In fact, most of what we do here in the metro is use it as a means to gather on a regular basis and share information about fire related issues in our particular jurisdictions. We also use it as a forum to provide some training once and a while to the group.

In order to help promote this concept, as well as other educational topics across the state, our Secretary Becky Nelson suggested that we implement a "Lunch and Learn" program. The idea is great and serves multiple purposes. The "lunch and Learn" is simply a lunch meeting hosted by anyone around the state, invite local fire investigative personnel in the area, and over lunch have a guest speaker present a topic of interest relating to fire investigation. The

cost would be for the meal only as arranged by the host at some local restaurant. The board has agreed to financially support the speakers if they incur any personal expenses so there is really no cost for the gathering other than the lunch. The board also has a couple other topics ready for delivery at a "Lunch and Learn" as needed.

What we need now to get this rolling is for some members to volunteer to host the "Lunch and Learn". The planning is minimal and the board would be glad to help if needed. You just need a location for the lunch, a date and an invitation list. If this sounds like something you would be interested in please let one of your board members or officers know. We think this could be a great way do build on professional fire investigation relationships in your immediate area.



John Kraemer
DIRECTOR OF INVESTIGATION



EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FIRE INVESTIGATION TASK FORCES

Across the country, many major metropolitan areas have implemented fire investigation task forces. Most of these task forces began with only a few men and women from fire and law enforcement agencies that recognized a need to share information across geographic jurisdictions and assist one another with investigations by sharing resources such as manpower and equipment. Slowly, more and more individuals representing other fire and law enforcement agencies recognized the value of taking a team-approach to fire/arson investigations and the sharing of resources that these task forces became more formal and much larger. Some of these task force teams have regular and mandated training on incident command, hazardous materials, origin and cause investigations, explosives and courtroom testimony to name a few. Some of these same teams also have designated response vehicles and /or trailers to store and transport fire investigation equipment and supplies to a fire/explosion scene to be utilized by the task force members.

In Iowa, the Metro Area Fire Investigator's Task Force (MAFIT) is a team located in the Des Moines

Exploring (Continued)

metropolitan area that is composed of professionals representing many different public and private sector agencies. Some of the agencies represented on this team include many area municipal fire and law enforcement agencies, the State Fire Marshal's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation's Criminalistics Laboratory, the Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner, the Iowa Insurance Fraud Bureau, and both public and private sector attorneys and special investigation unit (SIU) investigators from local insurance companies.

The Des Moines MAFIT team was formed in March of 2000. The founding team members learned that the task force approach was important because information sharing was critical in conducting thorough investigations and finding resolution to the origin and cause of fires. Smaller jurisdictions were found to be insufficiently staffed or equipped to investigate major fires, and studies have shown that arson perpetrators usually resided in or took refuge in larger cities while he/she preyed on smaller cities. Lastly, witnesses, leads, and evidence were found in more than one jurisdiction. By bringing together "the stakeholders" to one table, we found that information was easily communicated across jurisdictions and through this sharing of information we learned, on a couple of occasions, that some of our incendiary fires were connected. By taking a multi-disciplinary team approach to fire/arson investigation, one can feel confident that the investigation will be done thoroughly and competently.

The MAFIT team meets every other month and has elected officers to help govern the team. An agenda is sent out to all members ahead of the meeting and minutes and attendance are taken for each meeting. Each participating agency on the team has a signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) allowing and making for a more formal approach to sharing personnel and other resources. Application is made to the organization and a vote by current members is needed to allow for one to formally be a part of the task force. The leadership team tries to find educational topics to present at each meeting and such topics that have been presented in the past include fire debris analysis, legal matters, evidence collection methods, photography, and investigating fatal fires. Each agency is given an opportunity to share with other team members what is new in their respective agencies and they also share with the group any ongoing fire/arson investigations that they are currently working on. Usually, after a large incident and the case has been determined to be adjudicated, a presen-

tation is made by the original jurisdiction on the investigation and final opinions as to the origin and cause and subsequent legal proceedings that may have occurred in the case. We have all come to learn through the experiences of others. So, as I hope you can see, there is much value and education that can be gained from such a task force.

For our team, if a task force member wishes to summon other members to help with an investigation, a call is made to WestCom Dispatch Center in West Des Moines, Iowa requesting that a "page out" be done for MAFIT. A brief message is left with dispatchers to put out to the other MAFIT members (i.e. Residential fire with fatality. 2250 S. Ankeny Boulevard, Ankeny, Iowa. Call Lt. Kraemer at (515)123-4567. A briefing is usually held once all members have arrived on scene and the incident command structure is followed. Assignments are made by the lead investigator and the scene is processed in a methodical and thorough manner. Also, since we are seeing less and less fires due to strong fire prevention efforts and fire protection systems, MAFIT also realizes that calling in team members for room and contents and other "basic" fires also helps those new to the field gain experience. Again, we have come to draw on the experiences of each other to find resolution to these fires.

The MAFIT team, as do most, did have some issues that had to be worked through. The biggest issue, that I believe we have recently resolved, was to get members to make that initial "call out" other task force members. As with any growing organization, hurdles must be overcome. We have utilized MAFIT most recently on a couple of fires that involved fatalities and on a few large-dollar losses.

I would encourage other cities across the state to see if a task force approach is feasible. You do not have to be a large metropolitan area to have a task force. The more resources and expertise one can incorporate into a team related to fire and arson investigation, the more comprehensive the team will be. In times of budget shortfalls and limited personnel and resources, we are finding ourselves "doing more with less." I would be more than happy to assist you in helping develop a local task force, such as the one we have in Des Moines, along with the assistance from my colleagues from the ATF and the State Fire Marshal's Office. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the IAAI or the Iowa Chapter IAAI.

Please, if you have any suggestions for improvements or changes to the newsletter send me an e-mail at:
bnelson@gmrc.com