Randy Watson, IAAI-CFI, MIAAI, Georiga

How long have you been a member of the IAAI? Since 1984

How many IAAI Annual Meetings have you attended? 10 Which years? 1997, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016

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

List any offices held in your State Chapter. SC Chapter - Board of Directors

Please list any International offices held, special projects or Committee work, indicating years of service IAAI Board of Directors (2014 to present), CFITrainer.net Steering Committee (2011 to present), Public Agency Advisory Committee Chair (2012 to present), IAAI EP&G Committee (2016 to present) NFPA 921 Committee (1992 to present), NFPA 921 Committee Secretary (2002 to 2008), NFPA 921 Committee Chairman (2008 to present), NFPA 1033 Committee (2009 to present)

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. My almost 40 years of experience have allowed me to have unique experiences. I have experience in both the public and private sector; which have unique perspectives and legitimate issues. My experiences with the NFPA 921 and 1033 committees have provided me with invaluable experience in the efforts to raise the bar of professionalism within fire investigation. The tagline for the IAAI is "Global Leaders in Fire Investigation." To be the "Global Leaders," we must continue to advance science, methodology, and professionalism. My experiences with these committees have allowed me to assist in accomplishing the goal of global leadership.

Why do you want to become a Director or Officer of the IAAI? This membership has provided me with many opportunities, including speaking and teaching all over the country. When someone receives so much, there is a duty to give back. Being a Director has allowed me to give back to this organization as well as help guide and shape its future. Traveling around the country speaking to groups of fire investigators gives me a great opportunity to hear the views of the investigators out in the field. It is those views and voices I have tried to bring to the Board of Directors. It is for those investigators that the organization exists. The views of our membership matter!

What do you believe are your best leadership traits and how would you use them as a Director or Officer of the IAAI? The main quality to being an effective leader is to lead. In order to lead, a person must possess and demonstrate vision, fairness, integrity, and a strong work ethic. Using all of these qualities, a leader must build a consensus to accomplish the vision. Without a vision, there is no leadership and without consensus and hard work, there is no accomplishment. No one person knows all the questions, much less all the answers. It is through that inclusive leadership style that an organization can move forward. During my 20 plus years in working with committees and organizations, I believe I have exhibited these qualities and look forward to using these qualities on the Board of Directors. Leadership and experience matter.

What steps do you believe should be taken to grow membership? Any organization that is not growing is dying. For the IAAI to grow, it must maintain current members and demonstrate the value of IAAI to non-members. That is the purpose and focus of an effective Membership Committee. The first target for new members is within our own chapters. Most chapters have a significant number of members that are not members of the International. A concerted effort must be made to recruit chapter members to become International

members. As often as possible, there should be a representative of the International at local chapter annual conferences, with the main goal of recruiting. A second avenue of new members are these organizations with which we can develop strategic partnerships. These are organizations that have similar interests and objectives.

How would you propose to improve relationships and communications between the International and Chapters? The heart and soul of any organization are the people. The communication must be a two-way street between the International and the membership. The mechanisms of communication flow must be clear, open and available. The communication begins with the Officers, Board of Directors, Executive Director and staff. All opportunities to communicate with the members must be used to build and strengthen relationships. An effective chapter liaison program, coupled with the Executive Director, is critical to this relationship building. More effective use of the Executive Director position is central to this success. The membership needs to have a central person that they can contact to get help and have questions answered. The members have to know and feel they are valued. Not only does the International have a responsibility for effective communication, but the membership also has a responsibility. As this communication is flowing in both directions, the organization will become stronger.

What are your recommendations for future funding of CFITrainer.Net®? CFITrainer.net is a vital training tool for the fire investigation community. Paramount to that sustainability must be the identification of strategic partners, willing to invest in future training of fire investigators. This will require actively meeting with and explaining how they as partners will benefit from having a relationship with IAAI and better trained fire investigators. Communicating this value is key to developing these partnerships. These partnerships may involve simply sponsoring a training module or as broad as major sponsorship of the program itself. We have to be creative and open to various possibilities and opportunities. Secondly, the current model that has been so successful with the use of federal grants must be completely reevaluated. We all know the federal grants will run out, probably sooner rather than later. This must include an evaluation of the efficiency, operations, administration and costs of the current program. The CFITrainer.net program is too valuable to not maintain and grow. It is not enough to just maintain the program. Funds must be available to continue to develop new modules in the same professional manner as has come to be expected.

Other than training fire investigators, what two or three other elements do you consider as critical to the mission of the IAAI? While training is one of the paramount missions of the IAAI, the continued evolution of certifications and development of strategic partnerships/alliances is also critical. While the four certifications offered have served us well, a Certifications Committee should explore additional specific certifications, as well as the continued enhancement of our current certifications. All of this must be done while maintaining the highest standards, to assure the credibility of our certifications. Strategic and mutually beneficial partnerships must be a priority. Rather than trying to do everything, we should be partnering with others that have perfected various aspects of our industry. These partnerships should include educational institutions that could support our mission of advancing professionalism of fire investigators. By developing these partnerships, we begin to move toward the third item that is critical to our membership, which is being THE resource for information, research and technology to the fire investigation community. In the information, technology and digital age we live, the IAAI must be a leader in this arena. We need to explore ways to deliver information and technology to our members. This could include website enhancements, as well as mobile device type apps.