



Monthly Newsletter

“Partnering with the Fire Service to Protect Illinois”

Lawrence “Larry” Matkaitis (May 25, 1948 - July 9, 2016)

It is with great sorrow that the OSFM announces the passing of former State Fire Marshal Larry Matkaitis, age 68.



Beloved husband of 38 years to Valerie; devoted father of Amber (Louis) Rivera and Daniel Matkaitis, “Big Lar” to Aliyah, Liliana and Anais; cherished brother of Jerry (Ruth) Matkaitis, Jimmy Matkaitis, Nancy (Jim) Sorensen and Kathy (Kurt) Uhler; respected uncle to many; also survived by many dear family and friends.

Matkaitis served as the State Fire Marshal from 2010–2015. He also served for over three decades within the Chicago Fire Department, rising from paramedic to chief paramedic and later assistant deputy fire commissioner for emergency medical operations.

Matkaitis supervised numerous training programs for first responders and incidents involving hazardous materials. He was a member of the Illinois Terrorism Task Force, the Deputy Commander of the unified flood response command team during the summer of 2008, and previously served as Chairman of the Emergency Medical Services Committee of the Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois.

After attending Northern Illinois University, he served in the United States Army for six years before being honorably discharged in 1975. He was also a FAA-certified pilot.

Larry lived an exceptional life. He will be missed but not forgotten.

Memorial contributions in Larry’s name may be made to Camp “I am me” c/o Illinois Fire Safety Alliance, 426 W. Northwest Hwy, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056.

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Spotlight on Arson K-9 Program

Investigator Terry A. Ooms & K-9 Jules



Each year, billions of dollars in property damage and hundreds of lives are lost due to arson. A very important aspect of the OSFM Arson division is our K-9 program. The division currently has 7 certified Arson dogs throughout Illinois. K-9 dogs provide an invaluable service by sniffing out and locating accelerants (for example gasoline) commonly used by Arsonist to intentionally set fires. K-9 dogs and handlers are trained during an intensive 5-week program in Alfred, Maine. Once they pass the initial certification, each dog and handler must recertify every year.

Investigator Ooms retired from the Village of Glenwood Fire Department after 20 years of service before joining the OSFM in 2013. K-9 Jules is a 4 and a half year old Black Lab who is Terry's partner and family member. "There are many benefits to having these K-9 Arson dogs", says Mr. Ooms. "Jules can quickly

pinpoint the residue from an accelerant, even a tiny drop, which can save time on a fire investigation scene." The forensic evidence uncovered by the dog and handler is a key factor in arson investigations. Ooms and K-9 Jules can be called to a fire scene 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. "Wherever I go, she goes", says Mr. Ooms.

A statewide Arson Hotline, (800) 252-2947, has been established so that citizens may anonymously provide information about suspicious fires that have occurred or may occur. You may be eligible for an award up to \$2,500 for providing information leading to the arrest and/or conviction of an arsonist.

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JOIN US AT THE ILLINOIS STATE FAIR August 12th through August 21st, 2016

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is pleased to join Governor Bruce Rauner and Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti during this year's State Fair, which runs from Friday, August 12th through Sunday, August 21st in Springfield, Illinois. OSFM extends an invitation to families attending the fair to visit the Illinois Fire Services Association and OSFM Fire Safety Tent, where a variety of information and resources on fire prevention will be showcased. The tent is located next to the Illinois Fire Museum at Main & Central streets. OSFM representatives, including an Arson K-9 Team, will also be at the Lt. Governor's tent.



“The State Fair is the ideal event for adults and children to participate and get hands on activities that provide complete information and resources on fire safety,” said State Fire Marshal Matt Perez. “Participating in different activities and engaging in other demonstrations with fire prevention experts provides invaluable education for all ages.”

Visitors can interact at the fire safety tent and enjoy games with prizes, popcorn, and shows for all ages. A variety of demonstrations at the fire safety tent include a Live Burn Fire Sprinkler Trailer, Arson Detection K-9 demos, Fire Engine Displays, and Auto Extrication demos. Take a step back in time and admire fire service memorabilia at the Illinois Fire Museum. The museum also offers interactive activities where children can play computer games and color pictures.

“Producing Our Future” which is this year's state fair theme is indeed a useful tool to educate families on fire prevention in a fun and enjoyable environment.

UPCOMING DU QUOIN STATE FAIR August 26th through September 5th, 2016

Fire Service volunteers still needed, please call Robin Sudduth-217-558-6743

Recent Staff Changes at the OSFM:

Greg Yurevich joined the agency on June 16th as the Vehicle Coordinator;

Chief Operating Officer Kevin Schott retired July 18th;

Mike Vogal joined OSFM on August 1st, as the Chief Inspector for Boiler and Pressure Vessel Safety;

Two new Arson Investigators will start Aug 16th, *Bobby Joe Brown* of Adams County, and *Bob Solberger* of Peoria County; and

Kent Tomblin will join OSFM on Aug 16th as the Chief Operating Officer.

L.O.D.D. - END OF WATCH - 7/12/16

Captain Eric Kohlbauer served the Freeport Rural Fire Department for 30 years. He died of a medical emergency during a recent training exercise. Eric was 52 years old.

Eric graduated from Freeport High School in 1982. He also worked for Stephenson County Sheriff's Department, and for Steward Security. Eric was also a member of the Silver Creek Reformed Church. He is survived by his wife Cathy; his sons Grant and Garrett; a mother, Mary Ellen; his brothers Mike and Don; his sisters Claire and Diane; and special friend Randi Wilken. Eric was a hard worker and a valued asset to the Freeport Rural Fire Department and will forever be missed and remembered.

Our deepest sympathies go out to his family and friends. A memorial fund has been set up in his name with the Freeport Fire Department.

14th Annual Illinois Fire Service Institute's Explorer-Cadet Fire School July 7th through July 10th

The Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) recently held its Junior Firefighter Training School program. The Cadet-Explorer Fire School is a four-day training program for participants that range in age of 15-20 years old. Held at the University of Illinois-Champaign Fire Service Institute, the cadet program is targeted toward providing opportunities for youth to learn the basics of firefighting and encourage young people to consider working in the fire service as volunteers or career firefighters.

The cadet program is designed to give students firefighting experience and knowledge that is relevant to what firefighters today may face on the job. The students participate in live training, basic understanding of equipment and tactics for EMS, ropes and knots, and auto extrication. There are basically 4 different programs a cadet will take; Basic, Advanced, Officer, and Rope Operations Training. Each element of the program teaches leadership and teamwork, self-discipline and career preparation, in addition to other skills.

An advisor of the recent IFSI Cadet School remarked, "We arrived back in Boston and the kids are already talking about next year's trip. IFSI did an outstanding job and, as always, the staff could not have been better, please let them know how much we really enjoyed all they had to offer us. We will definitely see you next year." (Bob Bond-Boston, MA).



With an approximate attendance of 250 students and another 250 advisors, the event draws students and instructors from all over the state, as well as, out of state participation.