

Fire GUARD

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A Publication of the Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts

Summer 2024

William "Bill" Hoffmeister

By: Chief Jim Grady III, retired, Frankfort FD, IFCA-ED

Bill Hoffmeister past President of the NIAFPD passed away and as his obituary stated the world became lonelier and many of us lost a good friend.

Bill was a Trustee for the Frankfort FPD where he served as President and chair of the districts personnel committee. Bill brought a business perspective to the district board and was a great asset for us with personnel especially during our time of transition from all volunteer to a career organization. As Chief I had the opportunity to work with Bill very closely on a number of issues and he was a mentor and voiced his concerns and or approvals. One thing for sure, Bill supported the entire organization always willing to meet, to talk, to make end roads but never comprised on the safety aspects for the members or the community.



Through the FPD Bill was introduced to the NIAFPD where I truly believe he found a second home. Bill enjoyed attending functions where he could see that Frankfort found great information that helped us tremendously. Bill along with Trustee Don Lorenz made a commitment to the young NIAFPD very early on to attend all conferences, meetings and special trainings & also get involved, and Bill volunteered never looking back.

Bill joined the NIAFPD Board as a representative and then President. For me Bill along with all our Trustees' support for the NIAFPD made my involvement an easy task for participation and we gathered some great information and met some of the best in the fire service through the NIAFPD.

OK I would be remised if I did not interject a quip about Bill. Yes, it is true he is shorter than most if not all elected officials. During a trip to Washington for the Fire Service Congress we had the opportunity to have a photo session with a few of our congressman and Bill was the shortest in the picture and WE did not let him forget that. Past-President Ron Kabuki and Bill became close friends sharing ideas, thoughts and planning for the future of the organization. I will leave Ron's stories about Bill to him, but Ron's nickname was Ronnie Cubes, Bill had nicknames for many of us, but I will not go down that path (haha).

In all seriousness Bill was in his element meeting with folks and talking about the Fire Service of Illinois. Bill was truly a giant during our discussions on the hill or in Springfield.

Bill, was a regular visitor at our home where he not only had dinner and or lunch but watched our kids grow along with our grandchildren. Bill was known by several names but mainly the grand-daughters just called him Whizzo! He loved celebrating St. Patrick's Day with us where he reminded me of my heritage and the fact that Irish pubs are too loud, but he did enjoy a small Guinness.

I am not here to write a eulogy about Bill, but to just say that Bill was a good friend, a good boss and a solid member of the NIAFPD. His friendships were many and I feel it is safe to say that he felt that was about Ron Kubicki who he called best pal, (next to me of course). He loved the NIAFPD board members and appreciate the hard work and dedication shown to the organization. As I close, I say to Billy – Love you Pal you will be missed and the NIAFPD will miss you.

Bill's Obituary is on Page 5

Letter from President Bonnie Bayser

Hello to Everyone!

Hope everyone is doing well and enjoying the summer heat. Soon the leaves will be falling and colors turning, so enjoy the last of our summer.

Thank you to everyone who attended the 31st NIAPD conference in February. I am sure you will agree it was both informative, educational, and allowed time for networking. Kudos to our Board, conference committee, speakers, and sponsors for their support. The conference committee is working hard on our next conference January 31- February 1, 2025.

As was announced, Chuck and I moved to Oak Trace in Downers Grove in April. Having to leave my Trustee position at Huntley Fire Protection District was extremely difficult, but I am happy to report and honored to remain as a Director with NIAFPD but will step down as President. I will pass the baton to my fellow Director and colleague Corky Corless commissioner of Algonquin Lake In The Hills Fire District.

It has been my honor being your President. I am proud of all this organization has accomplished since being part of this organization. We, as a board, will continue to work together serving our membership. Thanks to all, Bonnie



Letter from Executive Director Gina Degleffetti



Greetings to all members and supporters,

As we move through the summer, the Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts (NIAFPD) is focusing on advancing legislative efforts that support and enhance fire protection services across Northern Illinois. Your involvement is crucial in shaping effective policies and advocating for our shared goals.

If you come across a relevant legislative bill or have ideas for new proposals, please contact me directly at admin@niafpd.org. Include as much detail as possible, such as bill numbers, key provisions, and how it might impact fire service operations. Your proactive engagement will help ensure that our collective voice is heard in the legislative process.

In addition to legislative updates, we will continue to keep you informed about our other initiatives, including upcoming training events, grant opportunities, and community outreach programs.

We look forward to your contributions and insights. Together, let's make a lasting impact on the future of fire service legislation.

Stay safe and engaged, Gina Degleffetti, Executive Director





Springfield Legislative Update

By: Liz Brown-Reeves and Samantha Brill, NIAFPD Lobbyist



The Illinois General Assembly remains adjourned until the Fall Veto Session. Fall Veto Session this year is November 12 – 14 and November 19 - 21. The dates for Lame Duck Session have not yet been announced. All legislation passed during the 2024 Spring Legislative Session has been forwarded to the Governor for consideration. The Governor has 60 days from receipt of the legislation to take action.

With the appointment of Senator Ann Gillespie as Director of the Illinois Department of Insurance, State Representative Mark Walker was appointed to replace Gillespie in the 27th Senate District. Local Democrats appointed Arlington Heights Village Trustee Nicolle Grasse to replace former Representative Mark Walker in the 53rd House District.

The Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts introduced two pieces of legislation this session. The first legislative measure is intended to halt lawsuits and confusion regarding Accumulation of Funds outside of the single Corporate Fund. [HB 4359](#) (Canty/Edly-Allen) now allows for an accumulation of funds in an Ambulance Fund as well as an Emergency and Rescue Fund. This bill is now before the Governor awaiting his signature.

The second legislative measure introduced [HB 4568](#) (Hanson) sought to allow a dozen fire protection districts who were required by law to start up an Article 4 Firefighters Pension Fund for its full-time members who currently lack the ability to levy property taxes in a Pension Fund. This bill was heard and successfully passed out of the House Revenue Committee on a vote of 11-2 but was unable to move any further this session.

Additional Fire bills that passed the House and Senate:

[HB 4460](#) (Gill/Cunningham) requires every self-insured county and municipality across the state to provide coverage for marriage and couples counseling for firefighters and police officers. Currently, insurance plans for fire responders are not required to cover marriage or couples counseling because it is not considered a diagnosable mental health condition.

[HB 5085](#) (Davis/Villivalam) clarifies the definition of clinical observations to include medical and mental health observations to better equip ambulance personnel to respond to mental health emergencies and receive reimbursement. The bill will

also allow an EMS system to provide education outside of just their region.

[HB 5561](#) (Evans/Castro) strengthens the current law prohibiting employers from taking retaliatory action against employees who blow the whistle on unlawful practices, including public health or safety threats, in the workplace. The bill gives the Attorney General the ability to act on behalf of workers whose employers have retaliated against them.

[SB 2702](#) (Villivalam/Kelly) clarifies existing language that a fire sprinkler inspector is not allowed to work for multiple fire sprinkler contractors at the same time.

[SB 2737](#) (Faraci/Guerrero-Cuellar) prohibits non-compete and non-solicitation agreements for mental health services that support first responders and veterans. Current agreements will be void if they result in an undue burden on first responders or veterans seeking mental health services from licensed mental health professionals.

[SB 2879](#) (Halpin/Manley) is a reintroduction from previous sessions regarding changing the minimum threshold for competitive bidding from the current \$20,000 to \$30,000. The introduced bill was amended to restore the current \$20,000 threshold, but with the ability for a board of trustees buying directly from a dealer/manufacturer in excess of \$50,000, the contract must be from the lowest responsible bidder. (Public Act 103-0634)

[SB 3585](#) (Hastings/Guerrero-Cuellar) requires any self-insured county or municipality that provides health insurance coverage to first responders must include mental health counseling without any cost-sharing requirements on patients.

Office of the State Fire Marshall Grant Opportunity:

The Office of the State Fire Marshall recently announced the application period will open soon for the Fire Station Construction and Rehabilitation Grant. The Grant program will provide up to \$350,000 for the construction or rehabilitation of fire stations. In order to be eligible for these grants, the department must have an active registration with SAM.gov and also registered in the state's Grantee Portal. Rules for the program are being finalized and the application is set to go live any day.



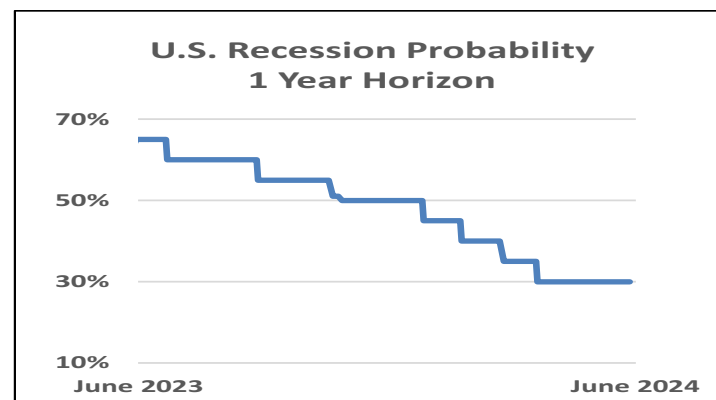
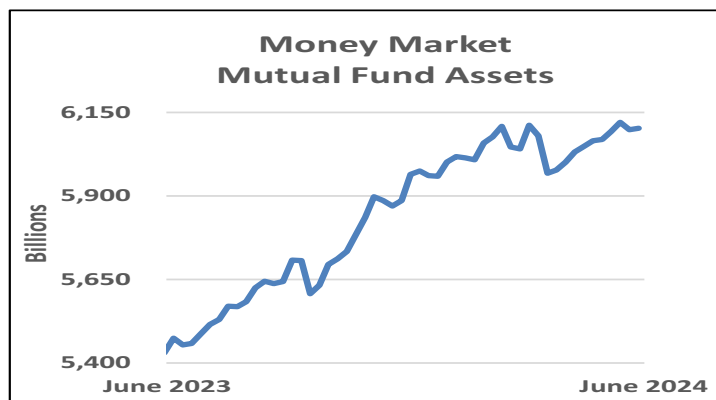
Federal Reserve Rate Action Remains on Hold

By: Thomas S. Sawyer, Managing Partner, Edward J. Lavin, Chief Investment Officer
Sawyer Falduto Asset Management, LLC

Key Economic Observations

General economic conditions remain strong despite headwinds from inflation. Although Inflation has shown signs of moderating, the data continues to exceed the Federal Reserve target of 2.0%. Consumer spending remains resilient, but signs of fatigue are beginning to appear in some sectors. Market consensus now calls for one to two Fed Funds Rate cuts during 2024, with the first cut in September. Short-term interest rates remain at multi-year highs. Recently, the Fed has generally kept any rate guidance "close to the vest" indicating the economic data will guide any interest rate decision. Attractive short-term interest rates are driving an increase in money market fund holdings.

Equity markets posted another strong quarter led by AI-related momentum. Consumer confidence is showing signs of weakening amid growing economic concerns although retail sales remain resilient. The probability of a U.S. recession over the next year continues to decline.

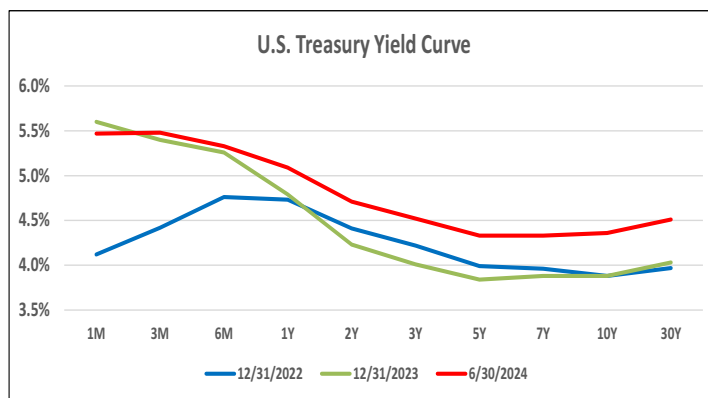


Fixed Income Overview

The Federal Reserve met twice during the second quarter leaving the Fed Funds Rate unchanged at 5.50%. Persistent inflation levels and resilient economic indicators have kept the Fed on hold. Fixed

income markets currently anticipate two potential Fed Funds Rate cuts during 2024.

As indicated in the graph below, the U.S. Treasury Yield Curve moved marginally higher during the second quarter while maintaining an inverted shape. As indicated in the Money Market Mutual Fund Assets graph above, short-term maturities continue to attract investors seeking yield and safety. That said, maturities between 2 and 5 years are starting to garner more attention from investors looking to lock-in yields. Additionally, look for increased discussion of potential quantitative easing actions by the Federal Reserve, which could well influence yields on intermediate to longer-term securities.



The resulting increase in the popularity of money market funds is understandable. Money market funds, which offer daily (or next day) liquidity, continue to offer annualized yields exceeding 5%.

District Portfolio Considerations

The current short-term interest rate environment has certainly captured the interest of investors of all types, public funds and otherwise. Most of our Fire Protection Districts (and other public/municipal entities) have relatively short-term, conservative fixed income portfolio structures as dictated by investment policy to guide District reserve funds. Most recently, we have been active in targeting fixed income maturities to anticipated capital needs ranging from apparatus purchases to the construction of new facilities. For reserve funds, we have started to add securities with somewhat longer maturities (1 to 2 years) to lock in yields in anticipation of Fed Funds rate reductions.

We always finish with the reminder that most readers of the Fire Guard invest cash reserves in conservative portfolios with limited interest rate, credit and market risk as guided by statute and investment policy. While statutory guidelines allow investment in corporate and municipal securities (within certain parameters), investment policy guidelines are the primary tool for managing risk across

economic and interest rate cycles. We welcome the opportunity to review your investment policy and current portfolio structure with you. As always, portfolio diversification and sound policy guidelines provide the foundation for consistent long-term returns and risk management.

"The allocation to all available asset classes should be determined with careful consideration given to factors such as statutory guidelines, investment time horizon, liquidity requirements, diversification and risk tolerance. The resulting asset allocation should be well documented in your investment policy and guidelines. Information contained in this commentary is solely the opinion of the author and obtained from sources believed to be reliable. Accuracy can not be guaranteed. Past performance is not predictive of future returns."



The FPIF Election Panel met on August 1, 2024, to approve the initial Slate of Candidates for the 2024 Executive Trustee Election. Voters will elect two Executive Trustees to serve four-year terms on December 2, 2024.

**FPIF Initial Slate of Candidates
2024 Executive Trustee Election**

Karl Langhammer
(Treasurer, Carol Stream Fire Protection District)
David Pileski (Mayor, Village of Roselle)
Michael Troup (Mayor, City of Quincy)

Members of the public may review candidate nominating petitions, and eligible individuals can challenge the validity of the petition validation process or the candidacy itself, according to the election rules specified in the FPIF Consolidated Rules available on the FPIF website.

The FPIF Election Panel will finalize the Slate of Candidates by August 21, 2024. The Panel is scheduled to meet next on August 16, 2024, at 10:00 AM.

William Hoffmeister | May 30, 1936 - June 15, 2024

The world became a lot lonelier with the passing of William (Bill) Hoffmeister. Born at home in Chicago, IL on May 30, 1936 to William and Anna (Rogers) and passed away on June 15, 2024. We lost a devoted Father, Papa, Brother, Uncle, Godfather, Friend, and Confidant.

Dad was initially employed at Rock Island Railroad and then left to enlist in the Coast Guard at Cape May, New Jersey. He also attended Machinist Mates School at Great Lakes, Illinois. He was stationed in Miami and St. Petersburg, Florida and sailed the seas to Cuba, Hawaii, Guam, Wake Island, Philippines, and Japan. Upon returning home, Dad continued at the Rock Island Railroad in the freight department and then went on to work 30+ years in the import/export business. He was a member of the International Trade Club of Chicago, Ocean Freight Agents Association and the Western Michigan, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis Trade Clubs.

After moving to Frankfort in 1972, Dad volunteered for various clubs and organizations. He was also involved for over 37 years as a trustee with the Frankfort Fire Department. He also was a past President of the Northern Illinois Alliance. Through these organizations, dad met so many people who then became dear friends for life.

Preceding Dad in death were his parents, brother Douglas, step mother Marion, and brother in laws, Andrew, John and sister in law Judy Hodolitz. Left to cherish his memory are his daughter Lisa (Randy) Segalla, son Daniel (Nadine) and granddaughter Caitlyn (Donny); devoted siblings, Jack (Anne), Bob, Don (Bev), Charlene, Tom (Sue), Barbara (Heinz), Darlene, Mark (MaryAnn); including in-laws Phyllis Herman, Pam Behrens (Roy) and Tommy (Gail), 32 nieces and nephews, 55 great nieces and nephews and 5 great great nieces and 2 great nephews. Special friends include Jack Augutis, Frank and Mary Schryner, James Grady and family, Marilyn Kurtz, Tommy and Michelle Vana, Heidi Hermes, Ron Kubicki, Bob Buhs, Bill's Kurtz Girls, everyone at the Frankfort Fire Dept., Northern Illinois Alliance, and many more dear friends so numerous to mention.

We created a Facebook page if you would like to add a memory/story.
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61562703486298
In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made out to: One Hundred Club who provides assistance to the families of law enforcement, firefighters and other public safety who are killed in the line of duty while engaged in public service and in the employ of any agency within the County of Will, state of Illinois. 24600 Presidential Avenue, Plainfield, Illinois 60544 (815) 782-6787 <https://100clubwillcounty.com/>
Coast Guard Foundation. 394 Taugwonk Road Stonington, CT 06378 860-535-0786.
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation P.O. Drawer 498 Emmitsburg, MD 21727 www.firehero.org/donate/. (301) 447 1365
Dad will be missed beyond words.

Two New Laws Enhance Fire District Financial Operations

By Hayley Loufek, Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd.

Thanks to the efforts of the Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts (“NIAFPD”) and the Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts (“IAFPD”) the Illinois General Assembly has passed two beneficial bills and forwarded them to Governor J.B. Pritzker for signature. House Bill 4359 clarifies the ability of a fire district to make ambulance fund reserves for capital projects. Senate Bill 2879 loosens the bidding requirements imposed by Section 11k of the Fire Protection District Act. Thanks to the efforts of NIAFPD and IAFPD, each passed unanimously in the Illinois House and Senate. This Article describes the new legislative changes.

Accumulations Expressly Allowed in Ambulance and Emergency & Rescue Funds

House Bill 4359 provides relief to fire protection districts who have been faced with property tax objections in special purpose funds. Recently, certain tax objectors have accused fire districts of excess accumulation of funds. This legal theory prohibits government bodies from levying additional property taxes into funds that already contain two to three times the average annual expenditures from that specific fund. Some tax objectors have had success under this theory. They claim that fire protection districts were only allowed to accumulate funds in their corporate funds, given the explicit grant of authority for that in Section 14 of the Fire Protection District Act read. Yet, Sections 22 and 24 of the Act, which govern ambulance funds and rescue funds, respectively, did not make similar allowances.

House Bill 4359 provides express authority for fire districts to accumulate funds in their ambulance funds for the purposes of acquiring, building, or maintaining real property, procuring EMS vehicles or equipment, or training to essential EMS services to the community. 70 ILCS 705/22(f). The Bill further provides fire districts with authority to accumulate funds in their emergency & rescue funds for the purposes of acquiring, building, or maintaining real property for emergency and rescue purposes, procuring emergency rescue crews and equipment, or training to provide essential rescue, specialized rescue, and technical rescue services to the community. The Bill passed unanimously in the House and Senate.

The Bill now advances to Governor Pritzker, who is expected to sign it. This will codify fire districts’ long-existing practice of planning to pay future station, fleet, and other capital needs from their ambulance and rescue funds. It will also neuter any

tax objection arguments concerning excess accumulations in those funds.

Bidding Requirements Loosened

Recently passed Senate Bill 2879 amends Section 11k of the Fire Protection District Act (70 ILCS 705/11k) by increasing the size of contracts that must be let subject to a competitive bidding process. Presently, Section 11k requires all materials, services, and work over \$20,000 to be bid out. However, Senate Bill 2879 installs a new exception for purchases directly from an original equipment manufacturer or dealer.

In its original form, Senate Bill 2879 would have simply increased the competitive bidding expenditure threshold from the current \$20,000 to a suggested \$30,000 for all contracts for supplies, materials, or work. Facing opposition from the construction trades, the Bill was modified to return the expenditure level back to \$20,000 for “all contracts for supplies, materials, or work” as defined under Section 11k. However, it proposed competitive bidding for purchases over \$50,000 for the purchase of equipment “directly from a dealer or an original manufacturer.” The Bill passed unanimously thereafter.

After Governor Pritzker signs Senate Bill 2879, equipment purchases from a dealer or manufacturer will only need to be competitively bid when they exceed \$50,000 in the aggregate. The rules governing other expenditures over \$20,000 will remain unchanged. Nevertheless, Senate Bill 2879 offers much needed relief in an era of high inflation and skyrocketing costs.





Lessons Learned in a Whistleblower Case

by John H. Kelly; Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd.

Recently, the Illinois Appellate Court upheld a Kankakee County Circuit Court decision dismissing a lawsuit brought by a former member of the Manteno Community Fire Protection District. In *Cwik v. Manteno Community Fire Protection District*, Christopher Cwik was hired as a probationary firefighter by the Manteno Fire Department in March of 2020. 2024 IL App (3d) 230036-U. The District's Collective Bargaining Agreement ("CBA") defined the probationary period of twelve months and limited employees' right to contest discipline during probation.

In November 2020, Cwik responded to a structure fire. He was injured at the scene. Cwik blamed violations of the District's response and fire attack procedures for his injuries. So, he purportedly reported them to the Fire Chief and his Battalion Chief immediately after the fire. He also complained to another Battalion Chief and two Lieutenants. A month later, he again brought up the issues to the Fire Chief. Importantly, Cwik did not report these supposed policy violations to anyone outside of the District.

In December 2020, the Fire Chief informed Cwik that he had not successfully completed his probationary period. The Chief's decision was premised on Cwik's performance—not his complaints concerning the November fire. The Chief provided Cwik with a memo documenting his termination and also informed the District's Board of Trustees.

Shortly after Cwik's termination, he filed a lawsuit in the Circuit Court of Kankakee County contending that he was fired because of his complaint about the violations of the District's policies. Cwik's complaint named not only the District, but also the Fire Chief individually. The Circuit Court dismissed Cwik's complaint, finding that he had not adequately stated a cause of action against the District or the Fire Chief. Cwik then appealed. The Appellate Court upheld the dismissal of Cwik's case. Although the court's order is non-precedential, it contains several valuable lessons.

First, the Appellate Court confirmed that probationary employees may not have rights under the Firemen's Disciplinary Act. 50 ILCS 745/1. The first count of Cwik's complaint alleged that the District violated the terms of the CBA by failing to provide him with the rights outlined in the Act. The Court disposed of this claim by finding that the District followed the language of the contract which provided that probationary employees could be terminated without cause and without any recourse to the grievance procedure to contest his termination. The Court pointed out that probationary employees are only guaranteed rights or procedural due process if the employer creates those rights. And here, no such rights were afforded to probationary firefighters like Cwik.

The upshot is that fire districts should review their personnel policies to make sure that they have not inadvertently created protections for probationary employees. On the other hand, employers should remember that, in other contexts, disciplinary processes should be conducted in the manner prescribed by the Act.

The second lesson to be gleaned from Cwik is that merely complaining about potential rule violations will not give rise to a claim under the Illinois Whistleblower Act, 740 ILCS 174/1 et seq. The Whistleblower Act is designed to protect employees who report violations of state or federal law, rule, or regulation. The law is designed to protect those who report illegal activity. Cwik's complaint alleged that he reported violations of various departmental policies and procedures to the District's upper management. Yet, the violations Cwik reported were not violations of federal or state law, rules, or regulations. District policies, no matter how important, are not the equivalent of law or regulations for whistleblowing purposes. The Appellate Court therefore concluded that a violation of an employer's internal policies or procedures does not support a claim for a violation of the Whistleblower Act.

Third, and relatedly, the Cwik decision demonstrates that individuals cannot be sued under the Whistleblower Act. In addition to the District, Cwik named the Chief as a defendant. However, the Act was designed to address employer retaliation. The Appellate Court observed that Cwik's employer was the District—not the Fire Chief—so, the Chief could not have been made a defendant. In summary, fire departments and fire chiefs should follow procedures applicable to probationary employees as outlined in District policy or any applicable CBA. It is also important to understand the provisions of the Illinois Whistleblower Act and, if confronted with potential violations of federal or state laws, rules, or regulations, treat those reports with the appropriate degree of concern and, if the employee makes those reports to federal or state enforcement agencies, to not take any action against that employee in retaliation for those reports. However, as Cwik demonstrates, these provisions have limits. If you are confronted with a situation involving the Firemen's Disciplinary Act or the Whistleblower Act, we recommend you partner with counsel immediately.

John H. Kelly is a partner with the law firm of Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd. in Naperville. Mr. Kelly focuses his local government practice on public employment, pension, and administrative law as it relates to police and fire departments and public safety communications. You can reach Mr. Kelly by e-mail at jkelly@ottosenlaw.com



Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal

OSFM Announces \$4 Million in Funding for the Small Equipment Grant Program

All interested departments should send an application to OSFM electronically or postmarked no later than October 1, 2024

Springfield, Ill- The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) today announced the application period is open for the Small Equipment Grant Program. The OSFM will award \$4 million to eligible fire departments and ambulance services for the purchase of small firefighting and ambulance equipment. All interested departments should send an application to OSFM electronically or postmarked no later than October 1, 2024.

"First responders put their lives on the line every single day to protect our communities and it's our responsibility to provide our heroes with the equipment they need to make their work safer," said **Governor JB Pritzker**. "That's why we're making \$4 million available in small equipment grants to empower fire departments and EMS providers throughout Illinois with state-of-the-art safety equipment. I encourage all eligible departments to apply to ensure they have the best resources to protect our communities and support our dedicated first responders."

"My goal as Illinois State Fire Marshal is to help enhance programs such as our Small Equipment Grant Program to provide as much funding as possible for departments/districts across the state. We hear the need daily, and departments shouldn't have to decide between putting fuel in their trucks or providing the needed equipment for their members to protect their communities safely and effectively," said **Illinois State Fire Marshal James A. Rivera**.

The Small Equipment Grant Program was established to provide grants of up to \$26,000 to eligible departments. A total of \$4 million was awarded to 168 fire departments/districts and EMS providers across the state during the last grant cycle in April.

This program is an innovative approach to a problem that has long caused difficulties for the fire departments and not-for-profit ambulance services in Illinois, particularly those that have hardships in generating the necessary revenue for small equipment. The grants allow eligible applicants the opportunity to purchase small tools and equipment that they may otherwise not be able to purchase. In addition to firefighting per-

sonal protective equipment (PPE), applicants can also apply for personal infection control items such as masks, gowns, and gloves this application cycle. Most Illinois fire departments, fire protection districts, and township fire departments are eligible to apply. In addition, stand-alone, not-for-profit ambulance service providers are eligible to apply.

All applicants are required to have participated in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) for a minimum of two years prior to applying. The OSFM will require departments to be current from October 2022 through September 2024. Fire departments are required to report all incidents responded to, including ambulance calls.

Additional information including the application can be found here:

<https://sfm.illinois.gov/iam/firedepartment/grants-and-loans.html>

Completed applications should be submitted to:
Office of the State Fire Marshal
Small Equipment Grant Program
1035 Stevenson Drive
Springfield, IL 62703

Contact: JC Fultz • 217-685-2041 • jc.fultz@illinois.gov

Meet Our Newest Team Member – Joan Koriath, Itasca FPD

Joan Koriath is the Assistant Director of Administration & Planning at the Itasca Fire Protection District. With over ten years of experience in municipal government, specializing in organizational improvement, process and efficiency through collaboration with a focus on how to best service the community. Joan lives the mission and vision of the organization. Always with a smile, she loves a deep dive into a challenging problem. She is constantly looking for ways to make the organization the best place to work. Joan holds a Master's degree in Organizational Development from Loyola University – Chicago. Her family, husband George, daughter Lillian, son Elliott and her nephews Dylan and Wyatt, grounds her. In her free time, Joan is a writer, working on several projects.

Joan has recently joined the NIAFPD and will work alongside Gina on administrative and financial duties.



Welcome New Board Members

Stephanie Mitchell

Homer Township Fire Protection District

Autumn Sheppard

Carpentersville & Countryside Fire Protection District



SAVE THE DATE

4th Annual
**ILLINOIS COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION
ONE DAY
CONFERENCE**

DATE:
NOVEMBER 1, 2024

LOCATION:
ILLINOIS FIRE SERVICE INSTITUTE
11 Gerty Drive – Champaign, Illinois

More details coming soon: **ILLINOISCR.COM**

OPTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT DEPOSITORS

WINTRUST MAXSAFE® MUNICIPAL DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS

You can receive more than \$7 million in FDIC insurance with our Wintrust MaxSafe Municipal Deposit Account! MaxSafe is an innovative and unmatched investment alternative that increases the amount of FDIC insurance coverage provided to local government entities up to \$3.75 million per ownership category, by spreading deposits across Wintrust's individually chartered banks. With a MaxSafe account, funds are deposited on behalf of a customer and a single consolidated statement and one tax document are provided at the end of the year.

How can we offer this unparalleled level of protection while other banks are limited? By depositing your funds across a group of our affiliated community banks. MaxSafe increases your audit control, gives you accurate financial reporting, offers a competitive return, and gives you added security.

For in-state accounts, you can receive up to \$3.75 million in FDIC insurance for the combined amount of all interest bearing accounts including time deposits, savings accounts, money market deposit accounts, and NOW accounts. Separately, you can also receive up to \$3.5 million in FDIC insurance for the combined amount of all interest-bearing and noninterest-bearing demand deposit accounts. This gives you more than \$7 million in FDIC insurance.



GREAT LAKES ADVISORS

Great Lakes Advisors, a Wintrust Wealth Management Company, offers customized, proprietary asset management services to private clients, as well as institutional investors. The portfolio managers at Great Lakes Advisors create and manage U.S. equity and fixed income portfolios of typically more than \$1 million.

Great Lakes Advisors uses sophisticated investment management tools to make asset allocation recommendations, select individual securities, and build custom tailored portfolios that are consistent with each client's objectives and risk tolerance. Using a common philosophy designed to achieve superior performance with less risk, along with a successful process for implementing that philosophy, their institutional group manages the assets of a wide range of clients including police and firefighters' pension funds, religious organizations, foundations, and endowments.

Investments products such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds are not insured by the FDIC or any federal government agency, not bank guaranteed or a bank deposit, and may lose value. For more information about Great Lakes Advisors, please visit their website at www.greatlakesadvisors.com.



Camp I Am Me Receives FEMA Assistance to Firefighter Grant Award of \$299,047 to Support Be Alarmed! Smoke Alarm Installation Program

Camp I Am Me by Illinois Fire Safety Alliance is proud to announce that it has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Assistance to Firefighter Grant (AFG) program. This \$299,047 grant will enable Camp I Am Me to purchase 16,000 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms and 400 bed shaker smoke alarm aids for hard-of-hearing and deaf residents.

The AFG grant provides 95% of the funds of \$299,047 with a 5% match of \$14,952 from Camp I Am Me.

Dennis Bryar, Vice-President of Camp I Am Me, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "We are thrilled that FEMA/AFT will help us further our mission by providing residents across the state with this lifesaving equipment. This grant is a game-changer for our communities allowing us to expand our impact and extend assistance to those with hearing impairments."

These devices will support the [Be Alarmed! Smoke Alarm Installation Program](#), which is a fire safety education and smoke alarm installation program administered cooperatively between Camp I Am Me and the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal. The program distributes fire safety education materials and 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms to fire departments in the state of Illinois. The departments then deliver the education while installing smoke alarms in at-risk homes within their communities.



"The Be Alarmed! Program helps save lives across the state and the funds received through the AFG Grant will help to enhance this program by providing even more lifesaving alarms to fire departments to install alarms in homes across the state," said Illinois State Fire Marshal James A. Rivera. "It's simple, working smoke alarms save lives."

This grant will make it possible to provide these critical devices to more than 280 Illinois fire departments currently participating in the Be Alarmed! program, equipping thousands of homes with smoke alarms and ensuring that countless residents can be alerted swiftly in the event of a fire.

Camp I Am Me supporter U.S. Congressman Mike Quigley noted, "I am pleased to have worked alongside Camp I Am Me to help them secure this grant. A working smoke alarm can mean the difference between life and death. Now, thousands of Illinoisans can go to sleep at night knowing they are prepared and protected from potential danger in their homes. This grant also helps our dedicated firefighters arrive earlier and hopefully save a home or better yet, save a life."

To learn more about Camp I Am Me and the Be Alarmed! Program, visit www.IFSA.org/alarms.

Pre-approved Federal Grant for your Fire District

Author Brent Frank

Former President Lisle-Woodridge Fire Protection District; member Du-Comm Board of Directors

The Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology named DoIT (www.doit.illinois.gov) offers programs to assist your District in identifying, detecting and preventing Cyber-attacks. Funded through grants, the offerings are free to your District. CrowdStrike software is available for 3 years in addition to a comprehensive Cyber Risk Assessment to Fire Protection Districts. The software provides monitoring to prevent malicious cyber activity. The Cyber Risk review helps Districts identify weaknesses in Cyber infrastructure. The program is funded with Federal Grants through Illinois DoIT. The best news is that all Fire Districts are pre-approved, all you or your IT provider needs to do is ask.

The original Federal grants issued in 2018 were provided to monitor the local election process working with County Clerks. The success of the program expanded to state entities and municipalities including Fire Protection Districts. DoIT is the agency providing the management and support for Illinois municipal government entities including backend support and monitoring in their security center in Springfield Illinois.

CrowdStrike (www.crowdstrike.com) software is designed to protect systems by providing 24x7x 365 monitoring. The cloud based software enhances the ability to detect and withstand cyber-attacks.

The DoIT contact for Fire Protection Districts is:

Jerry Joel

Cyber Navigator

IL Department of Innovation and Technology

224-595-8075

jerry.joel@illinois.gov



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