

FIRE FAX

VOLUME 33

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ISSUE 3

FROM THE DESK OF



Dan Roberts

2nd VICE PRESIDENT

Greetings fellow chapter members! I hope this finds you all in good health and happiness. I want to start by talking about the conference and the tough decision the board came to on this. First of all, it was not easy to even consider cancelling our annual conference. The conference, to me, means meeting with many chapter members that we don't get to see, collaborating, learning and enjoying time together with a common goal in mind. With that being said, we looked at several things about how the conference would be affected by COVID-19. The first was liability. We found that there was some risk to the chapter if someone would contract COVID while

attending the conference. Our attorneys from the board reported that it would be possible for us to be sued from this. Second, we looked at attendance. Just from the board stance alone we had 5 different companies or departments that currently had travel and/or training restrictions from their respective employer. We also heard from others of travel/training restrictions from their employers. The third thing we examined was our contract with the hotel and whether we would be able to meet it or be able to come out without a major loss financially after the conference. With all these things considered, we found that there was a liability risk and that we may not be able to meet our minimum number of room nights needed to avoid a large penalty from the hotel. Our board members spoke with the hotel and found out we could move the conference back a year with them and not incur a loss. So that is how we came to our decision.

This year has changed the way many of us do things. Things like meetings with groups of investigators or co-workers now are done virtually. This brings me to my next topic. We had several people ask about the conference being

broadcasted virtually. This brings up several issues. Obviously, as previously stated, we generally have a number of room nights reserved/sold that we typically have to meet with our site hotel. Also, we have the cost of speakers that is normally covered by your conference registration fee. So, I bring to you the chance to speak up and let your voices be heard. What are your thoughts on allowing the conference to be broadcasted to members? Do you have suggestions on how to improve our conference? I ask all of you to think about this and research the possibilities. We are in an era of changing times and ways and we have to be able to flow with change and bring the best possible training and information to you the member.

With the conference being delayed a year, we will still have our annual meeting. We are currently working out the details on this, but it will most likely be a virtual meeting. There are a lot of details to iron out with this, but we are examining as many options as possible to make sure the meeting occurs in the best way we can provide to you the member. We will also be making our lunch and

learns available for viewing either live or recorded via our website. Lastly, I would like to discuss our website. I currently am the one running the website. We changed from hiring someone to run the website for us to us handling and designing the website ourselves. This by no means was an easy task, but it is currently saving our chapter approximately \$40/mo. That being said, there are some things that may not work as fancy as a website created by a company, who specializes in such. I do currently have the ability for you to renew your membership on the website. Please remember that there are a couple steps in doing this and follow the directions on the webpage. I will also try to bring more training links to our webpage. Our previous webpage was only getting around 10 visits a month with the exception of conference time. I would like to double, if not triple, the number of visits we get to our webpage. I want you the member to find valuable information on this site. There is also a nomination form on the website for the current open board positions. If you know someone that is interested in being a board member, consider nominating them. If you have suggestions for improvement of our website or anything else that I can do to serve you better, please feel free to email me:

droberts@councilbluffs-ia.gov .

Stay safe,
Dan Roberts 2nd Vice President

FROM THE DESK OF



Joe Rodriguez

DIRECTOR OF DETECTION

Is There a Health and Safety Culture Change?

“Today’s fire scene is not like yesterday’s. As we learn more about the hazards fire investigators are exposed to, it becomes vitally important to understand the health and safety best practices all fire investigators should be following. While it is recognized and understood that every fire scene is different, the health risks associated with fire scenes are broad-based and apply to most every fire situation.”

--IAAI, Health and Safety Committee

I recently attended an IAAI live online class on Chapter 13 of NFPA 921, 2021 edition taught by Jeff Pauley, Chairperson for the Health and Safety Committee for IAAI. It was a very informative class with updates on changes to this chapter. I encourage you to attend these classes offered by the IAAI International since many in person conferences have been postponed for the health and safety of our members and our communities.

NFPA 921 Chapter 13 covers scene safety and special hazards, but I would like to address personal safety. It is a known fact

that fire investigators have a higher risk of contracting virtually any type of cancer. As you learned in the last Fairfax, we had a board member share his experience about an abnormality in one of his lab results during a routine physical. We are all vulnerable to these carcinogens that we cannot see with our naked eyes.

When I first started conducting fire investigations, I would wait until fire crews finished up their suppression operations and made sure that the four-gas (CO, H₂S, O₂, LEL) monitors were in safe ranges before I was cleared to enter the structure to start the scene investigation. I would don my gloves, hard hat, turnout gear or coveralls, eye protection, a dust mask, and of course the camera to document the scene. However, I rarely accounted for the hidden dangers that are in the post fire scenes, especially when digging the scene. Things have changed over time for the better for all. Recently, I was at the scene of a structure fire to conduct a joint origin and cause investigation with private fire investigators representing their clients. The fire had been extinguished for several days. After the briefing, I took a moment to observe everyone as they were gathering their equipment to get ready to conduct the scene examination.

I was pleased to see that most investigators were equipped with proper PPE and most had either a half-mask or a full-face air-purifying respirators (APR) with P100 particulate filter with OV/AG/FM gas/vapor cartridges. Our department has recently taken a stronger position towards health and safety in post-fire scenes by adopting policies, procedures, and equipment use during fire investigations

to coincide with industry best practices. We as individuals have to make our health the priority and wear our personal protective equipment when conducting our investigations.

There is ongoing research currently being conducted for fire investigators by London South Bank University and Firefighter Cancer Cohort Study with the University of Miami. Des Moines Fire Department fire investigators are taking part in the University of Miami research project. There are two pending projects with the Fire Protection Research Foundation and UL Fire Safety Research Institute.

Please take a moment to read the 2nd edition Fire Investigator Health and Safety Best Practices white paper at this link:

<https://www.firearson.com/Publications-Resources/Fire-Investigation-Resources/Health-Safety.aspx>

Please be safe and take care of yourself, physically and mentally!

FROM THE DESK OF



Cory Bengel
DIRECTOR EAST

Greetings Iowa IAAI Chapter members. Allow me to start out by introducing myself. I was elected by our membership at the September 2019 annual seminar as the Director at Large East. I currently

work in the public sector as a Fire Marshal for the City of Ottumwa. My job duties include fire investigations, inspections, public education as well as I am second to the Fire Chief so I also carry out administrative functions.

I began my career as a volunteer firefighter in 2001 and began my career with Ottumwa in 2003. I worked on shift until 2012 when I was promoted to this position. In 2014, I completed the Iowa Law Enforcement Basic Academy. I am the first Ottumwa Fire Marshal to become a peace officer and doing this has expanded my reach and abilities as a fire investigator. Since becoming a peace officer, the assistance from my local law enforcement has increased tremendously. I now have the ability to write and execute search warrants, complete and file complaint and affidavits, and be more active in the criminal investigations.

In January of this year, I traveled to the ATF for the Advanced Fire Origin and Cause two week course in Huntsville, Alabama. The resources available to the ATF are second to none when it comes to the instruction of this type of class. The course is very in-depth and they bring in the top instructors in their related fields. The hospitality that the ATF staff put forth is also very welcoming. As with any conference or courses we fire investigators attend, the networking is likely the best part. I highly recommend this course to anyone looking to improve your skills and learn from the best in our field.

As the only fire investigator in a fairly busy department, I have learned that I have to rely on all my resources and not be shy to ask for help when needed. I have often reached out to many of you via

email or phone calls to bounce ideas off of you or ask you for help. Use your resources and never be ashamed to ask your colleagues for help. I am sure you will not be turned away.

I hope to serve my time on the IAAI board well and hope that we can keep this organization thriving as we move through these troubling times. Every year I look forward to the fall conference and getting away for a few days, hopefully we can have our conference in 2021.



Iowa IAAI
ANNUAL MEETING
September 10, 2020
At 1:00pm VIRTUAL

Details will be sent by email

SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATIONS:
Reynold C. Hentges
Memorial Scholarship
Applications accepted by mail or email. See website for application form.

Deadline extended to:

August 31, 2020

www.iowaiaaichapter.org



**Iowa IAAI
Fire Investigation
SEMINAR &
ANNUAL MEETING
(postponed until)
September 7-9, 2021
CEDAR RAPIDS MARRIOTT**

**BOARD POSITIONS
OPEN FOR THE
UPCOMING YEAR:**

- President**
- 1st Vice President**
- 2nd Vice President**
- Secretary/Treasurer**
- Director of Insurance**
- Director of Prosecution**

Nominations will be accepted by mail, email, and at the annual meeting. See website for nomination form.

www.iowaiaaichapter.org

RECALLS

Product recalls:
(<https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>)
and Underwriter Laboratories
(<https://www.ul.com/>) detailing a variety
of faulty products that are a fire hazard,
to name a few:



Name of product:
Home Accents Holiday artificial
Christmas trees
Hazard:
The Christmas tree's foot-pedal con-
troller can overheat, posing a burn
hazard.

Remedy:
Replace
Recall date:
July 23, 2020
Units:
About 99,000 (another 5,100 were
sold in Canada)

SOFA



Name of product:
Mattress on the Go folding mat-
tresses
Hazard:
The mattresses fail to meet the man-
datory federal flammability standard
for mattresses, posing a fire hazard.

Remedy:
Repair
Recall date:
July 22, 2020
Units:
About 1,600



2018 - 2020 Ranger XP

Name of product:
Greenpan SimmerLite Dutch Ovens
with Lid
Hazard:
The lid on the Dutch oven can ex-
plode while it is inside the oven, pos-
ing injury and burn hazards to the
consumer.

Remedy:
Refund
Replace
Recall date:
July 22, 2020
Units:
About 11,160



Name of product:
Model Year 2015-2020 AXYS Trail
Performance and Crossover snow-
mobiles
Hazard:
The fuel hose can be improperly se-
cured, posing a fire hazard to con-
sumers.

Remedy:
Repair
Recall date:
July 16, 2020
Units:
About 41,200 (In addition, about
16,100 units were sold in Canada)



Name of product:

Riveted Mesh Floor Lamps

Hazard:

The lamp's on/off foot switch can overheat, melt or catch fire, posing a fire hazard.

Remedy:

Refund

Recall date:

July 9, 2020

Units:

About 1,180 (in addition, about 54 were sold in Canada)



Name of product:

Edwards Mechanical Heat Detectors

Hazard:

The recalled heat detectors can fail to activate in reaction to rising temperatures, posing a risk of failure to alert consumers to a fire.

Remedy:

Replace

Recall date:

June 17, 2020

Units:

About 85,000



Name of product:

Charging Cable for Relay Screenless Communication Devices

Hazard:

The charging cable can overheat and partially melt, posing a burn hazard.

Remedy:

Replace

Recall date:

June 17, 2020

Units:

About 15,000



Name of product:

Rainbow SRX Vacuums

Hazard:

The circuit board on the vacuum can spark, posing fire and burn hazards.

Remedy:

Repair

Recall date:

June 17, 2020

Units:

About 38,000 (In addition, about 4,800 sold in Canada)



Name of product:

Bunz Kidz Children's Sleepwear Sets

Hazard:

The children's sleepwear sets fail to meet the federal flammability standard for children's sleepwear which requires sleepwear to be either snug-fitting or flame resistant, posing a risk of burn injuries to children.

Remedy:

Refund

Recall date:

May 20, 2020

Units:

About 6,600



Name of product:

Garia Golf & Courtesy battery-powered electric vehicles

Hazard:

A fuse can overheat and melt while the electric vehicle is charging, posing a fire hazard.

Remedy:

Repair

Recall date:

May 14, 2020

Units:

About 1,000



Name of product:

Noah Reverse Fleece Hoodies

Hazard:

The Reverse Fleece Hoodie fails to meet the federal flammability standards for clothing textiles, posing a risk of burn injuries to consumers.

Remedy:

Refund

Recall date:

May 7, 2020

Units:

About 1,400 (In addition, about 165 were sold in Canada.)

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

**This edition of Firefox was presented by
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