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P R E P A R A T I O N ,
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E X C E L L E N C E .



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Over the past year, we have returned to a simple principle: **preparation creates competence, competence builds credibility, and credibility makes the world safer.** That principle has guided the International Association of Arson Investigators, Inc. ("IAAI") during my term as your IAAI President and continues to shape the progress we make in the global fire and explosion investigation and litigation community. As we reflect on the past quarter, the IAAI's Strategic Plan is not just a framework—it is advancing the preparation of public and private sector professionals who investigate fires and explosions worldwide.



That progress is evident through **Membership**, where the IAAI community continues to grow. In early-2026, well over 300 new professionals joined the IAAI, reflecting the continued demand for professional preparation and collaboration. Members are also engaging with benefits designed to support their work. The **Ignition Discount IAAI-Member Benefit for Early IAAI-Course Registrations** rewards preparation while strengthening course planning and participation. Members are also utilizing the **HAZWOPER & Asbestos Training & Education Benefit**, while the **New IAAI-Member Momentum Training & Education Discount** helps new members quickly connect with meaningful training early in their professional journey.



Your IAAI Board of Directors also approved the **IAAI Student Sponsorship Program**, beginning with the 2027 IAAI International Training Conference ("IAAI-ITC") in Reno, Nevada. The program will provide student members with reduced conference registration, baseline funding support, and opportunities to engage with IAAI Committees and mentors—helping emerging professionals connect with the global fire investigation community.

As membership grows, our focus on **Training and Certification** continues expanding access to professional development. In February 2026, the IAAI piloted its new **Forensic Photography** residential course in Saginaw, Michigan, strengthening practical investigative skills used in the field. We also introduced **IAAI Ignite: Leadership in Action**, a new leadership development course at the 2026 IAAI-ITC in St. Louis, Missouri.

The IAAI's global training footprint continues expanding through virtual programs, residential courses, and regional

events. Additional offerings are planned in Australia, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, Taiwan, and other locations. Streamlined online certification, endorsement, and renewal applications are reducing administrative barriers and accelerating processing timelines—connecting training to advancement through IAAI credentialing pathways.

Supporting these efforts requires continued focus on **Organizational Excellence**. Your IAAI Board of Directors and administrative staff continue modernizing operations, strengthening communication with current and prospective members, and improving alignment with IAAI Chapters and Committees. One example is the **SMS Communication Pilot Program** launched in connection with the 2026 IAAI-ITC in St. Louis, Missouri.

The IAAI's frontline Chapters and strategic partnerships remain essential to our work. The IAAI has continued training, education, and outreach with several Chapters, including Chapter 7, Kansas, Chapter 42, Louisiana, Chapter 33, South Carolina, Chapter 17, New Jersey, Chapter 8, Georgia, and Chapter 11, Virginia. We have strengthened collaboration with other organizations such as the Congressional Fire Services Institute, American Academy of Forensic Sciences, National Association of Subrogation Professionals, and The Institutes CPCU Society, reinforcing the multidisciplinary collaboration that modern fire and explosion investigation requires.

By the time you read this article, Devin Palmer will have taken his oath as your next IAAI President. He is a respected leader committed to integrity, professionalism, education, and service. Devin will serve the IAAI well.

Serving as your IAAI President has been the opportunity of a lifetime. I am deeply grateful to my wife, Amy, our daughters, Rowyn and Rylee, the IAAI Board of Directors, our Chapters, Committees, Administrative Staff, and every IAAI Member who contributes their time and expertise to advancing this profession. It has also been an honor to support the preparation of public and private sector fire and explosion investigation and litigation professionals to become their best selves—to become **qualified, certified, and competent**.

When I wrote my first article, I reflected on an early lesson from law school: **getting the right answer is not enough—you must also show how you got there**. Fires and explosions may try to erase the truth, but through preparation, discipline, and collaboration, investigation and litigation professionals restore it.

That is the IAAI's work—and we are only just getting started. Through the continued dedication of IAAI Members, its Chapters, and the leaders who will follow, **we will continue discovering the truth, defending the process, and bringing the truth back to light**.



In truth and service,

David E. Bridges, Esq., IAAI - CFI, IAAI - CI
IAAI President 2025-2026