

# Fire GUARD

[www.niafpd.org](http://www.niafpd.org)



A Publication of the Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts

*Fall 2021*

## Cybersecurity Awareness 5 Simple Steps You Take to Minimize Your Online Risk

*By Stephen Taylor, Chief Executive Officer & Technology Consultant at LeadingIT*

In Kubler Ross' five stages of grief, the last step is acceptance and hope. Let's apply the same concept here—there's no way we can win the war against cybercrime without understanding and accepting that the situation is wanting and working to make it better. You can begin by understanding the trends in cybersecurity and accept how dire the situation is. Is cybercrime on the rise? A resounding YES. Cybercrime Magazine predicts that by 2025, businesses will be losing up to \$10.5 billion annually to cybercriminals. According to Titanium, more than 90% of U.S. organizations registered increments in attempted and successful attacks in 2020.

So, what do you do? Do you sit pretty and wait to see how deep the rabbit hole goes? Or do you keep hoping and working to solve this menace? Wait, is there even a solution? If so, what is it?

### **How to Protect Your Organization from Cyberattacks**

Here's the thing—there's no surefire protection against data breaches. Even the most advanced cybersecurity systems are prone to compromise. And that's where you begin, appreciating that you're never safe enough. With that in mind, here are a few power tips to safeguard your networks from the bad guys:

#### **Maintain Reliable, Up-To-Date Backups**

Ransomware is one of the most prevalent and lethal cyber attack vectors in the U.S. Typically, cyber actors gain unauthorized access to your systems, introduce an infected software that blocks your user or admin access, and then demand ransom. Without access to your files and data, you cannot operate normally, and cyber attackers know this pretty well. They rely on interrupting your business processes to coax you into giving in to their demands. And that's why backups are essential.

When you maintain easy-to-retrieve, updated copies of your data offline, you can use them to sustain basic operations during an attack. That not only saves you from costly downtimes and interruptions but also enables you to seek a solution while more collected. With reliable offline backups, you don't have to pay hefty ransoms to resume normal operations hurriedly. We recommend backing up all your crucial files at least twice to thrice per day. It might also help to store the backups in separate servers with an additional layer of security.

#### **Regularly Update and Patch Your Systems**

Cybercriminals continually advance their techniques and devise new tactics daily. Therefore, a cybersecurity system or protocol that might have been perfect yesterday might be ineffective today. Data security experts and software developers monitor these emerging threats and occasionally update their software in response. They then release new security protocols to the end-users like your organization in patches and updates. Downloading and installing the updates, therefore, ensures that your systems have the latest security features. However, note that updates also pose a cybersecurity threat. We've recently seen several incidents where cyberattackers use compromised updates to access corporate networks.

A perfect example is the recent SolarWinds hack, where actors introduced malicious codes into a legitimate update. Users unsuspectingly downloaded the Orion update, probably because it was an unknown source, and fell victim to a supply chain attack that affected hundreds of SolarWinds customers. So, before you install an update or apply a patch, verify if it's secure – regardless of who has sent it. A better way is to install the updates in a few devices first, preferably within the IT department, and monitor any abnormal activity.

## Use Strong Passwords and Multifactor Authentication

A cyberattack begins the moment the bad guys enter your network. So, keeping them out of your systems is one of the most crucial cybersecurity techniques. The most basic intrusion prevention measure is using strong passwords. Deploy password expiration and complexity protocols and encourage your staff to use different passcodes for different accounts. Multifactor authentication adds an extra layer of protection just in case the bad guys access your passwords.

## Train Your Staff on Cybersecurity

Most cyberattacks target employee negligence. Even with the most advanced cybersecurity systems, you still need your staff to be alert. Regularly train your users on threat identification, common tricks, intrusion prevention, and fast-response protocols. A cyber-aware staff can help lower cybersecurity risks by over 91%. Also, consider occasionally launching simulated attacks to keep them always agile and ready.

## Leverage Multiple Prevention Layers

As we've said, cybercriminals are increasingly targeting business interruption by introducing viruses to your network. It is important to use a multi-layer, multi-vendor approach when protecting our organization from cybercriminals. Anti-virus is not enough, it should be used in addition to Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR). EDR can provide your organization with real-time response to potential threats, giving your organization an opportunity to stop attacks in the initial stages. While every business is always looking to cut costs, the focus here should be on performance and security instead.

## Letter from President Nick Kosiara



To say that the past couple of months have been busy and active would truly be an understatement. Since the last issue of The Fire Guard, we have hired new Executive Director Gina Degleffetti, planned and refined an in-person 2022 Annual Conference, put together our Fall Educational Seminar with Mike Fagel as the main speaker, worked to get a Fire District Trustee elected to the Illinois Fire Pension Investment Fund board and are adding two new faces to the Board of Directors.

It's back to Oakbrook Hills Resort in 2022 for the Annual Conference! Note that we are adapting to changes in the mandated hours of annual continuing education training for Pension Board trustees and reducing the conference to a 2-day event. The conference is again designed to fulfill all CEU hours required for both pension and Essential Trustee Training certifications with informative, interesting and fun sessions that are sure to keep everyone

engaged. We look forward to joining together once again in-person for our 29th Annual Conference on January 21st and 22nd, 2022.

The Board is appointing Brian Bernardoni, President of Roberts Park FPD and Christopher Kunze, President of Itasca FPD to serve as Board Directors. They will begin their terms on the board at our October 23rd Fall Seminar and General Membership meeting. We welcome both Brian and Christopher to the Board and appreciate their willingness to help the NIAFPD keep moving forward with fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

These are all big items and I'm very excited about each and every one of them. I want to thank all of those who have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to make it all happen.

## Letter from Executive Director Gina Degleffetti



Greetings! My name is Gina Degleffetti, and I am very excited to be the new NIAFPD Executive Director. Although it has taken a minute for me to settle in and get organized, I'm off and running!

You may recognize me from my time volunteering on the NIAFPD Conference Committee, my work at the North Palos FPD, and my duties with the IL Fire Chiefs Association. With over 23 years' experience in the fire service, I am honored to serve in this new capacity and delighted to have the opportunity to be an integral part of such a great organization.

I am committed to working closely with the Board and the NIAFPD members to ensure the Alliance continues to support every aspect of our Fire Districts. I appreciate the Board's confidence and trust in me, and I encourage you to reach out via email, text, or a phone call.

On a personal note, in my free time I am an avid baker and enjoy taking road trips with my husband. Our furthest drive so far was to Mammoth Lakes, CA to snowboard where the highest elevation point is 11,053 feet. I look forward to meeting with you at the 2022 NIAFPD Annual Conference in January. If you have not already registered, please visit: [www.niafpd.org](http://www.niafpd.org)



# TO VACCINATE OR NOT TO VACCINATE

## The impact of Governor Pritzker's Order on the Fire Service

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

On September 3, 2021, Illinois Governor J. B. Pritzker issued another in a long line of Executive Orders dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. In this Order (No. 2021-22) the Governor mandated wearing masks in indoor spaces in Illinois and COVID-19 vaccinations for "Health Care Workers" (including EMS personnel). Since the Order was issued, fire departments and districts across the State have been trying to come to grips with their new responsibilities. This article overviews the latest vaccination mandate to assist fire departments and fire protection districts in their decision-making.

In the Order, the Governor made clear that the mandatory vaccination order is in response to the Delta variant of the coronavirus. According to the Order, the Delta variant is more aggressive and transmissible than previously circulating varieties. As such, the Delta variant poses significant new risks in the ongoing effort to stop and slow the spread of the virus. This is especially true because the Delta variant "now accounts for more than 90 percent of all sequenced coronavirus cases in the U.S." and is affecting children at a disproportionate rate.

As a result, the Governor found that "health care workers, and particularly those involved in direct patient care, face an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19." Indeed, "stopping the spread of COVID-19 in health care settings is critically important because of the concentration of people in many of these settings and the presence of people with underlying conditions or compromised immune systems." Furthermore, "requiring individuals in health care settings to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or undergo regular testing can help prevent outbreaks and reduce transmission to vulnerable individuals who may be at a higher risk of severe disease."

The marquee requirement of Executive Order 2021-22 is that covered health care workers (including EMS personnel) must have obtained at least the first dose of the vaccine on or before September 19, 2021, and must receive the second dose within 30 days thereafter. Given the relatively short window for the health care personnel and the overriding message of getting as many Illinois residents vaccinated as possible, we do not believe this time frame should be viewed as limiting the opportunity for fire service members to be vaccinated.

Employees who have a medical condition or diagnosis for which the COVID vaccine is contraindicated can be exempted from the vaccination mandate. If an employee claims this exemption, the department can and should verify this information with a doctor's report.

Employees may also rely on a "sincerely held" religious belief, practice, or observance which forbids vaccination. A "sincerely held" religious belief includes an express requirement of the employee's religion and some formal or external sign of a religion. The determination of whether or not an employee's religious belief is "sincerely

held" is very fact specific. Therefore, if confronted with such a request, department administration should consult legal counsel before engaging the employee on the basis of their belief.

The Governor's Order provides an alternative to mandatory vaccination: diagnostic testing on a routine basis. Under the terms of the Order, any unvaccinated employee (including those who have religious or medical exemptions) must undergo testing at least once a week. Proof of a negative test result is required before the employee can be allowed back to the worksite.

However, the Illinois Department of Health ("IDPH") recently required twice weekly testing for the immediate future. On September 28, 2021, IDPH issued emergency rules aimed at implementing the Governor's order. Among other things, IDPH's regulations require twice weekly testing for those who are not fully vaccinated where the employer's worksite is in a county of high or substantial transmission as determined by the Centers for Disease Control ("CDC"). Presently, every county in Illinois has a "high" or "substantial" transmission status rating. Therefore, as a practical matter, IDPH's regulations currently require twice weekly testing.

Noncompliance with the Executive Order or IDPH's regulations will result in adverse consequences for employees. The Executive Order requires that an unvaccinated employee who does not take part in the required COVID testing schedule must be "excluded" from the workplace. Effectively, this means that such employees must not be allowed to work. How this absence will be treated in terms of pay and benefit eligibility is a matter for decision in each department or district. If your firefighters are represented by a labor organization, you will have to bargain over the pay status of employees during periods when they are unvaccinated or untested and any discipline associated with the failure of be vaccinated or tested.

Although the Executive Order does not contain an enforcement mechanism for the provisions of the Order, IDPH has now signaled that it may take enforcement action against those who do not comply with its emergency rules. Indeed, the rules warn that IDPH may issue fines or penalties "to the greatest extent permitted by law." Accordingly, EMS providers should ensure their personnel are complying with the statewide vaccination mandate. Otherwise, there may be adverse consequences. Because IDPH is the licensing authority for the EMS personnel, it is possible that these penalties could impact an individual's EMS license.

As we have seen throughout these times, the law, policy, and medical guidance concerning COVID-19 is continually evolving. This will also be true of Executive Order 2021-22, so our responses must follow suit. Fire departments and districts should be vigilant in reviewing vaccination information and policies. As always, should you have specific questions, please do not hesitate to contact an attorney at Ottosen DiNolfo Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd.





# Springfield Legislative Update



By: Liz Brown-Reeves, NIAFPD Lobbyist

It's almost the New Year and the second year of the 102nd General Assembly will begin on January 4th. All legislation introduced in 2021 may be considered in 2022 as well as any new bills which may be filed.

Census data used for the Constitutionally mandated reapportionment was delayed nationally due to COVID 19. Due to delay in finalizing new legislative maps (more on that below), and to provide the necessary time for election authorities and candidates to prepare, the primary election has been moved to June 28th. As a result, the General Assembly has planned an extremely aggressive schedule with adjournment on April 8th. While this schedule does reflect more scheduled days than previously, there is much less administrative time in the schedule. What this will mean is there will be less time for bills to be analyzed and negotiated. In the past, members have been asked to prioritize their bills and a limit was placed on how many they could call on the floor. While a bill limit may not happen, it is likely members will be focused on bills that can pass without significant negotiation or controversy.

Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts (IAFPD) will re-introduce legislation (previously Senate Bill 301) to allow workers' compensation coverage to begin the day after an injury or illness for part-time, on call and volunteer firefighters. This initiative was approved and supported last year as it cleans up a gap in the workers compensation law for part-time firefighters who may not be scheduled three working days for the benefit to kick in, while at the same time possibly missing work at their full-time position. Allowing the compensation to take effect immediately will protect these firefighters from loss of wages.

As I mentioned, the Illinois Constitution mandates a re-appointment of both federal and state legislative districts, every 10 years. As has happened in years past, there are judicial challenges underway to the lines which have been drawn for the Illinois General Assembly. Those lawsuits do not impact the Congressional districts. All the lawsuits are expected to be completed by the first of the year. To see what Senate and House district you're in, you can visit their respective redistrict website at <https://www.ilsenateredistricting.com/> and <https://ilhousedems.com/redistricting/>. You can click on the legislative map and enter your address in the legend to determine which Senate and House district the address falls within. If you're unable to determine, please let me know and my office can identify the district for you.

Unfortunately, COVID 19 has not gone away and with continued variants and spread, we anticipate Capitol access will again be very limited to legislators and staff with hearing being conducted mainly virtually for the public.

With the shortened session and continued stresses COVID 19 has placed on all levels of government and business, we will be closely monitoring the budget as it's formulated and will be looking for any ARRA funds that may become available to you.

As always, I am available to all of you. Feel free to email me directly at [liz.brown@gmail.com](mailto:liz.brown@gmail.com) if I can ever answer any legislative or political questions you may have.

1804 N. Naper Blvd.  
Suite 350  
Naperville, IL 60563  
630.682.0085

8 S. Main Street  
Suite C  
Elburn, IL 60119  
630.365.6441

2024 Hickory Road  
Suite 205  
Homewood, IL 60430  
331.212.8701



Ottosen DiNolfo  
Hasenbalg & Castaldo, Ltd.

A Legacy of Relationships Built on Trust

- Fire Service Law
- Fire Commission Issues
- Labor & Employment Law
- Pension Board Matters

[www.ottosenlaw.com](http://www.ottosenlaw.com)



Bob Brady, CWCP  
Sales Leader

toll free 800.422.1431  
phone 630.889.3516  
cell 630.915.6804  
fax 630.889.3550  
[bbrady@bbins.com](mailto:bbrady@bbins.com)



555 Waters Edge  
Suite 105  
Lombard, IL 60148



Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler  
Advisory Board

Executive Director Erik Hoffer  
Phone: 708-403-4468  
Email: [erik@nifsab.org](mailto:erik@nifsab.org)

- Onsite, hands-on fire sprinkler valve training for fire crews
- Sprinkler demonstrations for public events/open houses
- Fire sprinkler classes for continuing education
- Code adoption/interpretation assistance
- Educational displays and materials
- Fire sprinkler system training props



# Growing Inflation Concerns and Interest Rates

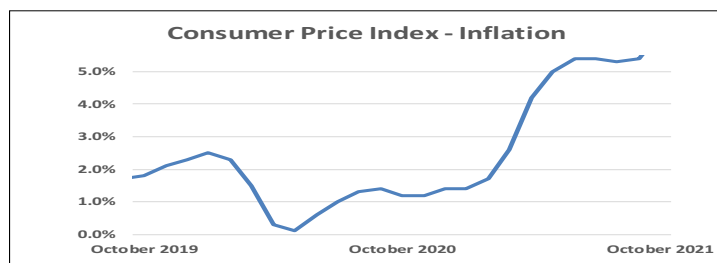
By: Thomas S. Sawyer, Managing Partner, Sawyer Falduto Asset Management, LLC

## Key Economic Observations

- **Positive Developments:** Many companies have returned to pre-pandemic revenue and profit levels resulting in strong third quarter 2021 earnings reports. The global economic restart is broadening, a positive factor for worldwide trade. Economic fundamentals continue to trend positive. Federal Reserve policies remain supportive of the economic recovery.
- **Potential Headwinds:** Supply chain disruptions have resulted in lower inventories and higher prices though pressures seem to be easing somewhat on this front. The emergence of the Omicron variant along with the recent rise in Covid cases globally may further challenge economic growth. While the employment data is improving, worker shortages continue to be problematic for companies.
- **Bond Yields:** Bond yields in the intermediate maturity range have risen recently on persistent elevated levels of inflation along with the Fed's comments regarding accelerating the tapering off of asset purchases.
- **Equity Markets:** U.S. domestic equity markets continue to perform well this year on strong corporate earnings, improving economic fundamentals and low alternative returns. The initial reaction to the emergence of the Omicron variant was a classic "knee jerk" sell-off that has recovered at this writing.

## Fixed Income Overview

Yields on U.S. Treasuries with longer maturities moved modestly lower over the last month while yields on short-to-intermediate maturities rose resulting in a "flattening" of the yield curve. Investor demand for fixed income securities remains robust. Economic impact concerns (the "fear trade") associated with the Omicron variant combined with strong demand continue to limit increases in yields on bonds with longer maturities.



Short-term interest rates remain very low. While the Federal Reserve indicated that monetary policy may be adjusted to accelerate rate increases should the economic growth and inflation data warrant a change, current policy holds rates at near zero percent.

## Looking Ahead

Inflation data will likely continue to dominate the headlines. Easing of supply chain disruptions and continued improvement in the

employment data will be key to extending economic gains. The ebb and flow of the pandemic remains a concern for economic growth globally.

## Portfolio Considerations

From a portfolio perspective, bond prices have experienced a slight decline recently due to interest rates moving higher. It is important to remember that fixed income securities mature at their face value despite any interim price volatility. We typically hold most fixed income securities until maturity at which time the face value of the security will be received. Looking beyond near-term price declines, rising interest rates provide enhanced opportunities for the reinvestment of maturing securities at higher yields. We will continue to focus on high quality securities that offer best opportunity to generate positive overall returns in a rising interest rate environment.

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.

From all of us at Sawyer Falduto Asset Management have a safe and Happy New Year!

*"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."*



**Independent | Disciplined | Experienced**

**Sawyer Falduto Asset Management, LLC is proud to provide Investment Advisory Services to:**

**173 Illinois Firefighter and Police Pension Funds  
25 Illinois Fire Protection Districts**

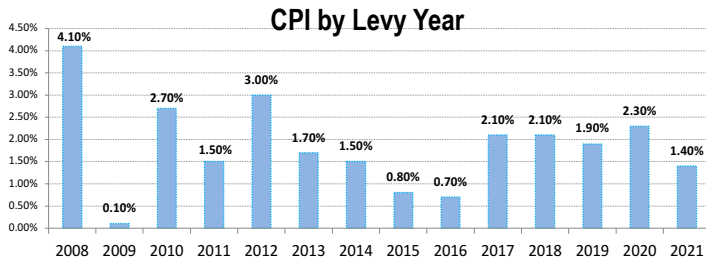
John Falduto, Managing Partner  
jfalduto@sawyerfalduto.com  
589 S. York Street  
Elmhurst, IL 60126  
630.941.8560  
www.sawyerfalduto.com



# Financial Update for Fire Protection Districts

Article by James Howard, CPA; Principal at Governmental Accounting, Inc.

Under the 1991 Illinois tax cap or Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), the total of certain levies (not including non-capped bond and pension surviving spouse levies) may not increase by more than 1) the lesser of 5% of the prior year total or 2) the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Over the last 10 levy years, the average CPI has been 1.7%. This tax cap limits most Fire Districts' largest revenue source.



Low CPIs provide for almost zero growth of Fire Districts' largest revenue source and tax delays cause cash shortages. Additionally, declining home values or equalized assessed valuation (EAV) cause tax rates to rise and approach tax rate ceilings. For major operating funds such as Corporate and Ambulance funds, hitting tax ceilings of 0.40 or 40 cents could have a large negative effect on your District's levy.

Some good news on the horizon is the recent Senate Bill signed on August 20, 2021. Governor Pritzker signed Senate Bill 508 ("SB 508") into law as Public Act 102-0519 ("P.A. 102-0519"). This new law amends the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law ("PTELL") by creating Section 35 ILCS 200/18-233. Under Section 18-233, all tax-capped taxing districts' levies "shall be increased by a prior year adjustment" to make the taxing district whole for revenue lost as the result of property tax assessment appeal refunds. Section 18-233 purports to automatically increase the extension for all tax-capped taxing districts by the amount lost to Property Tax Appeal Board ("PTAB") reductions, Circuit Court Orders in assessment cases, and Certificates of Errors resulting from assessment mistakes. Under the new law, the county treasurer will certify the aggregate refund paid during the prior 12-month period, and this amount will be added to the annual tax extension. This bill may have upcoming changes or be repealed and replaced so be sure to check with your attorney in the upcoming months before finalizing your levy.

Although Fire Districts are always trying to create new goals and initiatives to maximize current resources, address rising service levels in addition to balancing the budget (equate revenues to expenditures) when it is fiscally feasible, here are some techniques to use in challenging times.

## #1 - Make Changes to Your Tax Levy

One helpful technique to avoid deficit spending in major funds with no tax revenue growth may come from implementing Illinois' PA 94-976. This Public Act allows Districts the flexibility to levy monies subject to PTELL in an amount not to exceed each fund's voter

approved rate limit (individual fund tax rate ceiling) as long as the sum of all rates does not exceed the overall limiting rate. For example, if you increase the Corporate and Ambulance Funds, you must decrease other funds, not to exceed the aggregate limiting rate of all capped funds subject to PTELL.

For example, a District can increase their levies in the Corporate and Ambulance by lowering other non-major funds, but will be capped in aggregate by the overall limiting rate for your total capped funds. Make sure your estimates for Corporate and Ambulance Funds are still below their rate ceilings of 0.40 or 40 cents based on estimate of future EAV, especially when EAV is declining. This additional tax revenue can sure up any deficits that may arise in these two major operating funds under the assumption there is adequate fund balance in the other non-major funds (i.e. Tort, IMRF, Audit, FICA, Rescue) to offset these reductions to revenue. In addition, it may be beneficial to move expenses into the Corporate and Ambulance funds after excess fund balances have been absorbed.

The method of decreasing several non-major fund levies and including those amounts in the Corporate and Ambulance fund can result in the following:

- Reduction of unnecessary fund balance,
- Avoidance of tax objection as well as
- Enhanced understandability

## #2 - Increase Levy in Funds Without Ceilings Supported by Policy

When approaching individual tax ceiling due to falling EAV (such as Corporate and Ambulance Funds or 0.40 or 40 cents tax rate) another technique is to increase funds that do not have a ceiling such as the Tort Fund. To use Tort funds for salary expenses, you must have a risk management policy, in advance of the levy, that spells out the specific risks and measures taken to minimize or eliminate those risks.

The Illinois Local Government and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, (745 ILCS 10/9-101 et seq.), provides for a fire protection district to levy a tax which, when collected, will pay the costs of risk care management.

The Board of Trustees can enact a Risk Care Management Policy dedicated to establishing the necessary programs and practices to assure to the maximum extent possible, a reduction of injury to its members, damage to its equipment, facilities and property, and liability to its taxpayers. This continuing program attempts to maximize services to the community through administrative and operational methods aimed at reducing unnecessary expenditures due to such injuries, liabilities, or losses.

The District will commit to providing the leadership and support to develop, implement, monitor, and upgrade loss control programs toward the following objectives:

*(Continued on Next Page)*



1. To achieve compliance with applicable occupational safety and health laws, rules and regulations governing the District's operations.
2. To promote a safe and healthy work environment to the benefit of all members and visitors.
3. To minimize the degree of human and economic losses resulting from unnecessary personnel injury and property damage.
4. To assure the safety and security of District personnel, property, and vehicles.
5. To reduce risks of injury, liability, and operational inefficiencies through the adoption and implementation of effective training programs and Standard Operating Guidelines.
6. To maximize the fire protection and rescue services provided to residents by surveying high-life/high-risk hazards.
7. To prepare for large-scale incidents by creating an Emergency Response Plan and Resource Manual, as well as guidelines for integration of operations within the community.

Any risk management policy depends upon the commitment and support of the District employees to eliminate conditions and behaviors which contribute to such losses. Recognizing that we have the duty to implement practices to reduce such losses, all District members are expected to report any possible safety concerns in the workplace that threaten the safety and health of the employees and the public.

### #3 - Implement a Fund Balance Policy

Additionally, a fund balance or reserve policy should be implemented to maintain sufficient fund balances to fund district operations and protect against the need to reduce service levels or programs. This policy will ensure the District maintains an adequate fund balance and reserves in the District's various operating funds to ensure the capacity to 1) provide sufficient cash flow for financial needs (liquidity) 2) secure and maintain favorable investment grade bond ratings (creditworthiness) 3) offset significant economic downturns or revenue shortfalls 4) provide funds for unforeseen expenditures (litigation) and 5) fulfill future and immediate capital needs (new equipment, trucks and apparatus).

A fund balance policy is established for the governmental funds of the District as accounted for in the Annual Financial Report in accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 54, Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions per the chart below:

Classification	Definition	Examples
Non-spendable	Amounts that cannot be spent because they are either (a) not in spendable form or (b) legally or contractually required to be maintained intact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventories</li> <li>• Prepaid items</li> <li>• Long-term receivables</li> <li>• Permanent Endowments</li> </ul>
Restricted	Resources that are subject to constraints imposed by external parties or enabling legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State statute restrictions</li> <li>• Unspent bond proceeds</li> <li>• Grants earned but not spent</li> <li>• Debt covenants</li> <li>• Taxes dedicated to a specific purpose</li> <li>• Revenues restricted by enabling</li> </ul>
Committed (Unrestricted)	Amounts constrained for specific purposes by District's Board of Trustees through formal action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amounts set aside by the Board of Trustees by ordinance or resolution</li> </ul>

In order to commit fund balance, the Board of Trustees, as the highest level of decision-making authority, must incorporate in an ordinance or resolution the commitment of funds for specific purposes. These funds must be fully expended for their committed purpose or a separate action by the Board of Trustees must be taken for the funds to become uncommitted. The Board of Trustees, or designee, may assign fund balance through approval of the budget or action at any meeting.

The District's fund balance policy shall take effect immediately upon adoption by the Board of Trustees and will be applied beginning with the preparation of the District's audit for the fiscal year. This policy may be amended from time to time according to the wishes of the Board of Trustees. Compliance with the provisions of the policy can be reviewed as part of the annual budget adoption process. Actual final classification of fund balances can be determined during the annual fiscal year-end process for presentation in the District's Annual Financial Report.

Since all appropriations lapse at the end of the fiscal year, excess revenues over expenditures for the fiscal year can accumulate in the fund balance for the associated fund. Additionally, fund balances that exceed the maximum level established for each fund may be transferred and appropriated at year-end for non-recurring capital projects or vehicle replacement. These transfers should be designated for a specific future use as determined by the Board.

If the projected or estimated amount of fund balance will be less than the requirement at the completion of any fiscal year, then the Fire Chief shall prepare and submit a plan for expenditure reduction and/or revenue increases to restore minimum requirements in the subsequent budget year. Additionally, the District will exercise diligence in avoiding the appropriation of fund balance for recurring operating expenditures.

### #4 – Enroll in Critical Funding: Ground Emergency Medical Transport Program (GEMT)

The purpose of the GEMT program is to obtain Federal Medicaid funding for Medicaid ambulance emergency transports. Given the low reimbursement rate from Medicaid, especially if a significant percentage of your payor mix, this additional funding source can be critical. To be eligible for this funding your District must provide the following:

- Cost report
- Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)
- Obligated Medicaid EMS transport

Website:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/hfs/MedicalProviders/notices/Pages/prn200811a.aspx>

The IGA and cost report are due to the State of Illinois on October 1, 2021 and should include all costs associated with GEMT. Contact your accountant or finance team to ensure accurate reporting as the report must be re-calculated annually and submitted to [hfs.gemt@illinois.gov](mailto:hfs.gemt@illinois.gov). After the IGA and cost report submission, GEMT monies will be paid directly to the District monthly at the lower

(Continued on Next Page)

of your cost report average or your billing rate with the State issuing an invoice for 50% of the funds received quarterly.

#### #5 - Short-Term Vehicle Financing

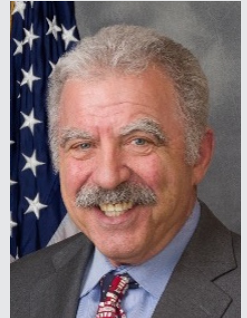
Due budgetary constraints and deferred vehicle replacement, Fire Districts may have an immediate need to acquire multiple vehicles. Additionally, the current rate environment provides for a good opportunity to borrow and pay for the cost of multiple apparatus. Many of our clients have used the tax-exempt capital lease/purchase program given the low-rate environment and obtained prepayment dis-

counts with the vendor to help offset annual interest costs. The capital lease is a lease to own, although the bank will be listed as dual obligee on the performance bond for a 100% prepay option. The payback period should be well before the life expectancy of the vehicle and work well within the structure of your comprehensive budget/forecast in addition to the vehicle replacement program. If the District can build reserves faster than expected there is no prepayment penalty on the lease after 12 months.

## Illinois Firefighters' Pension Investment Fund (FPIF)

By John Perry, Trustee

I am pleased to report that I won the election for Trustee of the Illinois Firefighters' Pension Investment Fund (FPIF). Thank you to all the districts and municipalities who supported me. I received great support from the NIAFPD and IAFFPD Boards and staff. These organizations work tirelessly to serve our mission. Thanks to each of them. Special thanks to Dave Geary who ran with me in 2020 when we both learned from losing our bid for office. While Dave was not able to run this time around, he worked just as hard to help me. His behind the scenes efforts gave me extra reason to admire his commitment to the fire service. Thanks to the Lisle Woodridge Board and staff for their encouragement and support. I am very grateful and proud and humbled to be the only representative on the Board from a fire district. My term runs until January 2023 so I have much to do in the months ahead.



The nine member FPIF Board, with four reps from municipalities and fire districts and five members from active and retired firefighters, began its work on January 1, 2020. The Fund's goal is to provide above market returns at below market costs. The first task for FPIF is to consolidate funds from 296 local fire pension funds into this statewide investment pool overseen by FPIF. On October 1, 2021, seventy-five local pension funds made the first transfer of their funds to FPIF. The remaining local pension funds (about 60 in each tranche) will transfer their investments to FPIF in Nov, Dec, Jan, and Feb. When funds are received by FPIF, the team of investment managers will begin to place those funds into a range of diverse investments that are intended to increase returns on investments and reduce the amount of revenues needed to fund future pensions. With the October funds transferred to FPIF, the process of reallocating these local funds to the new investment model has already begun. FPIF will begin to issue reports on investments it is managing in December 2021. Increasing investment performance is a critical objective for FPIF. From my limited contact with FPIF Board and staff members in the last ten days, I can assure you that they are consumed by the task of transferring and reinvesting our assets into higher performing investment vehicles. A key strategy for improving investment performance is reducing the expense for managing each investment. The FPIF investment team has negotiated some amazingly low expense costs to get us started.

Beginning with its October 15th Board meeting, FPIF will begin discussing the standards for future actuarial reviews. Each local pension fund from around the state has probably had good and bad experiences with the Illinois Department of Insurance or your own actuary reviewing the capability of your pension fund to pay for future benefits. If you would like to share some of your thoughts about these experiences, and how they might inform our future actions, I would welcome your feedback.

If I am going to successfully represent fire districts, I need your input and feedback. I encourage you to contact me with any comment or concern. I especially need your feedback over the next 60 days on the standards that will be used for actuarial analysis. I can be reached at 630-388-8127 or [jfperry1970@gmail.com](mailto:jfperry1970@gmail.com). The FPIF website is a good source for background information <https://ifpif.org> and I have found the staff responsive. Please keep in touch!



C O R K I L L  
I N S U R A N C E

Property & Casualty Insurance | Employee Benefits & Health Insurance  
Home & Auto | Individual Health & Life

Kalli Ortega

847.437.2956

[KOrtega@corkillinsurance.com](mailto:KOrtega@corkillinsurance.com)

Mitch Backes

847.427.7759

[MBackes@corkillinsurance.com](mailto:MBackes@corkillinsurance.com)

Dan Barnett

847.427.7757

[DBarnett@corkillinsurance.com](mailto:DBarnett@corkillinsurance.com)

AssuredPartners of Illinois | Corkill Insurance Agency

25 Northwest Point Blvd | Suite 625 | Elk Grove Village, IL 60007



**IPRF is the Leader in Workers' Compensation Coverage**

Since our inception in 1985, the Illinois Public Risk Fund has invited public entities and government agencies to examine our outstanding record for cost-effective workers' compensation coverage. Today, over 700 risk managers rely on IPRF for:

- 24/7/365 Claim Reporting
- Dedicated Claims Team
- In-house Nurse Case Management
- Prescription Drug Programs
- Aggressive subrogation program which will include members out of pocket expenses.
- Loss Control training and support that includes an extensive library of online training courses, simulator training and sample safety guides.
- IPRF members can select their own defense counsel subject to IPRF's litigation management process and approval.

**PROUDLY SERVING THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

[www.IPRF.COM](http://www.IPRF.COM) (800) 289-IPRF (708) 429-6300 (708) 429-6488 Fax



## Director's Spotlight

**Brian A. Bernardoni**  
Roberts Park FPD –  
President of the Board of  
Trustees



Impactful, resourceful, and passionate about making a lasting difference for those he serves, Brian A. Bernardoni is the founder and managing partner of Aurelius Public Affairs. He most recently served as the Region V US Department of Housing and Urban Development Affordable Housing Commission Chairperson. Prior to founding Aurelius Public Affairs in 2019, he served Illinois REALTORS for 17 years as the Senior Director of Governmental Affairs and Public Policy serving the Chicago Association of REALTORS® (CAR). He is a native Chicagoan and is regarded as a powerful voice leader on business issues including real estate, taxation, public policy, and political matters.

Brian is called “one of the great experts on Wrigley Field” by Chicago Cubs owner and Chairman Tom Ricketts; he is a noted Chicago Cub historian, archivist, and life-long Cub fan. In 2021 Brian enters his twenty fourth year as a Wrigley Field Ambassador Guide. He is a native Chicagoan and is widely recognized and highly regarded as an expert on the West Side Grounds, the Federal League, Wrigley Field, and the past ballparks of the Chicago Cubs.

Bernardoni's civic work includes serving as President of the Roberts Park Fire Protection District and is Second Vice Chairperson Chicago Advisory Board of the Salvation Army of Chicago. He is a distinguished alumni of the Department of Politics and Government at Illinois State University and serves of Advisory Board of Illinois State University's College of Arts and Science. He is married and the father of four daughters and one rabbit.

We are thrilled to have Brian A. Bernardoni as one of our newly appointed Directors!

**Christopher P. Kunze**  
Itasca FPD – President,  
Board of Trustees



Chris began his career as an auditor for the Chicago Board of Trade and moved on to Metromail Corporation, where he advanced through a series of finance and operations positions completing the last four years as Vice President, Corporate Controller and served as part of the successful IPO team.

In 1997, Kunze was hired as Chief Financial Officer for Acosta Inc., and upon completion of the first set of acquisitions in 1999, assumed the role of Senior Vice President, Finance and Administration, responsible for Health/Welfare plans, Risk Management, HR and fleet operations for the 10,000-employee operation.

After serving seven years as President and General Manager of Sourcelink Chicago, he then joined Perspectives as Chief Operating Officer and was responsible for all aspects of operations including a 24/7 crisis call center, HR, accounting, account management who delivered tailored EAP, work/life, wellness, managed behavioral healthcare and organizational consulting services to hundreds of client organizations nationwide.

After 43 years, Chris is now retired. However, he is quite busy actively serving as the President of the Board of Trustees for the Itasca Fire Protection District, formerly a Commissioner. Additionally, Kunze is a volunteer on the Bloomingdale and Itasca Lions Club since 1986 and he is a member of the Finance Board for St. Peters the Apostle Church in Itasca where he was Chairman of the Capital Campaign which raised \$7.2 million to build a new church.

All in all, we are happy to have Christopher P. Kunze join as a Director. No doubt, he will surely prove to be an asset to our Board.

## Member News

Please send news from your district to [admin@niafpd.org](mailto:admin@niafpd.org) for sharing on social media or in the Fire Guard.



Retired Fire Chief Steven Gorsky

### Retirement Announcement for Fire Chief Steven Gorsky

Fire Chief Steven Gorsky of the Darien-Woodridge Fire Protection District is retiring after 28 years of dedicated service to the District and Community.

### Retirement Announcement for Fire Chief Russ Wood

Fire Chief Russell Wood of the Glenside Fire Protection District is retiring after 32 years of service to the District and his community.



Retired Fire Chief Russ Wood

**Have you updated your contact information with the NIAFPD?  
Please forward all changes to [admin@niafpd.org](mailto:admin@niafpd.org)**

**PARAMEDIC SERVICES**  
of Illinois, Inc.

**SPECIALIZING IN THESE SERVICES:**

- Emergency Medical Personnel
- Fire Service Personnel
- Ambulance & Fire/Rescue Billing
- Fire Safety Consulting
- FSCI

**Dedicated to Excellence Since 1975**

For more information call 847-678-4900  
or visit us at [www.paramedicservices.com](http://www.paramedicservices.com)

**Districts are switching to  
Railside Citrus.**

Valuable advice.  
Important coverage.  
A **fresh** approach to insurance.

**railsidecitrus**  
INSURANCE AGENCY

Call: (630) 377-0700  
Visit: [railsidecitrus.com](http://railsidecitrus.com)

**INSURANCE  
POLICY**

**AMB**  
ANDRES MEDICAL BILLING, Ltd.

Insurance / Risk Advisory / Employee Benefits

**HORTON**

**Tony Evans**  
Senior Client Advisor

10320 Orland Parkway  
Orland Park, IL 60467

Phone 708.845.3171  
Cell 312.550.0614  
Fax 708.845.4646

[www.thehortongroup.com](http://www.thehortongroup.com)    [Tony.Evans@thehortongroup.com](mailto:Tony.Evans@thehortongroup.com)

**GARY KOSNOFF**  
Principal  
OneDigital | Health and Benefits

office: 847-294-0000 xt.6760  
fax: 844-248-8283  
2800 River Road, Suite 310, Des Plaines, IL 60018  
[gkosnoff@onedigital.com](mailto:gkosnoff@onedigital.com) | [onedigital.com](http://onedigital.com)

**ONEDIGITAL**  
HEALTH AND BENEFITS

**THANK YOU FOR ALL OF  
YOUR HARD WORK GETTING  
THROUGH 2020 WITH THE VIRUS...**

**LET'S EMBRACE 2021 AS WE  
FIGHT OUR WAY OUT!**

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS FIRE  
SPRINKLER INITIATIVE  
NIFSI**

**Plan your  
Fire Prevention  
Education,  
Training and  
Demos Now!**  
- Tom Lia

[www.nifsi.org](http://www.nifsi.org)

**LA**

**Lauterbach & Amen, LLP**

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

**ICRMT**

THE ILLINOIS COUNCIL RISK MANAGEMENT TRUST PROVIDING ILLINOIS PUBLIC ENTITIES EFFECTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS • SINCE 1983



## CHANDLER CHATTER: Advice from Dave Chandler of Chandler Services Inc.

Hello everyone and welcome to the Chandler Services checkup corner where we provide you with apparatus maintenance advice. With the cold weather just around the corner, let's talk about some maintenance items that should be addressed on your vehicles:

- Grease your vehicles every other month
- Check your radiator fluid. Red or Green?
- Check your tire air pressure on a weekly basis.
- Check your tires (all of them) for wear and tread life.
- Check your windshield washer fluid.

By doing these minor checks, this may save your vehicle from downtime and costly repairs!

### Check your "Zerk" fitting By Tim Moss



The patent for the Zerk fitting was granted to Oscar U. Zerk in January 1929, and the assignee was the Alemite Manufacturing Corporation. Alemite had already been marketing, since 1919. Today, many companies make these grease fittings. Grease fittings are permanently installed by either a (taper) thread or straight push-fit ('hammer in') arrangement,

leaving a nipple connection that a grease gun attaches to. You will find these fittings in various locations of your fire apparatus. You should be servicing these at least every other month.

Here are a few areas to look for the fittings:

- SPRING PINS
- LUBING THE STEERING
- KING PINS
- THE DRIVE SHAFT

Now comes the messy part. The real art of greasing a chassis is making sure that the old grease is pushed out and the new grease pushed in. That makes sense, right? Out with the old, dirty, contaminated, worn-out grease and in with the new grease with all those great wear properties in it.

### Hey rookie, go get me the water hammer!

Water hammer (also waterhammer) is a pressure surge that can arise in any pumping system that undergoes an abrupt change in its rate of flow and usually results from pump starts and stops, the opening and closing of valves, or water column separation and closure.



Fire Hydrants, standpipes, and pump valves are subject to this.

Remember when opening and closing any valves that SLOW is the way to GO. BE SAFE!

Chandler Services Inc. is a family-owned truck and transit repair facility that was established in 1980. Our convenient spacious

Mokena, Illinois location is equipped with the most current diagnostic equipment to troubleshoot and repair all types of transit and diesel equipment providing high quality service and minimal downtime.

## CHANDLER SERVICES INC.

Complete Transit and Truck Repair

**Metro**  
Paramedic Services, Inc.



**NORCOMM**  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Paramedic  Billing Services

**(630) 530-2991**

## The House That Service Built!

Founded in 1990, Air One is a family owned & operated full-line fire & safety equipment distributor. "You Know Us By The Company We Keep". We offer our customers quality, best in class equipment at competitive prices from the leading manufacturers in the industry. We pride ourselves in continuing to provide exceptional service after the sale.



**AIR ONE  
EQUIPMENT, INC.**

[WWW.AOE.NET](http://WWW.AOE.NET)

**888.247.1204**

360 Production Drive  
South Elgin, IL 60177



24/7/365 Emergency Number  
**800.956.8844**

[jcr24.com](http://jcr24.com)

Fast Restoration For Flood,  
Fire, or Storm Damage.

WATER DAMAGE • FIRE DAMAGE • CONTENTS RESTORATION • MOLD REMEDIATION  
COMMERCIAL / LARGE LOSS • RECONSTRUCTION • BOARD-UP





## NIAFPD OFFICERS

### President

**Nicholas Kosiara** / 630-414-1674  
Glenside FPD - Trustee  
[njkosi@comcast.net](mailto:njkosi@comcast.net)

### Secretary/ Treasurer

**Bonnie Bayser** / 847-515-1602  
Huntley FPD - Trustee  
[bbayser@foxvalley.net](mailto:bbayser@foxvalley.net)

### Executive Director

**Gina Degleffetti** / 847-951-2482  
North Palos FPD - Admin. Assistant  
[admin@niafpd.org](mailto:admin@niafpd.org)

### Directors

**Brent Frank** / 708-703-4745  
Lisle-Woodridge FPD - Trustee  
[bfrank@lwfd.org](mailto:bfrank@lwfd.org)

**Juan Manuel Giron** / 312-498-1630  
Pleasantview FPD - Trustee  
[JuanManuel@gironbooks.com](mailto:JuanManuel@gironbooks.com)

**Ellen Dimock** / 847-602-1878  
Grayslake FPD - Trustee  
[ellendimock@grayslakefire.com](mailto:ellendimock@grayslakefire.com)

**Christopher Kunze** / 708-380-7252  
Itasca FPD - Trustee  
[ckunze@itasca.com](mailto:ckunze@itasca.com)

**Brian A. Bernardoni** / 312-731-1407  
Roberts Park FPD - Trustee  
[babernardoni@gmail.com](mailto:babernardoni@gmail.com)

**Fire Guard** is a quarterly publication of

**NIAFPD**

**847-951-2482**

*Newsletter Designed & Printed by*  
**Vance Printing • 608-362-2049**

TO: