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June 2008

FFSA Web Community Continues to Grow

April marked the beginning of a milestone event for the Florida Fire Sprinkler Association. In addition to the Florida Fire Sprinkler Association website at: www.FloridaFireSprinkler.com, a new web community was unveiled.

When we started the web community, we could not imagine the impact it would have on Florida's Fire Sprinkler Industry. Members of the FFSA, other contractors, SAM's, Subscriber and Professional Members, and many guests have been making extraordinary use of the site. As of this writing, we have about 140 registered members and have had nearly 10,000 guests (each with unique ID's) visit the site on a regular basis.

Using an Invision Power Board, the community was established at: www.ffsacommunity.com. There is also a link to the web community on the front page of the regular Florida website.

Visitors to the site have been using all of the features, including the recently added "live chat" feature. One contractor recently had several of his technicians conduct a "live chat" session to discuss a technical issue. Private sessions can be set so that the user controls who has access to the "chat session". It has proven to be another positive tool for our industry.

Registration and use of the FFSA Web Community is free and we encourage any and all folks with an interest in fire protection and specifically fire sprinklers to register and join us in using the board. We're proud that FFSA continues to lead our industry in technology.

Florida Legislative Session Ends

The 2008 Florida Legislative Session was very interesting and shows the dynamic political environment that we are in. There were many pertinent bills passed and some significant issues avoided, too numerous to cover in this article. A complete summary of the session from our lobbyist, Buddy Dewar can be found at www.FloridaFireSprinkler.com. Use the link on the homepage in the "What's New" section to navigate to the Session summary.

Trustees Elected for Industry Advancement Fund

Elections have been held to seat trustees for NFSA's Industry Advancement Fund (IAF). As a result, NFSA is pleased to announce the following slate of trustees: Jim Spicer, SimplexGrinnell; Richard Ackley, Dalmatian Fire, Inc. and Bruce LaRue, Potter Electric Signal Company. It should be noted that both Gregg Huennekens, who made a substantial personal contribution and Wayne Gey of Wayne Automatic Fire Sprinklers who architected and seeded the fund with a sizeable contribution, respectfully declined nominations. Each trustee will serve a 3-year term with NFSA staff trustees John Viniello and Russ Fleming

Potter and REHAU Contributions Push IA Fund to \$249,000

With generous contributions of \$20,000 from Potter Electric Signal Company and \$2,000 from REHAU, the NFSA Industry Advancement Fund is now at \$249,000! The fire sprinkler industry has responded to this fund with great enthusiasm and support. The fund is open to all and will be used solely to support industry advancement efforts and to increase the fire sprinkler market. To make a contribution and join those who are committed to the betterment of the industry, follow the "Donate" link at the NFSA website at www.nfsa.org. Contributions can be made by credit card or bank account without sharing your financial information. All donations are tax deductible. Together we can keep our industry strong and vital for years to come. The NFSA Industry Advancement Fund will help us achieve that goal.

NFSA Tennessee Chapter Receives \$192,300 Training Grant

The Tennessee Fire Sprinkler Contractors Association – a Chapter of the National Fire Sprinkler Association announced it has been awarded a \$192,300 Assistance to Firefighters Grant. The funding will be used to provide training to fire sprinkler contractors, local AHJs and other interested parties. Training will be provided across the state of Tennessee with grant funds being made available to offset the cost of attendees' lodging, training materials and meals. Training will be provided by NFSA's Training & Education department.

NFSA Board Member John Perry of Victaulic Passes Away

It is with a deep sense of loss that the National Fire Sprinkler Association reports the passing of long-time board member John Perry. John, who represented Victaulic Company on the NFSA Board of Directors since 1999 when they first started manufacturing fire sprinklers, succumbed following a short battle with cancer. He was also an active member of the International Fire Sprinkler Association's Board of Governors. Our deepest sympathy goes out to the Perry family. A memorial service was held Monday, May 5 at 2:00 p.m. at the Cathedral Church of the Nativity, 321 Wyandotte Street, Bethlehem, PA. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations be made to Meals on Wheels.

REGIONAL REPORT

Florida Edition



Featured Florida Associate Member



About IOA

Being different is our difference. Insurance Office of America is a privately held, full-service insurance agency founded in 1988 and is one of the fastest-growing independent agencies in the U.S. It is Florida's largest privately-held insurance agency, ranked as the nation's 9th largest privately-held agency by Insurance Journal-National, and ranked as the 40th largest U.S. broker by Business Insurance magazine. IOA was named one of the top three Commercial Insurance Agencies of the year, 2005, by National Underwriter. And locally, IOA receives high marks—the Orlando Business Journal awarded them 59th on the Central Florida's Golden 100 list, 2004; plus recognized them as one of the Best Places to Work, 2007. A member of Independent Insurance Agents of America, IOA's home office is located in Longwood, FL with branch offices reaching from coast to coast.

IOA History & Company Information

As the largest privately-held agency in Florida and one of the fastest growing agencies in the country, IOA attributes its steady double-digit growth since its inception to the unique idea of partnering with agents. CEO John Ritenour's experience in the industry had convinced him that the traditional form of ownership in an independent agency left a lot of room for improvement. Strong agents rarely had the opportunity to transition to stock ownership, or have a vested interest in the "book" of business they develop after years of working hard and building a substantial client base. There had to be a better way. And so, in January of 1988, Mr. Ritenour founded Insurance Office of Florida in Apopka, Florida, and later changed the name to Insurance Office of America after opening the first branch in New Jersey.

The idea of partnering with agents and sharing commissions was innovative, and when combined with vested interest of the book, it became revolutionary. Our belief is that every successful agent wants to own stock in the agency and build value for retirement from the book of business. As the process of partnering with successful agents (much like a law firm) developed and attracted more agent partners and agencies, it became clear that the idea was too big to limit to the Orlando area. In 1997, the agency opened additional offices in Palm Beach and Tampa, Florida. The number of agents doubled that year.

Since 1988, we have added 21 more branch offices across the country and are currently interviewing prospective agents in all major cities throughout the U.S.

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Business Thursday On-line Seminars- 2008

Building on the success of the “Technical Tuesday” online seminars that the NFSA has been conducting for many years, we are pleased to announce its first half of 2008 seminar schedule.

Aimed at the contractor or project manager rather than the technician, these seminars will follow the same format, starting at 10:30 am Eastern time and continuing for 1 to 1-1/2 hours. The schedule of dates and topics is as follows:



Date	Topic	Instructor
June 19	Safety for Contractors	Ray Lonabaugh

You can attend a NFSA Seminar without traveling to a classroom. For more information and to view a demonstration, visit our Website at www.nfsa.org, or call Dawn at (845) 8784200 x 133.

*** Very shortly the 2nd half 2008 Business Thursday schedule will be posted. Current information will be presented, including the latest information on CPVC and the newest topic in the industry, LEED credits for fire sprinklers. Watch the national site at: www.NFSA.org for the latest information.**

Sprinkler Save Information

“One of the most effective ways to get the word out about the effectiveness of fire sprinklers is to report sprinkler saves.”

We need your sprinkler save information. Getting that information out to those who seek it is one of the most beneficial ways we can communicate the fire sprinkler message. Every day fire sprinklers are saving lives and preventing property damage. We need to pass that information on.

Please send us your “sprinkler save” information either by emailing or by directly submitting on the “Sprinkler Save” page of the Florida Web Site at: www.floridafiresprinkler.com

While you are at the web site, don't forget to check for the most current fire sprinkler information available.