



On Scene

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Beyond in the know—be in the lead.

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Forecasting Opportunities & Challenges in 2012



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As 2012 Approaches, the Economy Is Still the Top Focus

For this issue, a diverse group of IAFC leaders was asked to anticipate challenges and opportunities for 2012; not surprisingly, the struggling economy topped the list of challenges. What was surprising, however, was the similarity of answers at a detailed level, given that those surveyed represent very different groups in the IAFC. Although the contributors approached the questions from various perspectives, four key themes emerged. These themes were often related, demonstrating the complexity of what awaits in the year ahead.

Increase of Service Demand

"The old adage to 'do more with less' has reached its pinnacle," said Bob

Roper, a sentiment echoed by others. "Ongoing budgetary challenges—while still trying improve or provide the same level of service to our community—is problematic," said Chris Riley. "Our incident call volume continues to rise approximately 10% per year."

All predicted the current challenge to keep pace with administration, operations and training worsening in 2012. The reasons reflect the complexity of the economic landscape and the domino effect created by staffing cuts, politics, the real estate market and unemployment.

Add normal population changes and national legislative reforms, and

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The Crystal Ball



Al H. Gillespie, EFO,
CFO, MIFireE,
IAFC President
& Chairman
of the Board

In my office is a gift I received several years ago at a department director's Christmas party. The gifts were passed around in some sort of game that I've long since forgotten, but when the time was up—or you were eliminated—the gift you had in front of you was yours to take home.

I ended up with the one I was hoping for, a Magic 8 Ball.

I've had more fun with that 8 Ball than you can shake a stick at, if that's your idea of fun. I'd be in my office and someone would bring me their problem and try to put their steaming mess in my pocket.

So when they wanted *my* solution or answer to *their* problem, I'd turn around, reach into my drawer, pull out the Magic 8 Ball, give it a shake and give them an answer:

"Try again later." "Not likely."

Or some other great bit of wisdom.

They would then say, "You're not going to solve this for me, are you?" See, I knew they were smart!

I'm certainly willing to help them if they really need it and not just avoiding using their judgment and authority given to them by the rank they hold. If the decision is mine, then of course I'll take my responsibility and consult the 8 Ball—I mean make a decision.

What I'd really like is a crystal ball so I could see the future. We have a great rearview mirror in the fire and emergency service for what we've always done, and we're also pretty good at what we're doing right now.

But like any organization, we struggle with what we're going to do in the future. This has been compounded by the struggling economy

"What I'd really like is a crystal ball so I could see the future. We have a great rearview mirror in the fire and emergency service..."

and by how rapidly things are changing in the world.

I used to try to have a one-, five- and ten-year plan. Now I find they are out of date by the time we get there. What seems to be more normal now is a three-, six- and twelve-*month* plan.

The rapidly changing environment of financial volatility, technological advances and the explosion of information available to everyone makes it more challenging for most leaders to plan their organizations' direction.

But while more challenging, it also increases the importance of making correct choices. A small miscalculation can become a disaster for the organization and can affect the careers of those that made the decision.

That being said, today's leaders can't hesitate to make decisions, knowing they'll make mistakes, but also knowing that making rapid adjustments to new information will help them and their organizations survive these challenging times.

Come on, Magic 8 Ball! 🎲



As 2012 Approaches, the Economy Is Still the Top Focus *cont'd from page 1*

the magnitude of the challenge only increases. "EMS call volume in our communities will continue to rise because of Baby Boomers moving into their later years and requiring more health-care," said Gary Ludwig. The addition of about 43 million people to the insurance rolls because of national healthcare reform—with more people willing to seek emergency care—will further strain the system if communities don't provide adequate support to fire departments.

"The general public, or in my case the plant population," said Rick Haase, "expects quality emergency services to respond to every incident, no matter the circumstances."

"The general public ... expects quality emergency services to respond to every incident, no matter the circumstances."

But given the increase in demand with static or reduced resources, will that expectation remain feasible?

Establishing Community Priorities

Noting both the challenge and the opportunity it presents, there was a call for open and honest dialog with the public. The fire department is—and must be seen as—a contributor to a community's wellbeing and economic recovery. "We must provide these essential services to ensure the health and safety of our response area and ensure the vitality of the businesses we protect," said Haase. Ludwig noted that when it comes to EMS, "The fire service is the only true public-safety net of a community."

"The fire service is the only true public-safety net of a community."

But the partnership works both ways; if a community can't or won't make the financial commitment to support public-safety services, it must work with the fire department to change the model. "If you don't have enough money to respond as you always have, then the public must accept that fact or develop another way to achieve that goal," said Roper. "The overall goal is to build upon what a community wants from its public-safety sector, fund it and implement it. The secret is that each community must accept responsibility for the choices they make."

In 2012, that may mean not only funding, but public support of local ordinances and codes,

an increased personal responsibility for prevention, local investments in technology and willingness to change the status quo to best leverage the money available to address local priorities. "The efficient use of manpower, better use of technology and prioritization of tasks are critical components of a well-structured service program," said Haase.

For this to be successful, internal and external stakeholders need data about a department's activities, community needs and how to measure the success of current and new practices.

Metrics and Best Practices

The development of metrics represents a major value for fire service leaders and local government decision makers—particularly when difficult funding decisions must be made. But even in good times, the fire department rarely confronted these questions directly.

John Rukavina offered questions that every chief should ask before the new year:

- Do you know how good you are?
- Do you know where you stand relative to the best?
- Do you know where the variation exists?
- Do you know your rate of improvement over time?

The value of seeking best practices—for example via consensus standards or the accreditation process—and developing ways to measure department success has benefits for the future of the fire service beyond economic recovery. "Under any circumstances and any economic condition, answers to these questions would help fire and emergency service leaders to more safely and effectively improve services to the public and the responsibilities to their personnel."

"Delivering safety best practices to our members while ensuring we ... prevent emergencies from occurring is paramount."

Establishing best practices and developing means to evaluate the department's success aren't mutually exclusive to the safety of the public; they're inextricably linked to the safety of responders as well. "Delivering safety best practices to our members while ensuring we are doing everything possible to prevent

CONTRIBUTORS

- Rick Haase, Industrial Section chair and fire chief of Conoco Phillips Wood River Refinery, Roxana, Ill.
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- Chris Riley, Professional Development Committee chair and Pueblo (Colo.) fire chief
- Bob Roper, Wildland Fire Policy Committee chair and Ventura County (Calif.) fire chief
- John Rukavina, Constitution, Bylaws and Resolution Committee chair and director of Public Fire Safety Services in Weaverville, N.C.

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The Gifts that Keep on Giving: A Wish List for 2012

Gifts come in all shape and sizes: from gadgets to make our lives easier to the blessing of family and friends. Some gifts are easy to give and receive, others more difficult; they require some sacrifice to give—they may even be difficult to accept—but those often give the most satisfaction of all. As year-end approaches and you consider the gifts you've received this year and the outlook for 2012, this article highlights some things members of the IAFC board of directors have added to their personal wish list for the fire and emergency service next year.

The Gift of Common Sense – For the public, a sprinkler in every home. For personnel, for every responder buckle up, every time.

The Gift of Inspiration – For senior personnel to share with new and potential firefighters/EMTs why the fire and emergency service is a calling and the humble honor each receives from their service to others. For new members to remind senior personnel of the passion and excitement for such service.

The Gifts of Humor and Imagination – To remember that laughter is not only OK, but also a valuable resource in supporting mental health, physical wellbeing and the power to believe nothing is impossible. Wouldn't it be nice to get some Converse Chuck Taylor, NFPA-compliant wildland sneakers? How about a brand new Class-A pumper that washes itself?

The Gift of Creativity – Thought is the greatest power humans possess. Think of the possibilities if every officer, firefighter and EMT gave just one new, shiny idea to the service in 2012.

The Gift of a Sense of Self – For all fire departments and their members to fully embrace the spectrum of life-saving capabilities they provide. To gain an appreciation that EMS is a valuable and lasting part of who the fire service is. To focus on prevention as well as response. For the courage to self-define a new level of emergency service.

The Gift of a New Brand – Combining this new sense of self with a better understanding of its customer base leads to the gift of a new public image, or brand. Simply put, the wish is for the fire department to become the Apple Computers of public safety. Apple has built upon its iconic Mac, expanding its services, to become the quintessential, leading-edge technology company.

So too can fire departments build on fire suppression, expanding its services, to become the quintessential, leading-edge emergency response agency. By creating synergies between the services fire departments offer that directly speak to the needs of our communities, elected officials and residents will see the fire department not as just fighting fires, but as the comprehensive emergency-response agency it is.

The Gift of Open-Mindedness – In today's environment, the ability for fire departments, elected officials and the public to keep an open mind is critical to finding solutions that best fit a community—including the fire service that serves it.

For example, consolidating fire and emergency service resources across jurisdictions has proven effective for many communities. Unfortunately, there are many roadblocks that stand in the way of success—or even approaching the situation—that must be torn down. An open mind can destroy roadblocks, find ways around them or find alternative paths to success.

The Gift of Gratitude – For fire and EMS chiefs and chief officers to know how much they are appreciated for the important and often thankless job they do. Today's economic, political and labor climate has put infinitely more pressure on our fire service leaders, where they're forced to make unpopular decisions. Let them know the support of their families, their communities and their brothers and sisters in the service.

The Gift of Knowledge – From resources that fully explain the issues impacting their communities to data and research that supports meaningful decision making. Because the gift of knowledge is best when shared, this combines the wish for resources and the ability to convey fire service knowledge to others, such as an excellent canned presentation for elected officials explaining fire service deployment, matching resources to risk and maintaining firefighter competencies.

The Gift of Wisdom – To support the application of knowledge and a proactive focus that utilizes limited resources on actions that are most likely to produce results for those we serve. To fully embrace the concept of internal evaluation and continuous improvement.

The Gift of Unity – Politically and economically, the fire service has never been as challenged as it is now. Fire service organizations must represent the specific needs of their members, but there are many common issues that the community should—and must—tackle together. With all that fire departments are facing, this wish is that the national fire and emergency service organizations would come together to identify common issues and unify their voices on issues relative to our collective sustainability.

The Gift of Communication – For firefighters from Key West, Fla., to Kodiak, Alaska, to have the capabilities to communicate on a common radio spectrum when deployed during catastrophic emergencies and for a dedicated public-safety broadband network.

The Gift of Professionalism – For the public to acknowledge that fire and emergency service is a calling on par with the professionalism of other highly sought fields like medicine and law. For members of the fire service to see the value in their professionalism, to aspire to higher levels of education and to seek national credentials. ☞

Compiled by Ann Davison, CAE, strategic information manager, based on personal viewpoints from individual members. The opinions expressed don't necessarily reflect the official position of the IAFC.



2012: Welcome to the Land of Confusion

When I was originally asked to write on the 2012 political environment, one of my colleagues suggested I write a one-word column: "Confusion." While being a bit glib, that's not a bad way to start off.

Foretelling the future can be a difficult thing, especially for 2012. National elections always turn out different than they look the preceding December.

Anybody remember the predictions of the cross-New York, Hillary-Rudy campaign of 2008 or Democratic presidential nominee Howard Dean in 2004?

In addition, the past two elections demonstrated that the electorate is fed up with the current system and is looking for outsiders who promise they can fix the system.

So, a lot of the wiser sages around town say the political environment is "fluid" and "evolving."

However, that's kind of a cop out, so let me give you some thoughts to consider as we fasten our seatbelts and get ready for the turbulent year that's shaping up to be 2012.

The Federal Budget Will Get Cut

America's policymakers are all focused on Europe, where the phrase "too big to fail" describes countries, not banks. European economies are under tremendous pressure from the combination of large deficits, aging populations and stagnating economies.

It's clear to both Republicans and Democrats that America must get its budget under control to prevent economic disaster.

The Budget Control Act of 2011 is the first step towards reducing the deficit. It created the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction and told the 12 members from the House and Senate they must find \$1.5 trillion in savings between fiscal years 2012 and 2021.

Since the committee was unable to come to an agreement, a mandatory cut of \$1.2 trillion to all federal agencies, including the Departments of Defense

and Homeland Security, will go into effect in January 2013.

In many cases, our programs are already being cut. Congress eliminated the funding for the Interoperable Communications Grants earlier this year as part of the bill that funded the government for FY 2011.

Overall, homeland security grants have been savaged: In FY 2010, the State Homeland Security Program was funded at \$950 million and the Urban Areas Security Initiative grants received \$887 million. For FY 2012, the House would create a \$1 billion pool to fund these and other grant programs and the Senate appropriators only proposed \$430 million for SHSP and \$400 million for UASI.

Even the FIRE and SAFER grants are being cut. They received \$405 million each in FY 2011. For FY 2012, the House passed legislation funding the programs at \$335 million each, and the Senate appropriators were slightly more generous by funding the programs at \$375 million each.

We can expect continued efforts to cut our programs through the next few years. The recession that gutted many local budgets years ago has finally caught up to D.C. From an operational perspective, this means there will be less federal funding for America's fire departments and fire chiefs will have to be more aggressive in applying for funding in existing grant programs.

From a political perspective, the IAFC will work harder to demonstrate the effectiveness of our programs. The IAFC will work with you to identify how federal funding has been used wisely to improve the nation's emergency-response capabilities.

It always helps to visit your member of Congress, their staff and FEMA-regional staff to explain how taxpayers' money has improved the safety in your neighborhoods. As federal dollars dwindle, the competition for each dollar increases exponentially.

A Public-Safety Broadband Network Will Start to Become a Reality

Over the past few years, the IAFC has been the leading fire service organization in the effort to establish a nationwide, wireless broadband network for public safety. There is bipartisan support for the idea in Congress and the president even mentioned the concept in his State of the Union address.

There is general agreement that the federal government should help pay for some of the construction, operation and maintenance of the network. In addition, there are a number of proposals that would create a governance structure to oversee the effort.

The big question will be what happens to the D Block. There are bills in both the House and Senate to allocate the D Block to public safety. The easiest way to raise funds is to sell spectrum, because it's very valuable and doesn't have the PR problems of selling federal land or dropping oil wells next to beaches and wildlife preserves. The D Block is estimated to be worth \$2.75 billion.

So, there remains a lot of pressure in Congress to sell the D Block to a commercial bidder and use the funds for deficit reduction or the build-out of the public-safety network.

If the D Block is auctioned, public safety will have to work with the winning bidder to build a 20 MHz network using the 10 MHz that we have and the 10 MHz that the bidder won. The commercial provider will have significant control over access and priority.

So during an emergency, it will be much harder to ensure public safety's communications go through, and it will be much harder to ensure the system is as resilient as public safety requires.

It remains important that IAFC members continue to contact their members of Congress about allocating the D Block

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2012 Top Focus *cont'd from page 3*

emergencies from occurring is paramount," said Riley.

This mindset may be different from an increasing number of for-profit EMS and security firms who can leverage the fire department's lack of data to convince the community to enter into contracts. Ludwig noted the particular concern with EMS: "Chiefs should expect the possibility of private ambulance providers to make overtures to communities that they can do EMS cheaper and better."

Without measurable results, there are few ways to determine if that's true and fewer ways to know how to gain efficiencies and maintain quality during the coming year. "The key element of the answers to the questions is the role of fire service leaders in answering them," added Rukavina.

In Pueblo, for example, Riley and his team are committed in 2012 to maintain their international accreditation status, as they're constantly able to evaluate and validate their level of service to the community.

Evaluating call volume, response data and community priorities and engagement can lead to successful efforts in 2012, but it will also likely lead to change. According to Roper, "Each community must now reexamine its own situation and consider new service delivery models based on the public's buy-in of the corresponding performance metrics."

Alternative Service Delivery Models

"The great thing about challenging times is that it causes us to look beyond the fire and emergency service for ideas and practices that offer opportunities to maintain services and service levels within an environment of smaller budgets," says Roper.

While the military and private sector offer many possible models, it was suggested that the current environment

"Do you know how good you are? Do you know where you stand relative to the best? Do you know where the variation exists? Do you know your rate of improvement over time?"

John Rukavina

offers an opportunity to embrace proven tools and practices that haven't always been well received in the past by the public or responders. "In order to meet the needs, the fire service needs to incorporate innovative programs to get more done with less," said Haase, "We must think outside the box and be willing to, in some cases, break with tradition in order to be more efficient and effective."

While most paint a bleak economic outlook for 2012, IAFC leaders note the many opportunities that will come from a year of investment. Eventually, the economy will recover; the question is what shape your fire department will be in when it does.

While many of these elements require time and energy, each creates a long-term return in the success of your department, the security of your personnel and the safety of your community.

Will 2012 be another tough year?

Likely, yes.

Can 2013 be brighter as a result?

That's up to you. ☞

Compiled by Ann Davison, CAE, strategic information manager for the IAFC.

Welcome to the Land of Confusion *cont'd from page 5*

to public safety. This really is a one-shot opportunity.

There Will Be a Major Transportation Bill

The House and Senate have begun considering major legislation to reauthorize funding for the nation's highway system. Speaker Boehner has identified the passage of the House bill, the American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act, as "significant job legislation."

In the Senate, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee recently passed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act to authorize funding for the nation's highway system.

This legislation will be important to the fire service because it also authorizes the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration at the U.S. Department of Transportation. The IAFC has made a number of recommendations to improve the firefighter training for hazmat response that this agency does.

In addition, there may be provisions to improve traffic safety and incident management. The IAFC is actively engaged in the drafting of this legislation.

These are some of the major issues I expect for the upcoming year. However, there are opportunities for action in other areas too.


For example, the recent debate about the deficit has spurred a lot of conversation about reforming the federal tax code, which could end up affecting the tax treatment of volunteer firefighters. However, we'll have to wait to see if those discussions get tangled in election-year politics.

As a presidential election year, with Congress already stuck in partisan gridlock, 2012 should be a turbulent year. The IAFC will keep fighting for you on Capitol Hill and keep you informed about what happens. ☞

Ken LaSala is the IAFC's director of government relations and policy.

Chief Werner Joins Press Conference in Support of the D Block

Chief Charles Werner (Charlottesville, Va.) represented the IAFC at a November 15 press conference, arranged by Senator Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) to call for allocation of the D Block to public safety to build a nationwide public-safety broadband network.

The senator was joined by three other U.S. senators and two members of the House of Representatives. Standing behind the elected officials were more than 50 uniformed public-safety officers: fire chiefs, police chiefs and sheriffs supporting the call to create 21st-century communications capability for public safety. 



American Heart 9/11 Tenth Anniversary - A Remembrance

American Heart 9/11 Tenth Anniversary - A Remembrance is a 9 x 12 full color "coffee-table" style book with 70 photographs of the spontaneous memorials and tributes to the fallen heroes and victims of 9/11. The photographs are a unique collection as they captured the memorials before time and weather destroyed them and have never before been published. It also includes a listing of the victims.

Available exclusively through American Heart Productions at the special IAFC price of \$29.95 plus \$7.95 s/h.

To order, call 1-800-520-8850 today and receive your unique piece of American History. Every fire station should have a copy!

www.AmericanHeartProject.com/IAFC



As you turn the pages you can feel the intensity of the emotion that went into these memorials and tributes and the humanitarian spirit that breathed through them.

*- Alexandra Drakakis,
Asst. Curator of Collections
9/11 Memorial Museum*

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Firefighter/EMT Safety, Health & Survival

Is Obesity an Overbearing Burden on the Fire Service?

Two recent studies, funded by the AFG program, focused on the impact of obesity in the American fire service and the deleterious role it plays in terms of both safety and economically. The studies, published in the *American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* and at ObesityJournal.org, focused specifically on fire service obesity as compared to the general population.

Much has been reported on obesity as an epidemic in the U.S. population and in adolescents; it should come as no surprise that the fire service isn't immune from this troubling reality and its link to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, co-morbidity and mortality. Of course, cardiovascular disease continues to be the greatest cause of line-of-duty deaths in the American fire service.

Both studies, "Obesity & Injury-Related Absenteeism in a Population-Based Firefighter Cohort" and "The Prevalence of Overweight, Obesity, and Substandard Fitness in a Population-Based Firefighter Cohort," serve as a call to arms for the health and wellness of the fire service. These studies report that both career and volunteer fire service personnel had a high prevalence of being overweight and obese as demonstrated by body-mass indices (BMI). The prevalence in the groups studied actually exceeded that reported in the general U.S. population. The higher BMI percentage was linked to higher rates of cardiovascular disease and higher rates of on-the-job disability.

In addition to the obvious LODD potential fueled by obesity, study authors concluded the significance of economic impacts to the fire service. Non-fatal occupational injuries have been reported as being above 80,000 annually with an estimated annual economic impact of as high as \$7.8 billion to employers. The authors concluded that overweight and obese firefighters have higher rates of absenteeism than their non-overweight or non-obese counterparts do.

Additionally, overweight firefighters experienced longer periods of absence to recover from work-related injuries: a 1% increase in BMI was equated with a 5% increase in risk of job-related disability. While these findings may or may not surprise some in the fire service, they do validate the need to commit to firefighter health and wellness programs to protecting the members of the U.S. fire service.

While we have made strides at reducing preventable LODDs and injuries, the work of these two most recent analytic and scientific reviews should prod each and every fire service leader to pause and reflect. Are we doing enough to ensure the wellness of our firefighters? Are we providing them with the necessary tools, resources and information to ensure that their fitness and wellness affords them the greatest degree of safety and survival both on and off the job? ☞

Todd LeDuc, MS, CFO, CEM, MIFireE, is an assistant fire chief for Broward County (Fla.) Sheriff Fire Rescue. He's also a director at large for the Safety, Health and Survival Section.

I Spy with My Little Eye...

Another article in this edition of On Scene asked a number of fire and EMS leaders what they felt the biggest issues, challenges and opportunities will be in 2012, why these are important and what you need to know or do to prepare for these.

When I was asked these same questions, I thought these would be fairly easy to answer. However, the more I thought about this, the more I wished I had a crystal ball that could provide the answers.

Why? There are so many issues facing EMS that it's pretty hard to provide a clear picture, much less an answer.

But, here's a short list of issues and challenges, in a slightly different format than you usually see:

- **A lead federal EMS agency** – Will there be one? What will this agency look like? What will EMS look like once under this system? Is there funding for this? If so, where will it come from?
- **Budgets** – Will they get better? Will they get worse? Is your current budget the new norm? Will we be expected to do more with less? Will we still exist? Will we see an increase in consolidations and mergers to try to become more efficient and survive?
- **Volunteers** – Will we continue to see a decline in these ranks? Will volunteers be able to maintain a continual increase in training requirements? Can they still afford to volunteer in these economic times?

Will career or combination departments look to augment their ranks with more volunteers? If we have them, how do we keep them?

- **Technology** – Hardware is being developed faster than software; legacy systems are having a hard time keeping up. Do you buy the latest gadget? What do you do when it's outdated in six months?

Do you have the funding to pursue new technology? Is it really making a difference?

- **Drug shortages** – Is your agency being affected by this? Have you changed protocols to accommodate the shortage? How is this affecting patient care? Are we going to see a more widespread shortage of more medications?

Will patients increase their use of EMS because they don't have the meds available to address their medical issue?

- **Patients** – Baby boomers are continuing to age; what are your demographics? Is this going to increase your call volume?

Can you handle this increase on your same budget? With your same personnel? And still provide quality care?

Some of these issues and challenges are also opportunities. How?

- **A lead federal EMS agency** – This is our chance to help influence our destiny. We need to work with all of the players to create a system that works for the majority while not forgetting that our patients are the reason we exist.

We may also be able to address funding here that will ultimately help the next item.

- **Budgets** – We continue to learn how to do more with less. Some areas are seeing some relief while others continue to struggle. We know federal funds are tight and grant funds continue to shrink.

Are there opportunities to collect fees for other services? Is a public-private partnership possible for some services?

This may also be an opportunity to explore the use of part-time employees and volunteers to potentially fill gaps by the loss of full-time positions.

- **Technology** – Technology will continue to rapidly advance and will certainly offer fire and EMS a whole host of opportunities to improve the level of service we provide. From improved monitoring and care abilities of patients to NG911 and the D block, the opportunities before us are almost unlimited.

Great things are coming. Just think back to what technology looked like 10 years ago. We'll see that same level of advancement in two years, if not sooner.

- **Patients** – Patients will remain our customers, and we should continue to serve them with the highest level of service possible. These patients are also voters, and when they feel they have been treated well, they typically respond in kind.

Continue to educate your community on the services you provide, stay involved and make sure your employees understand the importance of this. When our budgets are under attack, our customers are our best allies.

So, these are just my predictions for next year. Don't place any bets on this, since we all know how rapidly our environment changes.

But I think the calendar does end next year, doesn't it? Wait, doomsday was supposed to happen this year. Twice, I think.

Hmm... Maybe I do need to find that crystal ball. ☞

Norris W. Croom III, EFO, CMO, is the deputy chief of operations for the Castle Rock (Colo.) Fire and Rescue Department. He's been a member of the EMS Section since 1998 and currently serves as the section's director at large.



IAFC Foundation Announces 2011 Scholarship Award Recipients

The IAFC Foundation will award \$32,000 in emergency service scholarships this year to career and volunteer first responders and Fire Explorers. These scholarship awards wouldn't be possible without the support of corporate sponsors and individual donors; we extend our sincerest gratitude to them. Here are the 2011 scholarship award recipients.

General Scholarship Awards

- Batt. Chief Allen Gesser
- Div. Chief Glenn Boothe III
- FF/Paramedic Christian Ganz
- Capt. Kyle Kosianowski
- FF/Paramedic Chris Potempa
- Fire Officer/Medic Dan Flinn
- Eng. Mike Morgan
- FF/Paramedic Brandon Peterleus
- FF Cassandra Tucker

To learn more about the IAFC Foundation, visit the Foundation website: www.IAFCF.org. To offer your support, please consider making a tax-deductible donation today on the Foundation's Donate webpage: www.IAFCF.org/Donate.htm.

- FF/Engineer Dean Donaldson
- FF/Paramedic Brooke Ekstrom
- FF 1st Grade Peter Killian
- FF/MPO Daniel Boissonneault

Recipient of the Charles Chet Henry Memorial Scholarship Award, made possible with support from VFIS, a division of the Glatfelter Insurance Group:

- FF/EMT IV Dustin Lofy

Recipient of the Garry Briese Scholarship Award, made possible with support from the Motorola Foundation:

- FF/EMT Paul Hogan

Recipient of the John Buckman III Scholarship

Award, made possible with support from the Volunteer Combination Section and German Township (Ind.) Volunteer Fire Department:

- Driver/Operator Lawrence Michael Bernier

Recipients of the Motorola Future Leaders Scholarship Award, made possible with support from the Motorola Foundation:

- Batt. Chief Todd Weidman
- Training Officer Christopher Chadwick
- Captain Jeremy Loncar

Recipient of the Heather Westphal Memorial Scholarship Award:

- Firefighter Darlene Worden

Recipient of the Federal Military Scholarship Award, made possible with support from the Fed/Mil Section:

- Lt. Kipp Dombrowski

Recipients of the Fire Explorer Scholarship Award, made possible with support from the Reed Elsevier Foundation:

- Collin Pearson
- Dakota Kwiatkowski
- AJ Stevenson
- Ashley Mahoney
- Austin Pea

Recipient of the scholarship to attend the IAFC's Company Officer Leadership Symposium:

- Lt. Rob Frampton



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Rules of Engagement for Firefighter Survival

Abandon Your Position and Retreat

Our occupation puts firefighters in a constantly changing, hazardous environment. They're frequently exposed to deteriorating conditions and occasionally are caught in flashovers or other conditions that injure or kill firefighters. Our culture sometimes creates a situation where they feel they need to stand their ground when fire is about to overtake them and so they don't have time to safely exit. Thus the need for this rule:

You are required to abandon your position and retreat before deteriorating conditions can harm you.

Objective: To cause firefighters and company officers to be aware of fire conditions and cause an early exit to a safe area when they're exposed to deteriorating conditions, unacceptable risk and a life-threatening situation.

Firefighters are nearly always at a point of greatest risk when operating on the fireground and so often detect a rapidly deteriorating condition before the incident commander. Flashovers can develop in seconds and firefighters may only have a few more seconds of survival time when they do occur. When a situation creates a high potential for injury or a life-threatening situation, no firefighter needs approval from a supervisor or the incident commander to abandon the high-risk position. Nor should they be required to report their intent to abandon if reporting impedes or delays a rapid exit to a safe location.

Firefighters should never push the safety envelope and extend risk for what is already lost or can't be controlled.

Withdrawal from a life-threatening position must occur early enough to allow a safe exit from the building or to relocate to a safe location. Firefighters should understand that an emergency exit from a building often takes *longer* than it took to get into the interior operating position and conditions will be worse. No hesitation should occur, as seconds can mean surviving or dying. If saving the hoseline or any equipment will delay exit, the firefighter should leave it behind and get out. It's far better for the crew to abandon the position early than to try to take a needless stand and be pushed out.

A radio report to the incident commander or the division/group supervisor on the decision to abandon a position should be made as soon as possible, but only when it's safe to do so and doesn't cause a delay in exiting.

The culture of firefighters standing their ground—with a willingness of taking on overwhelming flame and heat when a fire can't be controlled with existing fire-attack lines—cannot be tolerated. Evidence of firefighters who engage in this risky behavior is illustrated by repeated events resulting in melted or heat-damaged helmets or damage to other personal protective equipment. These firefighters often have a repeated burn-injury history. Where this behavior exists, the fire department's management team must intervene and eliminate this unsafe behavior and culture.

This rule by no means suggests that firefighters or an incident commander abandon a firefight when progress in fire control is being achieved. Interior firefighting is tough business. When crews are advancing and knocking down fire as they proceed, the action plan may be working. When crews

are not advancing—especially when fire is pushing back or is about to overtake a crew—firefighters should retreat to a safe location and do so *before* they're harmed.

When faced with such a situation, the company officer and firefighters must be comfortable with the knowledge that they have the authority to abandon a position they can't hold.

NO GO: If the fire is about to overtake you, retreat or exit the building before you are harmed.

NO GO: If your radio loses communications, exit the building. ☞

Gary Morris is a director at large on the Safety, Health and Survival Section board of directors and was the team lead for the Rules of Engagement project. He was formerly chief of the Rural Metro Fire Department in Scottsdale, Ariz.

The image is a campaign poster for Keith Bryant. At the top, it says "Elect Chief Keith Bryant 2nd Vice President IAFC". In the center is a portrait of a man in a white fire department uniform with a "FIRE DEPT" patch on his shoulder. To the left of the portrait is the IAFC logo (International Fire Chiefs Association) and the text "For The Fire 'Service'". Below the portrait is the year "2012". At the bottom, there is a red banner with the website "www.GKB4SecondVP.com".

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OpsNetlink: An Exclusive Resource for Operations Leaders

Here's an excerpt of an article featured in a recent OpsNetlink dossier on mutual aid.

Self-dispatching raises concerns on two fronts: whether firefighters from your department are dispatching to another locality or if you are encountering individuals or crews who self dispatch to an incident in your jurisdiction. Without a formal agreement established to address reimbursement and Workers Compensation, there is no protection outlined for self-dispatchers. If you allow personnel from your department to self-dispatch, you run the risk that your department may not be reimbursed for a non-sanctioned response.

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