



Devin J. Palmer Candidate for IAAI Board of Directors

How long have you been a member of the IAAI? 15 years

How many IAAI annual meetings have you attended? 4
Which years? 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018

What IAAI Committees have you served on; Which years? N/A

Do you regularly attend your State/Provincial Chapter meetings and activities? Yes

List any offices held in your State Chapter.

West Virginia IAAI Chapter, Board of Directors 2004 - 2005;
Texas IAAI Chapter, Board of Directors 2013 - 2016

Please list any International offices held, special projects or Committee work, indicating years of service. IAAI Career Path Module Development Team - 2018

If you are elected, will you take an active role in the IAAI, and with your present position, attend all annual meetings and board meetings during your term of office? Yes

Describe, in 100 words or less, why you feel you are qualified for this position. I have spent all of my career in fire investigation at all levels including local, state, federal and even private fire investigation. I have spent the last 13 years as a Special Agent with ATF and the last 8 years I have served as an ATF CFI and a member of ATF's National Response Team. In 2015 I was promoted within ATF to a Program Manager in the Fire Programs and Training Branch over ATF's Advanced Origin & Cause/Courtroom Testimony course. Within the IAAI I have served on the Board of Directors in both the West Virginia and Texas chapters.

Why do you want to become a Director or Officer of the IAAI? My desire to become a member of the IAAI Board of Directors stems from two different aspects. First, I have enjoyed serving as a member of the Board of Directors for the various state chapters with which I have been involved, including West Virginia and Texas. It is extremely important to the future of the IAAI to get chapter members involved in these capacities to bring in new ideas and help to guide the future of the IAAI. I have served as a member of the Board of Directors for both chapters while I was living in these states. Which brings me to the second aspect of why I want to become a member of the Board of Directors for the International Association. During my service to both state chapters I have had to prematurely give up my position on the board because I was required to move as part of my employment with ATF. In 2005 I had to give up my position on the IAAI West Virginia Chapter Board of Directors after serving only part of my first term when I was hired on by ATF and required to move to Texas. In 2013 I was elected to the IAAI Texas Chapter Board of Directors. Then in 2015 I was promoted within ATF to become a Program Manager in ATF's Fire Programs and Training Branch at our facility at the National Center for Explosives Training and Research in Huntsville, AL. This also required me to move from Texas to Alabama. While I was able to serve out my first term as a member of the Texas IAAI Board of Directors which expired in 2016, I was not able to run again for a second term. I have been disappointed at not being able to serve in a long term capacity or meet the required service time in an individual state in order to serve as an Executive Officer, however it led me to a conclusion regarding the best way for me to serve the membership of the IAAI... I felt the call to run for the International Board of Directors to best serve the fire investigation community as a whole.

What do you believe are your best leadership traits and how would you use them as a Director or Officer of the IAAI? I believe that I have several leadership traits that would make me an ideal selection for the IAAI Board of Directors. As a member of ATF's National Response Team and the Program Manager over ATF's Advanced Origin & Cause/Courtroom Testimony course, I understand how to work with multiple agencies in a high pressure environment and still react in a calm and logical manner. I believe that I could apply these skills while serving the membership of the IAAI. I believe that I also have the ability to design and carry out a long term plan while still being able to adjust to changing situations, a skill that I have honed during my time as a Program Manager with ATF. The final trait is the tenacity with which I pursue any endeavor upon which I embark and believe that this tenacity would be of great benefit to the IAAI. I believe that this combination of traits can be put to use as a beneficial member of the IAAI Board of Directors.

What steps do you believe should be taken to grow membership? I believe that in order to grow the IAAI membership, we need to look at several areas. We need to look to our state chapters to bring in new members on a local level. The International then needs to have a strong presence at the state conferences and show the members of the state chapters what benefits the International can provide to them plus the training and other benefits that they can receive as part of the IAAI. But it is imperative to have a stronger International presence at the state chapter conferences and meetings. While at the state conferences the IAAI can conduct membership drives offering membership at a reduced "conference only rate", because once an investigator becomes a member it is much more likely that person will stay a member.

One other direction that the IAAI needs to look is internationally. The IAAI needs to expand its reach to all areas of the globe as the Global Leaders in Fire Investigation. As with the state chapters, the IAAI needs to show the international community the benefits that they can be a part of and take advantage of being members of the IAAI.

Another avenue that the IAAI needs to fully capitalize on is to offer more scholarships to State Chapter members that covers the cost of the annual IAAI International Training Conference. The IAAI currently offers the John Charles Wilson – Robert Doran Sr. Scholarship for financial assistance to 5 individuals annually to attend the ITC or other IAAI Training event. This number should be increased to a minimum of 10 scholarships and applicants should be an International or State Chapter member. The State Chapters need to also offer their own scholarships for financial assistance to attend the local State IAAI training conferences. This would provide the opportunity for more fire investigators to be able to attend the quality training that the IAAI puts on, thus increasing interest in IAAI membership and training.

How would you propose to improve relationships and communications between the International and Chapters? I believe that it is critical for the IAAI to have a stronger presence at the state chapter conferences and meetings. I believe that many chapter members belong to their state chapter while they do not belong to the International and have seen this on several different occasions. By increasing the presence of the International executives, directors and members at the events of the state chapters we can better showcase the benefits of being a member of the International. This more hands on approach can be accomplished in several ways whether the International rents a vendor table at the state conferences, sends instructors to teach at the state conferences, attending awards banquets or opening ceremonies, even participating in the planning meetings for these state conferences. By making the International more accessible at the state levels we can better showcase the benefits of the IAAI to the members of the state chapters. The International Executive Officers and Board of Directors should also have an annual tele-conference with the state chapter presidents, or their designated representative, in addition to the chapter meeting that is held at the annual ITC. This would allow the state chapter presidents more input and access to the IAAI board members to voice suggestions, input and concerns that they may have on a more regular basis and allow the IAAI to have more regular communication with the State Chapters. Then by allowing the State Chapters to have more of a voice within the IAAI this would help to improve relations and communication.

What are your recommendations for future funding of CFITrainer.Net? The IAAI needs to look to several sources for the funding of CFITrainer.net. Government grants are one such area that the IAAI needs to make sure are being fully explored. Some government funds have been obtained and utilized, but it needs to be examined if there are any other grants that can be obtained. Advertisers or sponsors are also another component that should be fully examined to determine if more advertisers can be brought on board and how we can maximize the impact that our members have for those advertisers. This would make CFITrainer.net more attractive to advertisers in the future. Donations are another area that the IAAI needs to make sure are being fully explored to see if there are any corporate entities that would be willing to help continue CFITrainer.net moving forward in the future. While I understand that a paid subscription plan is currently being explored by the IAAI, and while I am not opposed to it, I believe that all other avenues of governmental or corporate funding should be explored first. CFITrainer.net is an extremely valuable resource to fire investigators and every possibility to make this a free service to fire investigators must be exhausted. Currently the National Fire Academy and ATF both require multiple CFITrainer.net modules be completed as prerequisites for entry into the fire investigation training programs because of the fact that this is quality, FREE training. If a paid subscription plan dissuades or prevents even one fire investigator from being able to access CFITrainer.net then we have done a great disservice to the fire investigation community as a whole.

Other than training fire investigators, what two or three other elements do you consider as critical to the mission of the IAAI? The IAAI's most important functional certainly is the training of fire investigators, but there are other elements that are critical to the mission of the IAAI. The aspect of liaising with other fire investigators is also an important aspect of the IAAI, where we can bring fire investigators from around the world together so that those individuals can develop a bond with other members of the fire investigation community. It is then important to foster those relationships so that when the time comes, and it will come, when an individual investigator needs assistance or just another fire investigator as a sounding board to bounce ideas or theories off of then they will have contacts that they can rely upon. It is also important for the IAAI to help guide the future of fire investigation, whether that be in the participation of members on boards and panels, committees or workgroups that are currently working toward changing the future of fire investigation or lobbying in the political arena to help to shape the laws that affect fire investigations and fire investigators. One of the primary areas where I believe that the IAAI can be a critical part of this process is the certification of fire investigators at a state level. With the release of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report there has been a concerted push toward accreditation of fire training and investigation programs and the certification of fire investigators to a more national standard. The IAAI can play a significant role in this regard as a leader in fire investigator training and certification the IAAI would be in an ideal position to be able to assist State IAAI Chapters to develop a training curriculum or process by which a fire investigator could become certified through their state, thus enabling fire investigators be able to attain an internationally recognized certification.